

Our Hour with the Editor

THE ROMAN EMPERORS

The immediate cause of the invasion of Italy by Alaric, the great leader of the Visigoths, was an appeal that came to him to put a stop to the slaughter of the wives and children of Barbarians, who lived in the Italian cities during the absence of their husbands and fathers in the Imperial army. The Visigoths, be it remembered, lived within the Roman Empire, where they had been permitted to settle some time previously, and although their ideas were always violated by the manners and customs of the Romans, they were content to recognize Roman suzerainty. The Gothic people had become divided into two branches, the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths, and it was the former, who had accepted the invitation of the Emperor and migrated into the eastern European provinces. They were called Barbarians, but the term was only one used to distinguish them from Roman citizens. They had embraced Christianity, and one of the most noted of the earlier books of that religion is the Gospel of Ulphilas, as it is called, being a translation by that priest of the Gospels into the language of the Visigoths, a work that seems to establish that the origin of English is to be sought in the speech of the Visigoths.

When Alaric had determined to invade Italy, he lost no time in acting. He met with no opposition worthy of the name. The Emperor of the West, the degenerate Honorius, shut himself up in Ravenna, a city surrounded by almost impenetrable marshes, and Alaric led his forces where he would until he came to the walls of Rome itself. It is not very clear just what his object was. As subsequent events showed, he had no desire to wear the imperial crown, and although his followers were doubtless guilty of many atrocities to individuals and destroyed much that was valuable in the way of buildings, the destruction wrought was by no means complete, nothing at all comparable to that which the Huns under Attila later left in their train. Whatever may have been his intentions, there is little doubt as to his conduct. He proceeded to invest Rome so completely that the city was absolutely cut off from communication with the surrounding country as well as with the sea. The populace were speedily reduced to terrible straits. In despair they sent an embassy to Alaric asking upon what terms he would consent to retire. He replied: "Give me all your gold, all your silver and all your slaves." The ambassadors asked what he proposed to leave to the Romans, and his answer was: "Only your lives." There ensued a period of suffering within the city, which historians confess their inability to describe. Food was so scarce that the most loathsome articles were eaten; cannibalism is said to have been general, and it is stated that mothers in many cases killed and ate their babes. The people died by the thousands and were left unburied in the streets for the reason that the citizens dared not venture beyond the gates. So hopeless did the case become that there was a demand from the people that the ancient gods of Rome should be appealed to for aid, and it is even said, although the statement lacks positive confirmation, that Pope Innocent was willing that this course should be adopted. The Senate refused its assent and the rites were not performed. At length Alaric consented to moderate his terms, and to raise the siege on receiving five thousand pounds of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, four thousand robes of silk, three hundred pieces of scarlet cloth and three thousand pounds of pepper, and the release of all slaves who could show that they were of Barbarian origin. These conditions having been complied with, Alaric withdrew and the sufferings of the citizens were promptly relieved.

Alaric frequently asserted that he had no desire other than to secure peace and the good government of the Western Empire, and the remarkable manner in which he held his resistless soldiers in check, reinforced as they were by the liberated slaves and new contingents of Goths, showed that he was bent upon something else than mere conquest. But the Romans themselves seemed determined upon bringing about their own destruction. Space will not permit even an outline of the events which led Alaric to advance once more against the city on the Tiber. It is sufficient to say that he was induced to do so by the bad faith of those who were administering affairs for Honorius, who, in the safety of Ravenna, issued his commands to his ministers, or, as is more probable, permitted them to carry out their own policies, which were characterized by base deceit, abominable cruelty and insatiable avarice. When forbearance ceased to be a virtue, and when his repeated requests that order should be restored remained unheeded, Alaric again appeared before the gates of Rome. Face to face with another famine, the citizens agreed to open the gates to the Goths, the understanding being that a new Emperor, in the person of Attalus, prefect of the city, should be proclaimed. This having been accomplished, Alaric again withdrew. Attalus made great promises as to what he would accomplish, and for a few days everything went well, but failure followed fast upon the heels of failure, and Alaric in disgust deprived the new emperor of all authority. He then made appeals to Honorius to establish permanent peace within his realms; but the massacre of a number of Goths, if not at the instigation of that tyrant, at least with his approval, led Alaric once more to the walls of Rome. This time he seemed resolved to be merciless. He obtained entrance into the city and gave it

