

Chapter XLVI: Troubles In Persia.--Part IV.

Amidst the glories of the succeeding campaign, Heraclius is almost lost to our eyes, and to those of the Byzantine historians. [91] From the spacious and fruitful plains of Albania, the emperor appears to follow the chain of Hyrcanian Mountains, to descend into the province of Media or Irak, and to carry his victorious arms as far as the royal cities of Casbin and Ispahan, which had never been approached by a Roman conqueror. Alarmed by the danger of his kingdom, the powers of Chosroes were already recalled from the Nile and the Bosphorus, and three formidable armies surrounded, in a distant and hostile land, the camp of the emperor. The Colchian allies prepared to desert his standard; and the fears of the bravest veterans were expressed, rather than concealed, by their desponding silence. "Be not terrified," said the intrepid Heraclius, "by the multitude of your foes. With the aid of Heaven, one Roman may triumph over a thousand Barbarians. But if we devote our lives for the salvation of our brethren, we shall obtain the crown of martyrdom, and our immortal reward will be liberally paid by God and posterity." These magnanimous sentiments were supported by the vigor of his actions. He repelled the threefold attack of the Persians, improved the divisions of their chiefs, and, by a well-concerted train of marches, retreats, and successful actions, finally chased them from the field into the fortified cities of Media and Assyria. In the severity of the winter season, Sarbaraza deemed himself secure in the walls of Salban: he was surprised by the activity of Heraclius, who divided his troops, and performed a laborious march in the silence of the night. The

flat roofs of the houses were defended with useless valor against the darts and torches of the Romans: the satraps and nobles of Persia, with their wives and children, and the flower of their martial youth, were either slain or made prisoners. The general escaped by a precipitate flight, but his golden armor was the prize of the conqueror; and the soldiers of Heraclius enjoyed the wealth and repose which they had so nobly deserved. On the return of spring, the emperor traversed in seven days the mountains of Curdistan, and passed without resistance the rapid stream of the Tigris. Oppressed by the weight of their spoils and captives, the Roman army halted under the walls of Amida; and Heraclius informed the senate of Constantinople of his safety and success, which they had already felt by the retreat of the besiegers. The bridges of the Euphrates were destroyed by the Persians; but as soon as the emperor had discovered a ford, they hastily retired to defend the banks of the Sarus, [92] in Cilicia. That river, an impetuous torrent, was about three hundred feet broad; the bridge was fortified with strong turrets; and the banks were lined with Barbarian archers. After a bloody conflict, which continued till the evening, the Romans prevailed in the assault; and a Persian of gigantic size was slain and thrown into the Sarus by the hand of the emperor himself. The enemies were dispersed and dismayed; Heraclius pursued his march to Sebaste in Cappadocia; and at the expiration of three years, the same coast of the Euxine applauded his return from a long and victorious expedition. [93]

[Footnote 91: I cannot find, and (what is much more,) M. D'Anville does not attempt to seek, the Salban, Tarantum, territory of the Huns, &c.,

mentioned by Theophanes, (p. 260-262.) Euty chius, (Annal. tom. ii. p. 231, 232,) an insufficient author, names Asphahan; and Casbin is most probably the city of Sapor. Ispahan is twenty-four days' journey from Tauris, and Casbin half way between, them (Voyages de Tavernier, tom. i. p. 63--82.)]

[Footnote 92: At ten parasangs from Tarsus, the army of the younger Cyrus passed the Sarus, three plethra in breadth: the Pyramus, a stadium in breadth, ran five parasangs farther to the east, (Xenophon, Anabas. l. i. p 33, 34.) Note: Now the Sihan.--M.]

[Footnote 93: George of Pisidia (Bell. Abaricum, 246--265, p. 49) celebrates with truth the persevering courage of the three campaigns against the Persians.]

