

Armenia
A year at Erzerum, and on the frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Persia.

By the Hon. Robert Curzon*
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CHAPTER XIV.
PRESENT CONDITION OF ARMENIA.

Impassable Character of the Country.-Dependence of Persia on the Czar. - Russian Aggrandizement. - Delays of the Western Powers. - Russian Acquisitions from Turkey and Persia. - Oppression of the Russian Government. - The Conscription. - Armenian Emigration. - The Armenian Patriarch. -Latent Power of the Pope. - Anomalous Aspect of religious Questions.

The description of Armenia and the adjacent districts in the foregoing pages will have sufficed to give a general idea of the many difficulties to be encountered by those whose business leads them through this inhospitable region, where they meet with impediments at every step, from the lofty mountains traversed by roads accessible only to mules and horses, the extreme cold of the high passes and elevated plains, the impossibility of obtaining provisions, and the savage character of the Koords and other wandering tribes who roam over this wild country. If a traveler, accompanied by a few followers, and assisted by firmans from the Sultan, finds this journey arduous in the extreme, how much more so must it prove to the general in command of an army, with many thousand men to provide for, with artillery and heavy baggage to encumber his march, on roads inaccessible to carriages or wheeled vehicles of any kind! and if to these is added an enemy on the alert to cut off supplies, to harass the long, straggling line of march, and to attack the passing army in narrow defiles from behind rocks, and from the summits of precipices, where they are safe from molestation, it will be understood that the difficulties presenting themselves to military operations in these regions are almost insuperable. It is the inaccessible nature of Circassia, even more than the bravery of its inhabitants, which has enabled them to resist the overwhelming power of Russia for so many years. On the approach to Erzerum these difficulties increase. From Georgia, Persia, and Trebizond, there is no other city or entrepot where

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The passages extracted from the account of his long-termed stay at Erzurum are devoted mainly to Armenians, their political history, church, and script, including manuscripts (Preface and pp.191-253). Although the sources used by the author are not cited and several suggestions contradict to modern scholarship, the book of R. Curzon submits new details to the understanding of the Armenian history and culture several decades before the tragic early XX century.

an army could rest to lay in stores and collect supplies for a campaign, with the exception of Erzeroom, which is the centre or key to all these districts. If it was strongly fortified, as it should be, or was, at any rate, in the occupation of an active, intelligent government, the power who possessed it would hold the fate of that part of Asia in its hands.

No caravans could pass, no mercantile speculations could be carried on, and no large bodies of troops could march without its permission. They would, in all probability, perish from the rigors of the climate if they were not assisted, even without the necessity of attacking them by force of arms. At this moment, the greater part of the artillery of the Turkish army is, I believe, buried under the snow in one of the ravines between Beyboort and Erzeroom from whence it has no chance of being rescued till next summer. It was the impassable character of country, and the treacherous habits of the robber tribes of Koordistan, which made the retreat of Xenophon and the Ten Thousand through the same regions the wonderful event which it has been always considered. While this is the of the elevated lands and mountains, the valleys which surround the snowy regions are absolutely pestiferous: in many of them no one can sleep one night without danger of fever, frequently ending in death. The port, or roadstead, of Batoum is so unhealthy as to be utterly uninhabitable to strangers during all the hot season of the year. I wish to draw attention to these circumstances, in order to explain the almost impossibility of dispossessing any power which had already obtained a firm footing in this district; and it is in order to fix herself firmly in this important post that Russia is now advancing in that direction, with a perfect knowledge of the advantages to be derived from this barren and unfruitful region, while she has the advantage of being able to send supplies to her forces by the Caspian Sea; for, once within her grasp, Persia is no longer independent; and, fettered as she is by her Russian debt, and what, in private affairs, would be called her heavy mortgage on her only valuable provinces on the shores of the Caspian-Geilaun and Mazenderaun - she must sink into the state of a vassal kingdom, subject to the commands of her superior lord the Czar.

The sum she owes to Russia is said to be about two millions sterling; far more than she could ever raise at a short notice, while she would receive no assistance in war from any of the neighboring Sooni tribes, whose religious feelings are so much opposed to the Sheahs; therefore, unless supported by Great Britain, Persia is now almost at the mercy of Russia. Russia is altogether a military power, and, as in the Dark Ages, the Czar and his nobles affect to despise the mercantile class, and, instead of doing what they can to promote industry and commerce, by opening communications, making roads and harbors, establishing steamers on rivers, and giving facility to the interchange of various commodities, the productions of distant quarters of her own enormous empire, she throws every obstacle in the way of her internal trade, and by heavy import duties, exactions of many oppressive kinds, and the universal plunder and cheating carried on by all the government officials in the lower grades of employment, she has paralyzed both her foreign and domestic resources. The Czar prefers to buy his

own aggrandizement with the blood of his confiding subjects, to the more honorable and less cruel course of enriching his empire by the extension of his commercial relations abroad, and the development of the peaceful arts, industry, science, and general improvement of the nations subjected to his rule. If it was not for this utter disregard of commerce, and the undivided attention of the Russian government to everything connected with military glory, the navigation of the great rivers would have poured many more roubles into the treasury of St. Petersburg than will be gained by any territorial accessions previous to the taking of Constantinople. Even under present circumstances, it is wonderful that a canal has not been made from Tzaritzin, on the Volga, to the nearest point upon the Don, a distance of not more than thirty miles, for by this means the silk of the northern provinces of Persia would be brought with the greatest facility into the Black Sea. In a mercantile point of view, Russia would gain more by the construction of that canal by the conquest of Armenia, for it would enable her to develop the great resources of Geilaun and Mazenderann, virtually belonging to her at this moment. The trade which in former times enriched the famous cities of Bokhara and Samarkand would be carried by caravans through Khiva, either now, or soon to be, the head-quarters of a Russian governor; from thence they would, with any encouragement, pass on their rich bales of merchandise to the Russian posts of Karagan, or Krasnovodsk, on the eastern shores of the Caspian, or to Asterabad on the south, and at these ports, now unknown to European navigators, ships might be laden which would discharge their cargoes at Liverpool, St. Petersburg, or New York.

I have said above that Russia has but little to gain by her territorial conquests in Asiatic Turkey until she takes Constantinople. I say this because, if things are permitted by the Western Powers to continue as they have done for some years, the Czar will most certainly be enthroned in the capital of the Byzantine emperors, principally by the assistance of England and France. It is a question only of time: for that the Patriarch of Constantinople will give his blessing to the Christian emperor under the dome of St. Sofia sooner or later, and before many years have passed, have hardly any doubt; and when once fairly seated on that throne, the Powers of Europe will not shake him in his seat. The acquisition of the Crimea, with the strong naval arsenal of Sevastopol, gave the Czar the command of the Black Sea. The wonderful business of Navarino, where the English and French admirals fought his battle for him, and crippled his enemy and their own ancient ally for many a year, was the next important step. The third seems to be taking place at this moment, if indeed sufficient advantages have not been gained already to suffice for the present emergency. It matters little whether Russia does or does not retain the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, which she has several times occupied before; she has almost drained the treasury of her enemy, now straining every nerve to avert the impending evil. Turkey will hardly be able to support the expenses of the war for any length of time from her own resources. Even if a diplomatic peace is concluded, it will, in fact, amount only to a truce, during which the Czar will have time to strengthen his position, and prepare his forces for another and a more vigorous assault

on the first convenient opportunity which occurs, from any dissension which may arise between the leading powers of the West; and the Sultan, having received nothing from his ancient allies but fair words, will be less able to defend himself than he is at present.

