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PAULINE AND OTHER
STUDIES

IN EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY

BY

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LIFE IN THE DAYS OF ST. BASIL THE
GREAT

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THE publication of three volumes of selections from the works of the great Cappadocian Fathers of the fourth century may well attract notice even in this busy time; and the careful and excellent scholarship displayed by the translators and editors thoroughly deserves more generous recognition than it has yet received. The work has been well done; it was well worth doing; and it was by no means easy to do. Gregory of Nyssa is a really difficult author. The style of Basil is, like his own character, direct, vigorous, and much too intense to become so complicated as that of his brother.

¹ *Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church.* Edited by Dr. Henry Wace, Principal of King's College, London, and Dr. Philip Schaff, Professor of Church History in Union Seminary, New York.

Vol. V., *Select Writings and Letters of Gregory of Nyssa.* Translated with prolegomena, etc., by W. Moore, M.A., Rector of Appleton, late Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and H. A. Wilson, M.A., Fellow and Librarian of Magdalen College, Oxford.

Vol. VII.: Part II., *Select Orations and Letters of S. Gregory Nazianzen.* Translated with prolegomena, etc., by C. G. Browne, M.A., Rector of Lympstone, Devon, and J. E. Swallow, M.A., Chaplain of the House of Mercy, Horbury.

Vol. VIII., *Letters and Select Works of St. Basil.* Translated with prolegomena, etc., by Blomfield Jackson, M.A., Vicar of St. Bartholomew's, Moor Lane, and Fellow of King's College, London.

The variety in the titlature of the three Saints suggests a certain difference of view among the translators.

But even Basil presents numerous difficulties to the comprehension of his readers; and the scholar, who studies an author of this period, with few and poor editions, has a much more difficult task than the translator of some author that has attracted the attention of generations and centuries of learned leisure. Dr. Wace is responsible for the editing of the whole volume of Gregory Nyssen, and part of the volume of Basil; and the many difficulties and questions that confront the translator in every page must all have been weighed anew by him in the execution of a peculiarly thankless, but important task.

It is not our intention to enter into minute questions of translation and criticism, but to attempt to illustrate the usefulness of work like this, by giving some examples of what is to be learned from the selected portions of the three authors. We shall disregard entirely the theological side of their writings, and only quote some of the passages bearing on the condition of society and life at the time and in the land where the three Fathers lived. It is from Basil that we learn most, partly because he had a much more practical and statesmanlike mind than either his brother or his friend, partly because almost the whole collection of his letters, which come into nearer relations to actual life than the theological treatises, is here translated,¹ whereas only a small selection of the letters of Gregory Nazianzen is given (and these seem chosen more for their theological or personal interest than for their bearing on the state of society), and only a very few letters of Gregory Nyssen have been pre-

¹The first 299, with a few specimens of the rest (including the doubtful or spurious correspondence), are included in Mr. Jackson's volume. Our references to *Epist.* are to be understood of Basil's letters, unless another name is mentioned.

served. We shall, as far as possible, narrate each incident in the original words, partly to preserve the true colouring, partly in order to bring out incidentally the success with which the work of translation has been performed.

The modernness of tone that is often perceptible in the literature of the Roman Empire strikes every reader; it corresponds to and expresses a certain precocious ripeness—or, possibly, rottenness—in a too rapidly developed social system. In the Eastern provinces an interesting problem is presented to us; this precocious Western civilisation and education was there impressed upon Oriental races, backward in development and unprogressive in temperament, by the organising genius of Rome and the educative spirit of Greece. It is an interesting process, whereby Western manners and ideas were for a time imposed on, and in a small degree even naturalised among, an Oriental people, and then died out again, either because the circumstances of the Byzantine Empire were uncongenial, or because all civilisation and ideas were destroyed by the Turks. That long process will some time find a historian; a single moment in it is revealed in the pages of the three great Cappadocians.

One of the most interesting passages for our purpose is Gregory Nyssen's satirical sketch of the early life of the two heretics, Ætius and Eunomius. Their history, as told by Gregory, is quite a romance; though it is doubtful how far the account which he gives of theological opponents is to be trusted. Ætius was originally a serf, bound to the soil on a vine-growing estate.

Having escaped—how, I do not wish to say, lest I be thought to be entering on his history in a bad spirit—he became at first a tinker, and had this grimy trade quite at his fingers' end, sitting

under a goat's-hair tent,¹ with a small hammer and a diminutive anvil, and so earned a precarious and laborious livelihood. What income, indeed, of any account could be made by one who mends the shaky places in coppers, and solders holes up, and hammers sheets of tin to pieces, and clamps with lead the legs of pots?