Instead of skirmishing on the frontier, the two monarchs who disputed the empire of the East aimed their desperate strokes at the heart of their rival. The military force of Persia was wasted by the marches and combats of twenty years, and many of the veterans, who had survived the perils of the sword and the climate, were still detained in the fortresses of Egypt and Syria. But the revenge and ambition of Chosroes exhausted his kingdom; and the new levies of subjects, strangers, and slaves, were divided into three formidable bodies. [94] The first army of fifty thousand men, illustrious by the ornament and title of the golden spears, was destined to march against Heraclius; the second was stationed to prevent his junction with the troops of his brother

Theodorus; and the third was commanded to besiege Constantinople, and to second the operations of the chagan, with whom the Persian king had ratified a treaty of alliance and partition. Sarbar, the general of the third army, penetrated through the provinces of Asia to the well-known camp of Chalcedon, and amused himself with the destruction of the sacred and profane buildings of the Asiatic suburbs, while he impatiently waited the arrival of his Scythian friends on the opposite side of the Bosphorus. On the twenty-ninth of June, thirty thousand Barbarians, the vanguard of the Avars, forced the long wall, and drove into the capital a promiscuous crowd of peasants, citizens, and soldiers. Fourscore thousand [95] of his native subjects, and of the vassal tribes of Gepidae, Russians, Bulgarians, and Sclavonians, advanced under the standard of the chagan; a month was spent in marches and negotiations, but the whole city was invested on the thirty-first of July, from the suburbs of Pera and Galata to the Blachernae and seven towers; and the inhabitants descried with terror the flaming signals of the European and Asiatic shores. In the mean while, the magistrates of Constantinople repeatedly strove to purchase the retreat of the chagan; but their deputies were rejected and insulted; and he suffered the patricians to stand before his throne, while the Persian envoys, in silk robes, were seated by his side. "You see," said the haughty Barbarian, "the proofs of my perfect union with the great king; and his lieutenant is ready to send into my camp a select band of three thousand warriors. Presume no longer to tempt your master with a partial and inadequate ransom your wealth and your city are the only presents worthy of my acceptance. For yourselves, I shall permit you to depart, each with an under-garment and

a shirt; and, at my entreaty, my friend Sarbar will not refuse a passage through his lines. Your absent prince, even now a captive or a fugitive, has left Constantinople to its fate; nor can you escape the arms of the Avars and Persians, unless you could soar into the air like birds, unless like fishes you could dive into the waves." [96] During ten successive days, the capital was assaulted by the Avars, who had made some progress in the science of attack; they advanced to sap or batter the wall, under the cover of the impenetrable tortoise; their engines discharged a perpetual volley of stones and darts; and twelve lofty towers of wood exalted the combatants to the height of the neighboring ramparts.

But the senate and people were animated by the spirit of Heraclius, who had detached to their relief a body of twelve thousand cuirassiers; the powers of fire and mechanics were used with superior art and success in the defence of Constantinople; and the galleys, with two and three ranks of oars, commanded the Bosphorus, and rendered the Persians the idle spectators of the defeat of their allies. The Avars were repulsed; a fleet of Slavonian canoes was destroyed in the harbor; the vassals of the chagan threatened to desert, his provisions were exhausted, and after burning his engines, he gave the signal of a slow and formidable retreat. The devotion of the Romans ascribed this signal deliverance to the Virgin Mary; but the mother of Christ would surely have condemned their inhuman murder of the Persian envoys, who were entitled to the rights of humanity, if they were not protected by the laws of nations.

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[Footnote 94: Petavius (Annotationes ad Nicephorum, p. 62, 63, 64) discriminates the names and actions of five Persian generals who were successively sent against Heraclius.]

[Footnote 95: This number of eight myriads is specified by George of Pisidia, (Bell. Abar. 219.) The poet (50--88) clearly indicates that the old chagan lived till the reign of Heraclius, and that his son and successor was born of a foreign mother. Yet Foggini (Annotat. p. 57) has given another interpretation to this passage.]

