seat of all the mediaeval arts soon after the transference thither of the headquarters of the empire. The plastic arts of Byzantium were for a while dominated by the survival of the dull classic art of the extreme decadence, but soon fresh life and vigour of conception were gained by a people who were not without the germinating seeds of a new æsthetic development. The bronze statue of St Peter in his Roman basilica is an early work which shows some promise of what was to come in the far-off future ; though classical in its main lines and stiff in treatment, it possesses a simple dignity and force which were far beyond the powers of any mere copyist of classic sculp­ture. @@1 Very early in the 5th or 6th century a school of decorative sculpture arose at Byzantium which produced work, such as carved foliage on capitals and bands of orna­ment, possessed of the very highest decorative power and executed with unrivalled spirit and vigour. The early Byzantine treatment of the acanthus or thistle, as seen in the capitals of S. Sophia at Constantinople, the Golden Gate at Jerusalem, and many other buildings in the East, has never since been surpassed in any purely decorative sculpture ; and it is interesting to note how it grew out of the dull and lifeless ornamentation which covers the degraded Corinthian capital used so largely in Roman buildings of the time of Constantine and his sons. It was, however, especially in the production of Metal-work *(q.v.)* that the early Byzantines were so famous, and this notably in the manipulation of the precious metals, which were then used in the most lavish way to decorate and furnish the great churches of the empire. This extended use of gold and silver strongly influenced their sculpture, even when the material was marble or bronze, and caused an amount of delicate surface-ornament to be used which was sometimes injurious to the breadth and simplicity of their reliefs. For many centuries the art of Byzantium, at least in its higher forms, made little or no progress, mainly owing to the tyrannical influence of the church and its growing suspicion of anything like sensual beauty. A large party in the Eastern Church decided that all repre­sentations of Christ must be “without form or comeliness,” and that it was impious to carve or paint Him with any of the beauty and nobility of the pagan gods. Moreover, the artists of Byzantium were fettered by the strictest rules as to the proper way in which to portray each sacred figure : every saint had to be represented in a certain attitude, with one fixed cast of face and arrangement of drapery, and even in certain definitely prescribed colours. No deviation from these rules was permitted, and thus stereotyped patterns were created and followed in the most rigid and conventional manner. Hence in Byzantine art from the 6th to the 12th century a miniature painting in an illuminated MS. looks like a reduced copy of a colossal glass mosaic; and no design had much special relation to the material it was to be executed in : it was much the same whether it was intended to be a large relief sculptured in stone or a minute piece of silver-work for the back of a textus.

Till about the 12th century, and in some places much later, the art of Byzantium dominated that of the whole Christian world in a very remarkable way. From Russia to Ireland and from Norway to Spain any given work of art in one of the countries of Europe might almost equally well have been designed in any other. Little or no local peculiarities can be detected, except of course in the methods of execution, and even these were wonderfully similar everywhere. The dogmatic unity of the Catholic Church and its great monastic system, with constant interchange of monkish craftsmen between one country and another,

were the chief causes of this widespread monotony of style. An additional reason was the unrivalled technical skill of the early Byzantines, which made their city widely resorted to by the artist-craftsmen of all Europe,—the great school for learning any branch of the arts.

The extensive use of the precious metals for the chief works of plastic art in this early period is one of the reasons why so few examples still remain,—their great intrinsic value naturally causing their destruction. One of the most important existing examples, dating from the 8th century, is a series of colossal wall reliefs executed in hard stucco in the church of Cividale (Friuli) not far from Trieste. These represent rows of female saints bearing jewelled crosses, crowns, and wreaths, and closely resembling in cos­tume, attitude, and arrangement the gift-bearing mosaic figures of Theodora and her ladies in S. Vitale at Ravenna. It is a striking instance of the almost petrified state of Byzantine art that so close a similarity should be possible between works executed at an interval of fully two hundred years. Some very interesting small plaques of ivory in the library of St Gall show a still later survival of early forms. The central relief is a figure of Christ in Majesty, and closely resembles those in the colossal apse mosaic of S. Apollinare in Classe and other churches of Ravenna ; while the figures below the Christ are survivals of a still older time, dating back from the best eras of classic art. A river-god is represented as an old man holding an urn, from which a stream issues, and a reclining female figure with an infant and a cornucopia is the old Roman Tellus or Earth-goddess with her ancient attributes. @@2

It will be convenient to discuss the sculpture of the mediaeval and modern periods under the heads of the chief countries of Europe.

*England.—*During the Saxon period, when stone build­ings were rare and even large cathedrals were built of wood, the plastic arts were mostly confined to the use of gold, silver, and gilt copper. The earliest existing speci­mens of sculpture in stone are a number of tall churchyard crosses, mostly in the northern provinces and apparently the work of Scandinavian sculptors. One very remarkable example is a tall monolithic cross, cut in sandstone, in the churchyard of Gosforth in Cumberland. It is covered with rudely carved reliefs, small in scale, which are of special interest as showing a transitional state from the worship of Odin to that of Christ. Some of the old Norse symbols and myths sculptured on it occur modified and altered into a semi-Christian form. Though rich in decora­tive effect and with a graceful outline, this sculptured cross shows a very primitive state of artistic development, as do the other crosses of this class in Cornwall, Ireland, and Scotland, which are mainly ornamented with those ingeni­ously intricate patterns of interlacing knotwork designed so skilfully by both the early Norse and the Celtic races. @@3 They belong to a class of art which is not Christian in its origin, though it was afterwards largely used for Christian purposes, and so is thoroughly national in style, quite free from the usual widespread Byzantine influence. Of special interest from their early date—probably the 11th century —are two large stone reliefs now in Chichester cathedral, which are traditionally said to have come from the pre- Norman church at Selsey. They are thoroughly Byzantine in style, but evidently the work of some very ignorant sculptor; they represent two scenes in the Raising of

@@@1 There is no ground for the popular impression that this is an antique statue of Jupiter transformed into that of St Peter by the addition of the keys.

@@@2 On early and mediæval sculpture in ivory consult Gori, *Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum,* Florence, 1759 ; Westwood, *Diptychs of Consuls,* London, 1862; Didron, *Images ouvrantes du Louvre,* Paris, 1871; Maskell, *Ivories in the South Kensington Museum,* London, 1872 ; Wieseier, *Diptychon Quirinianum zu Brescia,* Gottingen, 1868 ; Wyatt and Oldfield, *Sculpture in Ivory,* London, 1856.

@@@3 See O’Neill, *Sculptured Crosses of Ireland,* London, 1857.