this king of Nature and men.[1] His glory was the honor of all nations. Like Persia, Egypt claimed him as in the direct line of her kings.[2] The god of the Lybian desert predicts his coming, and owns him as his son. Sesostris, conqueror of continents, rises from his throne among the dead, and visits him in vision, to sink his own fame in the greater master who shall found a metropolis of nations, and identify Egypt with an all-unifying name. Darius Ochus and Serapis pay him similar honors. The Jew makes him a worshipper of Jahveh and the savior of his Holy Temple.[3] The Alexandrian Greek makes him abolish all the old cults, yet not by force, and become the apostle of a universal theism, whose prayer to the "Eternal One," at the head of his army, brings the Caspian mountains together, that he may build gates of brass to bar out Scythian Gog and Magog forever from the lands of the true faith.[4]

Age after age brought fresh accessions to that Egyptian epopee which, under the assumed name of Callisthenes, continued down to the time of Firdûsî, and even to the Middle Ages, to be the main stream of this mythic lore.[5] It was conspicuous among the resources of Firdûsî's muse. In this legend an Egyptian Magus substitutes himself for the god Ammon, and brings about with the wife of Philip the divine birth he has himself predicted to her. Alexander afterwards kills him; but his statue at Memphis speaks out to hail the world-master at his coming, and places a globe on his head. Here Alexander instructs his master Aristotle even in childhood, reconciles his parents, slays his father's murderers, but scorns to harm

[1] Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xx. 64).

[2] Pseudo-Callisthenes.

[3] Josephus: *Antiquities of the Jews*, xi. chaps. v. viii.

[4] Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*, p. 333.

[5] Through the Armenian translation, probably in the fifth century. For account of Pseudo-Callisthenes, see Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* ii. p. 586, *et seq.* And Lassen: *Indische Alterth.*, ii. 734. Also Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*

a foe who wounded him in battle; forgives his enemies, makes war only for humanity's sake, and binds the nations in brotherly ties; and, so testifies the Byzantine age, dives to the depths of ocean and mounts to heaven upon eagle's wings.[1]

In later legends of the same cycle (plainly Mahometan), he follows the setting sun to reach the fountain of immortality; nay, he hears the admonition of the Angel of Judgment, waiting on his mountains for God's command to blow the last trumpet. He learns the inherent necessity of evil in the treasures of this world from the heap of stones beside the way, from which he who takes and he who refrains from taking shall be equally miserable; because when they are found to be gems, the one becomes wretched because he has not taken more, and the other because he has not taken any when he might have had what he would. His death is foretold him by a king whom he finds throned within a mountain, and by two trees of the desert that speak, the one by day, the other by night, — the warning of Nature, if we may interpret the myth, that even her master is also her child, and must return to her bosom. When he lays his hand on the coffers of the kings of Iran, she goes out of her way to repeat the same omen by a monstrous birth. Greeks and Persians contend for the right to bury his body; but the oracle gives it to Alexandria, where the wise of all nations gather to celebrate his obsequies.

As the Jew claimed him as a pilgrim to Jerusalem, so the Mussulman finds him at his Kaaba, and a Syrian poet sings his praise as a follower of Christ.[2] Mahomet him-

[1] The Mahometan legends say that Alexander came to Abraham while he was building the temple of Mecca with Ismael, and acknowledged him as the messenger of Allah, and walked seven times round the place. They describe him as able to turn day into night and night into day, by unfurling one or the other of two magic standards, and so defeating his foes at his will; and even as having found himself so near the sun in a dream that he was able to seize him at his two ends. Weil: *Biblical Legends*, p. 70.

[2] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 607.

self celebrates him, it is commonly believed, under the name Dhu'lkarnain (the Two-horned), as a prophet sent to chastise the impious and reward the just with easy yoke; who prefers the service of God to the tributes of the nations.[1] Mussulman writers placed him beside Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and the rest to whom revelations had come. In the Chronicle of Nizâmi, he is the son of a pious Hebrew woman, adopted by Philip, — a saint and sage, more than a king.[2] By the gift of a stone, which outweighs everything save a handful of dust, the angels cure him of the desire to gain the whole world. A city whence men are summoned away one by one, to vanish in a mountain, and cannot be held back from obeying the call even by his kingly power, teaches him the inevitableness of death. How mythology, the world over, holds all lords and masters to spiritual realities and ethical laws! What transforming power there is in the wand of imagination, to bring a world-conqueror from his throne of centuries to his knees, before the primal conditions of human life and personal success! — a process whose operation illustrates the unhistorical character of idealization of the founders of religions and States, while at the same time it teaches that such imaginative constructions are under control of the conscience and aspirations of mankind.

To Mirkhond, the great Persian historian of the fifteenth century, Alexander's name signifies "lover of wisdom."[3] He is the ideal philosopher as well as king. He receives from Philip political counsels as fine as those which the Cyrus of Xenophon hears from Cambyses; for the natural flow of wisdom from age to youth, from father to son, is a premise of our ideal sense of continuity, which asserts itself wherever it is permitted to do so. He must make no

[1] *Koran*, sura xviii. 83, 90. [2] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. p. 607.
[3] Shea's Translation (Oriental Fund Series), p. 368, 369.

distinction in his treatment of rich and poor, Persian and Turk, remote and near, farmer and soldier, native and stranger. He must never be indifferent to the sufferer, nor oppress the poor.[1] Before the assembled nobles, after his father's death, he disclaims all special rights, consulting their judgment as one of themselves, and accepts the throne only at their desire. So for near two thousand years endures the repute of Alexander for having identified his conquests with local and personal liberties. His victories are in Allah's name, and his letters are Moslem sermons. Even while, as true Moslem, he must of course have destroyed "the accursed faith of the Magi," it is admitted that he had all their science translated into Greek.[2] All the wise men in Persia, India, Macedon, shower on him the didactics of ancient wisdom; but not even the Brahmins can reprove his destructive trade of war without being silenced by his credentials from the Creator to overturn unbelief and wrong everywhere, — "commands which I will faithfully execute till I die."[3] He institutes discussions between rival creeds and schools, and exalts the Hindu sage, who can answer all his questions and interpret all symbolic acts and gifts. He answers those who ask things impossible, even for his power, with edifying self-depreciation and humble recognition of human limits. Here is the Mahometan ideal of Nûshirvân and Akbar referred back to a period eight hundred years before Mahomet was born. Into this tribute-heap are thrown aphoristic treasures, old and new, till the conversational wisdom of Iskander is a catechism of the virtues for any age.

"In what should a king show perseverance?" "In meditating on the interests of his people by night, and securing them by day." — "From what do you gain most pleasure?" "From rewarding good service." — "The day passed without redressing some wrong or grant-

[1] Shea's Translation (Oriental Fund Series), p. 377. [2] Ibid., p. 396. [3] Ibid., p. 405.

ing some petition, is no part of life."—"My instructor deserves more of my respect than my father, because my father brought me from heaven to earth; but Aristotle raised me from earth to heaven."—"I refuse to make stealthy attacks, by night, on an enemy."—"The noble mind, even of a poor man, is forever held in honor; but the mean person, of whatever rank, is condemned."—"Man wants understanding more than wealth."[1]

His last message is a tender letter to his mother. Over his remains the sages moralize on the contrast of his glory with his dust; and then with the tribute that "Fortune has hidden him from human gaze, like treasures of silver and gold," consign him to his Alexandrian grave, "enveloped in the mercy and forgiveness of the Almighty, whose perfection endures while all things else decay."[2]

Quite as marvellous as this decree of natural change over which the Mussulman sages moralize in awe, is the contrast between the Alexander of history and these products of religious tradition, weaving ideals of successive ages around his name. While the pith and point in Plutarch's sayings of Alexander befit a master-mind that swayed men as it did nations, the commonplaces of the Mussulman ideal belong to a traditional moralist or a meditative saint. Probably no other character in history has afforded scope for a similar variety of construction. Such the universality of his function in history; such the significance for the future of the first appearance of personal supremacy, on a scale that matched the importance of that element in the evolution of humanity as a whole.

Such a Titanic force was not only accorded ideal rights by the voice of mankind, but strictly held to corresponding ideals of duty. And this moral criticism of one whose reported claim was that of being adored as an incarnate god is extremely creditable to the ages immediately succeeding him. Yet the fact is, that most of the crimes

[1] Sheal's Translation (Oriental Fund Series), pp. 421-26. [2] Ibid., pp. 428-29.

recorded against him are such as grew inevitably out of the delirium of his success and the real or imaginary perils from friend and foe which the situation involved. The difficulty of reconciling his outbreaks of fury with the grandeur, or at least the breadth, of his purpose and the equity of his general conduct, is increased by the puzzling variety of testimony and explanation concerning them. And we hardly know whether to ascribe these outbreaks to an intense nervous susceptibility which drove him to the madness of rage in his grief over the natural death of one friend,[1] and made his hasty revenge on another produce a revulsion of conscience to the insanity of despair,[2] or to believe that none of these dark tragedies have been related in their true connection with events. Perhaps here, as often elsewhere, the wine-cup is deep and red enough to solve much of the mystery. But careful study of the biographies of Alexander confirms the old belief, that, however superior to vulgar conquerors, he was in many respects a slave of unregulated passions, and especially of an ambition for personal sway, which could efface for the moment every consideration of mercy, justice, or private affection that appeared to stand in its path. The splendid star of empire that beckoned him in his early youth, when he complained that Philip was leaving him no lands to conquer,[3] gathered more and more of earthly exhalations about it, which showed that it was not made to shine steadily in the heavenly ether. It is painful, as we follow his track, to see how his victories multiplied the sharp temptations of his lower instincts, — necessities of cruel wrong, monstrous delusions about the plans and motives of others, barbarous sacrifices of life (brutal indulgences), and the slaughter of friend after friend upon suspicion, or in the fury of intoxication. These were the

[1] *Death of Hephaestion* (Arrian), vii. 14. [2] *Death of Clitus* (Arrian), iv. 9.
[3] Plutarch: *Life of Alexander*.

dreadful fatalities of a battle waged not against kingdoms so much as against nature, against possibility, against all rivalry of gods or men. Even Arrian, a most lenient judge, and perhaps the most dispassionate of his biographers, does not pretend to know what he designed; but "undertakes to say that he would never have been satisfied with victories, but would have been roving after places more remote from human knowledge. If he could have found no other foe to encounter, his own mind would have kept him in a constant state of warfare."[1] This is, we repeat, the incarnation of that internecine strife of the Two Principles, which belonged to the Iranian conception of life and the universe. The terrible conditions of that world-development were, that for three thousand years Ahriman should be master, though the germs of Ormuzd's victory are struggling and shaping through the whole; so that the very deliverance of the world must be purchased by the costly sacrifice of the noblest part of men's natures to the worst. The representative of this process is the career of personal Will. Translated into the facts of history, it has no type so perfect as Alexander's towering ambition, and its tragic fates of good and evil. By its triumph should man be brought to the consciousness of his unity. But the master-will shall not come to its throne without the slaughter of the man's own best instincts in the terrible struggle with opposing wills that must be trodden under his feet. Such the plane on which the conflict moved, pointing beyond itself to higher planes; such the inevitable conditions, of which he who should play the rôle of conqueror must be the instrument, — subject none the less to moral forces, since our responsibility is forever proved real by what we are, and by what our condition brings. Neither Sophocles nor Shakspeare has fathomed the tragedy of personal character which is involved in every step

[1] *Expedition of Alexander*, vii. 1.

of human progress. Only the grandeur of the end can absorb the anguish with which we must contemplate the actual implications of every great historic function. And our judgment alike of the suffering and the shame is obliged to accept that personal equation which interprets both these elements by the conditions of the age and its work; its susceptibilities of pain and pleasure, good and ill; its alternatives of choice; its ideal hopes, which direct the currents of individual aim; and the infinite stress of its invisible forces, which must smooth their own most destructive track through the natures they have themselves prepared to be their instruments. Even contemporary history records only the striking facts, the patent results, and these inaccurately at best: their causes and conditions and their spiritual quality, in the minds of the actors, lie mainly beyond its ken. If a past age cannot give these elements for judging its own leaders, our later times must supply them in part, by discerning the extent to which those leaders were, as they largely must have been, representatives of the age, as we now comprehend it,—their characters and conduct the work of its hand.

