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## **The History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire**

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[Chap. LIII.]

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THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE.

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CHAP. LIII.

*State of the Eastern Empire in the Tenth Century. —  
Extent and Division. — Wealth and Revenue. —  
Palace of Constantinople. — Titles and Offices. —  
Pride and Power of the Emperors. — Tactics of  
the Greeks, Arabs, and Franks. — Loss of the  
Latin Tongue. — Studies and Solitude of the  
Greeks.*

A RAY of historic light seems to beam from the  
darkness of the tenth century. We open with  
curiosity and respect the royal volumes of Constantine  
Porphyrogenitus<sup>2</sup>, which he composed at a  
mature age for the instruction of his son, and  
which promise to unfold the state of the Eastern  
empire, both in peace and war, both at home

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Memorials of  
the Greek  
empire.

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Works of  
Constantine  
Porphyroge-  
nitus.

and abroad. In the first of these works he minutely describes the pompous ceremonies of the church and palace of Constantinople, according to his own practice and that of his predecessors<sup>2</sup>. In the second, he attempts an accurate survey of the provinces, the *themes*, as they were then denominated, both of Europe and Asia<sup>3</sup>. The system of Roman tactics, the discipline and order of the troops, and the military operations by land and sea, are explained in the third of these didactic collections, which may be ascribed to Constantine or his father Leo<sup>4</sup>. In the fourth, of the administration of the empire, he reveals the secrets of the Byzantine policy, in friendly or hostile intercourse with the nations of the earth. The literary labours of the age, the practical systems of law, agriculture, and history, might redound to the benefit of the subject and the honour of the Macedonian princes. The sixty books of the *Basilics*<sup>5</sup>, the code and pandects of civil jurisprudence, were gradually framed in the three first reigns of that prosperous dynasty. The art of agriculture had amused the leisure, and exercised the pens, of the best and wisest of the ancients; and their chosen precepts are comprised in the twenty books of the *Geoponics*<sup>6</sup> of Constantine. At his command, the historical examples of vice and virtue were methodised in fifty-three books<sup>7</sup>, and every citizen might apply, to his contemporaries or himself, the lesson or the warning of past times. From the august character of a legislator, the sovereign of the East descends to the

more humble office of a teacher and a scribe: C H A P.  
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and if his successors and subjects were regardless of his paternal cares, *we* may inherit and enjoy the everlasting legacy.

A closer survey will indeed reduce the value of the gift, and the gratitude of posterity: in the possession of these Imperial treasures, we may still deplore our poverty and ignorance; and the fading glories of their authors will be obliterated by indifference or contempt. The Basilics will sink to a broken copy, a partial and mutilated version in the Greek language, of the laws of Justinian; but the sense of the old civilians is often superseded by the influence of bigotry; and the absolute prohibition of divorce, concubinage, and interest for money, enslaves the freedom of trade and the happiness of private life. In the historical book, a subject of Constantine might admire the inimitable virtues of Greece and Rome: he might learn to what a pitch of energy and elevation the human character had formerly aspired. But a contrary effect must have been produced by a new edition of the lives of the saints, which the great logothete or chancellor of the empire was directed to prepare: and the dark fund of superstition was enriched by the fabulous and florid legends of Simon the *Metaphrast*<sup>s</sup>. The merits and miracles of the whole calendar are of less account in the eyes of a sage than the toil of a single husbandman, who multiplies the gifts of the Creator and supplies the food of his brethren. Yet the royal authors of

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C H A P. the *Geoponics* were more seriously employed in expounding the precepts of the destroying art, which has been taught since the days of Xenophon<sup>o</sup>, as the art of heroes and kings. But the *Tactics* of Leo and Constantine are mingled with the baser alloy of the age in which they lived. It was destitute of original genius; they implicitly transcribe the rules and maxims which had been confirmed by victories. It was unskilled in the propriety of style and method, they blindly confound the most distant and discordant institutions, the phalanx of Sparta and that of Macedon, the legions of Cato and Trajan, of Augustus and Theodosius. Even the use, or at least the importance, of these military rudiments may be fairly questioned: their general theory is dictated by reason; but the merit, as well as difficulty, consists in the application. The discipline of a soldier is formed by exercise rather than by study: the talents of a commander are appropriated to those calm though rapid minds, which nature produces to decide the fate of armies and nations: the former is the habit of a life, the latter the glance of a moment; and the battles won by lessons of tactics may be numbered with the epic poems created from the rules of criticism. The book of ceremonies is a recital, tedious yet imperfect, of the despicable pageantry which had infected the church and state since the gradual decay of the purity of the one and the power of the other. A review of the themes or provinces might promise such authentic and useful information, as

the curiosity of government only can obtain, instead of traditionary fables on the origin of the cities, and malicious epigrams on the vices of their inhabitants<sup>10</sup>. Such information the historian would have been pleased to record; nor should his silence be condemned if the most interesting objects, the population of the capital and provinces, the amount of the taxes and revenues, the numbers of subjects and strangers who served under the Imperial standard, have been unnoticed by Leo the philosopher, and his son Constantine. His treatise of the public administration is stained with the same blemishes; yet it is discriminated by peculiar merit: the antiquities of the nations may be doubtful or fabulous; but the geography and manners of the Barbaric world are delineated with curious accuracy. Of these nations, the Franks alone were qualified to observe in their turn, and to describe, the metropolis of the East. The ambassador of the great Otho, a bishop of Cremona, has painted the state of Constantinople about the middle of the tenth century: his style is glowing, his narrative lively, his observation keen; and even the prejudices and passions of Liutprand are stamped with an original character of freedom and genius<sup>11</sup>. From this scanty fund of foreign and domestic materials I shall investigate the form and substance of the Byzantine empire; the provinces and wealth, the civil government and military force, the character and literature, of the Greeks in a period of six hundred years, from

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LIII.

Embassy of  
Liutprand.

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The themes  
or provinces  
of the em-  
pire, and its  
limits in  
every age.

the reign of Heraclius to the successful invasion of the Franks or Latins.

After the final division between the sons of Theodosius, the swarms of Barbarians from Scythia and Germany overspread the provinces and extinguished the empire of ancient Rome. The weakness of Constantinople was concealed by extent of dominion: her limits were inviolate, or at least entire; and the kingdom of Justinian was enlarged by the splendid acquisition of Africa and Italy. But the possession of these new conquests was transient and precarious; and almost a moiety of the Eastern empire was torn away by the arms of the Saracens. Syria and Egypt were oppressed by the Arabian caliphs; and, after the reduction of Africa, their lieutenants invaded and subdued the Roman province which had been changed into the Gothic monarchy of Spain. The islands of the Mediterranean were not inaccessible to their naval powers; and it was from their extreme stations, the harbours of Crete and the fortresses of Cilicia, that the faithful or rebel emirs insulted the majesty of the throne and capital. The remaining provinces under the obedience of the emperors, were cast into a new mould; and the jurisdiction of the presidents, the consulars, and the counts, was superseded by the institution of the *themes*<sup>12</sup>, or military governments, which prevailed under the successors of Heraclius, and are described by the pen of the royal author. Of the twenty-nine themes, twelve in Europe

and seventeen in Asia, the origin is obscure, the etymology doubtful or capricious: the limits were arbitrary and fluctuating; but some particular names that found the most strangely to our ear were derived from the character and attributes of the troops that were maintained at the expence, and for the guard, of the respective divisions. The vanity of the Greek princes most eagerly grasped the shadow of conquest and the memory of lost dominion. A new Mesopotamia was created on the western side of the Euphrates: the appellation and prætor of Sicily were transferred to a narrow slip of Calabria; and a fragment of the dutchy of Beneventum was promoted to the style and title of the theme of Lombardy. In the decline of the Arabian empire, the successors of Constantine might indulge their pride in more solid advantages. The victories of Nicephorus, John Zimisces, and Basil the second, revived the fame and enlarged the boundaries of the Roman name: the province of Cilicia, the metropolis of Antioch, the islands of Crete and Cyprus were restored to the allegiance of Christ and Cæsar: one third of Italy was annexed to the throne of Constantinople: the kingdom of Bulgaria was destroyed; and the last sovereigns of the Macedonian dynasty extended their sway from the sources of the Tigris to the neighbourhood of Rome. In the eleventh century, the prospect was again clouded by new enemies and new misfortunes: the relics of Italy were swept away by the Norman adventurers; and almost all

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the Asiatic branches were dissevered from the Roman trunk by the Turkish conquerors. After these losses, the emperors of the Comnenian family continued to reign from the Danube to Peloponesus, and from Belgrade to Nice, Trebizond, and the winding stream of the Meander. The spacious provinces of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, were obedient to their sceptre; the possession of Cyprus, Rhodes, and Crete, was accompanied by the fifty islands of the Ægean or Holy Sea<sup>13</sup>; and the remnant of their empire transcends the measure of the largest of the European kingdoms.

General  
wealth and  
populous-  
ness.