The greatest of blessings in this world is peace, and everything should be done to avoid the breaking out of war, with all the horrors and sufferings which" are brought upon mankind by that dreadful scourge. I think it was the Duke of Wellington who said that, next to a defeat, the most awful of all calamities was a victory. Every endeavor should be made to secure the happiness of peace. To those, however, who have no further means of information than what they read in newspapers, it would seem that, while we might have put out the candle, we have waited till the chimney is on fire, if not the house itself, and then who can tell how far and wide the conflagration may extend?

If England and France had shown a determined front, and informed the Czar that, being bound by treaty to preserve the integrity of the Turkish empire, they should consider the passage of the Pruth by one Russian armed man as a violation of that treaty and a declaration of war, and that they should act accordingly without delay, in all probability no war would have commenced, no blood would have been shed, no ruinous expenses would have been incurred. War having commenced, heavy and exhausting sums of money have been drawn from the treasury of the Sultan. When the ice set in upon the Baltic, what was to prevent the allied fleet from taking possession of the stores of com, and occupying or destroying the city of Odessa? Sevastopol, impregnable by sea, is not-or was not two years ago, and, I believe, at this day is not-defensible on the land side. The Bay of Streleskaia offers a convenient landing-place about three miles in the rear of the fortifications of the arsenal, where a Turkish army might be brought in two days from Constantinople to try its fortunes with the Russian force; or, if that was not judged expedient, Sevastapol could have been blockaded till some advantageous terms were gained for our ally. Failing this, a French army, convoyed and assisted by their own and our fleets, would have settled the question without doubt, and may do so still; but, unless an indemnity for the expenses of the war is exacted from Russia for her most unjust and unjustifiable aggression, very little advantage will be gained for Turkey, a great step will have been accomplished by the Czar, and the possession of the Crimea almost insures him the possession of Constantinople some day, perhaps at no very distant period. The restoration of the Crimea to the Turkish empire would, I imagine, be the only means of checking the advance of Russia in that direction. This, accompanied by a forced treaty, releasing Persia from her usurious debt, would restrain the encroachments of the Czar within certain bounds for some years to come. The present aspect of affairs in the East becomes more alarming every day. If negotiations are protracted till the ice of the Baltic melts in the spring or early summer, things will assume a much more grave appearance, and it will depend on many circumstances over which we have no control where the conflagration then may spread and where the war will end.

It is impossible to look back upon the history of Russia for the last 150 years without admiration and astonishment at the enormous strides which have been made by the giants of the north since that period. When Peter the Great acceded to the throne of Muscovy, there was no maritime outlet to his empire excepting in the icy shores of the Northern Ocean. The ground on which the metropolis of St. Petersburg now stands was not in the possession of Russia till the year 1721. Since the year 1774 Russia has acquired, quite in the memory of man, a territory from Turkey equal in extent to the whole empire of Austria, and much larger than the present possessions of the Turks in Europe. The following table of the progress of the Russian arms in the East will show at a glance how rapidly and steadily she has extended her power, her grasping hand, and her outstretched arm in that direction; and it can not be expected that, when she has rested and strengthened herself, and consolidated her resources in her newly-acquired territories, she will be prevented by any slight obstacle from farther aggrandizement.

RUSSIAN ACQUISITIONS FROM TURKEY.

Country to the north of the Crimea	1774
The Crimea	1783
Country round Odessa.....	1792
Country between the Sea of Azof and the Caspian, at the same period as the Crimea.....	1783
Besarabia.....	1812

RUSSIAN ACQUISITIONS FROM PERSIA

Mingrelia, on the Black Sea	1802
Immeritia, the same year	1802
Akalzik	1829
Georgia	1814
Ganja	1803
Karabaugh	1805
Erivan, Mount Ararat, and Etchmiazin	1828
Sheki.....	1805
Shirvan.....	1806
Talish, on the Caspian	1812

Few of these conquered or deluded nations have been able to bear the intolerable oppression of the Russian government, arising from the insolence of the petty employés, and more particularly the dreadful scourge of the conscription, by the aid of which, at any moment, children are remorselessly torn forever from their parents, whose sole support they were; families are on a sudden divided; one half sent off no

one knows whither, never to meet again; none of these unhappy slaves knowing whether it will be their lot to become soldiers or sailors; but, in either case, they are driven off, like beasts, in flocks, by cruel, savage tyrants, who steal, as a matter of course, the money provided by the superior government for the food of the despairing conscripts, while they-brutal and drunken though they may are distinguished for their love of home, and the affection and respect they bear for their parents.

The Nogai Tatars abandoned the Christian religion, and too refuge in the territories of the Khan of the Crimea, becoming Mohammedans in hopes of obtaining the protection of the milder rule of Turkey.

In 1771 a still more extraordinary event took place. The Kalmuks, a people who had emigrated from the frontiers of China, unable to endure the insults and oppressions of the Russian tyranny, made up their minds to return to the dominions of the Celestial Empire, from whence their ancestors had originally come. They fought their way through all the hostile tribes intervening between them, and their whole nation arrived safely under the wing of the Emperor of China, who afforded them protection, and gave them great tracts of land for the pasture of their flocks and herds. The ambassador of the Empress Catharine, who had been dispatched to desire the surrender of the fugitive tribe, and-as at this day in Turkey-to demand a "renewal of treaties" between the two countries, received the following answer from the court of Pekin: "Let your mistress learn to keep old treaties, and then it will be time to apply for new ones;" an answer which might have been given in our day to Prince Menschikoff, who was lucky in meeting with a milder reception at Constantinople than his predecessor received from the stout old mandarin at Pekin.

In the year 1829, Kars, Bayazeed, Van, Moush, Erzeroom, and Beyboort (which is coming very near) were occupied by the Russians, who evacuated that portion of the Turkish empire on the conclusion of the treaty of Adrianople. Trusting to the protestations of a Christian emperor, sixty-nine thousand Christian Armenian families were beguiled into the folly of leaving Mohammedan dominions, and sitting in peace under the paternal protection of the Czar. Over their ruined houses I have ridden, and surveyed with sorrow their ancient churches in the valleys of Armenia, desecrated and injured, as far as their solid construction permitted, by the sacrilegious hands of the Russian soldiers, who tried to destroy those temples of their own religion which the Turks had spared, and under whose rule many of the more recent had been rebuilt on their old foundations. The greater part of these Armenians perished from want and starvation; the few who survived this sharp lesson have since been endeavoring, by every means in their power, to return to the lesser evils of the frying-pan of Turkey, from whence they had leaped into the fire of despotic Russia.

By the treaty of Turkomanchai, 1828, the Czar became possessed of Persian Armenia, of which the capital is Erivan. In this district are contained the two great objects of Armenian veneration, Etchmiazin -and Mount Ararat. This noble snowy mountain takes the place, in the estimation of the Armenians, that Mount Sinai and

Mount Zion do among the followers of other Christian sects.

The foolish legends which disgrace the purity of true religion usually relate to the object of local tradition which may be met with in the neighborhood of the monastery; consequently an attack of indigestion in an Armenian monk generally produces a vision of some nonsensical revelation about Noah's ark, which is still supposed to remain, hidden to mortal eye, under the clouds and snows of Mount Ararat.

