

Europe ever since, amid all the vicissitudes of its fate. This new mistress of the Roman world continued to be the seat of the Eastern division of the Latin Empire more than a thousand years after Old Rome was sacked by Alaric's valiant Goths.

Whence came the rude people that now hold sway over so large and fair a portion of the dominions of mighty Rome? In the sixth century an enslaved tribe of central Asia, toiled at the forges which blazed on the slopes of the Altai Mountains, where they fabricated arms for the dominant horde which oppressed and despised them. At a favourable moment, under the guidance of a brave and skilful leader, the subject race rose upon their oppressors, and after a fierce and bloody contest, almost exterminated them. Pursuing a rapid course of conquest, the victorious warriors reduced to their sway the countless hordes which roamed over the pastoral plains of northern and central Asia; and they founded a great Scythian Empire which reached from the Oxus to the frozen north, and from the frontiers of China to the boundaries of Persia. This powerful people became known to the Roman world under the name of Turks, when Justinian sat upon the tottering throne of the ancient Cæsars which was steadied for a time by the genius and valour of the great Belisarius; and when the fame of the Sassanidae was more than sustained upon the throne of Persia by the brilliant qualities of Nushirvan the Just. The Turkish power continued unbroken for about two hundred years, after which the Turkish race was scattered in independent communities from China to the banks of the Danube. These northern shepherds were often the slaves, the warriors, and not unfrequently the masters, of the degenerating dynasties of Western Asia. Among the princes of Turkish blood, that thus supplanted the native possessors of a foreign