

set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. . . . it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever.'

The persecutions of the first three centuries were appalling tests of her endurance; but they were not the greatest dangers of the early Church. In them she met outside foes; her worst enemies were the traitors within the gates, her own children. She had met and defeated those who went out against her with sword and scaffold; would she defeat her own priests and bishops, her authorised leaders and defenders, become apostate and trying to destroy her faith, the root and foundation of her existence? She had already had experience of heretics and heresies, many of them; but they stood alone without secular aid. Would she defeat heresy when supported by the civil State? Observe that heretics always try by flattery, subservience, or cringing sacrifice of manhood and principle to bring kings, princes, governments, wealth over to their side. Without these they feel they can accomplish little. Arius and the bishops of his party succeeded in gaining the favor of emperors and their wives. So supported, they progressed in their career of violence and intrigue. They held councils and party synods; they banished the Catholic bishops from their sees, and intruded their own instead. Their influence extended far and wide; they drove the greatest man of the age, St. Athanasius, from Alexandria, and St. Hilary from far western Poitiers. They drove Pope Liberius from Rome, and kept him in prison for years. They seemed for the moment to have taken possession of Christendom. Men woke one morning, said St. Jerome ironically, to find the world turned Arian! But short-lived triumph! In fifty years Arianism had disappeared into the back-blocks occupied by a few obscure Gothic tribes, and the Catholic Nicene faith took its due place in the churches of Christendom. So the Church met and successively defeated great and power-bearing heresies—Arianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, and Iconoclasm.

Having achieved so glorious a victory over those forces of mind, heresy, and intrigue, the Church was destined to meet a second long-continued attack by physical violence. For 200 years, that is, speaking roughly, from the year 400 to the year 600, tribes of wild men from the steppes of Russia, the forests of Germany, the fiords of Denmark and Norway—Huns, Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Angles, Saxons, Normans—poured down over the fair provinces of the Roman Empire. Ruin marked their journeys. 'I am the scourge of God,' said one of their leaders, 'no grass shall grow where my troopers' horses have tramped.' They plundered cities and towns as they passed. They plundered monasteries, burnt churches, overturned altars. Whole territories were laid waste, and the populations mostly massacred. The barbaric armies reached Rome itself. The queen city was besieged and

taken. The invaders pillaged her wealth, revelled and rioted amidst her gardens, baths, and marble palaces. They scattered all her desirable things and all her artistic glories to the winds. The old society and the old order passed away. Confusion, ignorance, riot, darkness reigned instead. But where was the Christian Church all this time? Did she share the fate of the old civilisation? Were the causes which effected the ruin of the most powerful of empires able to destroy her? Wonderful! She rose from the ashes and ruins round about her. She appealed to the hearts and minds of those fierce barbarians; showed them and convinced them of the truth of the evidences of her divine commission; explained to them her credentials and her doctrines; convinced them of her divine origin and mission. And one by one those savage tribes came over to her, bowed before her altars, became her baptized children, rebuilt her churches and monasteries, and were ordained her priests and bishops. Old Rome, with its pomp and pride and luxury, had gone. A new Rome, with the Pope placed at its head by the Northmen, rose in its stead. The fall of the former tells us of the necessary fate of everything human. The rise of the latter tells us of the efficacy of the divine favor and protection. 'It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever.'

Time does not allow me to go into anything like satisfying details of the struggles of the Church during the ensuing centuries. Often the *Crucifigatur* of Friday was hurled at her; but the *Alleluias* of Easter Sunday were always sure to follow. I can only refer, in passing, to the contest between the Crescent and the Cross, which went on with vigor from, say, widely, 600 to 1600—that is, for 1000 years. Through ten centuries a fierce, almost unceasing, struggle was carried on. The armies of the Arabian fanatic, Mahomet, swept, in a short time, over Syria, Asia Minor, and North Africa. They threatened Italy; they crossed over into Spain. Everything went down before them; the old churches of the country, some of them dating from the days of the Apostles, were burnt or converted into Mohammedan mosques, and above their minarets was heard the cry of the muezzin from the Mediterranean to the Pyrenees. They crossed into France, and the coming of the white turban of Islam terrified men and women on the banks of the Loire and the Rhone. They had won one-third of Christendom. Their aim was to gain all. But, as usual, they failed. To make the long, long story of the Crusades short—Constantinople, once the second capital of Christendom, has been for centuries the capital of Mohammedanism. The glorious old Cathedral of Santa Sophia has been the central mosque of that religion. Well! A cablegram in yesterday's papers gave us in a few words news thrilling in its significance to the historian of



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