Etchmiazin is an ancient fortified monastery, within whose walls resides the Patriarch of the Armenian Church, the spiritual head of that body, and who is looked up to indeed as the temporal chief of that scattered nation whose industrious children are settled in India, Constantinople, and in many other parts of the world, so that those who live and thrive abroad are much more numerous and more wealthy than those who reside in Armenia itself. The possession, therefore, of the person and residence of the Patriarch is a fact of no small importance in the history of Russian advancement. To undertake a pilgrimage to Etchmiazin is a meritorious act among the professors of the Armenian faith; and the influence exercised over the Patriarch is diffused, through the obedient medium of bishops, priests, and deacons, through all parts of Turkey, and many of the cities of India, to an extent which would surprise those who never have troubled themselves with the affairs of the Armenian jeweler or silver-smith in an Eastern bazaar, for they are almost invariably dealers in jewels and precious metals; or serafs, bankers, among the native population; a position which renders their influence of no small consequence in every city where they reside. By these means, among others, the political interest of the Czar is nourished and extended on the Persian Gulf, at Bombay, Bushire, Madras, and many another place, in the same manner as the sway and power of the Roman pontiff is upheld, and that by no weak and trembling hand, in Ireland, England, London, and the House of Commons. And yet we pretend that there is no such power as the See of Rome; we ignore the existence of the Pope, and sneer at the prince of a petty Italian state supported by French bayonets, who is in that rotten and decaying state that we or our children are to see his end.

But my belief is, that the power of Rome is by no means in a falling state, nor would it be so even if the rule of some band of miscreants usurped for a little while the misgovernment of the Eternal City. The power of the Pope is now, at this moment, one of the greatest upon the earth; and as irreligion and *dissent* increase, so will the most wonderfully clever institution of the temporal power of the Roman Church increase. Its minute and marvelous organization, the perfect understanding and subordination of the inferior to the superior officer, its fixed and certain purpose, give the Pope the command over such a united and well-disciplined army of trained and fearless soldiers as never could be brought together by Caesar, or Napoleon, or our own old Duke. The peace of Europe in this direction arises not from the slightest want of power or means on the part of the See of Rome, but from the jealousy of the body in whose hands the election of the Supreme Pontiff lies. For many years they have elected a good old monk, who has passed his whole life in a state of supreme ignorance of the world in general, and

the whole art of government in particular. In his hands the mighty power at his command remains inert - a slumbering volcano. But should the ivory chair of St. Peter ever sustain the weight of a young and energetic man of genius, with some years of life before him, no one would laugh at the tottering state of Rome.

As for the petty principality of a state in Italy, I have been told, in the Pope's own ante-room, that it is a burden to him. His extended sway does not depend on the doubtful loyalty of half a dozen regiments of Italians, or on the more honest obedience of two or three thousand Swiss guards, but on the hearts and hands of many millions, who look up to him as their spiritual superior at all times, and their temporal superior; whom they are bound to obey in opposition to all other sovereigns, when anything occurs "ad majorem Dei gloriam," and for the advancement of the Church of Rome.

A power such as this, which in our trafficking and money-making country is thought little of a power such as this lies dormant, in the hands of the Grand Lama of Thibet, whose followers form almost half of all mankind-in those of the Patriarch of Constantinople-and to an inferior degree in those of the Patriarch of Etchmiazin. They are all paralyzed and quiescent from the same cause, namely, that the chiefs of these mighty institutions are old, ignorant men, whose minds have not the energy, or their hands the power, to work the tremendous engine committed to their care. That the Czar is perfectly aware of the uses to be made of the religious feelings of the inhabitants of other governments to further his own ends, we see from the numerous magnificent presents ostentatiously forwarded by him to churches in Greece and Turkey, where the monks and priests by these means are gained over to his interests. From his generous hand, extended to the borders of the Adriatic, about £5000 are annually dropped into the poor-box of that truculent specimen of the church militant, the Vladica of Montenegro. But the Czar is not an aged monk; he is not wanting in energy or strength; and he will not fail to pull the strings which hang loosely in the hands of the Armenian patriarch. If he pulls them evenly and well, he will advance his interests far and wide, even in the dominions of other princes, who may hardly be aware of the influence exercised in their states from a source so distant and unobtrusive. The danger in his case is, that he may use too great violence, and break the strings from too severe a tension, raising the storm against himself which he intended to direct against others. However this may be, the power of which he holds the reins is one which may be used for the advancement of the greatest or the most ignoble ends. For the most sublime and glorious actions, the most heroic and the most infernal deeds that have ever been accomplished by mankind, have been occasioned by the awakening of religious zeal, or by the fanaticism of religious hatred, from the earliest days, when the pen of history was first dipped in blood.

Nothing can be more anomalous than the present aspect of religious questions. The Christian Emperor of Russia is at this moment exciting the minds of his subjects to make war upon the infidel; and his armies march under the impression that they undertake a new crusade. Yet this crusade is carried on in direct contradiction to truth,

justice, honor, and every principle of the Christian religion, whose pure and sacred precepts are violated at every turn. On the other hand, the Mohammedan, or infidel, as he is called, displays, under the most difficult and insulting circumstances, the highest Christian virtues of integrity, moderation, and strict adherence to his word in treaties granted by himself or his predecessors; at the same time, the armies of the upright Sultan are commanded by a Christian renegade who has abjured his faith, and yet he fights against the Christian power in a righteous cause.

The terrible revolution which is the cause of such awful scenes of bloodshed and atrocities in China is carried on under the name of our merciful and just Savior, whose mild religion these rebels against their sovereign affect to follow.

The savage atrocities of the Holy Inquisition, the cruel massacres by the Spaniards in America, were perpetrated by men who made a cloak of the benevolent precepts of the Gospel for the perpetration of the most brutal crimes.

Those times we thought were past, but human nature is the same; and where the light of the Christianity has penetrated, we find a period of wonderful intelligence and appreciation of the truths of the doctrines of our Lord in some places; in others, where a nominal Christianity alone prevails, actions are committed by men in the highest stations which would disgrace the records of the Dark Ages.

CHAPTER XV.

Ecclesiastical History. - Supposed Letter of Abgarus, King of Edessa, to our Savior, and the Answer. - Promulgation and Establishment of Christianity. - Labors of Mesrob Maschdots. - Separation of the Armenian Church from that of Constantinople. - Hierarchy and religious Establishments. - Superstition of the Lower Classes. - Sacerdotal Vestments. - The Holy Books. - Romish Branch of the Church. - Labors of Mechitar. - His Establishment near Venice. - Diffusion of the Scriptures.

The ruins of Ani to this day attest the magnificence and antiquity of former dynasties which long since reigned and passed away in the highlands of Armenia. In the time of Cyrus, according to Moses of Chorene, the historian of that country in the sixteenth century, Greek statues of Jupiter, Artemis (Diana), Minerva, Hephæstion, and Venus, were brought to Ani and placed in the citadel of that town. Here the treasures and the sepulchres of the ancient kings were preserved in a fortress deemed by them impregnable. I will not pause to disentangle the records of Armenia before the time of our Savior, for even during the life of our Lord the annals of Armenia become remarkably interesting as connected with his holy faith, and the rise and progress of Christianity in the countries immediately adjoining the sacred soil of Palestine. Abgarus, king of Edessa, and sovereign of great part of Armenia, with the adjoining countries, is said by Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, the early historian of the Church, who flourished in the fourth century, to have written a letter to his court and to cure him of a disease under which he labored. The following is a translation of the letter which Abgarus is said to have written to our Lord:

"ABGARUS, King of Edessa, to JESUS the good Savior, who appeareth at Jerusalem, greeting:

"I have been informed concerning thee and thy cures, which are performed without the use of medicines or of herbs.

"For it is reported that thou dost cause the blind to see, the lame to walk, that thou dost cleanse the lepers, and dost cast out unclean spirits and devils, and dost restore to health those who have been long diseased, and also that thou dost raise the dead.

"All which when I heard I was persuaded of one of these two things:

"Either that thou art God himself descended from heaven;

"Or that thou art the Son of God.