[Footnote 96: A bird, a frog, a mouse, and five arrows, had been the present of the Scythian king to Darius, (Herodot. l. iv. c. 131, 132.) Substituez une lettre a ces signes (says Rousseau, with much good taste) plus elle sera menacante moins elle effrayera; ce ne sera qu'une fanfarronade dont Darius n'eut fait que rire, (Emile, tom. iii. p. 146.) Yet I much question whether the senate and people of Constantinople laughed at this message of the chagan.]

[Footnote 97: The Paschal Chronicle (p. 392--397) gives a minute and authentic narrative of the siege and deliverance of Constantinople Theophanes (p. 264) adds some circumstances; and a faint light may be obtained from the smoke of George of Pisidia, who has composed a poem (de Bello Abarico, p. 45--54) to commemorate this auspicious event.]

After the division of his army, Heraclius prudently retired to the banks

of the Phasis, from whence he maintained a defensive war against the fifty thousand gold spears of Persia. His anxiety was relieved by the deliverance of Constantinople; his hopes were confirmed by a victory of his brother Theodorus; and to the hostile league of Chosroes with the Avars, the Roman emperor opposed the useful and honorable alliance of the Turks. At his liberal invitation, the horde of Chozars [98] transported their tents from the plains of the Volga to the mountains of Georgia; Heraclius received them in the neighborhood of Teflis, and the khan with his nobles dismounted from their horses, if we may credit the Greeks, and fell prostrate on the ground, to adore the purple of the Caesars. Such voluntary homage and important aid were entitled to the warmest acknowledgments; and the emperor, taking off his own diadem, placed it on the head of the Turkish prince, whom he saluted with a tender embrace and the appellation of son. After a sumptuous banquet, he presented Ziebel with the plate and ornaments, the gold, the gems, and the silk, which had been used at the Imperial table, and, with his own hand, distributed rich jewels and ear-rings to his new allies. In a secret interview, he produced the portrait of his daughter Eudocia, [99] condescended to flatter the Barbarian with the promise of a fair and august bride; obtained an immediate succor of forty thousand horse, and negotiated a strong diversion of the Turkish arms on the side of the Oxus. [100] The Persians, in their turn, retreated with precipitation; in the camp of Edessa, Heraclius reviewed an army of seventy thousand Romans and strangers; and some months were successfully employed in the recovery of the cities of Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia, whose fortifications had been imperfectly restored. Sarbar still maintained

the important station of Chalcedon; but the jealousy of Chosroes, or the artifice of Heraclius, soon alienated the mind of that powerful satrap from the service of his king and country. A messenger was intercepted with a real or fictitious mandate to the cadarigan, or second in command, directing him to send, without delay, to the throne, the head of a guilty or unfortunate general. The despatches were transmitted to Sarbar himself; and as soon as he read the sentence of his own death, he dexterously inserted the names of four hundred officers, assembled a military council, and asked the cadarigan whether he was prepared to execute the commands of their tyrant. The Persians unanimously declared, that Chosroes had forfeited the sceptre; a separate treaty was concluded with the government of Constantinople; and if some considerations of honor or policy restrained Sarbar from joining the standard of Heraclius, the emperor was assured that he might prosecute, without interruption, his designs of victory and peace.

[Footnote 98: The power of the Chozars prevailed in the viith, viiiith, and ixth centuries. They were known to the Greeks, the Arabs, and under the name of Kosa, to the Chinese themselves. De Guignes, *Hist. des Huns*, tom. ii. part ii. p. 507--509. \* Note: Moses of Chorene speaks of an invasion of Armenia by the Khazars in the second century, l. ii. c. 62. M. St. Martin suspects them to be the same with the Hunnish nation of the Acatires or Agazzires. They are called by the Greek historians Eastern Turks; like the Madjars and other Hunnish or Finnish tribes, they had probably received some admixture from the genuine Turkish races. Ibn. Hankal (*Oriental Geography*) says that their language was



like the Bulgarian, and considers them a people of Finnish or Hunnish race. Klaproth, *Tabl. Hist.* p. 268-273. Abel Remusat, *Rech. sur les Langues Tartares*, tom. i. p. 315, 316. St. Martin, vol. xi. p. 115.--M]