As the story goes, "a certain incident necessitated the next change in his life". A woman, attached to a regiment, gave him a gold ornament to mend; he returned to her a similar one of copper, slightly gilt, "for he was clever enough in the tinker's, as in other, arts to mislead his customers with the tricks of trade". But the gold got rubbed off, and he was detected; "and as some of the soldiers of her family and nation were roused to indignation, she prosecuted," and secured his condemnation. After undergoing his punishment, he "left the trade, swearing that . . . business tempted him to commit this theft". He then became assistant to a quack doctor, and

made his attack upon the obscurer households and on the most abject of mankind. Wealth came gradually from his plots against a certain Armenius who, being a foreigner, was easily cheated, and . . . advanced him frequent sums of money. He next wanted to be styled a physician himself. Henceforth, therefore, he attended medical congresses, and, consorting with the wrangling controversialists there, became one of the ranters, and, just as the scales were turning, always adding his own weight to the argument, he got to be in no small request.

From medicine Ætius turned to theology. Arius had already started his heresy,

and the schools of medicine resounded then with the disputes about that question. Accordingly Ætius studied the controversy; and,

¹ The translation is certainly right, though "camel's hair" is a commoner sense of the Greek word. Such tents are, and doubtless always have been, common in the country.

having laid a train of syllogisms from what he remembered of Aristotle, he became notorious for even going beyond Arius in the novel character of his speculations.

At this point the inconsistency of this "veracious" narrative strikes the reader; if the life of Ætius as serf, tinker, quack's assistant, and quack principal is rightly recorded, when had he found time and opportunity to study Aristotle?

Eunomius, the pupil of Ætius, had (according to his theological opponent) an almost equally varied, though much less disreputable, career. He was born at a small village—Oltiseris—of the Korniaspene district, in the north-western part of Cappadocia, near the Galatian frontier. His father was a peasant farmer,—

an excellent man, except that he had such a son. . . . He was one of those farmers who are always bent over the plough, and spend a world of trouble over their little farm; and in the winter, when he was secured from agricultural work, he used to carve out neatly the letters of the alphabet for boys to form syllables with, winning his bread with the money these sold for.

This is an interesting picture of the farmer's life in a remote and obscure corner of Cappadocia; and it suggests that the knowledge of letters and writing had penetrated to a very humble stratum of society, if a peasant farmer could make money in this way during the long winter season, when the ground was covered with snow for months. Facts like these make it all the more remarkable that a bishop who was present at the Council of Constantinople, in 448, had to get a friend to sign on his behalf, *eo quod nesciam literas*. The Phrygian Church, which had been so flourishing in the second and third centuries, was destroyed with fire and sword by Diocletian, and the country never properly

recovered from that crushing persecution; education and prosperity were for a time almost annihilated. But Cappadocia had not been so thoroughly Christianised before the time of Diocletian, and hence it escaped more easily. In reading over the *Acta Sanctorum*, every student must observe that a much larger number of Cappadocian than of Phrygian martyrs are recorded under that great persecution; but the fact is that the destruction in Phrygia was so thorough that the memory of individuals was not preserved. Where a whole city with its population was burned, who would record the martyrdom of any single hero? In Cappadocia many martyrs were tried and condemned, and their memory embalmed in history: in Phrygia the Church in considerable districts was obliterated for the time, and its tone permanently depreciated.

Eunomius, perceiving that his father led

a life of laborious penury, said good-bye to the plough and the mattock and all the paternal instruments, intending never to drudge himself like that; then he sets himself to learn Prunicus' skill of short-hand writing; and having perfected himself in that he entered at first, as I believe, the house of one of his own family, receiving his board for his services in writing; then, while tutoring the boys of his host, he rises to the ambition of becoming an orator.

Here, again, we are struck with the development of education in this obscure district, when a shorthand clerk could be found worth board and lodging in a family, which must have been either rustic or of a small provincial town.

Gregory draws a veil over the subsequent stages in the life of Eunomius, until the epoch when he saw that his toil "was all of little avail, and that nothing which he could amass by such work was adequate to the demands of his

ambition". He accordingly turned to heresy-mongering, and found that this was a much more lucrative profession. "In fact, he toiled not thenceforward, neither did he spin; for he is certainly clever in what he takes in hand, and knows how to gain the more emotional portion of mankind." He made religion pleasant to his hearers and dupes; "he got rid of 'the toilsome steep of virtue' altogether"; and Gregory declares that he initiated them in practices and vices which it would not be decent even in an accuser to mention.