"On this account, therefore, I have written unto thee, earnestly desiring that thou wouldst trouble thyself to take a journey hither, and that thou wilt also cure me of the disease under which I suffer.

"For I fear that Jews hold thee in derision, and intend to do thee harm.

"My city is indeed small, but it is sufficient to contain us both."

In the history of Moses of Chorene, this letter begins with the words "Abgar, the son of Archam," but the substance of it is the same as the above, which is taken from the pages of Eusebius, who lived a century earlier than Moses of Chorene. This author ascribes the answer to St. Thomas the Apostle, who was deputed to write an answer to the above in these words:

"Happy art thou, O Abgarus, forasmuch as thou hast believed in me whom thou hast not seen.

"For it is written concerning me, that those who have seen me have not believed on me, that those who have not seen me might believe and live.

"As to that part of thine epistle which relates to my visiting thee, I must inform thee that I must fulfill the ends of my mission in this land, and after that be received up again unto Him that sent me; but after my ascension I will send one of my disciples, who will cure thy disease, and give life unto thee and all that are with thee."

These two letters are generally considered to be forgeries, although they are mentioned by some of the earliest historians of the Church.

Some years ago I was informed, while at Alexandria, that a papyrus had been discovered in Upper Egypt, in an ancient tomb; it was inclosed in a coarse earthenware vase, and it contained the letter from Abgarus to our Savior, written either in Coptic or uncial Greek characters. The answer of St. Thomas was said not to be with it. I was told that the manuscript afterward came into the possession -of the King of Holland, but I have no means at present of ascertaining the truth of the story, or the antiquity of the papyrus of which it forms the subject.

The seeds of the Christian faith were sown in Armenia by the apostles St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas. According to Tertullian (*adv. Judæos*, c. 7), a Christian Church flourished there in the second century. St. Blaise and other bishops suffered martyrdom in different parts of Armenia during the persecution of Diocletian, about the year 310.

To St. Gregory, the Illuminator, is due the honor of having established Christianity in this region, and he is known by the title of the Apostle of Armenia. Toward the middle of the third century, having been himself a convert from Paganism, he first preached the doctrines of our Lord among the mountains of his native land. He had received his education at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, where he was baptized. The zeal with which he was animated gave irresistible force to his words, and the people flocked to him in great multitudes, and were baptized by his hands. The King Tiridates, a violent persecutor of the Christians, touched by the piety and virtues of St. Gregory, embraced the Christian faith, and, with his queen and his sister, received the sacrament of baptism in the 16th year of his reign, A.D. 274, and became the first Christian King of Armenia. St. Gregory was consecrated bishop by St. Leontius, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, and continued his labors in propagating the faith all over Armenia, Georgia, and the nations living on the borders of the Caspian Sea. From this circumstance it became the custom for the Primate of Armenia to receive his consecration from the Archbishop of Cæsarea,

which continued to be the practice for several centuries. St. Gregory died in the year 336, in a cave to which he had retired, desiring to end his days as an anchorite, according to a custom much observed in the fourth century.

In those disturbed and unsettled times the religion of our Savior alternately rose and prospered, or was oppressed by the persecutions of various governors under the Emperors of Rome. Numerous heresies distracted the minds of the priesthood, and confused the doctrines of the Armenian Church. About the year 390 rose the most celebrated man in the history of this country: his name was Mesrob Maschdots. This personage was born in the town of Hatseगतz-Avan, in the province of Daron: he had been secretary to the Patriarch Narses, and to the Prince Varastad, who was dethroned by the Romans in the year 382. In the year 390, in conjunction with the Armenian Patriarch Sahag, he occupied himself in the extinction of the idolatry which still prevailed, and was the first person who arranged the forms of the Armenian liturgy.

Before this time the Armenian language had no written character; the inhabitants of the eastern districts used the Persian alphabet, while those of the west wrote in the Syriac character. Mesrob either restored the ancient Armenian letters according to the historian Moses of Chorene, who gives a long miraculous account of the event, or he invented an entirely new alphabet - a solitary instance, I believe, of such an undertaking having been accomplished by one man. The present Armenian letters were adopted by the commands of Bahram Schahpoor over the whole of that country in the year 406. The first complete version of the Bible was now arranged and promulgated by Mesrob, and written on parchment in his new characters; numerous copies of it were distributed to the churches and monasteries of Armenia, and the important circumstance of their being now able to read the Holy Scriptures in their own language tended to preserve their faith, and to unite them as a nation during the continual troubles and adversities which they have suffered ever since. This great benefactor to his country died in the year 441.

The Armenian hierarchy had till now been a branch of the Greek Church, but, unable to read their liturgy, troubled with diversities of opinion, and oppressed first by one neighboring tyrant and then by another, this helpless nation finally settled down into the heresy of Eutyches, and, under the guidance of their patriarch, separated themselves from the Church of Constantinople. They believe that the body of our Savior was created, or else existed without creation, a divine and incorruptible substance, not subject to the infirmities of the flesh. This schism took place about the year 535.

The Armenian era commences in the year 552, from which epoch their manuscripts and calendar are dated. The custom continues to the present day. By the council of Tibena in 554, they were confirmed in their persistence in the Eutychian heresy. The council of Trullo, 692, and the council of Jerusalem, 1143, condemned the errors of the Armenians. In the fourteenth century, Pope John XXII. sent a Dominican friar, called Bartholomew the Little, into that distant region, with several colleagues, to preach the doctrines of the Church of Rome. Bartholomew was consecrated bishop (of

Nakchevan?), and since that time the archbishop of that province has, with all his dependencies, continued a member of the Roman Church. The thunders of the Lateran have often since been directed against the perseverance of these distant heretics, but they have been of no avail.

The Patriarch of Armenia resides at Etchmiazin. He is styled Catholicos, and holds under his sway for-ty-seven archbishops, of whom the greater part are titular, having no jurisdiction or dignity beyond their titles; many of these reside in the monastery, and form a sort of court around their spiritual lord the Patriarch. They seem to hold the same position as the Monsignores of the court of Rome. Above the titular and actual archbishops are three Patriarchs, whose seats are at Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Diarbekir. The number of bishops and episcopal sees is very considerable, but I have not been able to enumerate them. The monasteries are also very numerous, and are scattered all over the mountains of Armenia, the islands of Lake Van, and other places in Persia, Georgia, and Turkey.

The ancient monasteries of their own land are of a peculiar construction; remarkable for the diminutive proportions of the churches and the small size of the monastic buildings, as well as their massive strength and the great squared stones of which they are built. They are little fortresses, and seem always to have been very poor, though some are larger and more wealthy, comparatively, than the generality. They have been erected to resist the incursions of the Saracens, Knights Templars, Koords, Turks, and Persians, who, from time to time, overran this abject principality. Their massive strength alone has saved them from being pulled down and utterly destroyed; the time necessary for such an operation could not be spared during the inroad of a chappow, or plundering expedition. Nothing worth stealing remains in the various monasteries which I have visited. A few dirty and imperfect church-books, some faded vestments and poor furniture for the altar, and the cells of three or four peasant-monks, were all the wealth that they displayed. Very few appear to have contained a library—none that I have seen. Their manuscripts were written in former days at Edeesa, Etchmiazin (which is a more extensive fabric), Tellis, Ooroomia, Tabriz, and other cities, and not usually in these outposts among the mountains. The little monastery of Kuzzul Vank possesses one ancient manuscript of the Holy Scriptures, written in the year, as far as I can remember, 422, which, if it refers to the Armenian era, would be 974; it is written in uncial letters, on vellum, in a small, thick quarto form.