In the case of Alexander, we have the most conspicuous instance in history of the representation in one man's life and destiny of the power of an age to shape its instrument to its own historic purpose. In him its constructive as well as its destructive energies found play. And in our respect for the criticism which he received through all the glamour of his success, we cannot forget that the very historical conditions which rendered such criticism possible were in part results of the stimulus given by him to moral forces of which he was no mere passive instrument, but to some extent a conscious and earnest producer. He who can effect the advance to an ethical standard higher than his own conditions allowed, and capable of bringing his own life into judgment, is, even on that

ground, an ideal factor in the ethical education of mankind. And while we willingly hear Juvenal and Lucian satirize his claim to divinity,[1] and the sophist Theocritus with keen wit tell his friends to "keep up their hearts, so long as they see the gods dying sooner than men;" while we respond to the somewhat rhetorical protest of Seneca, against the *eternum crimen*, the death of Callisthenes, as sufficient in his opinion to outweigh everything that could be said for "the first of generals and kings,"[2] — we must interline these and similar criticisms with the half-conscious testimony of their authors to the justice of even an Iranian hero-worship in his case. The supposed audacity of claiming the name and honor of a god is somewhat modified by the practical resemblance of most of the Greek gods to men; by the frequency of a supposed title to divine descent; and by the traditional habits of Oriental allegiance. Arrian says distinctly that the "adoration" given was "after the Persian manner." It was the Greek custom, as we know, for great families to claim descent from the gods; and Alexander had been taught to trace his own through three lines of demi-gods to Jupiter himself.[3] Lucian's Diogenes in Hades sneers at the "king of kings," — "So you too are dead like the rest of us!" but his own impartial Minos decides that Alexander is greater than Scipio or Hannibal, great as they are.[4] Juvenal and Seneca, writing from the abstract ethical standpoint, lose some of their force as soon as we reflect on the historical relations and conditions which they wholly leave out of sight. Arrian, whose version of Callisthenes' courageous rebuke of Alexander's pretensions to deity gives this philosopher the highest claim on our sympathy, nevertheless thinks he was justly odious to the king for his stiff and

[1] Satire, x. Dialogue, xix.
[2] *Quæstiones Naturales*, vi. 23. See Arrian, iv. 10, 11, 14.
[3] Arrian, iv. 10.
[4] Dialogue, xviii. xix.

sour ways, and that his own conduct greatly strengthened the suspicions to which he fell a victim.[1] Neither this nor any other acts of violence of which he allows his hero to have been guilty, prevented Arrian from affirming that in comparison with his great and laudable acts his vices were few and trifling; that he cannot but have been the special instrument of a divine care; that no one was ever comparable with him; that he was strictly observant of his own promises, vigilant to detect the treachery of others, and "as indifferent to the pleasures of the body, as he was insatiable in the desires of his mind."[2] Curtius, who charges Alexander with extreme injustice and cruelty towards Callisthenes, "for which he sought to make amends by a repentance which came too late,"[3] has, notwithstanding this, put upon his lips the most effective defences of his policy and conduct, and praises the noble qualities of his heart, — his constancy, clemency, good faith, and self-restraint in all pleasure, making only one exception, "an inexcusable passion for wine."[4] As to this affair of Callisthenes, it is to be remembered that Aristotle had warned his friend that his sharp tongue would probably bring him to an early death,[5] and that he had the name of being capable of making Alexander a god in his writings, and yet joking at his divinity among his friends.[6] The horrible cruelties said by some to have been inflicted on him are simply incredible and absurd. Lucan, in the effort to set off his own divinity, Julius Cæsar, calls the Macedonian "a conquering brigand;"[7] yet his Cæsar cares more for visiting this "brigand's" grave than for anything else in Alexandria; and his own Roman pride is mortified

[1] *Expedition of Alexander*, iv. 11, 12.
[2] *History of Alexander the Great*, viii. 8.
[3] Ibid., vii. 28, 29.
[4] Ibid., v. 7.
[5] Diogenes Laertius: *Life of Aristotle*.
[6] Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*. Arrian (iv. 8) admits that he was occasionally subject to this passion, to which he ascribes the killing of Clitus.
[7] Lucan: *Pharsalia*, bk. x.

by the confession that a single province of the "brigand's" empire is great enough to defy the imperial arms. Or what credit shall we accord to Curtius, when in the same breath with his praises of this hero of his romance for self-restraint in all pleasures but wine, he describes him as having kept three hundred and sixty concubines, and given himself up to debauchery among the courtesans of Persepolis?[1]

The Zoroastrian priesthood put Alexander in hell for burning the "Nosks" of the Zend-Avesta at Persepolis, pretending to account in that way for the supposed disappearance of their sacred volume till the time of the Sassanides, and charge the destruction of that splendid city, as does Curtius also, upon a drunken debauch, in which Alexander was incited to the act by the courtesan Thais.[2] But the best authorities agree that only the palace with its environs was burned, and this as a foolish act of requital for Xerxes' pillage of Athens;[3] and there are ample proofs that Persepolis was a flourishing city from the time of Alexander to the age of Julian.[4] Equally unhistorical is the story that the writings of Zoroaster were destroyed by Alexander, since the religious books of the Persians were used by Hermippus a century afterwards. They were in fact destroyed by Mahometan fanaticism nearly a thousand years after Alexander's time. It was contrary to his fixed policy and his natural instinct to treat native literatures and faiths otherwise than with respect. In spite of the *odium theologicum* of the Zoroastrians, ten Persian poets have sung the "Alexander-Saga."

It were well for the fame of the conqueror if the sack of Tyre and the enslavement of its population, the massacres and executions in India and Bactria, and above all the

[1] *History of Alexander the Great*, v. 7. [2] Ibid.
[3] Diodorus, xvii. 2. Arrian, iii 18. Plutarch: *Life of Alexander* (Strabo).
[4] Diodorus, xix. 22. 2 *Maccabees*, ix. 11. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, xxiii. 9. Arrian, vi. 30.

homicide of Clitus, the death-warrants of Philotas and Parmenio, could be disposed of as easily as the conflagration of the Persian capital. It is no part of our purpose to discuss the various and contradictory accounts of many of these apparent atrocities; the testimony is too strong to be dismissed, that here were deeds that would shame the noblest record. Some of the palliations that have been offered for them are not wanting in force, — such as the exasperation of obstinate conflict, and the extremity of personal peril, — though by far the strongest is the universal testimony that his violent acts were generally the result of sudden frenzy, and succeeded by equally violent remorse.[1] But if we abandon the disgraceful tradition that this son of the gods was in the habit of brawling with his friends over their cups, we are thrown back on the worse alternative that his paroxysms of rage had not even the excuse of drunkenness. Scandal-mongers, flatterers, false witnesses, ambitious companions, old national grudges (as against Persepolis and Tyre), plotters against his life,[2] the passions of his followers, the unbridled rage of his soldiery, the demands of turbulent Macedonian chiefs to judge and sentence suspected persons, the necessity of sharp and decisive blows in case of rebellion or treachery, — all must take their share of responsibility for these acts, and it is assuredly not a small one. But these associations were simply the natural *dramatis personæ* of the play. How could a man in any age of the world command divine honors to be paid not only to himself but to his friends, boasting that he was not only a god but could make gods,[3] without bringing such furies of temptation and torment as those around him in hosts? Arrian tells us he promised Cleomenes that if certain temples to Hephæstion in Egypt

[1] See especially Justin, xii. 6.

[2] Arrian tells us that a plot was really formed to kill Alexander, in which Philotas was concerned; and that it was discovered through Ptolemy. *Expedition of Alexander*, iv. 13.

[3] Lucian.

were built strictly according to his orders, he would forgive all the crimes that officer might afterwards commit. "To give such license to a man of cruel disposition," adds the historian, "admits of no excuse."[1] One fact remains, after all has been said, — Alexander was the spoiled child of success. The confusion of his biographers as to his character arises from the fact that his character changed, and at every phase made such powerful assertion of itself that every phase seemed equally valid. It has been allowed by all, that contact with Asiatic taste and colossal temptations gradually corrupted the simplicity of his Greek nature.[2] The treachery of friends and officials, too, destroyed his faith in others. After such experiences, "he became more and more ready to give credit to accusations, and inflict severest punishments on slightest offenders, on suspicion of plots."[3]

Here on the soil of Iran the worship of personal Will rose to its absolute idea by the very nature of men and things, and the human master could not stop short of pronouncing himself a god. We cannot but think that this later consummation of his life has been transferred to its beginning, in fastening such precocious egotisms upon his youth as the saying that "heaven could not suffer two suns, nor earth two masters;"[4] or the complaint that "out of the infinite number of worlds, he could not be master of one."[5] This would be preternatural in the boy-prince of a petty kingdom; but it can hardly be called audacity in one who had actually swept the civilized world with his conquering sword.

It would seem that the laws of human progress were responsible for the Oriental worship of Alexander. Nature had produced a man-child fit for that personal ideal

[1] *Expedition of Alexander*, vii. 23.
[2] Sainte-Croix: *Examen des anciens historiens d'Alexandre-le-Grand*, p. 376.
[3] Arrian, vii. 4 r.
[4] Diodorus, xvii. 54.
[5] Plutarch: *De Tranquillitate Animi*, iv.

through which alone man could advance to a world-civilization. The tribes must have been less or more than human not to have adored Alexander. A century before his accession Macedonia was scarcely a State; its petty princedoms were in feudal strife; its few towns were held by southern Greeks; its kings were regarded as barbarous chiefs, though claiming to be of Argive descent. At the death of Philip it had mastered Greece by policy and war; and Greek culture had penetrated it, in spite of more than one threatened return to barbarism. Yet it seemed on the point of disintegration. Alexander succeeded to a throne whose occupancy was usually determined by assassination. He inherited an empty treasury, royal domains mortgaged for a heavy debt, and the charge of a mother whose extravagance was only equalled by the evil fame which threw suspicion on the legitimacy of her son. His early habits of frugality could have had no worse impediment than her pampering hands. The mountain tribes were preparing to revolt. Subject Greece was discontented, Sparta hostile, Athens intriguing with Persia to seize the moment of a change of kings "to check and depress the rising kingdom." But Alexander proved his descent from Jove. He instantly passed every barrier, mastered Pan-Hellenes and Amphictyons, received from both councils higher honors than his father had; and, aided by a sagacity in choice of counsellors as great as his energy in the field, at once created an impression of majesty that made his visible presence needless, and allowed him to turn with all his resources to the punishment of the Persian King.

And these resources were all original. His Asiatic victories were not won by veteran Greeks.[1] Scarce one of his generals was of the old Greek stock; they were Macedonians, as was the mass of his army. The tactics and the battle-order of Alexander were, like everything he effected,

[1] Arrian: *Indica*, cap. xviii.

revolutions on the traditional method. He made the old phalanx mobile, armed it with the long spear, and, while drawing forth its utmost capacities, supplied its defects with corps of light infantry and cavalry trained to manœuvre on any ground, and to match the dash of their leader in scouring the deserts and surprising armies and towns. Before the masterly combinations of this earlier Napoleon, no Asiatic army, however immense, could stand. And every resistless line of steel moved, after all, within his single heart and brain. It was these that made void every obstacle, — the jealous chiefs and turbulent soldiery; the Bactrian snows and mountain passes; the terrible heats, droughts, and famines of the Gedrosian coast; the numerous satraps, watching for chances to start rebellions and set up governments for themselves; the vast populations of ancient cities and countries. Amidst it all, this band of conquerors moved like some volcanic wave, confident as though on their own soil. It is impossible to mistake the source of their inspiration; nothing like it has been seen, perhaps, in military history. Exposing himself to the extreme of peril, wounded again and again, directing every detail of personal government, and, in spite of all occasional excesses, choosing always the short path to victory, and combining the elements of every situation with far-sighted policy to the accomplishment of a purpose that grew vaster with every step, — to all human conception, in that day, Alexander verily acted the god. When his life was despaired of, the panic of the little army, so audacious in his strength, was equalled only by its grief; and when, as if by miracle, he was preserved again and again, it seemed to their delirious joy that Earth and Heaven waited on his will.[1] The march back to the Phœnician coast-cities, and the slow siege of Tyre were not the waste of time and strength they seemed; [2] they gave him that command of the sea

[1] Arrian, vi. 13. [2] Ibid., ii. 17.

without which he was lost. Striking at once at the great cities, as if devoid of prudence, he really gained the fame of a deliverer and the greater prestige of centralized power.

Lavish to his soldiers, often magnanimous to his foes; considerate of differences that called for distinctions in treatment of persons; master of the arts of pleasing and rewarding,[1] — Alexander knew how to unite the paternal spirit of the great Cyrus with a serene assumption of rightful ownership in all Asia, which seemed to make doubt of the claim a crime. It is related that he at first forbade his soldiers to plunder the conquered nations, because these were their own countrymen; and the story at least perfectly illustrates his attitude, which was the most effective possible, even in a strategic point of view. His management of the Greek States during the Asiatic campaigns was masterly; on the one hand, losing no opportunity of winning their gratitude by restoring their exiles, releasing their envoys to Darius after Issus, liberating and honoring their Ionian cities, sending trophies to their temples, paying devotion to their traditional gods and heroes everywhere, and specially encouraging the democratic spirit, as in his present to Athens of the statues of the patriot tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogeiton; while, on the other hand, keeping in custody the Spartan agents at the Persian Court (the Greeks who had entered Persian service after the league between Greece and Macedon) as hostages for the fidelity of their countrymen at home.[2] He discerned that the part of pacificator among nations and races was at once the true function of a hero, and the only path to universal empire. And this double motive explains his assumption of Oriental forms and manners; his amalgamation of Greeks and Asiatics; his training hosts of Asiatic youths (*Epigoni*) in Greek disciplines;[3] his per-

[1] Arrian, i. 18, 19; iii. 24, 27; iv. 21.