over to the licentiousness of his soldiers. Only the consecrated vessels of the Church were safe from the hands of the invaders. The stories of indiscriminate slaughter may be exaggerated, but there can be no doubt that much blood was shed in the streets of the city and that the outrages common to such occasions were innumerable. There does not appear to have been much wanton destruction of buildings, but many works of art were ruthlessly destroyed. Thousands of the citizens fled, and for years afterwards wandered as mendicants throughout the country, some of them being dispersed as far as Constantinople and Jerusalem. At the end of six days Alaric ordered his troops to leave the city, and they returned towards Venetia laden with booty. On the way the intrepid leader died after a brief illness. His soldiers caused a number of captives to turn aside the waters of a stream called the Busentinus, and in its bed they made what they deemed was a fitting tomb for so great a man. In this they laid his body with many valuable jewels. The water of the stream was permitted to resume its natural course, and the slaves who had performed the work were slain so that no man might betray where the Gothic hero was buried.

TALES OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

The Wonderful City of Sargon II. of Assyria

Sargon II., 720 B.C. to 703 B.C., was one of the greatest of the oldtime monarchs. During the seventeen years he reigned in Assyria, he subjugated all the neighboring countries, until he was known as King of Assyria and Babylon, of Sumir and Accad. In the second year of his reign he completely defeated the Egyptians and their Philistine allies, and it was this battle that marked the beginning of the long struggle for supremacy between the Egyptians and Assyrians, which resulted in the triumph of the latter people.

Sargon called his city after himself, Dur-Sharrukin, and for the description which follows we are indebted to Maspero's History of Egypt, Vol. VII.

"The ground plan of it is of rectangular shape, the sides being about 1900 yards long by 1800 yards wide, each corner exactly facing one of the four corners of the compass. Its walls rest on a limestone sub-structure some three feet six inches high, and rise fifty-seven feet above the ground; they are strengthened every thirty yards or so by battlemented towers, which project thirteen feet from the face of the wall and stand sixteen feet higher than the ramparts. Access was gained to the interior by eight gates, two on each side of the square, each of them marked by two towers separated from one another by the width of the bay. Every gate had its patron chosen from the gods of the city. . . . each of them was protected externally by a small castle, built in the Syrian style and flanked at each corner by a low tower thirteen yards in width, five allowed of the passage of beasts as well as men. It was through these that the peasants came in every morning driving their cattle before them, or jolting along in wagons, laden with fruit and vegetables. After passing the outposts, they crossed a paved courtyard, then made their way between the two towers, through a vaulted passage over fifty yards long, intersected at almost equal intervals by two transverse galleries. . . . At the entrance to the passage towered two colossal bulls with human heads, standing like sentinels—their faces and foreparts turned outward, their hindquarters ranged along the inner walls—as though gazing before them into space in company with two winged genii. . . . The rays of the sun made the forecourt warm in winter, while it was always cool under the archway in summer; the gates served as resorts for pleasure or business. . . . It was here that the king generally exposed to view the chieftains and kings he had taken captive; here they lay, chained like dogs in cages, dependent on the pity of their guards or of passersby for such miserable fare as might be flung to them, and, the first feeling of curiosity once passed, no longer provoking even the jeers of the crowd, until the day came when their victor took it into his head to remove them from their ignominious position and either restored them to their thrones or had them executed. The town itself being built from plans drawn up in one mind, must have presented few of the irregularities of ancient cities. The streets leading from the gates were of a uniform breadth throughout. . . . they were passed. . . . and crossed at right angles. The houses on either side of them seem to have consisted for the most part of a single storey. They were built of bricks, either baked or unbaked, the outer surfaces of which were covered with either white or tinted rough casting. . . . The inhabitants varied greatly in race and language: Sargon had filled his city with prisoners from all the four quarters of the empire. . . . and in order to keep these incongruous elements in check he had added a number of Assyrians of the mercantile, official or priestly classes. He could overlook the whole city from the palace he had built on both sides the northeastern wall of the town, half within and half without the ramparts. . . . The only entrance to the palace was on the city side, foot passengers being admitted by a double flight of steps built out in front of the ramparts, horsemen and chariots by means of an inclined plane which rose in a gentle gradient along the right flank of the masonry work, and terminated on its eastern front. Two main gates corresponded