The same princes might assert, with dignity and truth, that of all the monarchs of Christendom they possessed the greatest city<sup>14</sup>, the most ample revenue, the most flourishing and populous state. With the decline and fall of the empire, the cities of the West had decayed and fallen; nor could the ruins of Rome, or the mud walls, wooden hovels, and narrow precincts, of Paris and London, prepare the Latin stranger to contemplate the situation and extent of Constantinople, her stately palaces and churches, and the arts and luxury of an innumerable people. Her treasures might attract, but her virgin strength had repelled, and still promised to repel, the audacious invasion of the Persian and Bulgarian, the Arab and the Russian. The provinces were less fortunate and impregnable; and few districts; few cities, could be discovered which had not been violated by some fierce Bar-

barian, impatient to despoil, because he was hopeless to possess. From the age of Justinian the Eastern empire was sinking below its former level: the powers of destruction were more active than those of improvement; and the calamities of war were embittered by the more permanent evils of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. The captive who had escaped from the Barbarians was often stripped and imprisoned by the ministers of his sovereign: the Greek superstition relaxed the mind by prayer, and emaciated the body by fasting; and the multitude of convents and festivals diverted many hands and many days from the temporal service of mankind. Yet the subjects of the Byzantine empire were still the most dextrous and diligent of nations; their country was blessed by nature with every advantage of soil, climate, and situation; and, in the support and restoration of the art, their patient and peaceful temper was more useful than the warlike spirit and feudal anarchy of Europe. The provinces that still adhered to the empire were re peopled and enriched by the misfortunes of those which were irrecoverably lost. From the yoke of the caliphs, the Catholics of Syria, Egypt, and Africa, retired to the allegiance of their prince, to the society of their brethren: the moveable wealth, which eludes the search of oppression, accompanied and alleviated their exile; and Constantinople received into her bosom the fugitive trade of Alexandria and Tyre. The chiefs of Armenia and

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CHAP. Scythia, who fled from hostile or religious per-  
 LIII. secution, were hospitably entertained: their fol-  
 lowers were encouraged to build new cities and  
 to cultivate waste lands; and many spots, both  
 in Europe and Asia, preserved the name, the  
 manners, or at least the memory; of these national  
 colonies. Even the tribes of Barbarians, who  
 had seated themselves in arms on the territory  
 of the empire, were gradually reclaimed to the  
 laws of the church and state; and as long as  
 they were separated from the Greeks, their  
 posterity supplied a race of faithful and  
 obedient soldiers. Did we possess sufficient  
 materials to survey the twenty-nine themes of  
 the Byzantine monarchy, our curiosity might be  
 satisfied with a chosen example: it is fortunate  
 enough that the clearest light should be thrown  
 on the most interesting province, and the name  
 of PELOPONNESUS will awaken the attention of  
 the classic reader.

State of Pe-  
 loponnesus:  
 Sclavonians.

As early as the eighth century, in the troubled  
 reign of the Iconoclasts, Greece, and even Pe-  
 loponnesus<sup>15</sup>, were overrun by some Sclavonian  
 bands who outstripped the royal standard of Bul-  
 garia. The strangers of old, Cadmus, and Da-  
 naus, and Pelops, had planted in that fruitful  
 soil, the seeds of policy and learning; but the  
 savages of the north eradicated what yet remained  
 of their sickly and withered roots. In this irrup-  
 tion, the country and the inhabitants were trans-  
 formed; the Grecian blood was contaminated;  
 and the proudest nobles of Peloponnesus were

branded with the names of foreigners and *slaves*. By the diligence of succeeding princes, the land was in some measure purified from the Barbarians; and the humble remnant was bound by an oath of obedience, tribute, and military service, which they often renewed and often violated. The siege of Patras was formed by a singular concurrence of the Sclavonians of Peloponessus and the Saracens of Africa. In their last distress, a pious fiction of the approach of the prætor of Corinth, revived the courage of the citizens. Their sally was bold and successful; the strangers embarked, the rebels submitted, and the glory of the day was ascribed to a phantom or a stranger, who fought in the foremost ranks under the character of St. Andrew the apostle. The shrine which contained his relics was decorated with the trophies of victory, and the captive race was forever devoted to the service and vassalage of the Metropolitan church of Patras. By the revolt of two Sclavonian tribes in the neighbourhood of Helos and Lacedæmon, the peace of the peninsula was often disturbed. They sometimes insulted the weakness, and sometimes resisted the oppression, of the Byzantine government, till at length the approach of their hostile brethren extorted a golden bull to define the rights and obligations of the Ezzerites and Milengi, whose annual tribute was defined at twelve hundred pieces of gold. From these strangers the Imperial geographer has accurately distinguished a domestic and perhaps original race, who, in some

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Freemen of  
Laconia.

degree, might derive their blood from the much injured Helots. The liberality of the Romans, and especially of Augustus, had enfranchised the maritime cities from the dominion of Sparta; and the continuance of the same benefit ennobled them with the title of *Eleuthero*-or free-Laconians<sup>16</sup>. In the time of Constantine Prophyrogenitus, they had acquired the name of *Mainotes*, under which they dishonour the claim of liberty by the inhuman pillage of all that is shipwrecked on their rocky shores. Their territory, barren of corn, but fruitful of olives, extended to the Cape of Malea: they accepted a chief or prince from the Byzantine prætor, and a light tribute of four hundred pieces of gold was the badge of their immunity rather than of their dependence. The freemen of Laconia assumed the character of Romans, and long adhered to the religion of the Greeks. By the zeal of the emperor Basil, they were baptized in the faith of Christ: but the altars of Venus and Neptune had been crowned by these rustic votaries five hundred years after they were proscribed in the Roman world. In the theme of Peloponnesus<sup>17</sup>, forty cities were still numbered, and the declining state of Sparta, Argos, and Corinth, may be suspended in the tenth century, at an equal distance, perhaps, between their antique splendour and their present desolation. The duty of military service either in person or by substitute, was imposed on the lands or benefices of the province: a sum of five pieces of gold was assessed on each of the

Cities and  
revenue of  
Pelopone-  
sus.

substantial tenants; and the same capitation was shared among several heads of inferior value. On the proclamation of an Italian war, the Peloponnesians excused themselves by a voluntary oblation of one hundred pounds of gold (four thousand pounds sterling), and a thousand horses with their arms and trappings. The churches and monasteries furnished their contingent; a sacrilegious profit was extorted from the sale of ecclesiastical honours, and the indigent bishop of Leucadia<sup>18</sup> was made responsible for a pension of one hundred pieces of gold<sup>19</sup>.

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But the wealth of the province, and the trust of the revenue, were founded on the fair and plentiful produce of trade and manufactures: and some symptoms of liberal policy may be traced in a law which exempts from all personal taxes the mariners of Peloponesus, and the workmen in parchment and purple. This denomination may be fairly applied or extended to the manufactures of linen, woollen, and more especially of silk: the two former of which had flourished in Greece since the days of Homer; and the last was introduced perhaps as early as the reign of Justinian. These arts, which were exercised at Corinth, Thebes, and Argos, afforded food and occupation to a numerous people: the men, women, and children, were distributed according to their age and strength; and if many of these were domestic slaves, their masters, who directed the work and enjoyed the profit, were of a free and honourable condition. The gifts which a rich

Manufac-  
tures, espe-  
cially of silk,

CHAP. and generous matron of Peloponesus presented  
 LIII. to the emperor Basil, her adopted son, were  
 doubtless fabricated in the Grecian looms. Da-  
 nielis bestowed a carpet of fine wool, of a pat-  
 tern which imitated the spots of a peacock's tail,  
 of a magnitude to overspread the floor of a new  
 church, erected in the triple name of Christ, of  
 Michael the archangel, and of the prophet  
 Elijah. She gave six hundred pieces of silk and  
 linen, of various use and denomination: the silk  
 was painted with the Tyrian dye, and adorned  
 by the labours of the needle; and the linen was  
 so exquisitely fine, that an entire piece might  
 be rolled in the hollow of a cane<sup>20</sup>. In this de-  
 scription of the Greek manufactures, an historian  
 of Sicily discriminates their price, according to  
 the weight and quality of the silk, the closeness  
 of the texture, the beauty of the colours, and  
 the taste and materials of the embroidery. A  
 single, or even a double or treble thread was  
 thought sufficient for ordinary sale; but the  
 union of six threads composed a piece of stronger  
 and more costly workmanship. Among the  
 colours, he celebrates, with affectation of elo-  
 quence, the fiery blaze of the scarlet, and the  
 softer lustre of the green. The embroidery was  
 raised either in silk or gold: the more simple or-  
 nament of stripes or circles was surpassed by the  
 nicer imitation of flowers: the vestments that  
 were fabricated for the palace or the altar often  
 glittered with precious stones; and the figures  
 were delineated in strings of Oriental pearls<sup>21</sup>. Till

the twelfth century, Greece alone, of all the countries of Christendom, was possessed of the insect who is taught by nature, and of the workmen who are instructed by art, to prepare this elegant luxury. But the secret had been stolen by the dexterity and diligence of the Arabs: the caliphs of the East and West scorned to borrow from the unbelievers their furniture and apparel; and two cities of Spain, Almeria and Lisbon, were famous for the manufacture, the use, and perhaps the exportation, of silk. It was first introduced into Sicily by the Normans; and this emigration of trade distinguishes the victory of Roger from the uniform and fruitless hostilities of every age. After the sack of Corinth, Athens, and Thebes, his lieutenant embarked with a captive train of weavers and artificers of both sexes, a trophy glorious to their master, and disgraceful to the Greek emperor<sup>22</sup>. The king of Sicily was not insensible of the value of the present; and, in the restitution of the prisoners, he excepted only the male and female manufacturers of Thebes and Corinth, who labour, says the Byzantine historian, under a barbarous lord, like the old Eretrians in the service of Darius<sup>23</sup>. A stately edifice, in the palace of Palermo, was erected for the use of this industrious colony<sup>24</sup>; and the art was propagated by their children and disciples to satisfy the encreasing demand of the western world. The decay of the looms of Sicily may be ascribed to the troubles of the island, and the competition of the Italian cities.

transported  
from Greece  
to Sicily.

CHAP. In the year thirteen hundred and fourteen, Lucca  
LIII. alone, among her sister republics, enjoyed the  
lucrative monopoly<sup>25</sup>. A domestic revolution  
dispersed the manufactures to Florence, Bologna,  
Venice, Milan, and even the countries beyond  
the Alps; and thirteen years after this event, the  
statutes of Modena enjoin the planting of mul-  
berry trees, and regulate the duties on raw  
silks<sup>26</sup>. The northern climates are less propitious  
to the education of the silk-worm; but the  
industry of France and England<sup>27</sup> is supplied  
and enriched by the productions of Italy and  
China.