[2] Ibid., ii. 15; i. 30; iii. 24.

[3] Ibid., vii. 6.

sistent refusal to gratify his Macedonians to the sacrifice of the conquered tribes and chiefs; and the energy with which he suppressed their discontents on this score, especially at Opis, crowning his success with a grand Feast of Reconciliation, celebrated with religious rites and joyful games.[1]

Conquest develops a "Scamp Jupiter" out of an Apollo; but we cannot refuse Alexander the credit of having recognized something of the function which his conquests were to fulfil in human history. He was no vulgar marauder. His tastes were for the society of scholars, the books and the men whom all ages revere. He had thought and studied, and knew what his own age had to teach and to transmit. In the uncertainty resting on all individual statements about him, it is of great significance that on this point all testimonies agree. "Puer acerrimis literarum studiis eruditus," says Justin. Pliny makes him the centre of art and artists, and supplies one of the finest symbols in the history of literature when he pictures him putting the poems of Homer in the costliest casket he could find among his Persian spoils.[2] We are told that he often cited verses of Euripides, sometimes large portions of his dramas at once; that he enjoyed Pindar's lyrics, and chose Achilles among the heroes of the Iliad, as was natural enough. "He invaded Persia," says Plutarch, "with greater assistance from Aristotle than from Philip."[3] And if we go over the ethical and political ideas of the Stagirite, we shall find that the statement is not without confirmation in much of Alexander's history.[4]

[1] Arrian. vii. 11. Diodorus Siculus.

[2] Pliny: *Natural History*, vii. 30.

[3] "That Aristotle accompanied Alexander, or that plants and animals were sent to him for examination from distant districts, is mere talk. Aristotle confined himself to the knowledge of his own day, and was convinced that this was all that was of real importance to solve all the principal problems."— Lange: *History of Materialism*, i. 83. *Westminster Review*, July, 1881.

[4] *Politics*, v. 11; vi. 8; iii. 15, 16, 17; i. 2, 4. *Ethics*, viii. 10, 11; ii. 7; iv. 1; x. 7.

The clear distinctions between a tyrant and a king; the assertion of moral responsibility in king and people alike, of limits to monarchical power, of the right of all men to be well governed; the wise praises of moderation, and warnings against enslavement to passion; the democratic bias, marred though it is by the advocacy of slavery as an appointment of Nature; above all, the praise of intellect and of living for the best idea, — these elements of the Aristotelian doctrine may well have had their influence in producing many of the noble purposes and acts recorded of Alexander in the earlier part of his career. Intellectually an apt pupil, in instincts of liberty and breadth of human interest he probably was far beyond his master. Of Alexander no praise seems to have been thought extravagant. To a poet who did not meet appreciation one said, "Hadst thou lived when Alexander lived, for every verse he would have given thee an island or a territory." His person was the despair of artists, till one said, "I will compass it; I will shape Mount Athos into Alexander's likeness, with feet reaching to the seas, with a fair city in his left hand, and his right pouring as constant drink a great river into the waves." But Alexander said, "Let Athos alone; it is already a monument of vanquished vanity. Our portrait the snowy Caucasus, the towering Emodon, the Tanais, and the Caspian shall draw."[1] "He was happier than other conquerors," writes Pausanias, "in that his felicity was least of all assisted by treachery."[2] The tribute of the historian of Egypt, that we trace his conquering march in that country, "not by ruin, misery, and anarchy, but by the building of cities, the administration of justice, the growth of leaning,"[3] is, notwithstanding the exceptions we have mentioned, in great degree true of his whole career.

[1] Plutarch: *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander.*
[2] *Itinerary; or Description of Greece*, vii. 10.
[3] Sharpe: *Egypt* (English edition, 1846), p. 116.

And here is the point of reconciliation between the man and the instrument; between what he was and what was done through him. Such point of contact there must always be, or the continuity of historic cause and effect would be broken. Sainte-Croix, whose studies of the biographers of Alexander are more valuable for comparison of evidences as to facts than for criticism of motives or opinions, makes light of the idea that he was moved by any universal ideas or noble purposes whatever:[1] nothing but one man's unscrupulous ambition conquered the world. It is impossible to believe that the unquestionably direct effects of this all-embracing mastership are traceable to a personal cause so ignoble. To refute it, we need not rely on his reputation with every biographer for occasional acts or constant habits of heroism; on his sparing the tombs of patriot-dead at Thebes, his sending prisoners and exiles to their homes, his generosity to the family of Darius, his courteous and honorable treatment of noble women committed to his care, his agony at the death of his friends, his remorse for his own excesses.[2] There are stories by the best authorities that show him watching all night in cold and peril beside his old preceptor, who had fallen exhausted in the wilds of Anti-Libanus, and by personal attack on a hostile camp securing the means of preserving his life; pouring away the water sent him by his thirsty soldiers in a terrible drought, saying, "If I alone drink, these good men will be dispirited;"[3] drinking a potion before the face of the physician who had prepared it, after having shown him a letter in which he was charged with intent to poison;[4] telling a queen who had addressed his friend Hephæstion as the king, that she was right, "for this man also is Alexander;" persisting in disbelief of

[1] *Examen des anciens historiens d'Alexandre-le-Grand.*
[2] Pausanias: *Bœotica*, xli. Quintus Curtius, v. 5.
[3] Plutarch: *Life of Alexander.*
[4] Arrian, ii 4.

treachery in Harpalu till compelled to admit it, with a shock that told bitterly on his faith in men. Plutarch ventures to report as from him such rare sayings as these: "There is something noble in hearing oneself ill-spoken of, when one is doing well;" "God is the common father of men, but specially of the good."

Nothing can deprive Alexander of the glory of having aimed with enthusiasm, if not with constancy, at uniting mankind in following out the possibilities of progress in that wonderful age. In this form of imperial influence he instinctively led the way, in his passion for the ideal State throwing aside the social distinctions founded by Aristotle on slow inductions from the past. We may well believe the tradition that in making Greek and Barbarian equal before the law, he acted against the philosopher's specific counsel.[1] A striking illustration of this policy was his permitting his opponents in Greece to abide by the decision of the Amphictyons, instead of having them sent to Macedon for trial.[2] He won the hearts of the Egyptians by granting independent government by native rulers, and in accordance with national customs and laws; and charmed their priesthood by offering worship in the temple of the national god, as his son, after the manner of the ancient kings.[3] He in fact sought to accomplish in the political world what Aristotle pursued in the scientific only. How much finer than Napoleon's reconstruction of the map of Europe in his own dynastic interests, under the name of popular rights, was Alexander's establishment, at every commanding point in Egypt and Asia, of cities that should be nurseries in Greek culture for States remanded to native rulers and under free governments! Here the splendid intellectual and political genius of Hellas mingled with Oriental passion and imagination, to

[1] Plutarch: *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*, i. 6.
[2] Pausanias, vii. 10.
[3] Sharpe: *Egyptian Inscriptions*.

initiate the best elements of modern science and faith,[1] and especially the all-creative sense of *unity* and *universality*, whose far-brought germs have grown to maturity only in our day. The Neoplatonic and Jewish elements, combined in Alexandria to give early Christianity its power of expansion and adaptability to the demands of thought, and to free it from its original narrowness of scope, were brought together by this mighty centralizing force. Perhaps no point in the history of that transition has greater interest than the profound connection of the Alexandrian philosophy with Oriental conceptions of monarchy, as seen in the imperialism of its First Principle, — an essence lying behind all human experience, above all conceivable processes of life, and uniting Greek science with a mediatorial conception of ascending grades and orders of function towards the unapproachable One.[2] This speculative idea the growth of Alexander's empire had made the palpable suggestion of experience. On a quite different track the influence of these conquests was almost equally important. Absorbing all political ambitions in centralized forces, personal and organic, they left freer play for private and domestic interests, and led to a greater recognition of them in literature.[3] The New Comedy, one of the most fruitful sources of the study of human nature and social elements in all history, arose after Alexander had brought the exciting conflicts of races and States into quiet, so far at least as the above suggestion of unity and order in the political sphere could be so called; and this not only without destroying freedom of speech and of study, but by greatly encouraging it.[4]

But Alexander did not merely found cities, whose free cultures were germs of future civilization; he personally provided such cities with men who proved competent to

[1] See Zeller's *Stoics*, p. 15 (English edition). [2] Ibid., p. 34.
[3] Ibid., p. 18. [4] Chassang: *Histoire du Roman*, pp. 389, 434.

build institutions that were themselves civilizations, — the Museum of Alexandria and the Lyceum of Athens. The weight of his name protected the free thought of Aristotle at the Lyceum; for the great teacher was condemned for blasphemy immediately after Alexander's death.[1] The immense pecuniary aid and the thousands of collaborators, which Pliny reports him to have given Aristotle for the collection of scientific material, may be an exaggeration, especially as his physical works show slight acquaintance with Asiatic plants and animals, and were probably written, in part at least, before Alexander's campaigns; but the story is true so far as this, — that the Indian campaign, especially, was the source of a flood of writings on physical geography and natural history.[2] At his touch, harvests of historians, scholars, naturalists, moralists, and generals sprang up on Iranian soil. Ptolemy Soter, the regenerator of Egypt, one of the greatest of sovereigns, whose glory consisted in carrying out Alexander's system of freedom, mildness, and equity, and his love of philosophy and letters, was his intimate friend, and perhaps a near relative. A scholar, as well as statesman, he wrote his biography, and was in every sense his best successor; not least so in this, that, in conjunction with Demetrius Phalereus, he planned and instituted the Museum of Alexandria, and made it the intellectual centre of the age.

As the opener of the East to free government and scientific study, Alexander might well arouse the enthusiasm of his contemporaries; and not less as the pioneer of letters, preparing the way for Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Plato, and Aristotle. But there is a splendor of prophecy not to be described, in the influences that flowed back from this Iranian throne upon the Western world.

[1] Gillies, p. 74.
[2] See Blainville: *Histoire des Sciences de l'Organisation*, i. 305.

Arabia, India, Persia, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, were the Œcumenical Council to initiate these influences, centring in the purpose of this human Jove and the grander purpose that wrought at once beyond and through his will. Asia was not the mere corrupter of Greece, her Oriental siren of luxury and slavery. By his radiant march through Iran, and by the voyage of his admiral through the Indian seas, — which he proposed to follow up by opening the Euphrates and Persian Gulf, if not by circumnavigating Arabia, and exploring the Euxine, — what an empire of new knowledge, geographical, physical, ethnological, stimulated every human faculty, and impelled to inductive generalization as the only way of dealing with the materials! The spaces of Nature were doubled, and her borders set forward from the Zagros Mountains to the heart of India and the Scythian wilds of the North. Science became encyclopedic, a seeker of classes and wholes. Diodorus, Eratosthenes, Strabo, Pliny, and Ptolemy, became possible. It reached eastward, and the distant Ceylon was found to be an island only.[1] It began to conjecture inhabited lands in the Western sea that might complete the circuit of the globe, to strike out universal laws, to separate truth from mythology; and a wondrous series of cosmical discoveries ensued.[2] The commerce opened between Alexandria and India, and the embassies of the Seleucidæ, brought Greek astronomy into the Hindu schools, themselves already flourishing.[3] Greek terms abounded; obligations to Greek teachers are confessed; and the achievements of those apt scholars became in turn the sources of astronomical knowledge to the Arabs of Bagdad, by whom ancient science was passed down to modern times. Still fertile in errors, as was natural in this fresh expansion of its realm, the imagination received

[1] Pliny: *Natural History*, vi. 24. [2] Humboldt: *Cosmos*, ii. 147.
[3] Weber: *History of Indian Literature*, p. 251.

from the vast prospect of colossal mountains, varied climates, products, races, religions, which this man's eagle eye traced out, an impulse unexampled in history. At the same moment serious and free criticism began in the necessity of testing traditional beliefs by comparison with the new treasures brought by the higher authority of fact. In his striking description of certain aspects of these conquests in relation to the study of the physical world, Humboldt mentions the immense step taken, mainly through Aristotle, in "the formation of a *scientific language*."[1]

Most impressive of all the results of the Macedonian conquests, and the spirit in which they were pursued, was the inevitable suggestion of a universal citizenship in the great republic of Humanity, whose common interests no natural barriers could longer hide. The sublime outlook of Stoicism; its city of God; its brotherhood of nations; its absolute trust in natural order; its regeneration of Roman law by humanity and justice; its correction of Christian other-worldliness by acceptance of human destiny, flowed directly from the bivouacs of this great soldier on the Iranian plains.[2]

It does not belong to the plan of our work to enter into the development of the historic causes and effects, which are here affirmed only as bearing on our more extended theme, of which they form but a section. Enough has been said to show that the rapidity of these changes was a flash of Iranian fire. It demonstrated also that Alexander was the swift-moving focus of vast tendencies, of which his age was the natural climate and soil. His campaigns were over in

[1] *Cosmos*, ii. 149-165 (English edition).