to these two means of approach: the one on the northeast led straight to the royal apartments; the other faced the city and opened on the double stairway. It was readily distinguishable by its two flagstaffs bearing the royal standard, and its two towers, at the base of which were winged bulls and colossal figures of Gilgamesh crushing the lion. Two bulls of still more monstrous size stood sentry on either side of the gate. . . . while higher up on the arch was an enamelled mosaic showing the king in all his glory. This triumphal arch was reserved for his special use, the common people being admitted by two side doors of smaller size less richly decorated."

After Sargon had once begun to build his city, he bent all of his energies toward hastening its completion and beautifying it, particularly the royal palace. All of the trophies which he brought home with him from his campaigns were now used in the building of the city. There were the wonderful colored marbles from the Assyrian mountains, lapis-lazuli, rock crystal, pine, cedar and cypress wood, gold, silver and bronze. Among the hundreds of statues round about the palace, nearly half were of silver, the rest were for the most part bronze. Many of them have come down to us intact, and show marvelous skill in carving. The palace itself was divided into two distinct parts, one part being used by the king in his public capacity, and containing the dining-rooms, the pantries and the kitchens, the wine cellars and the houses for the domestic servants and slaves. The huge entrance to the king's private apartments was guarded by a company of winged bulls. "Behind this gate was a lawn, then a second gate, a corridor and a grand quadrangle in the very centre of the palace. The king occupied a suite of some twenty rooms of a rather simple character; here he slept, ate, worked, and transacted the greater part of his daily business, guarded by his eunuchs. . . . The walls of his own and the other state apartments were lined to a height of over nine feet from the floor with endless bas-reliefs, in greyish alabaster, picked out with bright colors. "The gods had a particular part of the palace set apart for them, with a zigurat some 141 feet above the esplanade, and it was in the shadow of the zigurat that the harem was built. At the time of its building Sargon probably had three queens, as it is divided into three compartments, similar in character, an ante-chamber, and a large apartment, one half of which was open to the sky, while the other was covered by a half dome, under which a flight of steps led up to an alcove where the queens' couch was placed. This latter group of buildings was completed "by a park, in which cedars of Lebanon, pines, cypresses, gazelles, stags, wild asses and cattle, and even lions were acclimatized, in addition to a heterogeneous collection of other trees and animals. Here, too, the king gave himself up to the pleasures of the chase, and sometimes invited one or other of his wives to come thither and banquet or drink with him."

It was to this city, after his wonderful and triumphant reign that Sargon returned to die. He had hoped, now that his work was done, to pass some years in well-earned pleasures and repose. We can picture the monarch's entry through the great gates, the gay cavalades, the soldiers on horseback and afoot, the cheering crowds, and the brave king himself, his face beaming with pleasure as he gazed about him at the materialized picture his brain had conceived. But he lived only twelve short months after his return home, killed by the hand of some unknown assassin.

THE MINERAL KINGDOM

It is not to be understood that, because certain rocks are called igneous, they are the result of the operation of fire. Fire implies a burning, that is, a chemical process whereby violent combination takes place between oxygen and some inflammable substance, such as hydrogen or carbon. Fire produces heat, but it is not the same as heat, which is now believed to be due to the exceedingly rapid collision of the molecules of which matter is composed. A rock that is truly igneous was itself hot; it did not derive its heat from any extraneous source as iron does from the glowing coals of a blacksmith's forge. If, as some suppose, the interior of the earth is a super-heated mass, its heat is inherent in itself and not derived from any other agency. If you break a piece of cast-iron you will see that it is crystalline in structure. The crystals were formed when the iron changed from a liquid to a solid form. Similarly it is supposed that what are called igneous rocks were formed, although owing to the great pressure to which they were subjected below the solid surface it may be assumed that they were in most cases not actually liquid. Geologists find themselves confronted with some serious difficulties in this connection. They are all agreed, for example, that granite is an igneous rock formed beneath the surface of the earth, and that by the action of some not very well understood agency it was pushed up to the surface, to be later exposed by the wearing away of other rocks. But granite consists of quartz, feldspar and mica. Feldspar is sometimes called orthoclase. It is a silicate of aluminum. Quartz is the oxide of silicon; mica is also a silicate of aluminum. Speaking in a general way, aluminum is the basic element in clay, and silicon the basic element in sand. In feldspar and mica these two elements are found in combination with each other and with oxygen, and in the case of quartz the combination is