[Footnote 99: Epiphania, or Eudocia, the only daughter of Heraclius and his first wife Eudocia, was born at Constantinople on the 7th of July, A.D. 611, baptized the 15th of August, and crowned (in the oratory of St. Stephen in the palace) the 4th of October of the same year. At this time she was about fifteen. Eudocia was afterwards sent to her Turkish husband, but the news of his death stopped her journey, and prevented the consummation, (Ducange, *Familiae Byzantin.* p. 118.)]

[Footnote 100: Elmcaïn (*Hist. Saracen.* p. 13--16) gives some curious and probable facts; but his numbers are rather too high--300,000 Romans assembled at Edessa--500,000 Persians killed at Nineveh. The abatement of a cipher is scarcely enough to restore his sanity]

Deprived of his firmest support, and doubtful of the fidelity of his subjects, the greatness of Chosroes was still conspicuous in its ruins. The number of five hundred thousand may be interpreted as an Oriental metaphor, to describe the men and arms, the horses and elephants, that covered Media and Assyria against the invasion of Heraclius. Yet the Romans boldly advanced from the Araxes to the Tigris, and the timid prudence of Rhazates was content to follow them by forced marches through a desolate country, till he received a peremptory mandate to risk the fate of Persia in a decisive battle. Eastward of the Tigris,

at the end of the bridge of Mosul, the great Nineveh had formerly been erected: [101] the city, and even the ruins of the city, had long since disappeared; [102] the vacant space afforded a spacious field for the operations of the two armies. But these operations are neglected by the Byzantine historians, and, like the authors of epic poetry and romance, they ascribe the victory, not to the military conduct, but to the personal valor, of their favorite hero. On this memorable day, Heraclius, on his horse Phallas, surpassed the bravest of his warriors: his lip was pierced with a spear; the steed was wounded in the thigh; but he carried his master safe and victorious through the triple phalanx of the Barbarians. In the heat of the action, three valiant chiefs were successively slain by the sword and lance of the emperor: among these was Rhazates himself; he fell like a soldier, but the sight of his head scattered grief and despair through the fainting ranks of the Persians. His armor of pure and massy gold, the shield of one hundred and twenty plates, the sword and belt, the saddle and cuirass, adorned the triumph of Heraclius; and if he had not been faithful to Christ and his mother, the champion of Rome might have offered the fourth opime spoils to the Jupiter of the Capitol. [103] In the battle of Nineveh, which was fiercely fought from daybreak to the eleventh hour, twenty-eight standards, besides those which might be broken or torn, were taken from the Persians; the greatest part of their army was cut in pieces, and the victors, concealing their own loss, passed the night on the field. They acknowledged, that on this occasion it was less difficult to kill than to discomfit the soldiers of Chosroes; amidst the bodies of their friends, no more than two bow-shot from the enemy the remnant of the