Ignorance and superstition contend for the mastery among the lower classes of Armenia, whose religion shows that tendency to sink into a kind of idolatry which is common among other branches of the Church of Christ in warmer climates. The following anecdote will explain my meaning in advancing such a charge. One of my servants had a bad toothache; he was a Roman Catholic of Smyrna; he made a vow to present an offering to the shrine of St. George at Smyrna if his toothache was cured by the mediation of that saint, but the pain still continued. A friend of his at Erzeroom advised him to vow a silver mouth to St. George of Erzeroom; "for," he said, "St. George

of Smyrna is a Roman saint, and, of course, he can have no authority here; but our St. George is an Armenian, and he will hear your prayer." The advice was taken: a silver mouth was vowed to St. George of Erzeroum, and the toothache ceased immediately, the servant firmly believing that he had been cured by this saint, who, he considered, was another person, and not the same as St. George of Smyrna, and that his picture here was more powerful in working miracles than the others. In the same manner, the pictures or images of Our Lady of Loretto, Guadalupe, or del Pilar are believed to be endowed with peculiar powers, and are, in fact, worshiped for their own merits, and not for what they represent.

A curious episode in the history of Armenia took place in the time of Shah Abbas the Great, who established a colony of the natives of that province at Julfa, a village near Isfahan. He gave them many privileges and immunities, which a remnant of their descendants enjoy still. The forms and ceremonies of their worship resemble those of the Greek Church, from which they are derived. Their vestments are the same, or nearly so: and here I will remark that the sacred vestures of the Christian Church are the same, with very insignificant modifications, among every denomination of Christians in the world; that they have always been the same, and never were otherwise in any country, from the remotest times when we have any written accounts of them, or any mosaics, sculptures, or pictures to explain their forms. They are no more a Popish invention, or have anything more to do with the Roman Church, than any other usage which is common to all denominations of Christians. They are, and always have been, of general and universal - that is, of catholic-use; they have never been used for many centuries for ornament or dress by the laity, having been considered as set apart to be used only by priests in the church during the celebration of the worship of Almighty God. These ancient vestures have been worn by the bishops, priests, and deacons of that, in common with the hierarchy of every other Church. In England they have fallen into disuse by neglect; King Charles I. presented some vestments to the Cathedral of Durham long after the Reformation, and they continued in use there almost in the memory of man.

The parish priests of the Armenian religion are, I believe, permitted, if not obliged, to marry, as is the case in the Greek and Russian Churches; but they cannot, so long as their wife survives, be promoted to any of the higher orders of the hierarchy. Bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs are elected out of the monastic bodies who take the vows of celibacy; their fasts are long and rigorous, their food simple, and their style of life severe; their time is almost entirely taken up with the services of religion, and, as a general rule, their ignorance is extreme.

In their doctrine of the Holy Trinity, they believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone; that Christ descended into hell, from whence he relieved the souls of sinners till the day of judgment; that the souls of the righteous will not be admitted to the beatific vision till after the resurrection, notwithstanding which they invoke them in their prayers. They make use of pictures in their churches, but not of images; they use

confession to the priests, and administer the Eucharist in both kinds.

In baptism they plunge the child three times in water, apply the chrism with consecrated oil prepared only by the Patriarch. They also touch the child's lips with the Eucharist, which consists of unleavened bread sopped in wine.

The Holy Scriptures contain more books than those of the Western Churches. In the Old Testament, after the Book of Genesis, occurs The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob; then The History of Joseph and of his wife Asenath; The Book of Jesus the Son of Sirach. After these the order of the scriptural books succeeds as with us. In the New Testament, after St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, we find the Epistle of the Corinthians to St. Paul, which is followed by St. Paul's Third Epistle to the Corinthians. The remainder of the New Testament is the same as ours.

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Book of Jesus the Son of Sirach, are well known; but I am not aware that the Book of Asenath has been printed in any European language. This curious book was translated into Italian, from an ancient Armenian manuscript of the Bible in my possession, by an Armenian friend, and translated from the Italian into English by myself: this I presume to be the only copy of the Book of Asenath in the English language. It is a work of considerable length, and is interesting, not only from the place it holds in the estimation of a numerous body of Christians, but also from the picture it presents of the manners and customs of Egypt, at some remote period when it was written. Several passages in it indicate that it must have been composed when what may be called the classic style of life was still in use. Whether it was included among the number of the sacred books collected by Mesrob I do not know: in that case it would date as far back as the fourth century after Christ, a period prolific in apocryphal books, several of which were forged about that time to support the authority of the various heresiarchs who promulgated their opinions in many countries of the East, and who, being unable to produce texts from the accepted books of the Sacred Scriptures which would prove the truth of their doctrines, invented others more suitable to their own purposes, and written more in accordance with their views.

The Epistle from the Corinthians to St. Paul, and the answer from the great apostle, is of a higher class, and bears much resemblance to his other Epistles. It has been published among Lord Byron's works. He took a few lessons in Armenian from Father Pasquale Aucher; a monk of the monastery of St. Lazarus, at Venice, a man of extraordinary learning, who speaks most of the European languages, as well as Turkish, Armenian, and other Oriental tongues. He translated these Epistles into English, with the assistance of Lord Byron.

The Roman Catholic branch of the Armenian Church has done much more for literature and civilization than the original body. Few Catholics are found in Armenia itself, excepting at Erzeroom and other cities, where a remnant remain, while at Constantinople a great number of the higher and wealthier Armenians give their adherence to that creed. Their minds are more enlarged, they are less Oriental in their ideas, being usually considered as half Franks by their more Eastern brethren. Their

churches bear a great resemblance to those of other Catholics, but they retain their own language in their ritual, with many of the forms and ceremonies of the Oriental Church. The Armenian Patriarch, with his long beard, and crown instead of a mitre, is one of the picturesque figures to whom attention is drawn in the ceremonies of the Holy Week at Rome, where there is a college for the education of priests of their nation. They have another college at Constantinople, and several handsome churches; but the most important establishment of this branch of their religion is that of the convent or monastery on the island of St. Lazarus, near Venice.

This society, as they themselves call it, was founded by Mechitar, an Armenian, who was born at Sebaste, in Lesser Armenia, in 1676. He received holy orders from the Bishop Ananias, superior of the convent of the Holy Cross, near Sebaste. He afterward studied in the convent of Passen, near Erzeroom, and at another on the island on Lake Van. His wish was to remain in the great monastery of Etchmiazin, to which place he traveled, but, finding no opportunities of study at the seat of the Patriarch, he proceeded to Constantinople, where he afterward founded a small society, of a monastic kind, at Pera, in the year 1700.

In the year 1708 he established a church and monastic society at Modon in the Morea, then under the government of Venice; but the Turks having taken that place, his companions were made prisoners and sold for slaves. He, with some others, escaped to Venice, where he received a grant, in the year 1717, from the Signory, of a small deserted island in the Lagunas, originally the property of the Benedictine order, who established a hospital for lepers there in 1180. In this island he set up a printing-press about the year 1730, for the production of Armenian religious books; and he had the satisfaction of seeing his convent increase in comfort, wealth, and respectability before his death, which took place on the 27th of April, 1749.

So high was the character of this establishment for usefulness and good conduct, that in 1810, when other monastic establishments were suppressed at Venice, the abbot of St. Lazaro received a peculiar decree, granting him and his community all the privileges of their former independence. So high also has been the character of this society since that time, that it has been usual for the Pope to confer upon each new abbot the title and dignity of Archbishop, although he has no province or bishops under him. The service they have rendered to their countrymen is very great: they have at present five printing-presses, from whence every year proceed numerous volumes of religious and historical character, as well as school-books, and a newspaper in the Armenian language. These are mostly sold at Constantinople, and among the scattered societies of their nation. The funds produced from this source enable them to establish a considerable school or college at Venice, and to send literary missionaries, as they may be called, to collect manuscripts and historical notices among the barren mountains of Armenia. Of these they make good use, compiling, from imperfect and mutilated fragments, authentic histories of their country; printing the almost hitherto lost

and unknown works of ancient Armenian authors, and distributing copies of the Holy Scriptures among their brethren in the wasted and benighted land of their fathers.