Revenue of  
the Greek  
empire.

I must repeat the complaint that the vague and  
scanty memorials of the times will not afford any  
just estimate of the taxes, the revenue, and the  
resources, of the Greek empire. From every  
province of Europe and Asia, the rivulets of  
gold and silver discharged into the Imperial re-  
servoir a copious and perennial stream. The  
separation of the branches from the trunk en-  
creased the relative magnitude of Constantinople;  
and the maxims of despotism contracted the state  
to the capital, the capital, to the palace, and the  
palace to the royal person. A Jewish traveller, who  
visited the East in the twelfth century, is lost in  
his admiration of the Byzantine riches. "It is  
" here," says Benjamin of Tudela, "in the  
" queen of cities, that the tributes of the Greek  
" empire are annually deposited, and the lofty  
" towers are filled with precious magazines  
" of silk, purple, and gold. It is said, that  
" Constantinople

\* Constantinople pays each day to her sovereign  
 " twenty thousand pieces of gold; which are  
 " levied on the shops, taverns, and markets, on  
 " the merchants of Persia and Egypt, of Russia  
 " and Hungary, of Italy and Spain, who fre-  
 " quent the capital by sea and land<sup>28</sup>." In all  
 pecuniary matters, the authority of a Jew is  
 doubtless respectable; but as the three hundred  
 and sixty-five days would produce a yearly in-  
 come exceeding seven millions sterling, I am  
 tempted to retrench at least the numerous festivals  
 of the Greek calendar. The mass of treasure that  
 was saved by Theodora and Basil the second,  
 will suggest a splendid, though indefinite, idea  
 of their supplies and resources. The mother of  
 Michael, before she retired to a cloister, attempted  
 to check or expose the prodigality of her ungrate-  
 ful son, by a free and faithful account of the  
 wealth which he inherited; one hundred and  
 nine thousand pounds of gold, and three hundred  
 thousand of silver, the fruits of her own œco-  
 nomy and that of her deceased husband<sup>29</sup>. The  
 avarice of Basil is not less renowned than his  
 valour and fortune: his victorious armies were  
 paid and rewarded without breaking into the mass  
 of two hundred thousand pounds of gold (about  
 eight millions sterling), which he had buried in  
 the subterraneous vaults of the palace<sup>30</sup>. Such  
 accumulation of treasure is rejected by the  
 theory and practice of modern policy; and we  
 are more apt to compute the national riches by  
 the use and abuse of the public credit. Yet the

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CHAP. maxims of antiquity are still embraced by a monarch formidable to his enemies; by a republic respectable to her allies; and both have attained their respective ends, of military power, and domestic tranquillity.

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Pomp and  
luxury of the  
emperors.

Whatever might be consumed for the present wants, or reserved for the future use, of the state, the first and most sacred demand was for the pomp and pleasure of the emperor; and his discretion only could define the measure of his private expence. The princes of Constantinople were far removed from the simplicity of nature; yet, with the revolving seasons, they were led by taste or fashion to withdraw to a purer air, from the smoke and tumult of the capital. They enjoyed, or affected to enjoy, the rustic festival of the vintage: their leisure was amused by the exercise of the chace and the calmer occupation of fishing, and, in the summer heats, they were shaded from the sun, and refreshed by the cooling breezes from the sea. The coasts and islands of Asia and Europe were covered with their magnificent villas: but, instead of the modest art which secretly strives to hide itself and to decorate the scenery of nature, the marble structure of their gardens served only to expose the riches of the lord, and the labours of the architect. The successive casualties of inheritance and forfeiture, had rendered the sovereign proprietor of many stately houses in the city and suburbs, of which twelve were appropriated to the ministers of state; but the great palace<sup>31</sup>, the centre of the

The palace

Imperial residence, was fixed during eleven centuries to the same position, between the hippodrome, the cathedral of St. Sophia, and the gardens, which descended by many a terrace to the shores of the Propontis. The primitive edifice of the first Constantine was a copy or rival of ancient Rome; the gradual improvements of his successors aspired to emulate the wonders of the old world<sup>12</sup>, and in the tenth century, the Byzantine palace excited the admiration, at least of the Latins, by an unquestionable pre-eminence of strength, size, and magnificence<sup>13</sup>. But the toil and treasure of so many ages had produced a vast and irregular pile: each separate building was marked with the character of the times and of the founder; and the want of space might excuse the reigning monarch who demolished, perhaps with secret satisfaction, the works of his predecessors. The œconomy of the emperor Theophilus allowed a more free and ample scope for his domestic luxury and splendour. A favourite ambassador who had astonished the Abbassides themselves by his pride and liberality, presented on his return the model of a palace, which the caliph of Bagdad had recently constructed on the banks of the Tigris. The model was instantly copied and surpassed: the new buildings of Theophilus<sup>14</sup> were accompanied with gardens, and with five churches, one of which was conspicuous for size and beauty: it was crowned with three domes, the roof of gilt brass reposed on columns of Italian marble, and the walls were incrusted

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of Constantinople.

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LIII.

with marbles of various colours. In the face of the church, a semi-circular portico, of the figure and name of the Greek *sigma* was supported by fifteen columns of Phrygian marble, and the subterraneous vaults were of a similar construction. The square before the sigma was decorated with a fountain, and the margin of the basin was lined and encompassed with plates of silver. In the beginning of each season, the basin, instead of water, was replenished with the most exquisite fruits, which were abandoned to the populace for the entertainment of the prince. He enjoyed this tumultuous spectacle from a throne resplendent with gold and gems, which was raised by a marble stair-case to a height of a lofty terrace. Below the throne were seated the officers of his guards, the magistrates, the chiefs of the factions of the circus; the inferior steps were occupied by the people, and the place below was covered with troops of dancers, singers, and pantomimes. The square was surrounded by the hall of justice, the arsenal, and the various offices of business and pleasure; and the *purple* chamber was named from the annual distribution of robes of scarlet and purple by the hand of the empress herself. The long series of the apartments was adapted to the seasons, and decorated with marble and porphyry, with painting, sculpture, and mosaics, with a profusion of gold, silver, and precious stones. His fanciful magnificence employed the skill and patience of such artists as the times could afford; but the

taste of Athens would have despised their frivolous and costly labours; a golden tree, with its leaves and branches, which sheltered a multitude of birds, warbling their artificial notes, and two lions of massy gold, and of the natural size, who looked and roared like their brethren of the forest. The successors of Theophilus, of the Basilian and Comnenian dynasties, were not less ambitious of leaving some memorial of their residence; and the portion of the palace most splendid and august, was dignified with the title of the golden *triclinium* <sup>35</sup>. With becoming modesty, the rich and noble Greeks aspired to imitate their sovereign, and when they passed through the streets on horseback, in their robes of silk and embroidery, they were mistaken by the children for kings <sup>36</sup>. A matron of Peloponnesus <sup>37</sup>, who had cherished the infant fortunes of Basil the Macedonian, was excited by tenderness or vanity to visit the greatness of her adopted son. In a journey of five hundred miles from Patras to Constantinople, her age or indolence declined the fatigue of an horse or carriage: the soft litter or bed of Danielis was transported on the shoulders of ten robust slaves; and as they were relieved at easy distances, a band of three hundred was selected for the performance of this service. She was entertained in the Byzantine palace with filial reverence, and the honours of a queen; and whatever might be the origin of her wealth, her gifts were not unworthy of the regal dignity. I have already described the fine

Furniture  
and attend-  
ants.

CHAPTER. and curious manufactures of Peloponefus, of  
 LIII. linen, filk, and woollen; but the most acceptable  
 of her presents confifted in three hundred beautiful  
 youths, of whom one hundred were eunuchs<sup>38</sup>;  
 “for ſhe was not ignorant,” ſays the hiftorian,  
 “that the air of the palace is more congenial to  
 “ ſuch infects, than a ſhepherd’s dairy to the  
 “ flies of the ſummer.” During her lifetime, ſhe  
 beftowed the greater part of her eſtates in Pello-  
 ponefus, and her teſtament inſtituted Leo the  
 ſon of Baſil her univerſal heir. After the payment  
 of the legacies, fourſcore villas or farms were  
 added to the Imperial domain; and three thouſand  
 ſlaves of Danielis were enfranchiſed by their new  
 lord, and tranſplanted as a colony to the Italian  
 coaſt. From this example of a private matron,  
 we may eſtimate the wealth and magnificence of  
 the emperors. Yet our enjoyments are confined  
 by a narrow circle; and, whatſoever may be  
 its value, the luxury of life is poſſeſſed with  
 more innocence and ſafety by the maſter of his  
 own, than by the ſteward, of the public fortune.

Honours and  
 titles of the  
 Imperial fa-  
 mily.