with oxygen alone. There are usually other elements mixed up with these in granite, but these two with oxygen are the fundamental ones. Now the difficulty which geologists have never been able to explain satisfactorily is as to how, given great heat under great pressure, the several compounds constituting granite were formed. Apparently it is one of Nature's laboratory secrets that she will not disclose. In the neighborhood of Victoria the country rock is chiefly diorite, which resembles granite in structure, but differs from it in composition, having hornblende in place of quartz. Extruding through the diorite are dykes of porphyry, which is composed of orthoclase or feldspar, that is, it is also a silicate of aluminum.

As was said in the former article, rocks which were not igneous were at one time grouped by geologists under the head of sedimentary, except where they had been subjected to a process of re-crystallization, when they were called metamorphic. It was mentioned that recently the stratified rocks had been divided into two classes, the surficial and the sedimentary. In the surficial class gravels, clays, sands and loams are included. They are the product of the erosion of the igneous rocks, but the soluble elements have been carried away leaving only quartz, silicate of alumina and oxide of iron. The erosion has been due to the action of water, ice and in some cases wind. Sedimentary rocks are those whose constituent elements were deposited by bodies of water in motion. Speaking generally, if you see a rock that is in layers, no matter at what angle it stands, you may conclude that it is of sedimentary origin.

While the action of water and wind upon the materials composing the surface of the earth has been very great, notably that of the former, the general opinion of geologists is that the great formative agency so far as the surface goes has been moving ice, either in the form of icebergs or glaciers. While there is abundance of evidence to sustain the Glacial Theory, it confessedly breaks down in some of the attempted applications of it. The appearance of the rock surfaces in North America as far south as between latitudes 36 and 40 seems to establish that the whole region was once covered with ice that moved slowly southward probably in obedience to the revolution of the earth, which has a tendency to cause movable masses to press towards the Equator. It is not necessary to suppose any great elevation at the north to explain this southward slide of the continental ice-sheet. Any one who has ever turned a grindstone, the lower part of which was immersed in water, knows that the revolving stone will carry up some of the water and throw it off into the air. This is due to what is called centrifugal force. It is this that has caused the earth to have a greater diameter at the Equator than at the Poles. Now if we suppose the northern hemisphere to be largely covered with ice free to move, which was constantly being added to by snowfalls, the tendency of the mass to move towards the Equator would be accentuated by its increasing weight, and hence it is probable that glacial action was more rapid in what is called the Ice Age than it is now. But be this as it may, and although there are some things about sands and gravels that cannot be explained satisfactorily by anything that glaciers are known to do at the present time, it is as well established, as anything can be that no one has seen or can be proved by human testimony, that a large portion of the North Temperate Zone was, at a period comparatively recent, as geologists reckon time, covered with a great ice mass. John Muir, the geologist, writes: "On the Atlantic Coast, where man is busiest, even in the parks and gardens of New York, glacial rocks shine and call attention to the story of the Ice Period; and in the town of Victoria on the west side of the Continent, fruitful boughs drop apples and peaches on the edges of glacier pavements, while the harbor rocks are still bright, notwithstanding the centuries of wave action they have been subjected to." There are, indeed, few places where the marks of glacial action are more pronounced than in this city. Almost everywhere the exposed rocks show not only glacial scratchings, but exhibit surfaces deeply and broadly grooved and polished to smoothness. The soil hereabouts is supposed to be of glacial origin, although centuries of vegetable growth have mixed organic matter with the sands, gravels and clays. Comparison of the soil here with glacial soils in Eastern Canada suggests that the soil-forming process has been more recent here than there, and there is a good deal of reason for believing that the Ice Age in this part of the Continent was prolonged until a time within the memory of the aboriginal races.