[2] No one has more strikingly recognized these tendencies in the very necessities of historic cause and effect than Merivale in his little work, "The Conversion of the Roman Empire." Yet he has greatly marred the value of his testimony by depreciating these tendencies of Nature in view of a supposed supernatural transformation of them in the person of Jesus Christ. Nor does he, as it seems to me, appreciate Alexander's conscious purpose in this unifying work. Lecture iii.

"Nearly all the most important Stoics before the Christian era belong by birth to Asia Minor, to Syria, and to the islands of the Eastern Archipelago."— Zeller's *Stoics*, p. 87.

twelve years. And fifty years after his death, the city he founded and laid out in the shape of his Macedonian cloak, and made the representative of his purposes and his name, was the open gate of intellect, commerce, and faith, to a new cycle of human growth.

There is no evidence to confirm the tradition that he died by poison;[1] but much reason to believe that Arrian is right in saying that he foresaw that his successors would perform his obsequies in blood.[2] The magnificent funeral car moved across the continents from Babylon to Egypt, bearing the dead form of the master of civilizations to his rest beside the sacred Nile;[3] around it hovered the awe of myriads, who believed, so says the tradition, that he still wore the hue of life, still sat crowned and on his golden throne, and was sure to smite to earth the impious one who should dare to touch his Majesty. For nearly a thousand years the cultus of his divinity survived in Egypt. Yet no picture or statue remains.[4] Other gods came, whose disciples could endure no rival names. The pictures of Augustus were put by Claudius in place of those of Alexander. We shall not see that majestic statue, by Lysippus, which was said to have made men tremble.[5] The Christians of Alexandria destroyed his tomb. But how slight is what men can do to build or destroy a name, compared with the work of ideas and principles that have ages for their servants and history for their fruits!

The ages of exclusiveness, national and religious, were passing away. The communion of races made inevitable a new historic birth. In Antioch and Alexandria and Rome, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, Barbarian and Greek, were now to know themselves as children of common relations, reaching beyond the borders of nations, continents, oceans, mountains, and deserts that had seemed

[1] See Arrian, vii. 27.
[2] Ibid., vii. 26.
[3] Diodorus Siculus.
[4] Sainte-Croix, p. 506.
[5] Plutarch. See Sainte-Croix, p. 499.

the limits of the world. Nature, humanity, unity, brotherhood, were syllables shaping on the winds, blow they whence they would. Later Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were to find their way prepared; the universal elements were ready to bear these religious harvests, and law and science and philosophy and all secular culture were assured. Three hundred years had passed since Cyrus turned the waters of the river of Babylon, when Alexander left an empire to his successors, which added to the Persian those worlds of intellectual promise,— Egypt and Greece.

Now again a mighty force of personal Will gathers and directs the currents of progress through the ideal prestige it can command. Other like forms of personal worship follow; for this was the condition of progress that opened with the mind of Iran. But all were involved in what had already been done. The veil that had hid the tribes of the earth from each other had already been rent; and the light shone, east and west, over the whole heavens of mind.

III.

THE SASSANIAN EMPIRE.

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WHAT would have been the destiny of the Persian empire had Alexander lived to complete his plans for making Babylon the organic centre of a new civilization, and transmitting his magnificent prestige in this permanent form, may be partially conjectured. His Oriental sympathies, his constructive capacity, and that of the remarkable group of thinkers and workers whom he had gathered around him; the vast antiquity of Asiatic traditions, and their common allegiance to this focus of cultures; the commercial advantages of the Euphrates valley, and the long-established lines of communication which gave Babylon a commanding voice through the ancient world, — would doubtless have preserved the continuity of the Persian State, and concentrated upon that historic region much of the intellectual and political significance which after the decline of Greece fell to the lot of Alexandria and Rome. Hellenic wisdom, forsaking the ruined republics, and gathering on its eastward track the splendid relics of Ionian culture, would have brought thither its best philosophy and science to mingle with the moral ardor and sensuous idealism of Mazdean worship. The tribes of the East and the West would have gone up to Alexander's Babylon with that Iranian passion for heroic personality, common to Persian and Greek, which would have united their jealous individualities and sunk their feudal independence in the pride of universal empire. Whether the corresponding demand for religious unity, which was the all-controlling impulse of the centuries succeeding Alexander, resulting in Neoplatonism

and Christianity, would not, under these conditions, have found its centre in an Aryan rather than a Semitic faith, and drawn its symbolism from the associations of Iran rather than from those of Palestine and Arabia, is a question not to be lightly answered in the negative. So plastic are special religions to the forces of evolution, and so interwoven and mutually dependent did they become as a result of the period to which we now refer, that the natural selection of one or another of them as a basis for the continuities of man's spiritual progress depended very much on such external elements as geographical location and the set of social and political currents. Science will not trace this selection, so far as it existed, to any extreme difference in their spiritual quality or even in their doctrinal form; while it overwhelmingly disproves the claim of any one race or religion to have been the sovereign factor of the highest elements of our civilization.

The Dualism of Mazdeism, its internecine war of God and Satan, its intolerance of infidel and hostile wills in the name of purity, its energy of ethical motive and its enthusiasm for personal heroism, as well as its devotion to one Supreme Person combining the powers of creation, preservation, and destruction, were all directly in the same line of religious development. Judaism and Christianity were, each in its way, equally dualistic. The good and evil creations were arrayed against each other in the prophecies of Isaiah and the Gospel of John as truly as in the Avesta of Zoroaster. The monarchical God of Europe could have been evolved from Ahuramazda, or the All-wise and All-mighty, as well as from Jahveh, Allah, or the Abba Father of Christianity. Doubtless the form in which the want of the Iranian world in Alexander's time for such a monarchical Will revealed in some visible or human way for the world's deliverance would have been met, would have differed from that in which Christianity met the same

demand three centuries later in the little province of the Roman State. But we may say, with equal truth, that the revival of the great Oriental monarchy by Alexander might well have wrought changes in all Asia to the borders of the Great Sea, and in the relation of those States to European history, which would have foreclosed the Messianic tragedy preparing in the social, political, and religious life of the Jewish people. Imagine the passionate monotheism of those patriotic tribes put under the fostering care of a new Cyrus and the spiritual providence of an idol-hating Ahura, instead of battling for its rites, traditions, and holy places against the polytheism of Greece and Rome. Imagine the faith of Ahuramazda broadened by the confluence of civilizations, and the development of Messianic Judaism drawn by his imperial sway out of its exclusive nationality, and made impersonal by prospects of moral and spiritual renovation for mankind, apart from the house of David and from visions of the end of this world, — and it is easy to see how changed would have been the historical relations and associations of modern civilization, so that their lines would have run back to quite other religious names and symbols of belief. There was nothing in the Iranian deity which made such world-influence impossible, and much that made it very probable, in connection with the wonderful old city where Jahveh himself was imbued with the larger life that was to come of his loins. All Asia, from the Hindu Koh to the river of Babylon, had submitted to the heroic personality of Alexander, and might have found in the religious traditions of the empire a basis for those cosmopolitan instincts which had long been working in the common relations of the tribes to an earthly "king of kings." A monarchical religion was desired that should fully recognize the great ethical conflict of good and evil, and be reconcilable with the liberty of States, of chiefs, of tribes,

of traditions; a god commanding by his ideal purity and energy the devotion of races that worshipped heroic Will, and believed in building a kingdom of heaven out of the resources of this world. Behind all dualistic mythology, magism, ritualism, spirit of conquest and sway, this was the essence of the Mazdean faith, upon which in large degree Alexander would have been forced to build his empire. What he might have effected in associating it with all future development, by union with the culture of Greece, and the communion of races and beliefs, in the city that had passed from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus, from Bel to Ahuramazda, and opened her gates to the humanities of Homer and the wisdom of Aristotle, is therefore on the whole not to be determined from a merely Semitic or even Christian point of view.

But Alexander's purposes died with his last breath; and the Macedonian princes who divided the yet unorganized empire neither cherished those purposes nor were capable of fulfilling them. Iranian religion, therefore, lost its distinguishable hold on the course of history, though not its real influence, as will hereafter appear. The river of Mazdeism runs mainly underground for five hundred years, and is hardly heard of till the day when the Sassanian Ardeshîr summoned it again to the throne of the East. But was a revival so wonderful ever known, before or since?

A more complete disappearance than that of the ancient faith of Iran during the reigns of the Macedonian and Parthian kings can hardly be imagined. The national legend takes no account of this period. Firdûsî merely says that after Iskander "light, turbulent, and bold princes seized on the divided empire, and were called kings of the tribes;" then passes directly to the birth of Ardeshîr, whose origin he traces to Sâsân, a scion of the native royal family, the ancestor of a tribe of shepherds, poor and straggling. Brought up by Bâbek, king at Istakhar, this descendant

of Isfendiyâr reopens the heroic and patriotic myth. Of the Seleucide period, history has preserved little but a wild phantasmagoria of shifting boundaries and fortunes, presented by the struggles of half-a-dozen princes for the mastery of a dissevered empire. Of the condition of the Iranian population under Seleucus Nicator, the greatest of these princes, whose dominions were almost conterminous with the old Persian empire, we know nothing. The Persian chroniclers may well ignore this whole Seleucide period and that of the Arsacidæ which succeeded it. The Greek colonists took no interest in Mazdeism, though all their native writers testify to the great influence which Oriental astrology (or asteroscopy), under the name of Magism, was exerting on the Hellenic mind. Notices of Persian Dualism in the writings of Theopompus and Plutarch,[1] of Pliny[2] and the Alexandrians, and the increasing tendency of all the Greeks to refer the beginning of their philosophic culture and the wisdom of their thinkers, old and new, to Zoroaster and his Magi, testify[3] to the profound interest created not only by the companions of Alexander, but by the whole intercourse of the East and West after the fall of the Persian empire, in a religion which was really of their own brain and blood, but more suggestive than their own of vast and subtile forces awaiting the touch of the understanding and the will. But great as was the world-historical interest of this period for the Mazdean faith, it depended, like the expansion of every other religion, upon failure and death on its own native soil, upon the transmission of its life into new forms and symbols, and the reaping of its harvests by other hands. The Macedonian strangers in Iran had little interest in the ethical earnestness of the Avesta,

[1] Plutarch: *Isis and Osiris.* [2] Pliny: *Natural History*, xxx.

[3] For a full account of these testimonies, see Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xix. 1–89).

and were doubtless of a more easy tolerance towards other forms of faith. The religion of the Parthians, who soon succeeded them, was a cultus of the elements, of the Turano-Scythic sort. Their worship of ancestors, of guardian genii, and of the heavenly bodies was somewhat advanced by a mixture of certain Mazdean names and associations, but had little regard for others, since they raised temples and statues to Mithra, and carried images of their gods about as teraphim.[1] It was said of them by the Armenian writers, that they let the fire of Ormuzd go out; and their priesthood may have been like those Median Magi who conspired against Cambyses, and sought to supplant the priests (*Âthravanô*) of Ahura. But they were certainly far from the intolerance of either party in that earlier war. The ease with which Ardeshîr accomplished the restoration of Mazdeism after four hundred years of Parthian rule, his immediate success in gathering a host of Mobads (eighty thousand, it is said) from all parts of the empire for this purpose, proves the full liberty of the old faith to maintain itself among the people through the reign of this foreign dynasty, and that it was in fact the popular religion of their dominions.

These Mobads, or Magi, whose name is never mentioned in the old Avesta where the priests are Âthravas, must have been either the representatives of the old Avestan priesthood, rising all at once from a state of semi-repression under the warlike Parthian tribes,[2] or else the Medo-Turanian priesthood must have been so modified by contact with Mazdeism as to be readily transformed into revivalists of Ahura at the summons of his apostle. The power of these Magi over the people, or as a social element, must have been maintained at its height during this whole period, since the revolution of Ardeshîr was evidently

[1] Justin, xli. 3. Josephus: *Jewish Antiquities*, xviii. 5, 9.
[2] Gibbon: *Roman Empire*, chap. viii.

an uprising of the Persian masses in the name of Ahura; and their representatives, the Mobads, were assigned the foremost place in the new order of things, and became the functionaries of a compulsory State religion. They collected and restored the old Avesta, and translated it from their original ancient Bactrian into the Pehlevî, or current language of the (Parthian) empire. It is not easy to see how the Mazdean faith could have survived in western Iran without the aid of its sacred books; yet if the old Bactrian had been comprehended by the people, why was it necessary to translate them into Pehlevî? There is no way of accounting for the facts, but to suppose that there were other methods of transmitting the doctrine and rites in the absence of original records,—such as oral traditions, fragmentary collections of hymns and precepts, embodying the substance of the faith, immemorial forms interwoven with social and domestic life, and including all, the undying love of a people for beliefs that were the natural outcome of their inward life. Here was a force of resistance capable of preventing any foreign influence from doing more than to overlay this natural religion with new details without altering its spirit, though the language of its records had become obsolete. The later portions of the Avesta, with their elaborate ritualism, are sufficient evidence of such foreign accessions and changes during the period preceding Ardeshîr, which the presence of the old Gâthâs at least would have foreclosed. The heroic national legends, as collected by Firdûsî as late as the Mahometan period, show how much of the oldest mythology of the faith is still traceable in strong outline through the whelming vicissitudes of thirteen centuries.