In an abſolute government, which levels the  
 diſtinctions of noble and plebeian birth, the  
 ſovereign is the ſole fountain of honour; and  
 the rank, both in the palace and the empire,  
 depends on the titles and offices which are  
 beſtowed and reſumed by his arbitrary will.  
 Above a thouſand years, from Veſpaſian to  
 Alexius Comnenus<sup>39</sup>, the *Cæſar* was the ſecond  
 perſon, or at leaſt the ſecond degree, after  
 the ſupreme title of *Auguſtus* was more freely

communicated to the sons and brothers of the reigning monarch. To elude without violating his promise to a powerful associate, the husband of his sister; and, without giving himself an equal, to reward the piety of his brother Isaac, the crafty Alexius interposed a new and super-eminent dignity. The happy flexibility of the Greek tongue allowed him to compound the names of Augustus and emperor (Sebastos and Autocrator), and the union produced the sonorous title of *Sebastocrator*. He was exalted above the Cæsar on the first step of the throne: the public acclamations repeated his name; and he was only distinguished from the sovereign by some peculiar ornaments of the head and feet. The emperor alone could assume the purple or red buskins, and the close diadem or tiara, which imitated the fashion of the Persian kings<sup>40</sup>. It was an high pyramidal cap of cloth or silk, almost concealed by a profusion of pearls and jewels: the crown was formed by an horizontal circle and two arches of gold: at the summit, the point of their intersection was placed a globe or cross, and two strings or lappets of pear depended on either cheek. Instead of red, the buskins of the Sebastocrator and Cæsar were green; and on their *open* coronets or crowns, the precious gems were more sparingly distributed. Beside and below the Cæsar, the fancy of Alexius created the *Panhypersebastos* and the *Protosebastos* a whose sound and signification will satisfy, Grecian ear. They imply a superiority and a

CHAPTER. priority above the simple name of Augustus ;  
 LIII. and this sacred and primitive title of the Roman prince was degraded to the kinsmen and servants of the Byzantine court. The daughter of Alexius applauds, with fond complacency, this artful gradation of hopes and honours ; but the science of words is accessible to the meanest capacity ; and this vain dictionary was easily enriched by the pride of his successors. To their favourite sons or brothers, they imparted the more lofty appellation of Lord or *Despot*, which was illustrated with new ornaments and prerogatives, and placed immediately after the person of the emperor himself. The five titles of, 1. *Despot* ; 2. *Sebastocrator* ; 3. *Cæsar* ; 4. *Panhypersébastos* ; and 5. *Protosébastos* ; were usually confined to the princes of his blood : they were the emanations of his majesty ; but as they exercised no regular functions, their existence was useless, and their authority precarious.

Offices of the palace, the state, and the army.

But in every monarchy the substantial powers of government must be divided and exercised by the ministers of the palace and treasury, the fleet and army. The titles alone can differ ; and in the revolution of ages, the counts and præfects, the prætor and quæstor, insensibly descended, while their servants rose above their heads to the first honours of the state. 1. In a monarchy, which refers every object to the person of the prince, the care and ceremonies of the palace form the most respectable department. The *Curopalata* \*\*, so illustrious in the age of Justinian, was sup-

planted by the *Protovestiare*, whose primitive functions were limited to the custody of the wardrobe. From thence his jurisdiction was extended over the numerous menials of pomp and luxury; and he presided with his silver wand at the public and private audience. 2. In the ancient system of Constantine, the name of *Logothete*, or accountant, was applied to the receivers of the finances: the principal officers were distinguished as the *Logothetes* of the domain, of the posts, the army, the private and public treasure; and the *great Logothete*, the supreme guardian of the laws and revenues, is compared with the chancellor of the Latin monarchies<sup>42</sup>. His discerning eye pervaded the civil administration; and he was assisted, in due subordination, by the eparch or præfect of the city, the first secretary, and the keepers of the privy seal, the archives, and the red or purple ink which was reserved for the sacred signature of the emperor alone<sup>43</sup>. The introducer and interpreter of foreign ambassadors were the great *Chiaus*<sup>44</sup> and the *Dragoman*<sup>45</sup>, two names of Turkish origin, and which are still familiar to the sublime Porte. 3. From the humble style and service of guards, the *Domestics* insensibly rose to the station of generals; the military themes of the East and West, the legions of Europe and Asia, were often divided, till the *great Domestic* was finally invested with the universal and absolute command of the land forces. The *Protosfrator*, in his original functions, was the assistant of the emperor when he mounted

CHAPTER. on horseback: he gradually became the lieutenant  
 LIII. of the great Domestic in the field; and his jurisdiction extended over the stables, the cavalry, and the royal train of hunting and hawking. The *Stratopedarch* was the great judge of the camp; the *Protospathaire* commanded the guards; the *Constable* <sup>46</sup>, the *great Aeteriarch*, and the *Acolyth*, were the separate chiefs of the Franks, the Barbarians, and the Varangi, or English, the mercenary strangers, who, in the decay of the national spirit, formed the nerve of the Byzantine armies. 4. The naval powers were under the command of the *great Duke*; in his absence they obeyed the *great Drungaire* of the fleet; and, in his place, the *Emir*, or *admiral*, a name of Saracen extraction <sup>47</sup>, but which has been naturalized in all the modern languages of Europe. Of these officers, and of many more whom it would be useless to enumerate, the civil and military hierarchy was framed. Their honours and emoluments, their dress and titles, their mutual salutations and respective pre-eminence, were balanced with more exquisite labour, than would have fixed the constitution of a free people; and the code was almost perfect when this baseless fabric, the monument of pride and servitude, was for ever buried in the ruins of the empire <sup>48</sup>.

Adoration of  
 the emperor.

The most lofty titles, and the most humble postures, which devotion has applied to the Supreme Being, have been prostituted by flattery and fear to creatures of the same nature with

ourselves. The mode of *adoration* <sup>49</sup>, of falling prostrate on the ground, and kissing the feet of the emperor, was borrowed by Diocletian from Persian servitude; but it was continued and aggravated till the last age of the Greek monarchy. Excepting only on Sundays, when it was waved, from a motive of religious pride, this humiliating reverence was exacted from all who entered the royal presence, from the princes invested with the diadem and purple, and from the ambassadors who represented their independent sovereigns, the caliphs of Asia, Egypt, or Spain, the kings of France and Italy, and the Latin emperors of ancient Rome. In his transactions of business, Liutprand, bishop of Cremona <sup>50</sup>, asserted the free spirit of a Frank and the dignity of his master Otho. Yet his sincerity cannot disguise the abasement of his first audience. When he approached the throne, the birds of the golden tree began to warble their notes, which were accompanied by the roarings of the two lions of gold. With his two companions, Liutprand was compelled to bow and to fall prostrate; and thrice he touched the ground with his forehead. He arose, but in the short interval, the throne had been hoisted by an engine from the floor to the ceiling, the Imperial figure appeared in new and more gorgeous apparel, and the interview was concluded in haughty and majestic silence. In this honest and curious narrative, the bishop of Cremona represents the ceremonies of the Byzantine court,

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LIII.

Reception of  
ambassadors.

CHAP. which are still practised in the sublime Porte,  
 LIII. and which were preserved in the last age by the  
 dukes of Muscovy or Russia. After a long  
 journey by the sea and land, from Venice to  
 Constantinople, the ambassador halted at the  
 golden gate, till he was conducted by the formal  
 officers to the hospitable palace prepared for his  
 reception; but this palace was a prison, and his  
 jealous keepers prohibited all social intercourse  
 either with strangers or natives. At his first  
 audience, he offered the gifts of his master, slaves,  
 and golden vases, and costly armour. The  
 ostentatious payment of the officers and troops  
 displayed before his eyes the riches of the empire:  
 he was entertained at a royal banquet<sup>51</sup>, in  
 which the ambassadors of the nations were mar-  
 shalled by the esteem or contempt of the Greeks:  
 from his own table, the emperor, as the most  
 signal favour, sent the plates which he had  
 tasted; and his favourites were dismissed with a  
 robe of honour<sup>52</sup>. In the morning and evening  
 of each day, his civil and military servants at-  
 tended their duty in the palace; their labour  
 was repaid by the sight, perhaps by the smile,  
 of their lord; his commands were signified by a  
 nod or a sign: but all earthly greatness stood  
 silent and submissive in his presence. In his regular  
 or extraordinary processions through the capital,  
 he unveiled his person to the public view: the  
 rites of policy were connected with those of  
 religion, and his visits to the principal churches  
 were regulated by the festivals of the Greek

Processions  
 and acclama-  
 tions.

calendar. On the eve of these processions, the gracious or devout intention of the monarch was proclaimed by the heralds. The streets were cleared and purified; the pavement was strewed with flowers; the most precious furniture, the gold and silver plate, and silken hangings, were displayed from the windows and balconies, and a severe discipline restrained and silenced the tumult of the populace. The march was opened by the military officers at the head of their troops; they were followed in long order by the magistrates and ministers of the civil government: the person of the emperor was guarded by his eunuchs and domestics, and at the church-door, he was solemnly received by the patriarch and his clergy. The talk of applause was not abandoned to the rude and spontaneous voices of the crowd. The most convenient stations were occupied by the bands of the blue and green factions of the circus; and their furious conflicts, which had shaken the capital, were insensibly sunk to an emulation of servitude. From either side they echoed in responsive melody the praises of the emperor; their poets and musicians directed the choir, and long life<sup>33</sup> and victory were the burthen of every song. The same acclamations were performed at the audience, the banquet, and the church; and as an evidence of boundless sway, they were repeated in the Latin<sup>34</sup>, Gothic, Persian, French, and even English language<sup>35</sup>, by the mercenaries who sustained the real or fictitious character of those nations. By the pen of

CHAP.  
LIII.

Imaginary  
law of Con-  
stitutional  
the Govern-  
ment this  
-anions

See the  
-anions  
p. 133

CHAPTER. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, this science of form  
 III. and flattery has been reduced into a pompous and trifling volume<sup>56</sup>, which the vanity of succeeding times might enrich with an ample supplement. Yet the calmer reflection of a prince would surely suggest, that the same acclamations were applied to every character and every reign: and if he had risen from a private rank, he might remember, that his own voice had been the loudest and most eager in applause, at the very moment, when he envied the fortune, or conspired against the life, of his predecessor<sup>57</sup>.

Marriage of  
 the Cæsars  
 with foreign  
 nations.