Persian cavalry stood firm till the seventh hour of the night; about the eighth hour they retired to their unrifled camp, collected their baggage, and dispersed on all sides, from the want of orders rather than of resolution. The diligence of Heraclius was not less admirable in the use of victory; by a march of forty-eight miles in four-and-twenty hours, his vanguard occupied the bridges of the great and the lesser Zab; and the cities and palaces of Assyria were open for the first time to the Romans. By a just gradation of magnificent scenes, they penetrated to the royal seat of Dastagerd, [1031] and, though much of the treasure had been removed, and much had been expended, the remaining wealth appears to have exceeded their hopes, and even to have satiated their avarice. Whatever could not be easily transported, they consumed with fire, that Chosroes might feel the anguish of those wounds which he had so often inflicted on the provinces of the empire: and justice might allow the excuse, if the desolation had been confined to the works of regal luxury, if national hatred, military license, and religious zeal, had not wasted with equal rage the habitations and the temples of the guiltless subject. The recovery of three hundred Roman standards, and the deliverance of the numerous captives of Edessa and Alexandria, reflect a purer glory on the arms of Heraclius. From the palace of Dastagerd, he pursued his march within a few miles of Modain or Ctesiphon, till he was stopped, on the banks of the Arba, by the difficulty of the passage, the rigor of the season, and perhaps the fame of an impregnable capital. The return of the emperor is marked by the modern name of the city of Sherhzour: he fortunately passed Mount Zara, before the snow, which fell incessantly thirty-four days; and the

citizens of Gandzca, or Tauris, were compelled to entertain the soldiers and their horses with a hospitable reception. [104]

[Footnote 101: Ctesias (apud Didor. Sicul. tom. i. l. ii. p. 115, edit. Wesseling) assigns 480 stadia (perhaps only 32 miles) for the circumference of Nineveh. Jonas talks of three days' journey: the 120,000 persons described by the prophet as incapable of discerning their right hand from their left, may afford about 700,000 persons of all ages for the inhabitants of that ancient capital, (Goguet, Origines des Loix, &c., tom. iii. part i. p. 92, 93,) which ceased to exist 600 years before Christ. The western suburb still subsisted, and is mentioned under the name of Mosul in the first age of the Arabian khalifs.]

[Footnote 102: Niebuhr (Voyage en Arabie, &c., tom. ii. p. 286) passed over Nineveh without perceiving it. He mistook for a ridge of hills the old rampart of brick or earth. It is said to have been 100 feet high, flanked with 1500 towers, each of the height of 200 feet.]

[Footnote 103: Rex regia arma fero (says Romulus, in the first consecration)... bina postea (continues Livy, i. 10) inter tot bella, opima parta sunt spolia, adeo rara ejus fortuna decoris. If Varro (apud Pomp Festum, p. 306, edit. Dacier) could justify his liberality in granting the opime spoils even to a common soldier who had slain the king or general of the enemy, the honor would have been much more cheap and common]

[Footnote 1031: Macdonald Kinneir places Dastagerd at Kasr e Shirin, the palace of Sira on the banks of the Diala between Holwan and Kanabee. Kinnets Geograph. Mem. p. 306.--M.]

[Footnote 104: In describing this last expedition of Heraclius, the facts, the places, and the dates of Theophanes (p. 265--271) are so accurate and authentic, that he must have followed the original letters of the emperor, of which the Paschal Chronicle has preserved (p. 398--402) a very curious specimen.]

When the ambition of Chosroes was reduced to the defence of his hereditary kingdom, the love of glory, or even the sense of shame, should have urged him to meet his rival in the field. In the battle of Nineveh, his courage might have taught the Persians to vanquish, or he might have fallen with honor by the lance of a Roman emperor. The successor of Cyrus chose rather, at a secure distance, to expect the event, to assemble the relics of the defeat, and to retire, by measured steps, before the march of Heraclius, till he beheld with a sigh the once loved mansions of Dastagerd. Both his friends and enemies were persuaded, that it was the intention of Chosroes to bury himself under the ruins of the city and palace: and as both might have been equally adverse to his flight, the monarch of Asia, with Sira, [1041] and three concubines, escaped through a hole in the wall nine days before the arrival of the Romans. The slow and stately procession in which he showed himself to the prostrate crowd, was changed to a rapid and secret