Such was the hold of the law of Ahuramazda upon the people of Iran through these five hundred years of foreign dominion. If the "fire" of that deity "had become extinct," it was not because the Parthian had directly

supplanted it by other fires, though he had lost his sacred regard for it sufficiently to burn the dead even,[1] but because the rule of a tribe of Turanian nomads, living on horseback, and devoted to aggressive warfare, had discouraged those national and personal traditions on whose authority it had come to rest, and by whose exclusiveness it had been fed. The revolution proved that the religious conscience of the Mazdeans had not been suppressed. Had it even been outraged? To the honor of their Scythic origin,[2] the Parthians were tolerant of all fires of faith. The Jews grew strong enough in Babylon and Nisibis, under their eyes, to rebel against them.[3] Jahveh, Ormuzd, Christ, even Bel and Buddha, dwelt side by side with the Parthian Mithra, and the worship of teraphim with that of the sun and moon. In Osrhoëne, Christianity was a State religion. Edessa was a fountain of Christian learning. The Parthian in Persia knew no difference of Greek and Jew. His coins bore Greek legends and Greek gods. At no other time or place in their history did the Jews live in greater authority and luxury than in his shadow. In his reign the materials for the Babylonian Talmud were gathered in quiet research. Everywhere in the empire sects competed and missionaries proselyted without offence. In Harran the Sabeans served many gods, and struck a root which held till the tenth century. If, as has been thought,[4] the Parthians sought to make every householder a priest, and thus to discourage special priesthoods, this very liberalism may have offended the Mazdeans. But the coins of the empire at that very time bore fire-altars, and the priests of Ahura were ready for the call of Ardeshîr.[5] The very names of these Parthian kings were mostly old Persian.[6]

[1] Herodian, iv. 30.
[2] Strabo, Justin, Arian, Gibbon, Niebuhr.
[3] Josephus: *Bell. Jud.* i. 11, *et seq.*
[4] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses.*
[5] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 6, 7.
[6] Roth (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xiii. 415, 416).

It is probable that, as the Parthian kings dropped the Scythian cap for the tall tiara of the Persians, so they accepted the Magism of their subjects as they found it, and allowed it considerable influence, — since the numbers of the priesthood in their time were very great, their possessions large, and they exercised a check on the royal autocracy.[1] The Parthians, though they had no art of any value, were by no means uncivilized, and became apt pupils of the Persian and the Greek. Mithridates turned upon the Scythic hordes, from whose bosom his line had come, and drove them from Iran. The race had large sympathies, and, like the Macedonians, sought unity on the basis of a religious freedom more liberal than Rome. They preserved, in this respect, the traditions of Alexander's policy, as well as foreshadowed the larger unities of modern times. It is, then, impossible that they should have dreamed of extinguishing the fires of Ahuramazda; but it is equally impossible that this very latitudinarianism should not have offended the rooted pride of Mazdeism, mortified its zeal, and provoked its jealousy; especially as its confessors were allowed too much freedom to become disheartened about their future destiny.

The energy of the revival, and its intense intolerance, were precisely what was to be expected from a religion absorbed in the worship of a supreme Divine Will. The old strength of Agni and Indra was in this flame that leaped from its fallen altars, where it had smouldered for five hundred years, and soared to its native heaven of absolute sway. What changes the faith had undergone during this long period, it is as yet difficult exactly to determine. But the Pehlevî literature of the Sassanians shows a large intermixture at least of Semitic beliefs,[2] with which, in the above respect, it could readily affiliate.

[1] Rawlinson: *Sixth Oriental Monarchy.*

[2] See Spiegel: *Eränische Alterthumskunde*, iii.

The interference of the Parthian kings with Iranian political institutions was equally unimportant. The Parthian rebellion was the work of nobles, discontented at the loss of personal liberties under the Seleucide rule; and their success brought personal rights to the front to such a degree that royalty itself was but a part of the nobility.[1] In respect to the powers of local chiefs, the Perso-Parthian State might be called Iranian. Originally a free tribe,—free from the time of Cyrus down, now allied to Alexander, and now arrayed against him,—the Parthians were swift to revolt from Hellenic satraps (250 B.C.) in the true spirit of old Iran. Their real sway over the empire began with Mithridates I. (163 B.C.), a conqueror worthy to be compared with Cyrus and Alexander, and was conducted on principles familiar to the native tribes. High-spirited nobles—a part of them Magi, and holding priestly office—elected the kings (called *Θεοί*, and brothers of the Sun and Moon), and tempered despotism by their independence.[2] The provinces were viceroyalties, and the social constitution, like the old Persian, was on a feudal basis,—each State retaining, in most respects, its local forms of government. The numerous cities founded by Alexander's Greek colonists preserved their liberties. The local rulers coined their own money. Persia itself had its own king and its own customs. Coins have been found, representing Ormuzd and the Mazdean religion, which good reasons have been given for ascribing to rulers of southern Persia during this period.[3] In every city there was a king, and it was in this sense that the Parthian first called himself, with literal truth, "king of kings," a title assumed by every master of the Iranian State. These institutions were inherent in the soil, learned from Persia and Greece. The

[1] Carré: *L'Ancien. Orient.* ii. 364.

[2] Rawlinson: *Sixth Oriental Monarchy*, p. 419.

[3] See the description of coins in Pehlevi legends, described by Levy (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxi. 440).

Parthian was himself their product, and he was not the first. Bactria had already, led by its Hellenic rulers, thrown off allegiance to the Seleucidæ, and revived its ancient glory. Alexander's death was the signal for local revolt. Even northern India hastened to refuse obedience to his successors.[1] Each of these States had its own hero or semi-divinity, a centre of enthusiasm for nobles and people, of a local pride and self-reliance, of which Firdûsî's epic gives the afterglow. It is curious to note that, notwithstanding the great variety of races included in the Persian empire, the names of most of these men of ideal will were Iranian.

If the Macedonian or Parthian kings could have become legitimate centres of the hero-worship so natural to their subjects, and made it a national instead of a localized instinct, they would have fulfilled the great opportunity opened by the conquests of Alexander. Some of them had commanding qualities,—Seleucus Nicator in the Macedonian line, Mithridates I. in the Parthian. But a succession of sanguinary conflicts, forever undecided, ruined every prestige of personal power; there was no towering personality, no natural king of the world, among these ambitious rivals. And so the States of Iran fell apart into their own natural position as individual atoms of Will. But more than that, there was no representative of the ancient war of Good against Evil; no son of Ahura to summon the masses of Iran with the old Zoroastrian warnings and commands; no supreme ethical principle embodied in royal lives that lived and died for its sake, and passed on its immortality, in a line like that of the old Avestan saviours of mankind. There were merely so many warring wills; and mere will-force, without the flame of ethical law for its divinity, could make no permanent impression on the Iranian mind. And if it is the experi-

[1] Justin, xv. 4.

ence of all subsequent ages of Aryan and Semitic development, that personal Will, as ultimate authority, can never make a permanent government, this is only because such will can never become the permanent basis for philosophical or religious belief. Political stability, though inconsistent with established creeds, yet rests directly on the religious nature; and the natural religion of Iran demanded either a succession of wills great enough to represent its living God, or else a system of ethical principles and spiritual beliefs embodying his enduring righteousness. The Seleucide kings aimed to satisfy the first of these alternatives. They aped divinity, and were adored with sacrifices, and put their images among the gods. They counted time from the dates of their accession to the throne. They worked effectively at building cities, opening trade, and circulating Greek culture, and made many admirable laws. But these claims had small value in Iranian eyes in comparison with the consecrated local instincts and personal loyalties which the foreigner overrode. Alexander had wisely put local opportunities into native hands; but the satraps of the Seleucidæ were Greek. The subject States saw their tributes squandered by luxurious and sensual courts, by men of foreign language and belief. Domestic feuds and family tragedies were bad arguments to prove the divinity of a line of kings; so were rival ambitions, and the cruelties of jealousy and fear. The old indigenous feudalism, based on a heroic impulse, sought its natural king; and so the old experience was repeated in the case of the Greek empire in Asia, which we have already described as befalling the empires which preceded it on the soil of Iran. Individual States, such as Parthia and Bactria, the mother-land of the faith, broke away from the central government, leading their Greek satraps, where these were competent, first into independence, and then, as the substitution of Bactrian for

Greek legends on the coins clearly shows, into gradual adoption of the local traditions and life.[1] And finally Parthia, remotest of these States which had grown by such local training, and so little known on its Turanian borders that no Greek had thought of paying heed to its growth, puts forth a natural master of men, seizes the unwieldy empire, — as the Persian, and before him the Mede, had done, — and proves again that on this soil new energy was always to be supreme.

There was much in the Parthians to rouse the hero-worship of Iran. They were bold riders, and made the bow and arrow historic. The crescent and star on their standards were significant emblems to the "fire-worshippers," and anticipated those of great nations and religions. Doubtless the military energy which gave them the mastery of the Persian empire from the Euphrates to the Hindu Koh, and which was the only power capable of checking the advance of Rome to world-dominion, — conquerors of Antony and Crassus, and during their whole existence the terror of the Roman soldier, to whom a Parthian campaign was the saddest of tidings, — was not entirely due to inherent qualities in the race. It was encouraged by the natural difficulties in the way of invading their country, and, aided by the effects of their guerilla warfare on horseback, a novelty to their European foes. But they had really great valor and endurance; they were as terrible with the long lance as with the distant arrow. Crassus was told by fugitives that they could neither be escaped when they pursued, nor caught when they fled; and that their strange arrows reached their mark before they seemed to have been shot.[2] Theirs was the great historic function of preserving the self-respect of Asia, and of holding over the traditions of the Persian empire till its glorious revival under the Sassanide kings. Without

[1] Lassen: *Ind. Alterth.* ii. 311. [2] Plutarch: *Vita Crassi.*

them the strong organizing hand of Rome would have crushed the freer feudalism of Iran, and that splendid literary and artistic era would probably never have dawned. Intolerant in their faith, the native Sassanide dynasty inherited an earnest and spirited people, whose idealism had been allowed free growth under the Parthian rulers, so that the requisite element was provided for counteracting the hard, practical, and political realism of Rome.

It was reported of the Parthian kings that they always respected the sacred rights of ambassadors, and never violated their treaties; that they were on the whole kind to their prisoners of war, gave asylum to fugitives, and admitted foreigners to offices of trust.[1] Germanicus, one of the best of the Romans, was in especial honor among them.[2] Their dynastic broils, on which the Roman historian Tacitus dwells, were at least proofs of remarkable individual force. He also says of the people, that they were constantly quarrelling with their princes, and regretting the loss of them when they had been expelled. These kings have the usual tragic record of crimes which belongs to all the dynasties of the time; but, in comparison with that of the Roman Cæsars, all Parthian enormities become respectable.

The condition of the Parthian empire in the early part of the third century B. C. prepared the way for the Sassanian revolution. Persia had lost its imperial name, divided into eighteen independent States; but the province of Fars, which had been the mother of that name, was most thoroughly alive to its heroic and sacred traditions, and persuaded that a great future awaited them out of the political anarchy and disintegration of the Arsacide State. The theory that the native uprising was due in large degree to the influence of the Semitic element of the population, and in pursuance of Semitic in-

1 Rawlinson: *Sixth Monarchy*, pp. 413, 426.

2 See Tacitus, ii. 58.

terests,[1] has no other apparent ground than the religious intolerance that characterized it; and this was so decided in the Mazdean faith as to need no aid from the narrowness of the Semitic. The disciples of Ahura were not likely to be gratified by the easy secularism of the Parthian. In their eyes, probably his heaviest oppression consisted in his latitudinarian treatment of creeds. They could not bear to see other priesthoods put on an equality with their own; for the worship of Ahura was the service of an all-commanding exclusive Will. Gobineau's idea, that the rebellion was an insurrection of the peasantry (*jaquerie*) directed against turbulent nobles, may or may not be partly true; but the utter extermination of the Parthians by Ardeshîr Bâbegân shows that only religious zeal could have been the prime mover of the war. And this motive, aided by the free communication between all parts of Iran, and brought under the influence of a common personal admiration for the great qualities of Ardeshîr, broadened into a patriotic ardor, which effaced local jealousies, and re-created the empire out of the very essence of its historic life. The old religious organization of the empire, in accordance with the Zoroastrian Amesha-çpentas, was not only preserved under the Sassanian régime, in "seven great families," clothed with exalted and hereditary rights, but constituted a thread of political continuity which extends from the early Achæmenidæ down to the end of the native Persian State.[2] So the old lower-landed nobility (*Dihkândn*) were still administrators of local functions in the time of the Mussulman conquest.[3] The five classes of this native aristocracy resisted all processes of centralization, and kept alive the local independence so dear to the Iranian mind.

