

idea can be formed of the depravity of the times of which I speak. (See "Lecky's Morals," ii. 348-355.)

I have already remarked that one of the best features of the pagan civilization—religious freedom—was destroyed as soon as Christianity gained an ascendancy. "From the very moment the Church obtained civil power under Constantine," says Lecky, "the general principle of coercion was admitted and acted on both against the Jews, the heretics, and the pagans" ("Hist. Rationalism," ii. 32). Constantine made it penal for any Christian to become a Jew. Any Jew who married a Christian incurred the penalty of death. Arian and Donatist parties were forbidden to assemble, their writings were burnt, and many of them were condemned to death. "' See how these Christians love one another,' was the just and striking exclamation of the heathen in the first century. 'There are no wild beasts so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith,' was the equally striking and probably equally just exclamation of the heathen of the fourth century" (Ib.)

Constantine did all he could to extirpate paganism by violence. He prohibited every form of pagan worship. Constantius made additional laws, forbidding the pagans to perform in public or in private the rites of their religion. Under Theodosius—who began his reign in 379—the pagans were deprived of all offices, their worship forbidden, and their temples destroyed. The appeals of the pagans were made in vain. Heartrending indeed are the accounts of the persecutions of the pagans that lived in the country districts remote from the centres of population where the old religion had yet a stronghold. They pleaded that the temple was to them "the very eye of nature, the symbol and manifestation of an ever-present Deity, the solace of all their troubles, the holiest of all their joys. If it was overthrown, their dearest association would be annihilated. The tie that linked them to the dead would be severed. The poetry of life, the consolation of labor, the source of faith would be destroyed." But their pleas availed naught; their temples were reduced to ruins and their worship absolutely prohibited. These persecutions were urged on by the Fathers of the Church. Eusebius eulogized Constantine for his edicts against pagan worship. Augustine used all the power of his brilliant mind to fan the flame of persecution. He drew his argument in its favor from the Old and New Testaments alike. Any one who celebrated the rites of the pagan religion in his time, he declared, incurred the penalty of death, and this sentence, he said, was unanimously applauded by the whole Christian Church (Gibbon, chap. xxv).

When paganism was suppressed, the persecuting spirit of the Christian system exhibited itself in the attempt made to extirpate, by violence, every heresy that appeared.

What innumerable multitudes have suffered and perished that the Christian religion might flourish. The transubstantiation controversy, which raged at intervals all over Christendom, cost the lives of between 300,000 and 400,000 human beings. The famous image controversy