journey; and the first evening he lodged in the cottage of a peasant, whose humble door would scarcely give admittance to the great king. [105] His superstition was subdued by fear: on the third day, he entered with joy the fortifications of Ctesiphon; yet he still doubted of his safety till he had opposed the River Tigris to the pursuit of the Romans. The discovery of his flight agitated with terror and tumult the palace, the city, and the camp of Dastagerd: the satraps hesitated whether they had most to fear from their sovereign or the enemy; and the females of the harem were astonished and pleased by the sight of mankind, till the jealous husband of three thousand wives again confined them to a more distant castle. At his command, the army of Dastagerd retreated to a new camp: the front was covered by the Arba, and a line of two hundred elephants; the troops of the more distant provinces successively arrived, and the vilest domestics of the king and satraps were enrolled for the last defence of the throne. It was still in the power of Chosroes to obtain a reasonable peace; and he was repeatedly pressed by the messengers of Heraclius to spare the blood of his subjects, and to relieve a humane conqueror from the painful duty of carrying fire and sword through the fairest countries of Asia. But the pride of the Persian had not yet sunk to the level of his fortune; he derived a momentary confidence from the retreat of the emperor; he wept with impotent rage over the ruins of his Assyrian palaces, and disregarded too long the rising murmurs of the nation, who complained that their lives and fortunes were sacrificed to the obstinacy of an old man. That unhappy old man was himself tortured with the sharpest pains both of mind and body; and, in the consciousness of his approaching end,

he resolved to fix the tiara on the head of Merdaza, the most favored of his sons. But the will of Chosroes was no longer revered, and Siroes, [1051] who gloried in the rank and merit of his mother Sira, had conspired with the malecontents to assert and anticipate the rights of primogeniture. [106] Twenty-two satraps (they styled themselves patriots) were tempted by the wealth and honors of a new reign: to the soldiers, the heir of Chosroes promised an increase of pay; to the Christians, the free exercise of their religion; to the captives, liberty and rewards; and to the nation, instant peace and the reduction of taxes. It was determined by the conspirators, that Siroes, with the ensigns of royalty, should appear in the camp; and if the enterprise should fail, his escape was contrived to the Imperial court. But the new monarch was saluted with unanimous acclamations; the flight of Chosroes (yet where could he have fled?) was rudely arrested, eighteen sons were massacred [1061] before his face, and he was thrown into a dungeon, where he expired on the fifth day. The Greeks and modern Persians minutely describe how Chosroes was insulted, and famished, and tortured, by the command of an inhuman son, who so far surpassed the example of his father: but at the time of his death, what tongue would relate the story of the parricide? what eye could penetrate into the tower of darkness? According to the faith and mercy of his Christian enemies, he sunk without hope into a still deeper abyss; [107] and it will not be denied, that tyrants of every age and sect are the best entitled to such infernal abodes. The glory of the house of Sassan ended with the life of Chosroes: his unnatural son enjoyed only eight months the fruit of his crimes: and in the space of four years, the regal title was assumed by

nine candidates, who disputed, with the sword or dagger, the fragments of an exhausted monarchy. Every province, and each city of Persia, was the scene of independence, of discord, and of blood; and the state of anarchy prevailed about eight years longer, [1071] till the factions were silenced and united under the common yoke of the Arabian caliphs. [108]

[Footnote 1041: The Schirin of Persian poetry. The love of Chosru and Schirin rivals in Persian romance that of Joseph with Zuleika the wife of Potiphar, of Solomon with the queen of Sheba, and that of Mejnoun and Leila. The number of Persian poems on the subject may be seen in M. von Hammer's preface to his poem of Schirin.--M]

[Footnote 105: The words of Theophanes are remarkable. Young princes who discover a propensity to war should repeatedly transcribe and translate such salutary texts.]

[Footnote 1051: His name was Kabad (as appears from an official letter in the Paschal Chronicle, p. 402.) St. Martin considers the name Siroes, Schirquieh of Schirwey, derived from the word schir, royal. St. Martin, xi. 153.--M.]

[Footnote 106: The authentic narrative of the fall of Chosroes is contained in the letter of Heraclius (Chron. Paschal. p. 398) and the history of Theophanes, (p. 271.)]