The princes of the North, of the nations, says Constantine, without faith or fame, were ambitious of mingling their blood with the blood of the Cæsars, by their marriage with a royal virgin, or by the nuptials of their daughters with a Roman prince<sup>58</sup>. The aged monarch, in his instructions to his son, reveals the secret maxims of policy and pride; and suggests the most decent reasons for refusing these insolent and unreasonable demands. Every animal, says the discreet emperor, is prompted by nature to seek a mate among the animals of his own species; and the human species is divided into various tribes, by the distinction of language, religion, and manners. A just regard to the purity of descent preserves the harmony of public and private life; but the mixture of foreign blood is the fruitful source of disorder and discord. Such had ever been the opinion and practice of the sage Romans: their jurisprudence proscribed the marriage of a citizen and a stranger: in the

days of freedom and virtue, a senator would have scorned to match his daughter with a king: the glory of Mark Anthony was sullied by an Egyptian wife<sup>o</sup>; and the emperor Titus was compelled, by popular censure, to dismiss with reluctance the reluctant Berenice<sup>o</sup>. This perpetual interdict was ratified by the fabulous sanction of the great Constantine. The ambassadors of the nations, more especially of the unbelieving nations, were solemnly admonished, that such strange alliances had been condemned by the founder of the church and city. The irrevocable law was inscribed on the altar of St. Sophia; and the impious prince who should stain the majesty of the purple was excluded from the civil and ecclesiastical communion of the Romans. If the ambassadors were instructed by any false brethren in the Byzantine history, they might produce three memorable examples of the violation of this imaginary law: the marriage of Leo, or rather of his father Constantine the fourth, with the daughter of the king of the Chozars, the nuptials of the granddaughter of Romanus with a Bulgarian prince, and the union of Bertha of France or Italy with young Romanus, the son of Constantine Porphyrogenitus himself. To these objections, three answers were prepared, which solved the difficulty and established the law. 1. The deed and the guilt of Constantine Copronymus were acknowledged. The Isaurian heretic, who sullied the baptismal font, and declared war against the holy images, had indeed embraced a Barbarian

C H A P.  
LIII.

Imaginary  
law of Con-  
stantine.

The first ex-  
ception,  
A. D. 733.

C H A P. wife, By this impious alliance, he accomplished  
LIII. the measure of his crimes, and was devoted to  
the just censure of the church and of posterity.

The second,  
A. D. 941.

II. Romanus could not be alleged as a legitimate emperor; he was a plebeian usurper, ignorant of the laws, and regardless of the honour, of the monarchy. His son Christopher, the father of the bride, was the third in rank in the college of princes, at once the subject and the accomplice of a rebellious parent. The Bulgarians were sincere and devout Christians; and the safety of the empire, with the redemption of many thousand captives, depended on this preposterous alliance.

The third,  
A. D. 943.

Yet no consideration could dispense from the law of Constantine; the clergy, the senate, and the people, disapproved the conduct of Romanus; and he was reproached, both in his life and death, as the author of the public disgrace. III. For the marriage of his own son with the daughter of Hugo king of Italy, a more honourable defence is contrived by the wife Porphyrogenitus. Constantine, the great and holy, esteemed the fidelity and valour of the Franks<sup>61</sup>; and his prophetic spirit beheld the vision of their future greatness. They alone were excepted from the general prohibition: Hugo king of France was the lineal descendant of Charlemagne<sup>62</sup>; and his daughter Bertha inherited the prerogatives of her family and nation. The voice of truth and malice insensibly betrayed the fraud or error of the Imperial court. The patrimonial estate of Hugo was reduced from the monarchy of France to the simple county

county of Arles; though it was not denied, that, in the confusion of the times, he had usurped the sovereignty of Provence, and invaded the kingdom of Italy. His father was a private noble; and if Bertha derived her female descent from the Carlovingian line, every step was polluted with illegitimacy or vice. The grandmother of Hugo was the famous Valdrada, the concubine, rather than the wife, of the second Lothair; whose adultery, divorce, and second nuptials, had provoked against him the thunders of the Vatican. His mother, as she was styled the great Bertha, was successively the wife of the count of Arles and of the marquis of Tuscany: France and Italy were scandalised by her gallantries; and, till the age of threescore, her lovers, of every degree, were the zealous servants of her ambition. The example of maternal incontinence was copied by the king of Italy; and the three favourite concubines of Hugo were decorated with the classic names of Venus, Juno, and Semele<sup>61</sup>. The daughter of Venus was granted to the solicitations of the Byzantine court: her name of Bertha was changed to that of Eudoxia; and she was wedded, or rather betrothed, to young Romanus, the future heir of the empire of the East. The consummation of this foreign alliance was suspended by the tender age of the two parties; and, at the end of five years, the union was dissolved by the death of the virgin spouse. The second wife of the emperor Romanus was a maiden of plebeian, but of Roman, birth; and their two daughters,

C H A P.  
LIII.

CHAP. Theophano and Anne, were given in marriage  
 LIII. to the princes of the earth. The eldest was  
 Otho of Ger- bestowed, as the pledge of peace, on the eldest  
 many, son of the great Otho, who had solicited this  
 A. D. 972. alliance with arms and embassies. It might legally  
 be questioned how far a Saxon was entitled to  
 the privilege of the French nation: but every  
 scruple was silenced by the fame and piety of a  
 hero who had restored the empire of the West.  
 After the death of her father-in-law and husband,  
 Theophano governed Rome, Italy, and Germany,  
 during the minority of her son, the third Otho;  
 and the Latins have praised the virtues of an  
 empress, who sacrificed to a superior duty the  
 remembrance of her country<sup>64</sup>. In the nuptials  
 of her sister Anne, every prejudice was lost, and  
 every consideration of dignity was superseded,  
 by the stronger argument of necessity and fear.  
 A Pagan of the north, Wolodomir, great prince  
 of Russia, aspired to a daughter of the Roman  
 purple; and his claim was enforced by the threats  
 of war, the promise of conversion, and the offer  
 of a powerful succour against a domestic rebel. A  
 victim of her religion and country, the Grecian  
 princess was torn from the palace of her fathers,  
 and condemned to a savage reign and an hopeless  
 exile on the banks of the Borysthenes, or in the  
 neighbourhood of the Polar circle<sup>65</sup>. Yet the  
 marriage of Anne was fortunate and fruitful: the  
 daughter of her grandson Jeroslaus was recom-  
 mended by her Imperial descent; and the king  
 of France, Henry I. fought a wife on the last  
 borders of Europe and Christendom<sup>66</sup>.

Wolodomir  
 of Russia,  
 A. D. 988.

In the Byzantine palace, the emperor was the first slave of the ceremonies which he imposed, of the rigid forms which regulated each word and gesture, besieged him in the palace, and violated the leisure of his rural solitude. But the lives and fortunes of millions hung on his arbitrary will: and the firmest minds, superior to the allurements of pomp and luxury, may be seduced by the more active pleasure of commanding their equals. The legislative and executive power were centered in the person of the monarch, and the last remains of the authority of the senate, were finally eradicated by Leo the philosopher<sup>67</sup>. A lethargy of servitude had benumbed the minds of the Greeks; in the wildest tumults of rebellion they never aspired to the idea of a free constitution; and the private character of the prince was the only source and measure of their public happiness. Superstition rivetted their chains; in the church of St. Sophia, he was solemnly crowned by the patriarch; at the foot of the altar, they pledged their passive and unconditional obedience to his government and family. On his side he engaged to abstain as much as possible from the capital punishments of death and mutilation; his orthodox creed was subscribed with his own hand, and he promised to obey the decrees of the seven synods, and the canons of the holy church<sup>68</sup>. But the assurance of mercy was loose and indefinite: he swore, not to his people, but to an invisible judge, and except in the inexpressible guilt of heresy,

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LIII.

Despotic  
power.Coronation  
oath.

CHAP.  
LIII.

the ministers of heaven were always prepared to preach the indefeasible right, and to absolve the venial transgressions, of their sovereign. The Greek ecclesiastics were themselves the subjects of the civil magistrate: at the nod of a tyrant, the bishops were created, or transferred, or deposed, or punished, with an ignominious death: whatever might be their wealth or influence, they could never succeed like the Latin clergy in the establishment of an independent republic; and the patriarch of Constantinople condemned, what he secretly envied, the temporal greatness of his Roman brother. Yet the exercise of boundless despotism is happily checked by the laws of nature and necessity. In proportion to his wisdom and virtue, the master of an empire is confined to the path of his sacred and laborious duty. In proportion to his vice and folly, he drops the sceptre too weighty for his hands; and the motions of the royal image are ruled by the imperceptible thread of some minister or favourite, who undertakes for his private interest to exercise the task of the public oppression. In some fatal moment, the most absolute monarch may dread the reason or the caprice of a nation of slaves; and experience has proved, that whatever is gained in the extent, is lost in the safety and solidity, of regal power.

Military  
force of the  
Greeks, the  
Saracens, and  
the Franks.

Whatever titles a despot may assume, whatever claims he may assert, it is on the sword that he must ultimately depend to guard him against his foreign and domestic enemies. From the age of

Charlemagne to that of the Crusades, the world (for I overlook the remote monarchy of China) was occupied and disputed by the three great empires or nations of the Greeks, the Saracens, and the Franks. Their military strength may be ascertained by a comparison of their courage, their arts and riches, and their obedience to a supreme head, who might call into action all the energies of the state. The Greeks, far inferior to their rivals in the first, were superior to the Franks, and at least equal to the Saracens, in the second and third of these warlike qualifications.

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The wealth of the Greeks enabled them to purchase the service of the poorer nations, and to maintain a naval power for the protection of their coasts and the annoyance of their enemies<sup>69</sup>. A commerce of mutual benefit exchanged the gold of Constantinople for the blood of the Slavonians and Turks, the Bulgarians and Russians: their valour contributed to the victories of Nicephorus and Zimisces; and if an hostile people pressed too closely on the frontier, they were recalled to the defence of their country, and the desire of peace, by the well-managed attack of a more distant tribe<sup>70</sup>. The command of the Mediterranean, from the mouth of the Tanais to the columns of Hercules, was always claimed, and often possessed, by the successors of Constantine. Their capital was filled with naval stores and dextrous artificers: the situation of Greece and Asia, the long coasts, deep gulfs, and numerous islands, accustomed their subjects to the exercise of navigation; and

Navy of the  
Greeks.