[1] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 604.
[2] See Nöldeke: *Tabari*, p. 437. (*Uber die inneren Verhältn. d. Sassanidenreichs.*)
[3] Ibid., 440. Also Masûdi: *Meadows of Gold*, v. 33.

Against all these individual elements the Sassanian kings had a hard struggle to maintain an authority won only by the revolutionary energy of Ardeshîr; and their success was due not so much to any power they possessed to disturb the traditional organism of the State, as to the influence of personal character, and the seizure of special opportunities to make good their private interests and gratify their desires. The clergy grew, under the religious earnestness of the dynasty, into a close and highly organized body, and formed a kind of "State within the State," whose power was often leagued with that of the nobles against the king, and who knew as well as any other priesthood how to persecute and rule. The empire, divided into prefectures, was loosely related to the central power; the army, a cumbrous feudal mechanism, was under the immediate control of the higher nobility. Nevertheless, the kings had the old prestige of Iranian will-worship. They called themselves "gods," or rather "the seed of God," and took the names of national deities, not exactly as identified with them, but as claiming to be under their special care.[1] The common hope was to restore the old religious traditions. It was by representing these that Ardeshîr rose at once to the place of Cyrus in the hero-worship of his people; so that Gibbon thinks he must have been himself a Magus. Appealing at once to the popular instincts, he superseded the local chiefs. The revival was essentially democratic, so far as this was possible in an Oriental State. The popular element, thus revealed in Mazdeism, appeared in various ways. The native legends make Ardeshîr the son of a common shepherd, soldier, astrologer, or laborer, though descended from the great line of kings that ran back to the mythical Isfendiyâr;[2] and the impoverishment that had befallen this royal race

[1] Nöldeke: Tabari's *History of Sassanides*, pp. 451, 452.
[2] Masûdi; also Firdûsi.

was the mythic expression of the long eclipse of the Persian State. The last discrowned Sâssân had served a wealthy person named Bâbek,[1] whose daughter he married, and their son was Ardeshîr Bâbegân.[2] These humble relations of the new royalty were justified by the popular nature of his institutions. "He allowed no intermediate power," says Gibbon, "between himself and the people." The local chiefs had to yield to his personal sway. He deprived the satraps of excessive powers, and brought a standing army to hold them in obedience. The chroniclers prove at least his fame as a wise and just ruler, when they ascribe to him sentences like these: "No power without an army; no army without money; no money without agriculture; no agriculture without justice." "A king should be a father; but without religion he is a tyrant; and for a people to be without religion is simply monstrous." "The worst of kings is he who is feared by the rich and not by the bad."[3] "Four qualities are indispensable to kings: a natural magnanimity; goodness of heart; firmness to repress social disorder; and justice enlightened enough to give no occasion to any loyal subject to fear for his life, his honor, or his estate."[4]

Burning to restore the ancient faith and freedom, Ardeshîr pushes his way to high office in his native Fars, refuses to be superseded, and the whole province backs him in his revolt. He defeats and slays Artabân, the Parthian king, in the battle of Hormuz; and, after Oriental fashion, strengthens his position by marrying the king's daughter. Imperilled by the ambition of his brother and his wife, he puts them out of the way; and, apparently

[1] Or Pâpak. In the inscriptions he is called Sap or "king." Others say he was the son of a noble, and revolted.

[2] Nöldeke's translation of Tabari's *History of Sassanides*, p. 34. Tabari gives the legends about Ardeshîr: his predicted sway, his slaying the petty kings, his motive for avenging the murder of Darius. Troyer's note on p. 105. Dabistân, vol. i. Rawlinson: *Seventh Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 30–32.

[3] Firdûsî.

[4] Bernard: *Chroniques Orientales*, p. 99.

shrinking from no severity necessary to make secure his throne, proceeds to lay the foundations of the grandest epoch of Persian nationality.

Ardeshîr is regarded by the Persians as entitled to a still more enduring glory. Their traditional code, the basis of their civil polity for many ages, was his work; their lost and scattered religious books came down recovered, reconstructed, given to the people through his pious hands. El Masûdi, the Moslem writer, says "the satrapies were in anarchy, after Alexander's death, till Ardeshîr united the empire, restored order, established religion, advanced agriculture, preparing the way for the greater prophet sent of God to destroy every infidel creed.[1] Firdûsî tells us that he organized labor, forbade bribery, enforced good administration, enjoined forbearance in war, and mercy to the defeated foe; that he established schools and altars in every street, suffered none to remain in want, exhorted his son Hormazd to obey God and seek refuge in him alone. His administration, which promised equal laws, personal security, and suppression of feudal tyrannies, was doubtless a mighty revolution, so far as the old aristocratic nobles were concerned, many of whom were driven out of Persia proper into Seistan, where the Afghan clans still represent the old jealous hate of centralized government. Though labor was freed from many galling exactions, the feudatories were by no means extinguished, and the people, brought directly under the strong hand of royalty, were subjected to strict sumptuary laws and stern religious disciplines. It is charged that, while destroying the great nobles who endangered the throne, Ardeshîr not only retained a noble class distinctly marked off from the masses, but held to the necessity of a permanently poor class, as a durable basis for the political

[1] *Meadows of Gold*, chap. xvii. Malcolm: *History of Persia*. Carré: *L'Ancien Orient*, ii. 365.

structure.[1] Many cruelties are ascribed to his penal legislation, while he is credited with many mitigations of older customs.

But whatever merits entered into his system, it was certainly the union of Church and State in the most aggressive form. The sentiment, already quoted as ascribed to him, that a people without religious institutions is a monstrous form of society, meant a great council of priests, in whom was vested direct control over the descent of property, over police and private affairs, and who had the principal voice, through their chief, in determining what were the last instructions of the king before his death concerning the succession to the throne, which could only be filled by a sworn servant of Ahura.[2] In an empire which for centuries had been the home and the debating-ground of religions (of Mazdeism, Buddhism, Hellenism, and Christianity), he let loose the hounds of a merciless intolerance,—the old Avestan hate of the unbeliever in Ahura, the fierce exclusiveness that lurks in the worship of a monarchical will. He destroyed every graven image, trampled out every foreign cult, and put his host of Mobads at the head of the State. Till the Arab came to substitute for Mazdeism a god and prophet as jealous as its own, the law of Ahura was the government of Iran. Here and there a Sassanian king was great enough to bring out its humanities rather than its fanatic zeal; but most of the line were persecutors. The chronicles tell us that Ardeshîr commanded his Mobads to provide one of their number who should "divest himself of the body, and bring intelligence of heaven and hell." Hence the Vision of Ardâi-Vîrâf, who is selected out of forty thousand, as the one sinless saint, to receive the revelation in sleep. The work whereof

[1] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. p. 626, 627.

[2] Nöldeke (Tabari, p. 36) records him as having fulfilled an oath of his ancestor Sâssân to destroy every Arsacide. Nöldeke thinks he is greatly overrated, and was a cruel, ambitious despot, p. 8.

this story is the mythical explanation is in substance preserved, and combines the two opposite elements of the Avestan faith to which we have referred. Led through all the spheres by guardian angels of the Avesta, and with performance of its sacred rites, this older Dante beholds in types of sense the rewards and punishments of Mazdean futurity. Amidst the delights of heaven are the spirits of all who have observed the solemn festivals, — the priests and their attendants, the heroes of the faith, the souls of shepherds and husbandmen, and makers of gardens and fertilizing streams. In fetid winds and waters of hell, in night and cold, tormented by demons, and horrible food, are not only shedders of innocent blood, slanderers, extortioners, sensualists, hypocrites and liars, defrauders of labor and oppressors of the poor, betrayers of trusts, but breakers of the ritual observances and laws of purification, even those who have wept for the dead, or slayers of four-footed animals, such as water-dogs, and in general all who have befriended those hostile to the faith.[1] A more extended version of the book shows it intended to announce that all existing religions but the Mazdean were inventions of the enemy, and to embody the purpose of the revival, which was to put an end to the long-continued ferment of differing creeds in Iran.[2]

But if such was its purpose, the multiplication of beliefs which followed it, and the profound influence of the Sassanian empire on the development both of Christianity and Islam, show that the native energy of Mazdeism could not be confined to these destructive channels. And we are disposed to think that the work of Ardeshîr was essentially constructive; that it supplied the concentration of forces, political and religious, needed to counterbalance

[1] See Dabistân, i. 283–304. Ardâ-î-Vîrâf is mentioned in the later Yeshts of the *Avesta*, and his work is believed to have been sent by Nûshirvân, in the sixth century, as a kind of Mazdean Bible, to all the provincial governors of the empire. (Ibid., 285.)

[2] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, ii. 630.

similar forces, — at least equally exclusive and tyrannical, — by whose rapid organization in the Western world the faith and freedom of Asia were alike threatened with destruction.

The military and political energy of Ardeshîr was more than rivalled by the reign of his successor, Shapûr I., in whom all the pride of the Assyrian and the world-ambition of the Achæmenidan were renewed. Shapûr avenges the East upon the West. He defies Rome, devastates her provinces, defeats her armies on their own soil, drags her emperor in triumph to Ctesiphon, his Persian capital, gives her legions a new general, and clothes an obscure fugitive from Antioch with the imperial name. The inscriptions give no support to the story of shocking barbarities inflicted on the captive Valerian.[1] An immense irrigating system of canals, and a dike twenty feet broad and twelve hundred feet long, built to turn the Karun upon the plains around a city of his own creation, were monuments of his devotion to Ahura's law, — another grand type for Iranian hero-worship, which did its best to make him immortal in stone. There stands his statue, a colossal image twenty feet high, hewn out of the natural rock, of noble proportions, the hand resting on the sword.[2] That towering head-gear, with eagle's wings poising the globe in air, speaks the true Shâhân-shâh, — the king aspiring to godhood by right of will. And again the sculptures show

[1] According to Firdûsî, Shapûr, visiting Roum (Ctesiphon), was taken by the emperor when under the influence of wine, sewed in the skin of an ass, and thrown into prison, whence he was delivered by a young girl of Iranian descent, who swears to keep his secret by everything sacred in all existing religions, and by her love and fear for the Lord of Iran. She softens the ass-skin with milk, and they escape together. When the emperor in his turn is defeated and taken prisoner, Shapûr revenges himself by cutting off his ears, piercing his nose, and casting him into prison; while the people of Roum refuse to recognize him, his name is accursed, his altars are cast down, his bishop's crosses and girdles burned. "Roum and Canoudj differ no more, for the voice of the Messiah's faith is dead." (Mohl's *Firdûsi*, v. 465.) The unhistorical character of this legend is clear enough. Tabari celebrates his virtues (Nöldeke, pp. 31-33), among them his distribution of treasures to the poor on his accession, and his deference to the claims of his nobles.

[2] See Rawlinson: *Seventh Oriental Monarchy*, p. 605.

him riding in triumph, holding a conquered Cæsar with one arm while he guides his steed with the other, the embassies of nations on their knees around him, pleading for mercy or for ransom for the royal captive, it would seem, in vain. How these Persians seized the historic value of his achievement, lavishing upon it such munificence of art as that of the great tablet representing his triumph by a hundred and fifty figures, animal and human! Their colossal carving delighted in the theme of the royal sons of Ahura charging the children of Ahriman on steeds full of nervous power, kings dead and still beneath their feet, or Ahriman himself grovelling in chains before them. Never was the heroic ideal of Mazdeism so fulfilled as in this Sassanian line. They more than made good the terrible prestige won by Parthian arms; holding Cæsar after Cæsar at bay, carrying one away captive, annihilating the splendid army of a second, and defeating a third, alternating defeat with victory, for centuries the only counterpoise to the power that was to rule the world at last. Gibbon describes it as the height of the Emperor Julian's ambition, "despising the trophies of a Gothic victory, to chastise the haughty nation" which, as he had said in his satire on the Cæsars, had so defied the Roman arms that in a war of three hundred years they had not subdued a single province of its dominion.[1] But the chastisement fell upon his own head, and he died amidst his routed and panic-stricken army, retreating from the desperate courage of a people who dared to sacrifice all they possessed that the invader might be fought with famine and fire, if heroic swords should fail.[2]

Shapûr II., the conqueror of Julian and his magnificent Roman and Arabian army, was as great a general as the first of his name. In his youth he delivered Iran from

[1] Gibbon, xxiv.

