

gifts with the Roman genius, and produce works of novelty and originality, yet able to charm the world" ("Apostles," 268-9).

The accurate historian Hallam, speaking of the times of Marcus Aurelius, says: "There were men who made the age famous—grave lawyers, judicious historians, wise philosophers; the name of learning was honorable, its professors were encouraged, and along the vast surface of the Roman Empire was, perhaps, a greater number whose minds were cultivated by intellectual discipline than under the more brilliant reign of the Cæsars" ("Middle Ages," 451).

From the death of Marcus Aurelius the arts and sciences declined rapidly; philosophy became perverted, the Latin language corrupted, and the intellectual condition disheartening in the extreme. It was, we must here add, about this time that Christianity, although not yet established, began to be strongly felt in the Empire. However it may be explained, the fact is undeniable that the progress of this system of faith corresponded with decay of intellect, and its complete ascendancy was succeeded by a night of mental and moral darkness. "From the death of Marcus Aurelius," says Lecky, "about which time Christianity assumed an important influence in the Roman world, the decadence of the Empire was rapid and almost uninterrupted" ("History Morals," ii. 12).

It has been often said that Rome made herself rich by conquest and plunder. This is true; and the remark applies not only to all the great nations of antiquity, but to not a few of modern times, in which Christianity has been the popular faith. It would be unjust, however, not to admit that the policy of the pagan Empire toward the conquered provinces was generally characterized by wisdom and justice. Speaking of the reign of Hadrian and the two Antonies, Gibbon says: "By every honorable expedient they invited the friendship of the barbarians, and endeavored to convince mankind that the Roman power, raised above the temptation of conquest, was actuated only by the love of order and justice. During a long reign of forty-three years their various labors were crowned with success; and if we except a few slight hostilities that served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antonius Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace. The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians submitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor, and we are informed by a contemporary historian that he had seen ambassadors who were refused the honor which they came to solicit, of being admitted into the rank of subject" ("Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," ch. i. p. 22).

"If a man were called to fix the period," says the same author, "in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian . . . to the accession of Commodus" (Ibid, ch. ii. p. 73).

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