

It is in balancing evidence on a point like this that we expect such a rapid—one may say, headlong—writer as our author to fail. But for vivid and effective delineation of a most characteristic story, take that of Augustine and Alypius, and the uproar in Church over the question of the ordination of Pinianus (ii. pp. 575 *seq.*).

That which gives an imperishable interest to the great or notable men whom Archdeacon Farrar has portrayed, is the historical momentum which they give to the whole after age of the Church and of the world, throughout the centuries which follow the fall of Jerusalem, and which makes that catastrophe the turning-point of human history. These new forms of spiritual life wait in solemn groups round the lingering death-bed of the old Empire and assist the birth throes of all that has come since. The Julio-Claudian dynasty dies out in Nero, the Flavian in Domitian, that of Trajan, recruited by adoption, in Commodus. Each of them thus determines in a monster from whom a long-suffering world at last relieved itself by an assassin's hand. The next, the Septimian, ends in a bright specimen who similarly perished, but untimely and too young to make his mark, Alexander Severus. Ruthless ferocity, military energy, and unlettered barbarism make up the character of Maximin who follows. That such a series should be tolerated, and should go on repeating itself, until the dead level of a sycophant empire is reached in Arcadius and Honorius, is a cumulative proof of the moral impotency of what once was mighty Rome.

It is probable, indeed, that the progress of Christianity hastened her decline and precipitated her fall. But this was chiefly owing to the instinctive antagonism with which she encountered the Christian idea of virtue, sanctified by religion and sanctifying freedom. That idea contained the germ of a new liberty, and therefore was inconsistent with—if one may coin a word—an *effervescent* Cæsarism. Because Rome was identified with an idea irreconcilable with Christianity, therefore her decay was irretrievable. This applies primarily to the Imperial city and its society, to other cities and their societies in proportion as they approached it. No socio-