[2] Gibbon's noble chapter on the expedition of Julian.

the earliest incursions of Arab hordes; in his maturity he imposed a degrading treaty on Rome. Khosrû I. and II. were equally famous in the Roman wars; the latter captured Jerusalem, and his general failed to take Byzantium only from the want of a fleet. In all his campaigns against Rome the first Khosrû was never defeated but once, and his treaty with Justinian, framed upon terms of equal advantage to both empires, became historic by a provision which enjoined upon that persecutor of Greek culture to receive again the seven great heathen teachers whom he had banished, and restore their freedom of speech. Yezdegerd,[1] the last of the line, though not himself a soldier, but inclined to the luxurious habits of the old Persian kings, vigorously resisted the Moslem invasion in the seventh century for twenty years, and only yielded at last to a fanaticism of conquest before which no nation on the earth could stand.

And the spirit of the Sassanian kings was always shared by the local chiefs, when it was itself heroic; and when it was tyrannical or weak, they recalled the old liberties of Iran, and either dethroned the monarch or dismembered the State.[2] They set aside Kobâd for his adherence to the communistic schemes of Mazdak, and after his death determined the succession. When Hormazd IV., after

[1] Yezdegerd, called "the Wicked" by Tabari, and by the priestly traditions of Persia charged with every kind of oppression and cruelty, seems to have lived in intense strife with his nobles and other privileged classes, who took their revenge on him for his resistance to their authority. The Christians on the contrary, who were humanely treated by him, as well as the Jews, regarded his memory with affection, and called him "the Blessed." (Nöldeke's note to p. 75.)

Similar differences of judgment attach to the memory of Hormazd, the son of Khosrû, whom Firdûsî treats with great severity, while Tabari says he had strife only with the privileged classes, and was a lover and benefactor of the poor. (Nöldeke, p. 264.)

The struggle of the great Sassanians with their nobles was vain. In the later times the downfall of the State was foreshadowed by the disintegration caused by this class.

Varahrân V. was a brave, generous, and most popular prince, famous for dealing justly with all classes of his people, and forgiving all his nobles who sought to deprive him of his birthright (Malcolm, *History of Persia*, i. 91). His story in the epic of Firdûsî is a most fascinating picture of the hero, the philosopher, and the saint.

[2] These contentions, as described by Tabari and others, were incessant.

years of beneficent government, became a despot, the tribes revolted under leadership of their chiefs, who dethroned him and repaid his cruelties by depriving him of sight. Then they placed his general at the head of the State; and when forced to receive his son as their king they refused to be placated, even though a Roman army was brought to his assistance. This son Khosrû II., called Parvîz, a man of capricious and cruel temper, but a great promoter of art, order, and social prosperity, when he fled behind the walls of Ctesiphon from the Roman army of Heraclius, was imprisoned and put to death by his indignant nobles,[1] who had seen their cities burned, their sacred fires extinguished, and their people transported by thousands at a time. It was Khosrû II. who tore up Mahomet's letter demanding submission to Islam, and flung its fragments into the Kara-Su, — which, says the Mussulman chronicler, shrank within its banks with horror, and refused to fertilize the land of a blasphemer. He had made Persia glorious abroad and prosperous at home. He had plucked out of the hands of Rome the holy city of the Jews, which had cost her such a terrible price, and made its hated Christians with their patriarch march out into captivity behind "the true cross," — the sign of the godhood of their Christ changed into a trophy of Ahura. His palace was the ideal of Persian pride and splendor, and his throne was girded with the twelve signs of the zodiac. Yet when he basely yielded to the advance of the invader, — or rather, according to Tabarî, when he overloaded the people with exactions, maltreated the nobles, and committed cruelties on soldiers and prisoners, — the patriotic chiefs forgot everything but the personal dishonor, and, led by his own son, deprived him at once of life and crown.[2]

In several instances the crown was seized by idolized generals, who made and unmade kings.[3] It was the army

[1] 628 A. D. [2] Nöldeke: *Tabari*, p. 356. [3] Ibid., p. 396.

that raised a daughter of Khosrû to the place of the first female ruler of Iran since the foundation of the empire, to be succeeded by her sister. The individual Will that had held its own throughout Iran for all these ages, and had spent its pride in upholding a throne of national glory, yielded its natural result when that throne was hastening to its fall. Pretenders to royalty arose everywhere, as in Rome in the latter days of the Cæsars; the crumbling crown was seized by hand after hand, and wrested from each within a few months. Province after province fell apart from the rest, and the empire was the prey of anarchy, simply from the absence of a personality great enough to stand as the ideal of these worshippers of heroic Will. It was this failure of the central ideal, not defect of courage, patriotism, or resource, which caused this great historic structure to go down before the blows of Rome on the one hand, and Islam on the other. The power of electing their king had come back to the nobles of Iran; but there was none to answer to the meaning of kinghood, and their selection of a prince of the old Sassanian line was a pathetic resort to legitimacy as their only hold upon the proud traditions of the State. In truth, the wealth and glory of Persia had made the imperial office a hotbed of vanity and luxury; and Iranian hero-worship had become dazzled by the vain show of earthly godhood with which it had clothed its object. The majesty of the Sassanian kings was lost, like the throne of Jemshîd, before the army of Heraclius had trampled on its pride. Yezdegerd had worn jewelry instead of armor. Khosrû had been seduced into luxurious habits by the conquest of Jerusalem. Kobâd II. had massacred his own family to secure the crown. The spoils captured and divided by the Roman chiefs in the palace of Ctesiphon, the golden horse covered with precious stones, the silver camel, the heaped-up gems, and the jewelled carpets of inestimable price, revealed that

the souls of these later Sassanians had been buried under the splendors of the mine. The old ideal of the servant of Ahura could not go hand in hand with these Ahrimanic seductions; and the national spirit was already broken when the united frenzy of the Arab and the Sirocco won the decisive battle of Kadisiyeh, and the glorious standard of Persian hero-worship, the blacksmith's apron, fell into the invader's hands. Every successive battle proved more clearly, that, while an ideal loyalty inspired the Mussulman, all-conquering mastership had departed from its own fatherland of Iran. Her vast armies were routed and exterminated by a handful of desert-born heroes, who had been scornfully called a lizard-eating, salt-drinking horde. When the elephants on which she had shifted the burden of defence that belonged to men, were once despoiled of their terrors by being turned upon their masters, the end had come; and the Persians saw their king, not at the head of his failing hosts, but in flight on the distant borders. The last of the Sassanians died miserably outside of his kingdom, — none knew certainly how or where. His predecessors had been puppets of factions, and doomed victims of the passions on whose crests they had been lifted up to momentary power. Another stream of Iranian fire had become extinct, having burned this time more than four hundred years.

The Iranian ideal comes to its typical form for the Sassanians, and we may perhaps say for the Persian race, in Khosrû I., who received the enviable title of "Soul of Sweetness" (*Nûshirvân*), to which was added "The Just" (*Al-Adil*). His reputation among his contemporaries was unrivalled. Agathias speaks of Romans as well as Persians who regarded him as having "reached the summit of philosophical and literary culture,"[1] being familiar through translators with the highest productions of Greek genius;

[1] *Historiarum libri*, ii. 28.

and although he treats this tribute with evident doubt, he does not hesitate to declare him the greatest of Persian kings, not excepting Darius, or Cyrus himself.[1] Mahomet is said to have held himself fortunate in being born during the reign of such a prince.[2] The ideal of an age must have shared its spirit; and this was an age when power was everywhere purchased by cruelty, from Christian bishops who proved their piety by massacring Arians and Manichæans, to the Mazdean king opening his reign by putting to death his own relatives who conspired to set him aside, and exterminating the heresy of Mazdak, which was perhaps necessary, by the sword. Heraclius tortured Jews and heretics, and Justinian depopulated whole kingdoms, and destroyed more than ten times as many Samaritan lives alone in the name of Christ as Khosrû destroyed Christian ones in the name of Ahura.[3] In a period when law had not yet either given security or set limits to personal power, the main condition of political or military success was to act with resistless energy in whatsoever of good or evil one had to do. It is certain that Khosrû could show better reason for his appeals to the sword than most rulers of his time could for theirs. His principal wars with Rome were incited by the appeals of oppressed provinces and peoples to his humanity.[4] The heresy of Mazdak, which had already carried away the court, perhaps from policy through a natural reaction against despotism, against property and the family, was one of those communistic storms which any civilized government must suppress, or itself perish.[5] The military energy of Khosrû was marvellous, and had not its equal in Eastern history. There was no Oriental enervation in the

[1] *Historiarum libri*, iv. 29. [2] Gibbon, xlii.

[3] See Gibbon, chaps. xliii. xlvii (Milman's edition, ii. pp. 87, 99, 183). See also Procopius: *De Bell. Vand.* ii. And Finlay: *Greece under the Romans*, pp. 284–288.

[4] Gibbon, ii. 77–82.

[5] See Malcolm: *History of Persia*, i. 108, 109.

will of this "king of kings." His wars with the Romans were a succession of rapid and overmastering blows, such as the capture of Antioch and other Roman cities, with an initiative which reminds us of the victories of Prussia in her war with Austria. Khosrû had the wealth of these great cities in his treasuries before Rome knew of his advance, and the foundations were laid in an hour of the prodigious riches which have made Persia the synonym of splendor ever since his day. He was never personally defeated but once. He made treaties in a grander style than other kings, — no ordinary truce between the standing hates of Asia and Europe, but peace which was to be as endless as their wars might have been; the eternal Ahura in place of an eternal Ahriman, — the glorious consummation of the universe. And when peace had to be broken, he pursued war also equally in the spirit of his faith, till he had secured fully equal terms with the conquerors of all other nations but his own. If the Christian dogma, at least as intolerant as his own, should not be expelled from Persia, it should not propagate there; and if Persia must give up her guardianship of the eastern coast of the Euxine, Rome must pay thirty thousand pieces of gold annually for an undetermined future. Only Belisarius could check his path to the mastership of the world; and from Arabia to the Transoxanian tribes, his armies dictated order and dynastic succession. Besides inflicting on Justinian the intolerable disgrace of an annual subsidy, he forced him to advance seven years payment of the same, thereby impoverishing the empire and crippling its resources for supplying mercenary troops.[1] Rome was in no condition to bear this drain. Justinian's administration was the most expensive and wasteful that had been known for a long period. At the same time the pay of the soldiers was cut down and came irregularly,

[1] Finlay: *Greece under the Romans*, p. 326.

mercenaries were put in the place of provincial troops, and foreigners placed in command; the army was in disorder, and revolts incessantly weakened its discipline. Justinian failed to support his best generals, who alone, by the unaided force of military genius, sustained the fortunes of his decaying empire against every discouragement from within.

It was the Persia of Khosrû that brought to light the failing energies of Rome, and in every campaign showed far more energy than her mighty rival. There can be little doubt that his armies displayed more individual valor than their opponents, who relied more on traditional Roman discipline, which, as we have just said, was already on the decline. Finlay mentions the circumstance, strongly illustrative of our view of Iranian character, that the Roman officers caught from the Persians the passion for personal prowess;[1] and nothing could have been more unfavorable to that subordination and precision in which the strength of their legions consisted. Khosrû brought all the States into political unity and inspired them with a common loyalty, — an unprecedented achievement, and of itself sufficient to prove him the greatest ruler Persia had known. The old system of governing them by satraps, so fertile of fraud and dissension, was superseded by a fourfold division of the empire, each fourth being placed under a prefect, and including several provinces. Central supervision was maintained not only by the old expedient of official espionage, but by personal inspection. In both these ways Khosrû appears to have diligently watched over the comfort and security of the poorer classes, to whose appeal special courts of inquiry were always open. Poor and orphan children were the care of the State, and officials were bidden to carry the poor in their bosoms. For this kind of virtue the Mahometan

[1] Finlay: *Greece under the Romans*, p. 258.

writers give him highest credit. Mirkhond relates that he executed eighty tax-gatherers at one time for extortion, and rendered taxation uniform, systematic, and moderate; exempting women, together with the very old and the very young. Many hundred years after his time, the people of Ctesiphon showed strangers a little house hard by the ruins of his palace, as a memorial of the humanity of the just king. When about to build a palace, Khosrû gave orders that all the buildings on the spot should be bought, and the highest price paid to their owners. But one poor old woman refused to sell her little homestead, saying that she would not give up the king's neighborhood for the whole world; whereat the king was so pleased, that he not only allowed the house to stand, but so improved it that it lasted longer than his palace itself.[1] "Irregularity with justice," added a courtier, "is better than symmetry purchased by wrong." The legend grew, of course always to the greater honor of the hero. Thus the servants of the palace complained to the king that the paintings on its walls were suffering from the smoke that came from the old woman's fire; but Khosrû commanded that the pictures should be renewed as often as they needed it, and that no one should molest the hearth of the poor.[2] It is related that being sick, the king was advised by his physicians to take as a remedy pounded brick from a ruined Persian town; but when the messengers returned from searching after it, they reported that not a ruined town was to be found in his dominions. When warned against going abroad without protection, he wrote: "Justice is the protection of kings." "All I give to worthy people is saved, not lost." "The happiness of his people is a better defence for a king than armies, and justice a better fertilizer of his lands than the happiest climate." To

[1] Travels of Yaçut-el-Rumi (twelfth century), *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xviii. 406.

