

Theodosius being then at Milan, St. Ambrose, the Bishop of that city, excommunicated him and forbade him to enter the Church. The Emperor humbly accepted the penance and gained admittance to the Church only after decreeing that a law should be passed by which sentences of capital punishment could not be put into execution until an interval of thirty days had elapsed.

III. — Division of the Empire. — 63. At the death of Theodosius in 395, the Roman Empire was divided into the Eastern and the Western Empire.

By this division Rome was weakened, at a time when it was on the verge of sustaining the rudest and most numerous attacks.

The Visigoths, led by Alaric, first ravaged Macedonia, Thessaly and Greece. They then invaded Italy, took Rome, pillaged it and set fire to a part of it (409). These barbarians afterwards passed over into Southern Gaul and there founded a kingdom which extended over the greater part of Spain.

The Suevi, the Burgundians, the Alans, the Vandals and the Franks in turn swept down upon the Empire of the West; consequently in the middle of the fifth century the Franks were to be found in the north of Gaul, the Burgundians in the valley of the Rhone, while the Alans, the Suevi, and the Vandals had crossed the Pyrenees and settled in Spain.

In 451 the Huns, led by Attila, crossed the Rhine and overran Gaul. The tribes that had already settled in that country then united with the remnants of the Roman legions under the command of Aetius and together overcame Attila at Chalons-sur-Marne.

Rome, now delivered from Attila, found another enemy in the person of Genseric, King of the Vandals, who took possession of it in 445. From that day, the Western Empire hastened to its destruction and finally passed out of history in 476. Odoacer, King of the Heruli, dethroned the last heir of Augustus, Romulus Augustulus and took the title of King of Italy. Henceforward