They printed the Armenian Bible in the year 1805; and, entirely by their energy, the small spark which alone glimmered in the darkness of Armenian ignorance in the East has gradually increased its light into a feeble ray, which now, seen faintly through the mist, draws every now and then the attention of some one endowed by nature with more intelligence than the rest, and incites him to inquire into those truths the rumors of whose existence had only reached him hitherto. Slowly enough, but we trust surely, the good work prospers: when curiosity and interest are awakened, the mind turns naturally to the sources from which information may be gained. The Holy Gospels, the New Testament, and, in some places, the whole Bible, may now be procured at a comparatively trifling expense; the leaven, once introduced, sooner or later will leaven the whole mass; truth and common sense will dissipate the clouds which ignorance and superstition have gathered over the face of the land, and the light of true religion will arise to set no more.

CHAPTER XVI.

Modern division of Armenia.-Population.-Manners and Customs of the Christians.-
Superiority of the Mohammedans.

THE country which was called Armenia in ancient times is now divided into two portions; the smaller of the two belongs to Persia, but the larger part is contained in the Turkish province or pashalik of Erzeroom. It does not possess any communication with the sea, and is a wild and mountainous district. Although not of any high importance for mercantile productions, it has continually been an object of jealousy to the neighboring empires of Persia and Byzantium-or, in our time, Persia and Turkey - from the high road between those empires necessarily passing through it; the power of cutting off supplies, and permitting the passage of caravans laden with the rich productions of other lands, being vested in the hands of the military governor of Erzeroom. The number of inhabitants of this pashalik is estimated at 1,000,000; there were probably more in earlier times. The principal cities are- Erzeroom, the capital, containing about 30,000 souls. The population of Kars is considered to be about 20,000, Van 20,000, Moosh and Beyboort about 8000 each. The Turkish governor of the pashalik has generally an armed force of 25,000 regular soldiers; but it would be easy for him, with sufficient funds, to raise a more considerable force of irregular cavalry, and infantry armed with rifles, the use of which weapon is well understood by the hardy mountaineers and hunters, whose manners in some respects resemble those of the Tyrolese. The greater half of the population are Mohammedan Turks or Osmanlis, followers of Osman. The word Turk is never used in this country, and is more generally applied to the Turkomans and some of the tribes on the Persian border, who are of Calmuc or Tartar origin, and a completely different sort of people from those whom we call Turks. The Christian population consists of a small number of Greeks, Nestorians, and Roman Catholics, the greater part being descendants of the ancient possessors of the soil, and professing the Christianity of the Armenian Church, which I have attempted to describe above. Their manners and customs are the same as those of the Turks, whom they copy in dress and in their general way of living; so much is this the case, that it is frequently difficult to distinguish the Turkish from the Armenian family, both in Armenia and at Constantinople; only the Armenian is the inferior in all respects; he would be called in China a second-chop Turk. He is more quick and restless in his motions, and wants the dignity and straightforward bearing of the Osmanli. More than 100,000 Armenians are settled at Constantinople. These are not so ignorant, and are, even in appearance, different from those of their original country, who are a heavy and loutish race, while the citizens are thin, sharp, active in money-making arts, and remarkable for their acuteness in mercantile transactions. Each Turkish village elects its *cadi*, a

sort of mayor; an Armenian Christian village elects its elder, who is called the Ak Sakal, or White Beard; he is the responsible person in all transactions with government, and sometimes holds an arduous post.

The women live in a harem, like the Turkish women, separate from the men. The mistress of the house superintends the kitchen, the making of preserves, and salting winter stores; they wear the yashmak, or Turkish veil, at Constantinople, where the Armenian ladies are celebrated for their beauty, and their fine eyes, and black, arched eyebrows. In Armenia, the women, when they go out, wrap themselves up in a large piece of bunting, the same kind of stuff that is used in Europe for flags; being of wool, it takes a fine color in dyeing. The ample wrappers of the women are sometimes of a bright scarlet, sometimes a brilliant white or blue. The effect of this veil is much more pleasing than those of Constantinople or Egypt. The Armenians are not bad cooks: some of their dishes are excellent; one of mutton stewed with quinces leaves a very favorable impression on the recollection of the hungry traveler. The country people live underground in the peculiar houses which I have described; they are an agricultural peasantry, tilling the ground, and not possessing large herds of sheep or cattle, like the Turkomans, Koords, or Arabs; they are a heavy-looking race, but are hardy and active, and inured from youth to exercise and endurance, but even in these respects they are excelled by the Mohammedan mountaineers.

The superiority of the Mohammedan over the Christian can not fail to strike the mind of an intelligent person who has lived among these races, as the fact is evident throughout the Turkish empire. This arises partly from the oppression which the Turkish rulers in the provinces have exercised for centuries over their Christian subjects: this is probably the chief reason; but the Turk obeys the dictates of his religion, the Christian does not; the Turk does not drink, the Christian gets drunk; the Turk is honest, the Turkish peasant is a pattern of quiet, good-humored honesty; the Christian is a liar and a cheat; his religion is so overgrown with the rank weeds of superstition that it no longer serves to guide his mind in the right way. It would be a work of great difficulty to disentangle the pure faith preached by the Apostles from the mass of absurdities and strange notions with which Christianity is encumbered, in the belief of the villagers in out-of-the-way places, among the various sects of Christians in the dominions of the Sultan. This seems to have been the case for many centuries, and it has produced its effect in lowering the standard of morality, and injuring the general character of those nations who are subjects of Turkey and not of the Mohammedan religion. For, of two evils, it is better to follow the doctrines of a false religion than to neglect the precepts of the true faith.

CHAPTER XVII.

Armenian Manuscripts.-Manuscripts at Etchmiazin.-Comparative Value of Manuscripts.-Uncial Writing.-Monastic Libraries.-Collections .in Europe.-The St. Lazaro Library.

ARMENIAN manuscripts are of extreme rarity, not only in Europe, but in Armenia itself, at Constantinople, or any other place. The unsettled state in which that distracted province has from time immemorial been sunk, has prevented the development of the peaceful arts, and few of the monastic establishments of that country had wealth, or leisure, or convenience to copy and illuminate their books. The few fine manuscripts which I have met with seem to have been written for some Armenian princes, and were the works of scribes supported by exalted personages, who wrote under the shadow of their protection in the metropolitan cities, or in the patriarchal monastery of Etchmiazin. I was prevented by illness when in the neighborhood from visiting Etchmiazin, but there are preserved (or rather neglected) there, I have been given to understand, more than 2000 ancient manuscripts. These are completely unknown, unless within these few years they have been examined by any Russian antiquarian; no other traveler has been there who was competent to overlook a dusty library, so as to give any idea, not of what there is, but even what it may be likely to contain. This, as my bibliographical friends are well aware, is a peculiar art or mystery depending more on a general knowledge of the first aspect of an old book than a capacity to appreciate its contents. A book written on vellum implies a certain antiquity immediately recognizable by the initiated. If it does not appear to be ancient, it is then more than probable that it contains the works of some author of more than ordinary consideration, to have made it worth while to go to the expense and labor of a careful scribe and a material difficult in those days to procure. An illuminated, manuscript on vellum, if not a prayer-book, secures additional attention; independent of its value as a work of art, it must be of some consequence to have made it worth illuminating. A large manuscript, as a general rule, is worth more than a little one, for the same evident reason that its contents were considered at the time when it was written to have been of some importance, and deserving of more labor, time, and care, than if it was just written out cheaply by a common scribe. Uncial writing-that is, a book written in capital letters-is much more ancient than one written in a cursive hand, and the most ancient volumes were generally large square quartos. It is curious that this should be the case in almost all nations and languages surrounding the Mediterranean, though their customs may be so different in other respects. Manuscripts on paper, again, are sometimes of remarkable-interest, from their containing the works of authors then considered trivial and inferior, but now of much more value than the more ponderous tomes of the Middle Ages.