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

It is very pleasant to receive, as we do from time to time, letters expressing pleasure at the perusal of articles on this page dealing with subjects of religious thought, and to be asked occasionally to treat of some phase of it. If we are rarely able to comply with such requests, it is not because we do not appreciate them, but because we wish to avoid anything that may appear to be in any sense controversial. The objects aimed at in these articles is rather to stimulate religious thought than to attempt to form the religious opinions of readers. Convinced that there is a solid foundation for the religion of Jesus Christ, we have endeavored to show how very unimportant those things are upon which the several

branches of the Christian Church are divided, and that many things which many people find obstacles to religious thought are not of a basic character but result from misunderstandings, from a too literal interpretation of the Scriptures and from a disregard of the fundamental truths. If the Emperor Theodosius had not declared all the followers of Arianism heretics and threatened them with persecution, it might have been the Athanasians and Arians would have been content to live side by side, satisfied to agree to disagree upon points that neither of them could really pretend to understand. Unless we believe that the Council of Nicea was divinely guided to accept the doctrines of Athanasius and reject those of Arius, and that Theodosius was also divinely guided to issue his famous proclamation, we will have to reject the idea that the welfare of mankind depends upon a certain interpretation of manuscripts, the authorship of which cannot be established without qualification, and the translations of which are certainly not perfect. As all religious controversy arises out of scriptural interpretation, and as religious controversy is not religious thought, we desire as far as possible to avoid anything of the kind.

The chief idea, that it has been the purpose of these articles to impress upon those who read them, is that there is a life which is spiritual, and that this spiritual life may be lived here and now; that the real purpose of religious thought is to fit mankind to live this life; that there are spiritual forces available to mankind; that there are things that can only be "spiritually discerned," and that to live the spiritual life is not incompatible with the reasonable and best enjoyment of the physical life. In short, the aim is to establish that a perfect life implies the best use of our physical, mental and spiritual powers, and that if we develop ourselves on these three lines we need have no fear of what the future either on this or the other side of the grave may have in store for us.

Religious thought need not concern itself with creeds and definitions. To expend one's time and energy in such a task is like sitting in a room with the curtains drawn and wondering if it is morning when all we have to do is to throw open the windows and let the sunlight in. One of the most beautiful stories of Jesus is that which tells of His blessing the little children and saying: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God." Again we find Him saying: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God." The little children came unto Him. They did not stand off and speculate just what His mission was; they had never heard anything about the doctrines for refusing to accept which later generations burned people at the stake. They just came. The whole New Testament is full of this thought. Paul had to argue with the Corinthians and others, because he felt it necessary to meet them on their own ground. Christianity was a very new thing then. He adapted his arguments to circumstances, just as Jesus met the question as to the lawfulness of paying tribute money. He expressed no opinion. He met his questioners by asking to be shown the tribute money, and when told that the image and superscription thereon was Caesar's, He said: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Paul had good precedent, if he needed it, to engage in intellectual fencing with those who opposed him and who delighted in intellectual discussion. He was able to more than hold his own with them in argument. When he saw the inscription at Athens to "The Unknown God," he did not tell the people how very wicked they were to think of such a thing, but he said he had come to declare the Unknown to them. The very scrappy accounts preserved of the teachings of Paul afford some idea of his intellectual powers and wonderful adaptability to the needs of discussion. There is little wonder that he carried men with him. But all that happened more than eighteen hundred years ago. We have eighteen centuries of Christian history, and if there is not sufficient proof in their record of the divinity of the Christian religion, it is hopeless to try to bolster it up by endeavoring to interpret ancient writings dating from a period long before Christianity was ever heard of. Many of the noblest of Christians lived at a time when there was no Old Testament or New Testament available for perusal. Not only did they live as Christians but they died for the faith that was in them. It is more than doubtful if any of the Christians, whom Nero caused to be slain, could pass an examination in the Catechism. Let us, when we engage in religious thought, clear away the ground of everything that prevents thought from having freedom. If "the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the inward operation of His Holy Spirit," it is not necessary to worry yourself because you cannot understand the process.

Religion is a very simple thing. It simply consists in opening the windows of our souls to let the sunlight of God's presence in. Religious thought need concern itself only with attaining this result. The proof that such a result is attainable is overwhelming, and the wonderful thing about it is that every person can prove it for himself. It is not necessary to believe any one else unless you want to. Neither pope nor parson can give you the spiritual life. "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, and cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."