CHAP. the trade of Venice and Amalfi supplied a nursery  
 III. of seamen to the Imperial fleet <sup>71</sup>. Since the time  
 of the Peloponesian and Punic wars, the sphere  
 of action had not been enlarged; and the science  
 of naval architecture appears to have declined.  
 The art of constructing those stupendous machines  
 which displayed three, or six or ten, ranges of  
 oars, rising above, or falling behind, each other,  
 was unknown to the ship-builders of Constantinople,  
 as well as to the mechanicians of modern days <sup>72</sup>.  
 The *Dromones* <sup>73</sup>, or light gallies of the  
 Byzantine empire, were content with two tire of  
 oars; each tire was composed of five and twenty  
 benches; and two rowers were seated on each  
 bench, who plyed their oars on either side of  
 the vessel. To these we must add the captain or  
 centurion, who, in time of action, stood erect  
 with his armour-bearer on the poop, two steersmen  
 at the helm, and two officers at the prow, the  
 one to manage the anchor, the other to point  
 and play against the enemy the tube of liquid  
 fire. The whole crew, as in the infancy of the  
 art, performed the double service of mariners  
 and soldiers; they were provided with defensive  
 and offensive arms, with bows and arrows,  
 which they used from the upper deck, with  
 long pikes, which they pushed through the  
 port holes of the lower tire. Sometimes indeed  
 the ships of war were of a larger and more solid  
 construction; and the labours of combat and  
 navigation were more regularly divided between  
 seventy soldiers and two hundred and thirty

mariners. But for the most part they were of the light and manageable size; and as the cape of Malea in Peloponesus was still clothed with its ancient terrors, an Imperial fleet was transported five miles over land across the Isthmus of Corinth <sup>74</sup>. The principles of maritime tactics had not undergone any change since the time of Thucydides: a squadron of galleys still advanced in a crescent, charged to the front, and strove to impel their sharp beaks against the feeble sides of their antagonists. A machine for casting stones and darts was built of strong timbers in the midst of the deck; and the operation of boarding was effected by a crane that hoisted baskets of armed men. The language of signals, so clear and copious in the naval grammar of the moderns, was imperfectly expressed by the various positions and colours of a commanding flag. In the darkness of the night the same orders to chace, to attack, to halt, to retreat, to break, to form, were conveyed by the lights of the leading galley. By land, the fire signals were repeated from one mountain to another; a chain of eight stations commanded a space of five hundred miles; and Constantinople in a few hours was apprized of the hostile motions of the Saracens of Tarsus <sup>75</sup>. Some estimate may be formed of the power of the Greek emperors, by the curious and minute detail of the armament which was prepared for the reduction of Crete. A fleet of one hundred and twelve galleys, and seventy-five vessels of the Pamphylian style, was equipped in the capital, the islands of the Ægean

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LIII.

CHAPTER. sea, and the sea-ports of Asia, Macedonia, and  
 LIII. Greece. It carried thirty-four thousand mariners, seven thousand three hundred and forty soldiers, seven hundred Russians, and five thousand and eighty-seven Mardaites, whose fathers had been transplanted from the mountains of Libanus. Their pay, most probably of a month, was computed at thirty-four centenaries of gold, about one hundred and thirty-six thousand pounds sterling. Our fancy is bewildered by the endless recapitulation of arms and engines, of clothes and linen, of bread for the men and forage for the horses, and of stores and utensils of every description, inadequate to the conquest of a petty island, but amply sufficient for the establishment of a flourishing colony<sup>76</sup>.

Tastes and  
 character of  
 the Greeks.

The invention of the Greek fire did not, like that of gunpowder, produce a total revolution in the art of war. To these liquid combustibles, the city and empire of Constantine owed their deliverance; and they were employed in sieges and sea-fights with terrible effect. But they were either less improved, or less susceptible of improvement: the engines of antiquity, the catapultæ, balistæ, and battering-rams, were still of most frequent and powerful use in the attack and defence of fortifications; nor was the decision of battles reduced to the quick and heavy *fire* of a line of infantry, whom it were fruitless to protect with armour against a similar fire of their enemies. Steel and iron were still the common instruments of destruction and safety; and the helmets, cuirasses, and shields, of the

tenth century did not, either in form or substance, essentially differ from those which had covered the companions of Alexander or Achilles". But instead of accustoming the modern Greeks, like the legionaries of old, to the constant and easy use of this salutary weight; their armour was laid aside in light chariots, which followed the march, till, on the approach of an enemy, they resumed with haste and reluctance the unusual incumbrance. Their offensive weapons consisted of swords, battle-axes, and spears; but the Macedonian pike was shortened a fourth of its length, and reduced to the more convenient measure of twelve cubits or feet. The sharpness of the Scythian and Arabian arrows had been severely felt; and the emperors lament the decay of archery as a cause of the public misfortunes, and recommend, as an advice, and a command, that the military youth, till the age of forty, should assiduously practise the exercise of the bow". The *bands*, or regiments, were usually three hundred strong; and, as a medium between the extremes of four and sixteen, the foot soldiers of Leo and Constantine were formed eight, deep; but the cavalry charged in four ranks from the reasonable consideration, that the weight of the front could not be increased by any pressure of the hindmost horses. If the ranks of the infantry or cavalry were sometimes doubled, this cautious array betrayed a secret distrust of the courage of the troops, whose numbers might swell the appearance of the line, but of whom only a chosen band would dare to encounter the

C H A P. spears and swords of the Barbarians. The order  
 LIII. of battle must have varied according to the ground,  
 the object, and the adversary; but their ordinary  
 disposition, in two lines and a reserve, presented  
 a succession of hopes and resources most agreeable  
 to the temper as well as the judgment of the  
 Greeks<sup>79</sup>. In case of a repulse, the first line fell  
 back into the intervals of the second; and the  
 reserve, breaking into two divisions, wheeled  
 round the flanks to improve the victory or cover  
 the retreat. Whatever authority could enact was  
 accomplished, at least in theory, by the camps  
 and marches, the exercises and evolutions, the  
 edicts and books, of the Byzantine monarch<sup>80</sup>.  
 Whatever art could produce from the forge, the  
 loom, or the laboratory, was abundantly supplied  
 by the riches of the prince, and the industry of  
 his numerous workmen. But neither authority  
 nor art could frame the most important machine,  
 the soldier himself; and if the *ceremonies* of Con-  
 stantine always suppose the safe and triumphal  
 return of the emperor<sup>81</sup>, his *tactics* seldom soar  
 above the means of escaping a defeat, and pro-  
 crastinating the war<sup>82</sup>. Notwithstanding some  
 transient success, the Greeks were sunk in their  
 own esteem and that of their neighbours. A cold  
 hand and a loquacious tongue was the vulgar  
 description of the nation: the author of the *tactics*  
 was besieged in his capital; and the last of the  
 Barbarians, who trembled at the name of the  
 Saracens, or Franks, could proudly exhibit the  
 medals of gold and silver which they had extorted

from the feeble sovereign of Constantinople. What spirit their government and character denied, might have been inspired in some degree by the influence of religion; but the religion of the Greeks could only teach them to suffer and to yield. The emperor Nicephorus, who restored for a moment the discipline and glory of the Roman name, was desirous of bestowing the honours of martyrdom on the Christians who lost their lives in an holy war against the infidels. But this political law was defeated by the opposition of the patriarch, the bishops, and the principal senators; and they strenuously urged the canons of St. Basil, that all who were polluted by the bloody trade of a soldier, should be separated, during three years, from the communion of the faithful<sup>83</sup>.

These scruples of the Greeks have been compared with the tears of the primitive Moslems when they were held back from battle; and this contrast of base superstition, and high-spirited enthusiasm, unfolds to a philosophic eye the history of the rival nations. The subjects of the last caliphs<sup>84</sup> had undoubtedly degenerated from the zeal and faith of the companions of the prophet. Yet their martial creed still represented the deity as the author of war<sup>85</sup>: the vital though latent spark of fanaticism still glowed in the heart of their religion, and among the Saracens who dwelt on the Christian borders, it was frequently rekindled to a lively and active flame. Their regular force was formed of the valiant slaves who had been educated to guard the person and accompany the

Character  
and tactics of  
the Saracens.

CHAPTER LIII. standard of their lord; but the Musulman people of Syria and Cilicia, of Africa and Spain, was awakened by the trumpet which proclaimed an holy war against the infidels. The rich were ambitious of death or victory in the cause of God; the poor were allured by the hopes of plunder, and the old, the infirm, and the women, assumed their share of meritorious service by sending their substitutes, with arms and horses, into the field. These offensive and defensive arms were similar in strength and temper to those of the Romans, whom they far excelled in the management of the horse and the bow; the massy silver of their belts, their bridles, and their swords, displayed the magnificence of a prosperous nation, and except some black archers of the south, the Arabs disdained the naked bravery of their ancestors. Instead of waggons, they were attended by a long train of camels, mules, and asses; the multitude of these animals, whom they bedecked with flags and streamers, appeared to swell the pomp and magnitude of their host; and the horses of the enemy were often disordered by the uncouth figure and odious smell of the camels of the East. Invincible by their patience of thirst and heat, their spirits were frozen by a winter's cold, and the consciousness of their propensity to sleep exacted the most rigorous precautions against the surprises of the night. Their order of battle was a long square of two deep and solid lines; the first of archers, the second of cavalry. In their engagements by sea and land, they sustained with

patient firmness the fury of the attack, and seldom advanced to the charge till they could discern and oppress the lassitude of their foes. But if they were repulsed and broken, they knew not how to rally or renew the combat; and their dismay was heightened by the superstitious prejudice, that God had declared himself on the side of their enemies. The decline and fall of the caliphs countenanced this fearful opinion; nor were there wanting, among the Mahometans and Christians, some obscure prophecies " which prognosticated their alternate defeats. The unity of the Arabian empire was dissolved, but the independent fragments were equal to populous and powerful kingdoms; and in their naval and military armaments, an emir of Aleppo or Tunis might command no despicable fund of skill and industry and treasure. In their transactions of peace and war with the Saracens, the princes of Constantinople too often felt that these Barbarians had nothing barbarous in their discipline; and that if they were destitute of original genius, they had been endowed with a quick spirit of curiosity and imitation. The model was indeed more perfect than the copy: their ships, and engines, and fortifications, were of a less skilful construction; and they confess, without shame, that the same God who has given a tongue to the Arabians, had more nicely fashioned the hands of the Chinese, and the heads of the Greeks ".