The majority of the volumes in an ancient monastic library are worn-out, imperfect church-books, which have been cast aside from time to time, and committed to the care of the mice and spiders, who alone frequent the shelves or the floor of that dusty lumber-room. It is uncommon to find a manuscript in more than one volume, unless it may be the works of St. Chrysostom, or another of the Fathers of the Church. In this case the volumes are hardly ever found together, and a complete set of three or four volumes is beyond hoping for, carelessness and neglect having been for centuries the librarians of the monastery. These and other circumstances combine to make a cursory examination of one of these original hoards of by-gone literature a task for which the learned student of some abstruse science, or dead or dying language, is totally incompetent. The translator of an almost forgotten tongue, the laborious compiler of unpublished history, requires that the musty chronicles, the splendid illuminated volumes bound in gold and velvet, the crabbed, ill-written works of antique lore, should be laid upon the table before him, so that, in the undisturbed silence of his study, surrounded with lexicons and modern books of reference, he may bit by bit extract the pith, and winnow off the chaff, from the venerable manuscripts of distant lands and other times. The bibliographical traveler, who is to provide these precious relics for his careful use, who is to drag them from their dark recesses, where they have been lying undisturbed 500 or 1000 years, has an entirely different task to fulfill. The professor would require months to look over each book one by one, to brush away the cobwebs, to ascertain by difficult and uncertain passages what the subject of those manuscripts might be which had lost many pages at the beginning and end, and to satisfy himself at last that it was worthless - a conclusion to which another would arrive at the first glance. This power of immediately appreciating the value of ancient manuscripts in the manner above mentioned will be understood by those who are aware that such is the usual jealousy of the ignorant monks for that which they can neither use nor understand themselves, that it hardly ever happens that a stranger is permitted to take more than a general survey of the worm-eaten and dusty mass which lies in heaps upon the floor, or is piled in the corners of the room which they call their library, but which they probably have never entered on any other occasion.

Such as I have described are the libraries at Etchmiazin, the monastery on Lake Van, those near Ooroomia, and the few places where more than the church-books are still remaining.

In England, the Bodleian Library contains about twenty volumes of Armenian manuscripts; the British Museum not so many, I believe; the Royal Library at Paris has about 200, which were collected by the emissaries of Louis XIV. Some of these are of considerable antiquity and beauty. In private collections very few are to be found. In my library there are about a dozen, of which two are the most splendid that I have met with in the East, or in any country. I possess also a number of loose leaves of the highest antiquity, which are so far curious that they display the progress of the art of writing almost since the days of Mesrob to the present time. But, with the exception of the

unknown treasures of Etchmiazin, the convent of St. Lazaro at Venice not only preserves, but makes good use of, the finest collection of Armenian manuscripts extant. Their number is about 1200, of which 100 are on vellum; the rest are written partly on ancient paper made from cotton, and partly on paper such as we use at present. Three volumes on Charta Bombycina are among the most ancient that I have met with that are written on that material: one contains commentaries on the Psalms and the Epistles, by Ephraim Syrius and St. Chrysostom, written in the year of the Armenian era 448, Anno Domini 999; the second is a small book of prayer, containing the date of A.D. 1178; the third is the romance of Alexander the Great: this curious volume is illustrated with numerous drawings, richly gilt and colored; it was written in the thirteenth century.

They have three copies of the Gospels, and one Ritual written in uncial letters (one of these ancient copies of the Gospels is illuminated with several large miniatures in a style resembling Greek art), as well as several others of inferior interest.

The library also possesses six or seven richly illuminated copies of the Scriptures, some splendid books of prayer, and a great number of other Armenian manuscripts, containing records of the history or the works of authors who were natives of that country, from which have been printed many volumes whose pages illustrate manners and events which were completely forgotten before the monks of St. Lazaro rescued them from oblivion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

General History of Armenia.-Former Sovereigns.-Tiridates I. receives his Crown from Nero.-Conquest of the Country by the Persians and by the Arabs.-List of modern Kings.-Misfortunes of Leo V.: his Death at Paris.

THE general history of Armenia contains but little that is interesting. It presents the picture of a line of sovereigns who have seldom been able to support their own authority, and who have constantly abdicated, embraced monastic vows, or been driven from the throne by rebellions of their subjects, and invasions of neighboring conquerors more talented and more powerful than themselves. Many of the Armenian kings seem to have lived almost on the charity of other states; the lines of their dynasties have been so often interrupted, and the changes from king to governors, dukes, and counts have been so frequent, that their history is most intricate; and, from the boundaries of the so-called kingdom of Armenia having never been the same for many years together, it is difficult to understand from the scattered notices which history has transmitted to us who should be considered as the head of the state, or which of the many vassal princes, under the great empires of the East, has the better claim to the title of sovereign of this ancient kingdom.

At the time of our Savior, Abgarus, king of Edessa, seems to have exercised sovereignty over great part of Armenia, on the southern and western sides. Tiridates I. is the first person styling himself King of Armenia after this period. He conquered the country from Rhadamistus, by the assistance of his brother Vologeses, King of Parthia. The Romans, however, who did not approve of the erection of an independent kingdom in those regions, sent an army against Tiridates, commanded by Corbulo, who forced Tiridates to abdicate, on condition of his proceeding to Rome to receive his crown from the hands of the Emperor Nero. He was received with the highest honors by the Roman emperor, who advanced as far as Naples to meet him. Tiridates won his good graces by the artful manner in which he flattered Nero on his skill in driving a chariot. They became great friends: the Armenian king received large sums of money from the emperor, with which he returned to his own country, and repaired his dismantled fortresses. He changed the name of his capital from Artaxarte to Neronia, in compliment to his imperial protector, and died in the year 75 A.D., after a reign of eleven years.

To him succeeded several princes who were vassals to the Roman empire, but whose actions do not seem to offer any thing of interest. *Tiridates II.* had received his education at Rome, and, assisted by the emperor, he was placed upon the throne of Armenia, by the general consent of the nobles of his country, in 259. He, as I have mentioned in the ecclesiastical sketch of this history, embraced Christianity, and died in the year 314. Other unimportant princes succeeded, among whom *John Nustaron*

governed Armenia, under the Emperor Maurice. The Persians conquered the country in the reign of the Emperor Phocas, but it was soon retaken by Heraclius. *Pasagnates* revolted against the Emperor Constantine II., who defeated him, and placed *Sabarius*, a Persian, on the throne, who also rebelled, and was beat in the year 658. Justinian II. concluded a treaty with the Caliph Abdol-malek, by which the two sovereigns divided between them the revenues of Armenia, Iberia, and Cyprus; and the same emperor, Justinian II., placed *Sablas* on the Armenian throne. This prince, being established in this mountainous kingdom, organized an army, and, having attempted to extricate his country from the power of the Caliph, was defeated by him in 687, and the Arabs became masters of Armenia. The Emperor Constantine Copronymus retook this province, and established *Paulus* as viceroy. Paulus was conquered by the forces of the Caliph, but he afterward re-established himself upon the throne.