[Footnote 1061: According to Le Beau, this massacre was perpetrated at Mahuza in Babylonia, not in the presence of Chosroes. The Syrian historian, Thomas of Maraga, gives Chosroes twenty-four sons; Mirkhond, (translated by De Sacy,) fifteen; the inedited Modjmel-alte-warikh, agreeing with Gibbon, eighteen, with their names. Le Beau and St. Martin, xi. 146.--M.]

[Footnote 107: On the first rumor of the death of Chosroes, an Heracliad in two cantos was instantly published at Constantinople by George of Pisidia, (p. 97--105.) A priest and a poet might very properly exult in the damnation of the public enemy but such mean revenge is unworthy of a king and a conqueror; and I am sorry to find so much black superstition in the letter of Heraclius: he almost applauds the parricide of Siroes as an act of piety and justice. \* Note: The Mahometans show no more charity towards the memory of Chosroes or Khoosroo Purveez. All his reverses are ascribed to the just indignation of God, upon a monarch who had dared, with impious and accursed hands, to tear the letter of the Holy Prophet Mahomed. Compare note, p. 231.--M.]

[Footnote 1071: Yet Gibbon himself places the flight and death of Yesdegird III., the last king of Persia, in 651. The famous era of Yesdegird dates from his accession, June 16 632.--M.]

[Footnote 108: The best Oriental accounts of this last period of the Sassanian kings are found in Euty chius, (Annal. tom. ii. p. 251--256,) who dissembles the parricide of Siroes, D'Herbelot (Bibliotheque

Oriente, p. 789,) and Assemani, (Bibliothec. Oriental. tom. iii. p. 415--420.)]

As soon as the mountains became passable, the emperor received the welcome news of the success of the conspiracy, the death of Chosroes, and the elevation of his eldest son to the throne of Persia. The authors of the revolution, eager to display their merits in the court or camp of Tauris, preceded the ambassadors of Siroes, who delivered the letters of their master to his brother the emperor of the Romans. [109] In the language of the usurpers of every age, he imputes his own crimes to the Deity, and, without degrading his equal majesty, he offers to reconcile the long discord of the two nations, by a treaty of peace and alliance more durable than brass or iron. The conditions of the treaty were easily defined and faithfully executed. In the recovery of the standards and prisoners which had fallen into the hands of the Persians, the emperor imitated the example of Augustus: their care of the national dignity was celebrated by the poets of the times, but the decay of genius may be measured by the distance between Horace and George of Pisidia: the subjects and brethren of Heraclius were redeemed from persecution, slavery, and exile; but, instead of the Roman eagles, the true wood of the holy cross was restored to the importunate demands of the successor of Constantine. The victor was not ambitious of enlarging the weakness of the empire; the son of Chosroes abandoned without regret the conquests of his father; the Persians who evacuated the cities of Syria and Egypt were honorably conducted to the frontier, and a war which had wounded the vitals of the two monarchies, produced no change

in their external and relative situation. The return of Heraclius from Tauris to Constantinople was a perpetual triumph; and after the exploits of six glorious campaigns, he peaceably enjoyed the Sabbath of his toils. After a long impatience, the senate, the clergy, and the people, went forth to meet their hero, with tears and acclamations, with olive branches and innumerable lamps; he entered the capital in a chariot drawn by four elephants; and as soon as the emperor could disengage himself from the tumult of public joy, he tasted more genuine satisfaction in the embraces of his mother and his son. [110]

[Footnote 109: The letter of Siroes in the Paschal Chronicle (p. 402) unfortunately ends before he proceeds to business. The treaty appears in its execution in the histories of Theophanes and Nicephorus. \* Note: M. Mai. Script. Vet. Nova Collectio, vol. i. P. 2, p. 223, has added some lines, but no clear sense can be made out of the fragment.--M.]