A name of some German tribes between the Rhine and the Weser had spread its victorious

The Franks  
or Latins.

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influence over the greatest part of Gaul, Germany, and Italy; and the common appellation of FRANKS<sup>88</sup> was applied by the Greeks and Arabians to the Christians of the Latin church, the nations of the West, who stretched beyond *their* knowledge to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. The vast body had been inspired and united by the soul of Charlemagne; but the division and degeneracy of his race soon annihilated the Imperial power, which would have rivalled the Cæsars of Byzantium, and revenged the indignities of the Christian name. The enemies no longer feared, nor could the subjects any longer trust, the application of a public revenue, the labours of trade and manufactures in the military service, the mutual aid of provinces and armies, and the naval squadrons which were regularly stationed from the mouth of the Elbe to that of the Tyber. In the beginning of the tenth century, the family of Charlemagne had almost disappeared; his monarchy was broken into many hostile and independent states; the regal title was assumed by the most ambitious chiefs; their revolt was imitated in a long subordination of anarchy and discord, and the nobles of every province disobeyed their sovereign, oppressed their vassals, and exercised perpetual hostilities against their equals and neighbours. Their private wars, which overturned the fabric of government, fomented the martial spirit of the nation. In the system of modern Europe, the power of the sword is possessed, at least in

in fact, by five or six mighty potentates; their operations are conducted on a distant frontier, by an order of men who devote their lives to the study and practice of the military art: the rest of the country and community enjoys in the midst of war the tranquillity of peace, and is only made sensible of the change by the aggravation or decrease of the public taxes. In the disorders of the tenth and eleventh centuries, every peasant was a soldier, and every village a fortification; each wood or valley was a scene of murder and rapine; and the lords of each castle were compelled to assume the character of princes and warriors. To their own courage and policy, they boldly trusted for the safety of their family, the protection of their lands, and the revenge of their injuries; and, like the conquerors of a larger size, they were too apt to transgress the privilege of defensive war. The powers of the mind and body were hardened by the presence of danger and necessity of resolution: the same spirit refused to desert a friend and to forgive an enemy; and, instead of sleeping under the guardian care of the magistrate, they proudly disdained the authority of the laws. In the days of feudal anarchy, the instruments of agriculture and art were converted into the weapons of bloodshed: the peaceful occupations of civil and ecclesiastical society were abolished or corrupted; and the bishop who exchanged his mitre for an helmet, was more forcibly urged by the manners of the times than by the obligation of his tenure \*°.

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Their character and tactics.

The love of freedom and of arms was felt, with conscious pride, by the Franks themselves, and is observed by the Greeks with some degree of amazement and terror. "The Franks," says the emperor Constantine, "are bold and valiant " to the verge of temerity; and their dauntless " spirit is supported by the contempt of danger " and death. In the field and in close onset, " they press to the front, and rush headlong " against the enemy, without deigning to compute either his numbers or their own. Their " ranks are formed by the firm connections of " consanguinity and friendship; and their martial " deeds are prompted by the desire of saving or " revenging their dearest companions. In their " eyes, a retreat is a shameful flight; and flight " is indelible infamy." A nation endowed with such high and intrepid spirit, must have been secure of victory, if these advantages had not been counterbalanced by many weighty defects. The decay of their naval power, left the Greeks and Saracens in possession of the sea, for every purpose of annoyance and supply. In the age which preceded the institution of knighthood, the Franks were rude and unskilful in the service of cavalry<sup>91</sup>; and, in all perilous emergencies, their warriors were so conscious of their ignorance, that they chose to dismount from their horses and fight on foot. Unpractised in the use of pikes, or of missile weapons, they were encumbered by the length of their swords, the weight of their armour, the magnitude of their shields,

shields, and, if I may repeat the satire of the meagre Greeks, by their unwieldy intemperance. Their independent spirit disdained the yoke of subordination, and abandoned the standard of their chief, if he attempted to keep the field beyond the term of their stipulation or service. On all sides they were open to the snares of an enemy, less brave, but more artful, than themselves. They might be bribed, for the Barbarians were venal; or surprised in the night, for they neglected the precautions of a close encampment or vigilant centinels. The fatigues of a summer's campaign exhausted their strength and patience, and they sunk in despair if their voracious appetite was disappointed of a plentiful supply of wine and of food. This general character of the Franks was marked with some national and local shades, which I should ascribe to accident, rather than to climate, but which were visible both to natives and to foreigners. An ambassador of the great Otho declared, in the palace of Constantinople, that the Saxons could dispute with swords better than with pens; and that they preferred inevitable death to the dishonour of turning their backs to an enemy". It was the glory of the nobles of France, that, in their humble dwellings, war and rapine were the only pleasure, the sole occupation, of their lives. They affected to deride the palaces, the banquets the polished manners, of the Italians, who, in the estimate of the Greeks themselves, had degenerated from the liberty and valour of the ancient Lombards".

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LIII.

Oblivion of  
the Latin  
language.

By the well-known edict of Caracalla, his subjects, from Britain to Egypt, were entitled to the name and privileges of Romans, and their national sovereign might fix his occasional or permanent residence in any province of their common country. In the division of the East and West, an ideal unity was scrupulously preserved, and in their titles, laws, and statutes, the successors of Arcadius and Honorius announced themselves as the inseparable colleagues of the same office, as the joint sovereigns of the Roman world and city, which were bounded by the same limits. After the fall of the Western monarchy, the majesty of the purple resided solely in the princes of Constantinople; and of these, Justinian was the first, who after a divorce of sixty years regained the dominion of ancient Rome, and asserted, by the right of conquest, the august title of emperor of the Romans<sup>96</sup>. A motive of vanity or discontent solicited one of his successors, Constant the second, to abandon the Thracian Bosphorus, and to restore the pristine honours of the Tyber: an extravagant project (exclaims the malicious Byzantine), as if he had despoiled a beautiful and blooming virgin, to enrich, or rather to expose, the deformity of a wrinkled and decrepit matron<sup>97</sup>. But the sword of the Lombards opposed his settlement in Italy: he entered Rome, not as a conqueror, but as a fugitive, and after a visit of twelve days, he pillaged, and for ever deserted, the ancient capital of the world<sup>98</sup>. The final revolt

and separation of Italy was accomplished about two centuries after the conquests of Justinian, and from his reign we may date the gradual oblivion of the Latin tongue. That legislator had composed his Institutes, his Code, and his Pandects, in a language which he celebrates as the proper and public style of the Roman government, the consecrated idiom of the palace and senate of Constantinople, of the camps and tribunals of the East<sup>97</sup>. But this foreign dialect was unknown to the people and soldiers of the Asiatic provinces, it was imperfectly understood by the greater part of the interpreters of the laws and the ministers of the state: After a short conflict; nature and habit prevailed over the obsolete institutions of human power: for the general benefit of his subjects, Justinian promulgated his novels in the two languages; the several parts of his voluminous jurisprudence were successively translated<sup>98</sup>: the original was forgotten, the version was studied, and the Greek, whose intrinsic merit deserved indeed the preference, obtained a legal as well as popular establishment in the Byzantine monarchy. The birth and residence of succeeding princes estranged them from the Roman idiom: Tiberius by the Arabs<sup>99</sup>, and Maurice by the Italians<sup>100</sup>, are distinguished as the first of the Greek Cæsars, as the founders of a new dynasty and empire: the silent revolution was accomplished before the death of Heraclius; and the ruins of the Latin speech were darkly preserved

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CHAP. in the terms of jurisprudence and the acclamations of the palace. After the restoration of the Western empire by Charlemagne and the Othos, the names of Franks and Latins acquired an equal signification and extent; and these haughty Barbarians asserted, with some justice, their superior claim to the language and dominion of Rome. They insulted the aliens of the East who had renounced the dress and idiom of Romans; and their reasonable practice will justify the frequent appellation of Greeks<sup>101</sup>. But this contemptuous appellation was indignantly rejected by the prince and people to whom it is applied. Whatsoever changes had been introduced by the lapse of ages, they alleged a lineal and unbroken succession from Augustus and Constantine; and, in the lowest period of degeneracy and decay, the name of ROMANS adhered to the last fragments of the empire of Constantinople<sup>102</sup>.

The Greek emperors and their subjects retain and assert the name of Romans.

Period of ignorance.

While the government of the East was transacted in Latin, the Greek was the language of literature and philosophy; nor could the masters of this rich and perfect idiom be tempted to envy the borrowed learning and imitative taste of their Roman disciples. After the fall of Paganism, the loss of Syria and Egypt, and the extinction of the schools of Alexandria and Athens, the studies of the Greeks insensibly retired to some regular monasteries, and above all to the royal college of Constantinople, which was burnt in the reign of Leo the Isaurian<sup>103</sup>. In the pompous style of the age, the president

of that foundation was named the Sun of Science; his twelve associates, the professors in the different arts and faculties, were the twelve signs of the zodiac; a library of thirty-six thousand five hundred volumes was open to their enquiries; and they could shew an ancient manuscript of Homer, on a roll of parchment one hundred and twenty feet in length, the intestines, as it was fabled, of a prodigious serpent<sup>104</sup>. But the seventh and eighth centuries were a period of discord and darkness; the library was burnt, the college was abolished, the Iconoclasts are represented as the foes of antiquity; and a savage ignorance and contempt of letters has disgraced the princes of the Heracleian and Isaurian dynasties<sup>105</sup>.