Considering the style in which religious controversy was carried on by almost all parties at this time, we cannot attach any special credibility to Gregory's accusation that Eunomius's teaching was so profoundly immoral. But it is of some interest to observe that the charge of appealing to the excitability and to the vices of the public was mutual. Eunomius declared that his great opponent Basil, the brother of Gregory, was "one who wins renown among poor old women, and practises to deceive the sex which naturally falls into every snare, and thinks it a great thing to be admired by the criminal and abandoned".

In these descriptions of Ætius and Eunomius, and in many other occasional touches in the writings of Basil and Gregory, we observe traces of a certain contempt for the low-born persons who had to make their living by their own work. The family of Basil and Gregory possessed considerable property in land, and their tone is that of the aristocrat, brought up in a position of superiority, and voluntarily accepting a life of asceticism and hardship to which they were not trained. Basil is distinctly a champion of the popular cause against the dominant power of the Emperor and of the wealthier classes; but his position is not that of Cleon and Hyperbolus, claiming rights for the class

from which they sprang, and not free from a touch of vulgarity in their speeches and a taint of selfishness in their aspirations. His spirit and his aims are like those of Tiberius Gracchus, actuated by sincere and Divine sympathy for the wrongs and miseries in which he had no part, and showing perhaps want of judgment, but not selfishness.

From the Apostle Paul onwards it was, as a general rule, the local aristocracy that produced the leading figures in Anatolian history during the Roman period. Education was indispensable to advancement and influence under the Empire; and the poorer classes were cut off from the opportunity of getting education by a chasm which very few could cross. The Imperial system never attempted to spread education more widely; rather, it almost discouraged any movement of this kind. Only private individuals,¹ or the cities of the provinces, made some attempt to increase the educational opportunities for their own people. Basil and Gregory of Nazianzos belonged to the class of landed proprietors whose fortune opened to them the path of education and enabled them to study in Athens or some other of the leading Universities.

Such families belonged originally to a conquering class of land-owners, who dwelt as a country aristocracy amid an older conquered population. They dwelt in a kind of building which was called Tetrapyrgion or Tetrapyrgia: quadrangular farm steadings enclosing an open courtyard, with towers at the corners and over the gate. Such buildings were made to be defensible; and Eumenes found that regular military operations were necessary to reduce them.²

¹ Pliny the younger may be taken as typical of a class.

² Plutarch, *Eum.*, 8; *Studies in the Eastern Roman Provinces*, p. 372 f. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1906); *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, ii., p. 419.

Their plan has been preserved to the present day in the great Khans, built along the principal roads by the Seljuk Sultans to defend the trade from the wandering and unruly Nomads.

According to Gregory of Nyssa, Christianity was the nearly universal religion of Cappadocia in the second half of the fourth century. He says in his *Epistle on Pilgrimages* that,

if it is really possible to infer God's presence from visible symbols, one might more justly consider that He dwelt in the Cappadocian nation than in any of the spots outside it. For how many Altars¹ there are there, on which the name of our Lord is glorified. One could hardly count so many in all the rest of the world.

There is, doubtless, some truth in this picture; but it has been considerably heightened in colour, even setting aside the Oriental hyperbole of the last words, which were not meant to be taken literally. Basil, who is always more trustworthy than Gregory, because he was more honest and more earnest, and stood closer to real life, gives a somewhat different account. He sees how far the Christian spirit was from having extirpated the pagan spirit, even where it had triumphed in outward appearance. He gives, for example, an interesting account of the Magusæi, a people who were settled in Cappadocia "in considerable numbers, scattered all over the country, settlers having long ago been introduced into these parts from Babylon". Probably they had been transplanted to Asia Minor by the Persian kings, to strengthen their hold on the country; and they had remained for nearly eight centuries unmixed with the other inhabitants, preserving their own religious customs and separateness of blood. In a recent

¹ "Θυσιαστήρια, the sanctuaries (with the Altar), into which at this time no layman except the Emperor might enter."