[2] Caswine, ibid.

his son Hormazd he left this last injunction: "Remember the poor; and be not seduced by indolence and self-indulgence." And the pious son of Islam, catching this broad humanity of an unbeliever, concludes, — "Since death has not spared this great prince, the wise man should not attach himself to the goods of this world."[1]

A true Zoroastrian, Khosrû reorganized industry, and encouraged agriculture. After the fashion of model Oriental kings, he established a fixed land-tax, and advanced seed and implements to the husbandmen.[2] His laws provided for reclaiming waste lands; he enforced irrigation, punished idleness, and opened good roads through the empire. The great dike of Shuster, built of immense stones clamped together, is claimed as his work. To purify administration, the official "jackals" throughout the country were put to death.[3] To increase population, marriage was made compulsory, immigration encouraged, and colonists from conquered countries were settled on the land.[4] To protect his empire from the northern hordes, he completed the long wall commenced by Kobâd, famous as the barrier of Gog and Magog, of stones seven feet thick and twenty feet long, without cement, and which still stands stretching three hundred miles along the Georgian mountains; and in every treaty with Rome he jealously stipulated that both empires should unite in guarding these borders from the common foe. It was a curious instance of the intermingling of barbarous with humane impulses which characterized this great type of Iranian Will, that he built a new city out of the spoils of his terrible Syrian campaign, — a march as merciless to life as it was rapacious of booty, — put his Syrian captives into this new home as like as possible to that from which they were exiled, and

[1] Mirkhond: *Histoire des Sassanides*, translated by De Sacy.
[2] Malcolm: *History of Persia*, i. 115.
[3] Ibid., i. 117.
[4] Rawlinson: *Persia*.

made it an asylum for Greek slaves. As he forsook the use of wood for that of stone in his public buildings, so he seemed to possess the gift in administration of putting everything to new and permanent uses. Thus the past and future of Persia centred in him. He revived the old code (or rather moral and political maxims) of Ardeshîr, and so ennobled it that its important features passed over into the golden age of the Mussulman caliphs. He made the priesthood watchers over the interests of the people by inspection of the conduct of officials. Above all, his services to literature and philosophy conferred immortal renown on his country and his race. Even on the Mussulman conquerors his intellectual reputation produced a kind of messianic awe, and took the usual mythical form of a childhood, before which the aged counsellors of the kingdom bent to hear a wisdom higher than their own.[1]

The testimony of Agathias to his encouragement of free discussion on theological and cosmical questions is qualified by the Byzantine's studied contempt for the sophist Uranius, with whom he declares the king to have been infatuated, and by his vivid description of the disappointment of the seven Greek scholars at the whole character of Persian civilization, which they had painted in ideal colors before their arrival at the court. According to Agathias, these cultivated men hurried away, persuaded that it would be better to suffer immediate martyrdom on reaching their native country than to endure the spectacle of such barbarous customs and corrupt administration. But the Greek historian evidently writes under a strong bias against "the barbarian," and contradicts that high repute of Persia in enlightened Athens on which the sages had based their glowing expectations, and in regard to which the Athenians could not have been mistaken. The trans-

[1] Mirkhond. De Sacy's translation of *Histoire des Sassanides*, p. 359. Nöldeke's *Tabari*, p. 162.

cendental nature of the questions discussed at the court of Khosrû, although put in a ridiculous light by the shallow chronicler, prove intellectual tastes and sympathies of a high order. Here was a king of Asia who made actual what Alexander had dreamed; who had set translators at work upon all the great philosophies and poems of Greece; who could read and discuss them; who took pride in furnishing every aid to the Greek-speaking world for acquiring a knowledge of his country and its institutions;[1] who founded colleges and schools;[2] who stands out as a calm rationalist in relief against the fanaticism of his day; who compelled the priesthood of Ahura to meet and tolerate the speculative and religious thought of the world; who opened his arms to the representatives of Greek culture when their schools had been closed and their voices silenced by the Christian Church and State; and who made special provision for their liberty of teaching in his treaty with Rome.[3] "He began his reign," says Mirkhond, "by proclaiming that his power did not extend over the consciences of his subjects, since only the All-seeing could judge the heart; that justice, not caprice, should govern his judgments, and that administrative reform was his first duty. Behold the reward of righteousness; time has not been able to destroy the palace of Khosrû."[4] His interest in physical studies was a rare thing in that age, and could least be expected in an Asiatic monarch; and his medical school at Susa embraced the study of philosophy and poetry. His vizier, Abu-zurd-Mihir, raised from the lowest ranks through the penetration of the king, is scarcely less famous for wisdom and humanity than

[1] Through his favorite interpreter, Sergius, to whom Agathias was indebted for what he has recorded (History, iv. 30, Latin).

[2] So says Malcolm, i. 110.

[3] Nöldeke: *Tabarî*, p. 162.

[4] Mirkhond: *Sassanian Kings*, translated by De Sacy. See also *Zeenut-ul-Tuarikh* (Malcolm, i. 108), and Firdûsi's account of his talks with the Mobads.

Khosrû himself.[1] Firdûsî records his magnificent declaration of the rights of conscience.

But Khosrû's greatest services to future ages were performed in collecting and preserving the heroic legends of Iran, which were destined to become immortal as the Shâh-Nâmeh, or Book of Kings; and in bringing out of India, and transmitting through a Pehlevî version to all languages of the civilized world the oldest Bible for Rulers, — the marvellous Sanskrit Apologues, which are known to us, in substance, through two variations, the "Hitopadeça" and the "Pancha-tantra," — as the noblest treasury of practical wisdom and humane culture in the Oriental world. In what form this old Book of Wisdom was brought into Persia we cannot now tell; for, like the rest of the native Persian literature of the Sassanian period, the translation made by order of Khosrû perished at the Moslem conquest. We know it only through an expanded Mahometan-Persian version of the fifteenth century, — the "Anvâr-i Suhailî," or "Lights of Canopus," — and from the Arabic version of the eighth century of the "Book of 'Kalîlah and Damnah,'" of which the other was a secondary revision.[2] It is reasonable to suppose that the king's Pehlevî translation much more closely resembled the Hindu originals we have named, than do these later Mahometan ones. While the "Pancha-tantra" and the "Hitopadeça" themselves materially differ from each other in their list of fables, and still more in the maxims which are thickly strown among them, they are alike in their extreme directness and simplicity of form, which is in absolute contrast with the verbose and hyperbolic language of the later Persian "Anvâr-i Suhailî." Besides this difference of style, the Persian work contains a very large amount of material not to be found in either of

[1] See chap. on Shâh-Nâmeh.

[2] Both have been translated into English, — *Kalîlah and Damnah*, by Knatchbull, 1819; and the *Anvar-i Suhaili*, by Eastwick, 1854.

the others, and is thoroughly Persian in its character. But the spirit of all three is one and the same; and throughout all the changes undergone by this venerable Gospel of the Duties of Kings, there is no marring of the soul of justice, tenderness, nobility, and reverence for humanity which pervades these genial tales and aphorisms; no lowering of the tone of serious remonstrance and rebuke, of high exhortation couched in parable and hint and maxim; no wavering from the standard set before the sovereign, at the beginning of the "Anvâr-i Suhailî," when he accepts labor and trial for "the repose of his oppressed subjects and the peace of the poor among his people,"[1] and at the end when his epitaph reads, —

> "Two things life offers, — fame, the virtuous deed.
> Save these, '*All things are subject to decay.*'
> Injure not others, help men to succeed;
> Thus shalt thou reap a blessing for to-day —
> And the next world, when this hath passed away."[2]

Firdûsî tells us the legend, that Barsuyah the physician brought word to Khosrû of a Hindu book which taught how to bring the dead to life, where the wise interpreted the teaching to mean resurrection from the death of ignorance; and being successful in committing it piecemeal to memory, he brought it to Persia in great joy, saying, "The ocean of wisdom has indeed come to us," and begged of the king that the vizier in re-editing it might make the opening a memorial of himself.

This dumb morality, and the reverence for a Providential destiny, which is equally prominent in the Mahometan version, is in substance identical with the homely, practical, uninspired tone of the Hindu books, through all the difference of form. We may be sure that Khosrû's information of the world-famed book, "whose wisdom in all that befits a king had been compiled from the speech

[1] *Anvâr-i Suhaili*, p. 70. [2] Ibid., p. 649.

of animals," and his unspeakable desire to obtain it, were associated with these all-pervading qualities that make it so impressive to us; and if, as the Mahometan writer assures us, "his actions, as they may be traced in his justice and beneficence, his conquests of countries and his ways of soothing the hearts of his subjects, were based on the perusal of this book," we can understand why it is that he stands at the zenith of royalty for all Persian and even Mahometan faith.

The age of Khosrû brings him into direct contrast and comparison with another great monarch of equal fame, but of far inferior qualities, the head of Christendom as he was of Heathendom, — the Roman emperor, Justinian, with whose name are associated the compilation of Roman law and the general, though by no means final, suppression of Paganism in the Christian world. The most striking difference is that the glory of Khosrû is thoroughly personal, that of Justinian external and incidental. Justinian was a bad administrator of the empire, financial, political, civil, religious; he was a bigot, and an extortioner from the poor. "His victories and his losses," says Gibbon, "were alike pernicious to mankind." Italy and Africa were desolated; Vandals and Moors were slain by millions; and fifty thousand laborers were starved in a single district of Italy alone. "Khosrû," says Procopius,[1] "was a bad man, but it was Justinian who incessantly stirred up the Persian wars." Under his system of taxation, landed proprietors were impoverished and reduced to the level of slaves; his civil-service system was far more corrupt than the Persian, his treasury filled with the open sale of offices. He cheated his troops of their pay, heaped abuse upon his best generals, and left them unaided in face of overpowering foes. The whole empire was discouraged and demoralized at the moment when hordes of barbarians threatened its very

[1] *Historia Arcana*, p. 18.

existence with incessant raids and terrible devastations. He even cut down the army to save expense, while he lavished immense sums on public buildings and churches and monasteries. He closed the schools of philosophy, and destroyed the municipal institutions of Greece. He abolished the Olympic games, but encouraged the frightfully riotous and internecine factions of the circus. He emptied the local treasuries of Greece, and gave over her cities to ruin. The central authority was broken down for all purposes but that of persecution, and its place filled with the anarchical wilfulness of soldiers, monks, usurers, sects, and officials.

And perhaps one main reason, that with all the military prestige of the Roman empire it found itself again and again beaten back by Persia, lay in this premature disintegration by the extortionate, selfish, and intolerant policy of Justinian and his successors. Nothing in his private character could justify confidence or quicken the failing patriotism of the empire. John of Cappadocia, notoriously the most villanous ecclesiastic of his day, was his special favorite. His early intrigues and crimes, and his uxorious submission throughout his long reign to the unscrupulous Theodora, whose vices filled all the best historical writers of the age with indignation and contempt, gave added impulse to the downward tendencies of the State.[1] That dissolution of nationality into multitudes of discordant, rebellious wills, which befell the last days of Sassanian Persia, began at a much earlier moment in the Græco-Roman empire; and in both, the compensation was a return in some measure to that force of personality which always conditions the passing away of old systems, and the entrance of new social or religious forces.

It might be supposed that the new life thus introduced into the decaying frame of Justinian's empire was Chris-

[1] Gibbon, xlvii.

tianity; but Christianity was itself the religion of the State, the narrowing creed, the rule of ecclesiastical councils and military edicts, tending to the utter annihilation of personal freedom and rational inquiry. The new life which national disintegration indicated was the birth of heresy everywhere, the heroism of martyrs, the building up of a rival religion, which absorbed great sections of the Roman world.

It is stated by Procopius, that the persecutions by Justinian of Christians and Pagans alike not only caused great religious revolts in various parts of the empire, which resulted in multitudes of deaths by suicide and war, and great accessions to Paganism and Manichæism, but that by reason of them great numbers fled for shelter to nations outside of Roman or Christian sway.[1] His superstition made him a willing tool of an intolerant priesthood, so that, as Gibbon says, "his whole reign was a uniform yet various scene of persecution." He gave bishops the right to use the military arm to compel conversions. He was so foolish as to believe that all the heresy in his empire could be abolished by a three months' warning to be converted or banished, and Paganism be destroyed by inquisitors; also for the crime of a creed, he stamped out almost the whole nation of the Samaritans, from which his Master had brought a type of humanity to rebuke the priests and Levites of his own race. He refused unbelievers in Christianity the right to testify, to teach, or to bequeath, and imposed death as a penalty for refusing baptism. But by the irony of events, this arch-persecutor of heretics died not without the taint of heresy upon his name.

Every portion of the empire was devastated by these systematic attempts to eradicate both Pagan and heretical belief,[2] and the Byzantine historians even talk of a

[1] Procopius: *Historia Arcana*, xi.
[2] Gibbon, chap. xlvii. pp. 182-83. Finlay: *History of Greece*, p. 324.