After his reign, Armenia was governed by several dukes and counts, some of whom ruled over a larger, and some over a smaller, portion of the country. During this period constant battles and disturbances took place between the adherents of the caliphs and the Christian emperors in this distracted province. The Patriarch of Constantinople made every endeavor to break down the religious subjection of the Armenians to their heretical Patriarch. But the history of the numerous princes who succeeded each other, after periods of short and doubtful power, on the throne of parts only of Armenia, is so complicated and so doubtful, that I shall not attempt to speak of them, and proceed to the time of the first generally acknowledged king of modern times. The name of this monarch was

Philaretus Branchance. After resisting the forces of the Emperor Michael Ducas, he submitted to his successor, Nicephorus Botoniates, by whom he was supported through the rest of his reign. He flourished about the year 1080.

Constantine was succeeded by his brother

Taphroc, or *Taphnuz*. Under these two sovereigns appear numerous petty princes, who were feudatories to the King.

Leo, who was long a prisoner under the Turks, lived in 1131.

Theodorus, or *Thoros*, after a stormy reign, died in 1170.

Thomas, son of the sister of Thoros.

Milo, brother of Thoros. Under this reign the power of the Knights Templars was formidable. They had acquired large possessions in Armenia; and their numerous preceptories were in fact fortified castles, from which they defied the power of their suzerain. Milo waged war with the Templars, and succeeded in banishing many of their followers from his dominions. He died in 1180.

Rupinus was made prisoner by Bohemond, Prince of Antioch. He died in 1189.

Leo I., or *Livon*, concluded a treaty, by which he freed Armenia from the tribute which it had paid to the Prince of Antioch, instead of which he voluntarily paid homage to the Pope Celestinus III. He lived in perpetual war with the formidable body of Knights Templars, with various success, and died in 1219.

Isabel, daughter of Leo. In the reign of this princess the kingdom of Armenia became tributary to the Turkish Sultans of Iconium.

Aiton, or *Otho*, sent ambassadors to St. Louis, King of France, in the island of Cyprus. He made a visit to Mangou, Khan of Tartary, whom he converted to Christianity, and in alliance with whom, assisted by his brother, Houlagou Khan, he made war against the Mohammedans, and, having destroyed the castles of the Assassins, penetrated into the dominions of the Sultan of Aleppo, their further progress being stopped by the death of Mangou Khan, which occasioned the return of Houlagou to his own country. The Saracens or Mohammedans, on this change of affairs, in their turn overran Armenia, where they committed dreadful cruelties; and Aiton, having abdicated the crown in 1270, retired into a monastery, under the name of Macarius, where he died in the year 1272.

Leo, the son of Aiton, mounted the throne of his father in 1270, and was in constant war with Bondochar, Sultan of Egypt, who massacred 20,000 persons in Armenia. He was excommunicated for outrages committed upon the Patriarch of Antioch. After a reign of trouble and disaster, he died in 1288.

Aiton, or *Otho II.*, the son of Leo, with many of his nation, embraced the Roman faith, and demanded the assistance of Pope Boniface VIII. against the infidels who menaced his power. No effective assistance having been afforded him, he abdicated the throne, took the habit of a Capuchin friar, and, under the name of Brother John, died in the year 1294.

Thoros, or *Theodorus*, despairing of success against the incursions of the neighboring nations, also became a Capuchin friar. He died in 1296.

Sembat, or *Penihald*, the brother of Aiton and Thoros, usurped the throne in the absence of his brothers; he was dethroned by another brother, Constantine, and died in 1298.

Constantine sent his remaining brothers to Constantinople, with a recommendation to the Emperor to take care of them. The year of his death is uncertain.

Leo III. was murdered in the year 1307.

Chir Ossim, with the assistance of Pope John XXII., made an advantageous truce or treaty with the Kings of Sicily and Cyprus, with whom he was at war. This was accomplished through the mediation of the Genoese, who at this time appear to have been the principal traders in Constantinople, Persia, and Armenia. He died in 1320.

Leo IV. lived in continual war with the Saracens. This king sent ambassadors to Philippe de Valois, King of France, to beg assistance against the incursions of the Saracens. He married first Constancia, daughter of Frederick, King of Sicily, and secondly the daughter of the Prince of Tarentum, niece to Robert, King of Naples. Having provoked the jealousy of his countrymen by promoting numerous Frenchmen to high offices of government, he was assassinated in the year 1344.

After his death *Guy de Lusignan* was elected King of Armenia. He died in 1344.

Constans, or *Constantius*, apparently his son, succeeded Guy de Lusignan, and was killed by the Saracens in 1351. He had dispatched ambassadors to implore - assistance against the infidels to the courts of the Pope, the King of England, and the King of France.

Constantine, the next king, appears to have lived in continual troubles with his own subjects, as well as in constant alarm at the increasing inroads of the neighboring powers on both sides. The annals of his stormy reign are almost silent, and it is not known when he died. To such a state of misery and confusion was the kingdom of Armenia now reduced, that the existence of another king, who was probably his successor, is only known by the witness of a rare coin, which bears as legend DRAGO • REX • ARMEN • AGAPI. In the year 1368 the nobles of Armenia elected Peter I., King of Cyprus, king; but he was at Rome at that period, and never took possession of his precarious honor.

The records of the Armenian sovereigns are now drawing to a close. About this period, Leo V., of the family of Lusignan, was seated on his trembling throne. He was famous only for his misfortunes. Menaced on every side, his provinces and castles, one by one, fell before the victorious inroads of the Turks. The Genoese alone, who, in pursuit of trade, had fortified many strong places in Armenia, held out gallantly against the common foe, and the Mohammedan invaders were unable to gain possession of the town of Curco, or Corycus, in Cilicia, which was defended by the soldiers of the intrepid merchants. After a constant series of disasters and defeats, the unhappy king escaped with his life to the island of Cyprus, from whence he passed to Italy, and afterward to Castile, where he implored in vain for assistance from those Christian princes to reinstate him in the kingdom of his ancestors, which had fallen into the power of the infidel, and which, from that period to the present day, has continued to form one of the great pashaliks, or provinces of the Turkish empire. From Castile he took refuge in France, where he was received with distinguished favor and hospitality by King Charles V., who assigned for his residence the hotel of St. Ouen, near St. Denis. About the year 1378 Leo passed over to England, in the hopes of effecting peace between King Richard II. and the King of France, with whom he was then at war, and inducing the two sovereigns to embark in a crusade against the Turks for the recovery of the Holy Land, and for his own restoration to his kingdom. His overtures, like all his other acts, were unsuccessful; but from Richard, King of England, he received magnificent presents, and a pension of 20,000 marcs; which munificence was imitated by the King of France in an annual allowance of 6000 livres.

Leo, King of Armenia, was of small stature, but of intelligent expression and well-formed features. He lived in great magnificence, being richer from the presents of the Christian monarchs than he had been in his own beleaguered kingdom. The last of his royal line, he died, leaving no successor, at Paris, in the year 1393. His body was carried to the tomb clothed in royal robes of white, according to the custom of Armenia, with an open crown upon his head and a golden sceptre in his hand. He lay in state

upon an open bier hung with white, and surrounded by the officers of his household, clothed all of them in white robes. He was buried by the high altar of the church of the Celestines, where his effigy was to be seen upon a black marble tomb under an archway in the wall, and on the tomb was written

Cy gist le tres noble et tres excellent Prince, Leon de Lusignan, quint Roi Latin du Royaulme d'Armenie, qui rendit l'ame a Dieu a Paris le xxix. Jour de Novembre, l'an de Grace mcccxciii.

THE END.