book on Turkey,¹ it has been pointed out as one of the worst evils in the country that the different races remain apart, divided by difference of custom, and by consequent mutual hatred; and the existence of the same evil in ancient time might have been stated even more strongly than it is in that work. In the fourth century Roman rule and the influence of the Church had alike failed, as yet, entirely to obliterate racial differences; but it is only in incidental references like this to the Magusæans, that the existence of such despised races is admitted by the Cappadocian Fathers. As Basil says, "Their manners are peculiar, as they do not mix with other men. . . . They have been made the prey of the devil to do his will. They have no books; no instructors in doctrine." Basil means, of course, Christian books: it is not improbable that in secret they preserved and used Magian books. "They are brought up," as he goes on to say, "in senseless institutions." Besides more obvious characteristics, "they object to the slaying of animals as defilement; and they cause the animals they want for their own use to be slaughtered by other people. They are wild after illicit marriages: they consider fire divine," and so on. These illicit marriages are described by Eusebius² as being between such near relatives as father and daughter, brother and sister, son and mother; and the same writer says that the Magusæi were very numerous in Phrygia and Galatia, and everywhere retained the social customs and mysterious religious ritual which they had brought with them from Persia.

Illicit marriages were not confined to the Magusæi, but were still admitted among the general population of Cappa-

¹ *Impressions of Turkey*, p. 95.

² *Præp. Ev.*, vi., pp. 275, 279, Viger.

docia, as is evident from the Canonical Letters, and from some incidental references.

Apparently, the Magusæi made a superficial pretence of Christianity, but retained their pagan customs almost unaltered ; as at the present day some races in the same country put on an outward appearance of Mohammedanism, though wanting its real character. Such, for example, are the Takhtaji (woodmen), about whom every traveller, who has seen much of Asia Minor, speaks: Dr. Von Luschan, *Reisen in Lykien*, ii., p. 199, vouches on personal knowledge for the survival among them of the custom of marriage between brother and sister, and they are as much despised by the Turks now as the Magusæi were by the Christians of Basil's time. But even among the Cappadocians proper, who had embraced Christianity in a more thorough way, there continued to exist many customs belonging to their pre-Christian state, which the Church had either tacitly acquiesced in, or at least failed to eradicate. Basil belonged to the Puritan party, and waged stern war with many of these customs. His invectives against them have preserved their memory ; and the student of ancient society will turn to these passages with a very different spirit and interest from that which Basil felt.

Marriage by capture was still a common practice, justified and supported by common opinion. In Letter 270 Basil speaks of this "act of unlawfulness and tyranny against human nature and society," and prescribes the treatment which is to be meted out to the offenders. The nature of the punishments shows that he is writing to some church official, probably one of his subordinate bishops, or village-bishops, or presbyters.

Wherever you find the girl, insist on taking her away, and restore her to her parents, shut out the man from the prayers, and make him excommunicate.¹ His accomplices, according to the canon which I have already put forth, cut off, with all their household, from the prayers. The village which received the girl after the abduction and kept her, or even fought against her restitution, shut out with all its inhabitants from the prayers; to the end that all may know that we regard the ravisher as a common foe like a snake or any other wild beast.

It is clear, then, that the whole neighbourhood approved the capture as preliminary to enforced marriage; and even the clergy to some extent acquiesced in the popular opinion, for Basil says that "if you had all been of one mind in this matter, there would have been nothing to prevent this bad custom from being long ago driven out of your country".

Basil was not so severe on some superstitions which had clothed themselves in a thoroughly Christian form. He regards it as quite praiseworthy that sick persons should have recourse for cures to the prayers of hermits; and he promises to try to find some relics of martyrs for a new church built by Bishop Arcadius (*Ep.* 49). Gregory Nazianzen declares that the mere visit of Basil almost cured the sick son of the Emperor Valens, and would have done so completely, had not his saving influence been counteracted by the presence of Arian heretics (*Or.* xliii., § 54). Yet Basil writes a noble eulogy of the medical profession: "To put that science at the head and front of life's pursuits is to decide reasonably and rightly" (*Ep.* 189). But the lively interest taken by the physicians of the time in theological controversy, as proved by that very letter, and by the life

¹In the canonical letter to Amphilochius, p. 238, the total duration of the punishment in its various degrees is specified as four years.

of Ætius described above, is not suggestive of good ; and, on the whole, we may gather that the medical profession had degenerated seriously from the scientific spirit of the old Greek medical schools.

