ever, but a passing storm,—the only interruption, in fact, to the peace and prosperity of the country during 400 years. With the departure of the Franks Spain soon recovered herself, and when we next hear of her early in the 5th century we find commerce and civilization well established, and cities ranking among the finest and richest in the Roman world. In 409, however, the year of the sack of Rome under Alaric, a tide of barbarism swept over the country; Suevi, Alani, Vandals “ravaged," says a writer of the time, quoted by Gibbon (ch. 31), “ with equal fury the cities and the open country.” Spain, long so quiet and prosperous, was brought down to the lowest depth of misery. At this point the precise order of events is not quite clearly ascertainable. It seems that in 414 or 415 a Visigothic host entered Spain under their king, Ataulphus, Alaric’s successor by election, who had married Placidia, the sister of Honorius, emperor of the West, son of the great Theodosius. Ataulphus was now Rome’s ally, and fought as her champion in Spain against Suevi and Vandals. A new era seemed to have opened, and we may see in this alliance a prophecy of the ultimate fusion of Latin and German peoples,—the beginnings, in fact, of the modern world. To Ataulphus, who was murdered at his new capital Barcelona, succeeded after a brief interval in 415 Walia, a warlike and ambitious chief, who may be said to have established the Visigothic or West-Gothic kingdom in Spain on the ruins of the old Roman province. Walia concluded a treaty with the emperor Honorius, and, putting himself at the head of his brave Goths, in a three years’ war he destroyed or drove

into remote corners the barbarous hordes of Vandals, Alani, and Suevi that had settled down in the country. Spain, thus reconquered, was nominally subject to Rome, but soon became really independent and began to be the seat of a Christian civilization.

Section II.—Spain under the West-Goths.

The West-Gothic or Visigothic kingdom in Spain,

founded by Walia, lasted for nearly three centuries, from 418 to 711, when it fell before the Arab or Saracen inva­sion. Toulouse was its headquarters ; here was held the court of the West-Gothic kings, while Toledo became the centre of administration for Spain. The relations of the West-Goths with Rome varied from time to time : some­times they were her friendly allies, sometimes, nominally at least, her dependants ; sometimes they rose in revolt and were her open enemies. Walia, after his victories in Spain, professed to restore the country as once more a Roman pro­vince to the rule of the emperor Honorius, and again we hear of the oppressions of imperial officers and functionaries, which seem to have been even more intolerable to the Spaniards than the strifes and wars of Vandals, Alani, and Suevi. Nor were these troubles finally ended ; Walia had by no means thoroughly consolidated his conquests ; and the West-Gothic kingdom in Spain cannot be said to have been firmly established till the 6th century. In northern Spain, in Galicia more especially, the Vandals and Suevi still had settlements, and were quarrelsome neighbours. In 428 they routed an allied army of Romans and Goths, and overran the southern districts, plundering some of the chief cities on the coast before they quitted the country for Africa under their king, the famous and savage Gen- seric. The Suevi yet remained, but at the solicitation of the Romanized Spanish provincials of the southern cities, who felt themselves threatened with utter extinction by these barbarians, Rome offered its intervention, which was effectually carried out by the king of the West-Goths, Theodoric II., grandson of Alaric. Crossing the Pyrenees in 456, as Rome’s representative and ally, Theodoric crushed the Suevi by a decisive victory in the north-west of Spain,

near Astorga. It would seem that from this time the Suevic power was confined within the limits of Galicia, which became in fact a mere dependency of the West- Gothic kingdom. Theodoric’s victories, so far from strengthening Rome’s hold on Spain, greatly weakened it ; and this was what he himself really intended. He did not even make a pretence of restoring the country to the imperial rule. His brother and successor Euric@@1 (466-485) persistently defied the empire, completing Theodoric’s work, and establishing by further successes in Spain, carried into its remotest western districts, the West-Gothic kingdom in that country in full and avowed independence. Euric was something more than a successful warrior : he aspired to be a legislator, and he had the “ customs of the Goths ” recorded in writing and embodied in a code. The work was continued by his successor Alaric II. in the beginning of the 6th century, under the superintendence of civil and ecclesiastical lawyers, and it was based mainly on what was known as the Theodosian code (see Brevi­arium Alaricanum). The result was that a thoroughly Roman character was impressed on the West-Gothic legis­lation, and that Roman institutions, ideas, and manners long survived in Spain. With the conversion of the West- Goths from Arianism to the orthodox faith in the latter part of the 6th century, under their king Recared (586- 589), came in new influences and a great accession of power to the ecclesiastics. Recared was the first Catholic king of Spain. With the zeal of a convert he set himself to root out Arianism, burning Arian books of theology and frightening his Arian bishops into the profession of the Catholic belief. He seems to have been thoroughly suc­cessful, and richly endowed churches and monasteries grew up in every part of Spain. Pope Gregory the Great acknowledged the good work of Recared by a gift of sacred relics. Unhappily the seeds of bigotry and religious intolerance had been sown, and with the beginning of the 7th century came a savage persecution of the Jews, multi­tudes of whom had long been settled in Spain and had thriven, as elsewhere, by trade and industry. The Jew up to this time seems to have found in Spain a particularly safe and comfortable home. Now, at the instance of a West-Gothic king, he was so cruelly@@2 oppressed and per­secuted that even the Catholic clergy interposed to some extent on his behalf. A decree for the expulsion of the entire Jewish community was promulgated on one occasion with the sanction of the council of Toledo; but the Jew still held his ground in Spain and prospered and grew rich, and his presence in the country contributed to the rapid spread of Arab conquest in the next century.

Among the most conspicuous features of the West- Gothic kingdom in Spain we may note elective@@3 monarchy, the great and indeed overshadowing power of the church, an aristocracy which had in its hands a very large part of the administration, a uniform code of laws for all Spaniards, with both a distinctly Roman and ecclesiastical impress on it. The church on the whole seems to have been the guiding spirit, and the Spanish bishops and clergy were held in high esteem for their learning and virtue. It was they who mainly inspired the legislation of the great national councils of Toledo, which to the West-Goths of Spain were what the Witena- gemot was to our Saxon ancestors. The church was the centre round which the whole of society moved. In this fact we see foreshadowed much of the future of Spanish history, the supremacy of ecclesiastics, the extraordinary powers of the Inquisition. It had from the first its evil

@@@1 Euric is said to have assassinated his brother Theodoric.

@@@2  Ninety thousand Jews were compelled to receive baptism (Gibbon’s Decline and Fall, ch. 37).

@@@3 Limited, however, to pure Gothic blood.