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In the ninth century, we trace the first dawnings of the restoration of science<sup>106</sup>. After the fanaticism of the Arabs had subsided, the caliphs aspired to conquer the arts, rather than the provinces, of the empire: their liberal curiosity rekindled the emulation of the Greeks, brushed away the dust from their ancient libraries, and taught them to know and reward the philosophers, whose labours had been hitherto repaid by the pleasure of study and the pursuit of truth. The Cæsar Bardas, the uncle of Michael the third, was the generous protector of letters, a title which alone has preserved his memory and excused his ambition. A particle of the treasures of his nephew was sometimes diverted from the indulgence of vice and folly; a school was

Revival of  
Greek learn-  
ing.

CHAP. opened in the palace of Magnaura; and the  
 LIII. presence of Bardas excited the emulation of the  
 masters and students. At their head was the  
 philosopher Leo, archbishop of Theſſalonica: his  
 profound ſkill in aſtronomy and the mathematics  
 was admired by the ſtrangers of the Eaſt; and  
 this occult ſcience was magnified by vulgar cre-  
 dularity, which modeſtly ſuppoſes that all know-  
 ledge ſuperior to its own muſt be the effect of  
 inſpiration or magic. At the preſſing entreaty  
 of the Cæſar, his friend, the celebrated Pho-  
 tius<sup>107</sup>, renounced the freedom of a ſecular and  
 ſtudious life, aſcended the patriarchal throne,  
 and was alternately excommunicated and abſolv-  
 ed by the ſynods of the Eaſt and Weſt. By the  
 confeſſion even of prieſtly hatred, no art or  
 ſcience, except poetry, was foreign to this uni-  
 verſal ſcholar, who was deep in thought, in-  
 defatigable in reading, and eloquent in diction.  
 Whiſt he exerciſed the office of protopſpathaire,  
 or captain of the guards, Photius was ſent am-  
 baſſador to the caliph of Bagdad<sup>108</sup>. The tedi-  
 ous hours of exile, perhaps of confinement, were  
 beguiled by the haſty compoſition of his *Library*,  
 a living monument of erudition and criticiſm.  
 Two hundred and fourſcore writers, hiſtorians,  
 orators, philoſophers, theologians, are reviewed  
 without any regular method: he abridges their  
 narrative or doctrine, appreciates their ſtyle and  
 character, and judges even the fathers of the  
 church with a diſcreet freedom, which often  
 breaks through the ſuperſtition of the times. The

emperor Basil, who lamented the defects of his own education, entrusted to the care of Photius his son and successor Leo the philosopher; and the reign of that prince and of his son Constantine Porphyrogenitus forms one of the most prosperous æras of the Byzantine literature. By their munificence the treasures of antiquity were deposited in the Imperial library; by their pens, or those of their associates, they were imparted in such extracts and abridgments as might amuse the curiosity, without oppressing the indolence, of the public. Besides the *Basilis*, or code of laws, the arts of husbandry and war, of feeding or destroying the human species, were propagated with equal diligence; and the history of Greece and Rome was digested into fifty-three heads or titles, of which two only ( of embassies, and of virtues and vices ) have escaped the injuries of time. In every station, the reader might contemplate the image of the past world, apply the lesson or warning of each page, and learn to admire, perhaps to imitate, the examples of a brighter period. I shall not expatiate on the works of the Byzantine Greeks, who, by the assiduous study of the ancients, have deserved in some measure the remembrance and gratitude of the moderns. The scholars of the present age may still enjoy the benefit of the philosophical common-place book of Stobæus, the grammatical and historic lexicon of Suidas, the *Chiliads* of Tzetzes, which comprise six hundred narratives in twelve thousand verses, and the

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commentaries on Homer of Eustathius archbishop of Thessalonica, who, from his horn of plenty, has poured the names and authorities of four hundred writers. From these originals, and from the numerous tribe of scholiasts and critics<sup>100</sup>, some estimate may be formed of the literary wealth of the twelfth century: Constantinople was enlightened by the genius of Homer and Demosthenes, of Aristotle and Plato; and in the enjoyment or neglect of our present riches, we must envy the generation that could still peruse the history of Theopompus, the orations of Hyperites, the comedies of Menander<sup>101</sup>, and the odes of Alcæus and Sappho. The frequent labour of illustration attests not only the existence but the popularity of the Grecian classics: the general knowledge of the age may be deduced from the example of two learned females, the empress Eudocia, and the princess Anna Comnena, who cultivated, in the purple, the arts of rhetoric and philosophy<sup>102</sup>. The vulgar dialect of the city was gross and barbarous: a more correct and elaborate style distinguished the discourse, or at least the compositions, of the church and palace, which sometimes affected to copy the purity of the Attic models.

Decay of  
taste and ge-  
nius.

In our modern education, the painful though necessary attainment of two languages, which are no longer living, may consume the time and damp the ardour of the youthful student. The poets and orators were long imprisoned in the barbarous dialects of our Western ancestors, devoid of

harmony or grace; and their genius, without precept or example, was abandoned to the rude and native powers of their judgment and fancy. But the Greeks of Constantinople, after purging away the impurities of their vulgar speech, acquired the free use of their ancient language, the most happy composition of human art, and a familiar knowledge of the sublime masters who had pleased or instructed the first of nations. But these advantages only tend to aggravate the reproach and shame of a degenerate people. They held in their lifeless hands the riches of their fathers, without inheriting the spirit which had created and improved that sacred patrimony: they read, they praised, they compiled, but their languid souls seemed alike incapable of thought and action. In the revolution of ten centuries, not a single discovery was made to exalt the dignity or promote the happiness of mankind. Not a single idea has been added to the speculative systems of antiquity, and a succession of patient disciples became in their turn the dogmatic teachers of the next fervile generation. Not a single composition of history, philosophy, or literature, has been saved from oblivion by the intrinsic beauties of style or sentiment, of original fancy, or even of successful imitation. In prose, the least offensive of the Byzantine writers are absolved from censure by their naked and unpretending simplicity; but the orators, most eloquent<sup>11</sup> in their own conceit, are the farthest removed from the models whom

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CHAPTER. they affect to emulate. In every page our taste  
 LIII. and reason are wounded by the choice of gigantic and obsolete words, a stiff and intricate phraseology, the discord of images, the childish play of false or unseasonable ornament, and the painful attempt to elevate themselves, to astonish the reader, and to involve a trivial meaning in the smoke of obscurity and exaggeration. Their prose is soaring to the vicious affectation of poetry: their poetry is sinking below the flatness and insipidity of prose. The tragic, epic, and lyric muses, were silent and inglorious: the bards of Constantinople seldom rose above a riddle or epigram, a panegyric or tale; they forgot even the rules of prosody; and with the melody of Homer yet sounding in their ears, they confound all measure of feet and syllables in the impotent strains which have received the name of *political* or *city verses*<sup>22</sup>. The minds of the Greeks were bound in the fetters of a base and imperious superstition, which extends her dominion round the circle of profane science. Their understandings were bewildered in metaphysical controversy: in the belief of visions and miracles, they had lost all principles of moral evidence, and their taste was vitiated by the homilies of the monks, an absurd medley of declamation and scripture. Even these contemptible studies were no longer dignified by the abuse of superior talents: the leaders of the Greek church were humbly content to admire and copy the oracles of antiquity, nor did the

schools or pulpit produce any rivals of the fame of Athanasius and Chrysoſtom<sup>114</sup>.

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In all the purſuits of active and ſpeculative life, the emulation of ſtates and individuals is the moſt powerful ſpring of the efforts and improvements of mankind. The cities of ancient Greece were caſt in the happy mixture of union and independence, which is repeated on a larger ſcale, but in a looſer form, by the nations of modern Europe: the union of language, religion, and manners, which renders them the ſpectators and judges of each others merit<sup>115</sup>: the independence of government and intereſt, which aſſerts their ſeparate freedom, and excites them to ſtrive for pre-eminence in the career of glory. The ſituation of the Romans was leſs favourable; yet in the early ages of the republic, which fixed the national character, a ſimilar emulation was kindled among the ſtates of Latium and Italy; and, in the arts and ſciences, they aſpired to equal or ſurpaſs their Grecian maſters. The empire of the Caſars undoubtedly checked the activity and progreſs of the human mind; its magnitude might indeed allow ſome ſcope for domeſtic competition; but when it was gradually reduced, at firſt to the Eaſt and at laſt to Greece and Conſtantinople, the Byzantine ſubjects were degraded to an abject and languid temper, the natural effect of their ſolitary and inſulated ſtate. From the North they were oppreſſed by nameleſs tribes of Barbarians, to whom they ſcarcely imparted the appellation of men. The language

Want of national emulation.

CHAP. and religion of the more polished Arabs were  
LIII. an insurmountable bar to all social intercourse. The conquerors of Europe were their brethren in the Christian faith; but the speech of the Franks or Latins was unknown, their manners were rude, and they were rarely connected, in peace or war, with the successors of Heraclius. Alone in the universe, the self-satisfied pride of the Greeks was not disturbed by the comparison of foreign merit; and it is no wonder if they fainted in the race, since they had neither competitors to urge their speed, nor judges to crown their victory. The nations of Europe and Asia were mingled by the expeditions to the Holy Land; and it is under the Comnenian dynasty that a faint emulation of knowledge and military virtue was rekindled in the Byzantine empire.