On the other hand, he was very severe on the *Panegyreis*, or local festivals, which, along with religious observances and sermons, united a good deal of social enjoyment of a kind that was in his opinion objectionable (*Ep.* 42). We should be glad to learn more about these festivals. There can be no doubt that they were a Christianised form of the earlier pagan festivals, celebrated at the places which have continued to be the great centres of religion in all ages of history. The festivals were, in the first place, "spiritual gatherings," where might be heard "expositions of the teaching of the Apostles, lessons in theology," and so on ; but, besides, there were presented before the assemblies plays, music, mountebanks, jests and follies, drunken men and—worst of all in Basil's estimation—beautiful women. The most interesting of these festivals took place at Venasa, the old seat of one of the three great temples of Cappadocia ; and it corresponds to the modern festival of St. Macrina at Hassa-Keui, a few miles south of Venasa (which is now purely Turkish), to which Mohammedans as well as Christians resort, bringing sick animals to be cured on the holy occasion. The quaint and interesting story of the Deacon Glycerius is associated with that festival (*Ep.* 169 ff.) ; but it is too long for our space, and, moreover, has been very fully discussed elsewhere.¹

Again, Basil condemns unsparingly the evils and abuses that existed in the Church of his time. He forbade an old unmarried presbyter of seventy to have a woman living in

¹ *Church in the Roman Empire before 180*, ch. xviii.

his house, and when the presbyter wrote to explain that there was no evil relation between them, he rebuked him with growing sternness, ordering him to expel her from his house and "establish her in a monastery". Basil also strenuously denounced the practice of taking money from candidates for ordination: "They think that there is no sin because they take the money not before but after the ordination; but to take is to take at whatever time" (*Ep.* 53). He strove to reintroduce "the ancient custom observed in the Churches," that ministers should be tested by examination as to their moral character and their whole past life before being admitted, and to put down the ordinary practice among the village-bishops of allowing "presbyters and deacons to introduce unworthy persons, without any previous examination of life and character, by mere favouritism, on the score of relationship or some other tie" (*Ep.* 54).

The clergy had not yet become a distinct order, wholly separate from the laity: they practised trades in order to make their living. Basil had difficulty in finding any clergyman to whom he might entrust a letter to Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata, "for though our clergy do seem very numerous, they are men inexperienced in travelling, because they never traffic and prefer not to live far away from home, the majority of them plying sedentary crafts, whereby they get their daily bread" (*Ep.* 198).

From the letter just quoted, and many others, it is clear that Basil usually tried to find clerical letter-carriers; and we may understand that in many other cases, where no exact information is given, this was the case, *e.g.*, in *Epist.* 19 to Gregory Nazianzen, where he explains that he could not reply on the spot to Gregory's letter, "because I was away from home, and the letter-carrier, after he had delivered

the packet to one of my friends, went away". But other convenient opportunities were sometimes used: *e.g.*, magistrates travelling were often asked to carry letters for their friends (*Ep.* 215, 237).

The number of travellers was evidently far greater on the roads leading to Constantinople or Athens than towards Armenia. Basil has "no expectation of finding any one to convey a letter to Colonia in Armenia, which is far out of the way of ordinary routes" (*Ep.* 195). On the other hand, he speaks of a continuous stream of travellers coming from Athens to Cappadocia (*Ep.* 20); and though the letter, addressed to Leontius the Sophist, bears the stamp of the rhetorical style, sacrificing fact to effect, yet it implies that a considerable number of Cappadocian students, like Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, attended the University of Athens.

The important road to Samosata in Syria would be probably well frequented; and, when Basil speaks of difficulty in finding messengers thither, either he is speaking of the winter season, when the passes were blocked by snow, or he requires to find a trustworthy special messenger for an important letter.

On the whole, the impression given by the letters is that the custom of travelling, which had increased under the early Roman Empire to an extent almost unknown until the present century, was fully maintained in the fourth century.

Travelling on pilgrimage to the holy places of Palestine was not very much approved by the Cappadocian Fathers. Basil says here little on the subject. Gregory, having been entrusted with the duty of "visiting the places where the Church in Arabia is on the confines of the Jerusalem district," desires also to "confer with the Heads of the Holy Jerusalem Churches". He describes his journey thus:—

Our most religious Emperor had granted us facilities for the journey, by postal conveyance, so that we had to endure none of those inconveniences which in the case of others we have noticed; our waggon was, in fact, as good as a church or monastery to us, for all of us were singing psalms or fasting in the Lord during the whole journey.

But, though he took advantage of this opportunity of visiting Jerusalem, he did not approve of going on pilgrimage. He thought that there was nothing to be gained, even for men, by pilgrimage, except the more vivid appreciation of the fact "that our own places are far holier than those abroad"; and he considered that people should stay at home till they died, and that it was better for "the brethren to be absent from the body, to go to our Lord, rather than to be absent from Cappadocia, to go to Palestine". As to women going on pilgrimage, the difficulties of travelling made it still more unbecoming and improper.