[Footnote 110: The burden of Corneille's song, "Montrez Heraclius au peuple qui l'attend," is much better suited to the present occasion. See his triumph in Theophanes (p. 272, 273) and Nicephorus, (p. 15, 16.) The life of the mother and tenderness of the son are attested by George of Pisidia, (Bell. Abar. 255, &c., p. 49.) The metaphor of the Sabbath is used somewhat profanely by these Byzantine Christians.]

The succeeding year was illustrated by a triumph of a very different kind, the restitution of the true cross to the holy sepulchre. Heraclius performed in person the pilgrimage of Jerusalem, the identity of the

relic was verified by the discreet patriarch, [111] and this august ceremony has been commemorated by the annual festival of the exaltation of the cross. Before the emperor presumed to tread the consecrated ground, he was instructed to strip himself of the diadem and purple, the pomp and vanity of the world: but in the judgment of his clergy, the persecution of the Jews was more easily reconciled with the precepts of the gospel. [1111] He again ascended his throne to receive the congratulations of the ambassadors of France and India: and the fame of Moses, Alexander, and Hercules, [112] was eclipsed in the popular estimation, by the superior merit and glory of the great Heraclius. Yet the deliverer of the East was indigent and feeble. Of the Persian spoils, the most valuable portion had been expended in the war, distributed to the soldiers, or buried, by an unlucky tempest, in the waves of the Euxine. The conscience of the emperor was oppressed by the obligation of restoring the wealth of the clergy, which he had borrowed for their own defence: a perpetual fund was required to satisfy these inexorable creditors; the provinces, already wasted by the arms and avarice of the Persians, were compelled to a second payment of the same taxes; and the arrears of a simple citizen, the treasurer of Damascus, were commuted to a fine of one hundred thousand pieces of gold. The loss of two hundred thousand soldiers [113] who had fallen by the sword, was of less fatal importance than the decay of arts, agriculture, and population, in this long and destructive war: and although a victorious army had been formed under the standard of Heraclius, the unnatural effort appears to have exhausted rather than exercised their strength. While the emperor triumphed at Constantinople or Jerusalem, an obscure

town on the confines of Syria was pillaged by the Saracens, and they cut in pieces some troops who advanced to its relief; an ordinary and trifling occurrence, had it not been the prelude of a mighty revolution. These robbers were the apostles of Mahomet; their fanatic valor had emerged from the desert; and in the last eight years of his reign, Heraclius lost to the Arabs the same provinces which he had rescued from the Persians.

[Footnote 111: See Baronius, (Annal. Eccles. A.D. 628, No. 1-4,) Euty chius, (Annal. tom. ii. p. 240--248,) Nicephorus, (Brev. p. 15.) The seals of the case had never been broken; and this preservation of the cross is ascribed (under God) to the devotion of Queen Sira.]

[Footnote 1111: If the clergy imposed upon the kneeling and penitent emperor the persecution of the Jews, it must be acknowledge that provocation was not wanting; for how many of them had been eye-witnesses of, perhaps sufferers in, the horrible atrocities committed on the capture of the city! Yet we have no authentic account of great severities exercised by Heraclius. The law of Hadrian was reenacted, which prohibited the Jews from approaching within three miles of the city--a law, which, in the present exasperated state of the Christians, might be a measure of security of mercy, rather than of oppression. Milman, Hist. of the Jews, iii. 242.--M.]

[Footnote 112: George of Pisidia, Acroas. iii. de Expedit. contra Persas, 415, &c., and Heracleid. Acroas. i. 65--138. I neglect the

meaner parallels of Daniel, Timotheus, &c.; Chosroes and the chagan were of course compared to Belshazzar, Pharaoh, the old serpent, &c.]

[Footnote 13: Suidas (in Excerpt. Hist. Byzant. p. 46) gives this number; but either the Persian must be read for the Isaurian war, or this passage does not belong to the emperor Heraclius.]