For instance, it is impossible for a woman to accomplish so long a journey without a conductor; on account of her natural weakness, she has to be put upon her horse and to be lifted down again; she has to be supported¹ in difficult situations. Which-ever we suppose, that she has an acquaintance to do this service or a hired attendant to perform it, either way the proceeding cannot escape being reprehensible; whether she leans on the help of a stranger or on that of her own servant, she fails to keep the law of correct conduct; and as the inns and hostleries and cities of the East present many examples of licence and of indifference to vice, how will it be possible for one passing through such smoke to escape without smarting eyes?

The evil reputation of the inns and taverns on the great roads of the Empire, to which Gregory here alludes, is

¹ Gregory seems to have had the lowest possible idea of women's capacity: they could not even sit on a horse, without being held to prevent them falling off.

confirmed by many other testimonies. Under the pagan Empire, the hostelries were for the most part little better than houses of ill-fame;¹ and under the Christian Empire there seems to have been no serious improvement. The story of the birth of St. Theodore of Sykea in Galatia, about A.D. 560, bears witness to a singularly depraved condition of public feeling; and in the Middle Ages matters seem to have been equally bad for the Pilgrims to the Holy Land. Felix Fabri of Ulm, about 1480, says that "the inns on the isles of the sea are houses of ill-fame," and warns every "good and godly pilgrim" at night to "return to his galley and sleep therein safe in his berth".² The character of the public hostelries was, doubtless, one of the reasons that weighed with Basil in making his great foundation near Cæsareia, including not merely an almshouse and hospital, but also

a place of entertainment for strangers, both those who are on a journey and those who require medical treatment on account of sickness, and so establishing a means of giving these men the comfort they want, doctors, means of conveyance, and escort.

A foundation like this shows Basil's practical character; he diagnosed the real character of the evil, and struck out the cure; and, as we believe, his foundation became so important that it gradually attracted the city to itself, and the ancient site is now deserted, while Basil's site is the present Kaisari.³

The frequent allusions to the severity of winter weather will surprise those who do not know the country. Although

¹ See Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte Roms*, ii., p. 44.

² Translation in *Palest. Pilgrims' Text Society*, i., p. 163; compare p. 21.

³ Α πανδόχσιον at Constantina in Osrhoene, *B. C. H.*, 1903, p. 200, was founded in 514, *hotellerie ecclésiastique pour pèlerins*.

Cappadocia does not lie so high, and the winters are not so severe, as in Armenia, yet Cæsareia is 3,500 feet above sea-level, and the border-land between the valleys of the Halys and Sarus and Euphrates is a good deal higher; and at that elevation winter is long and hard. Basil speaks of "such a very heavy fall of snow that we have been buried, houses and all, beneath it, and now for two months have been living in dens and caves" (*i.e.*, under the surface of the snow, like the underground dwellings—dens and caves—used in some parts of Cappadocia) (*Ep.* 48). Even an unusually mild winter "was quite enough to keep me not merely from travelling while it lasted, but even from so much as venturing to put my head out of doors" (*Ep.* 27).¹

In another letter he mentions that "we have had a winter of such severity that all the roads were blocked till Easter" (*Ep.* 198). Again, "the road to Rome is wholly impracticable in winter" (*Ep.* 215). Even a meeting with the Bishop of Iconium must be arranged "at a season suitable for travelling" (*Ep.* 191), though the road from Cæsareia to Iconium traverses only level country and crosses no hills or passes except that of the Boz-Dagh, about 600 feet above the plain.

As to the state of peace and order in the country, there are many indications that the administration of government was both arbitrary, weak and ineffective. Basil writes to Candidianus, the governor or a high official of the province Pontus,² shortly after his return from Athens, probably about A.D. 360, asking redress for a serious wrong: the

¹ Contrast with this the account given of a modern missionary in my *Impressions of Turkeý*, p. 222. The winter weather does not prevent travellers of Western origin from going about; but the Eastern people are not great travellers, and regard winter as a closed season.

² Not Cappadocia, as editors think, for Annesi was in Pontus.

house on his farm had been broken into, part of the contents stolen, and his servants beaten, by a band of rude persons from the neighbouring village of Annesi. Basil himself seems to have been living at the time in his retreat in the gorge of the river Iris, near the farm. The farm was managed by a steward, who had died; and a creditor in Annesi had taken this disorderly way of recovering a debt which he claimed. We have, of course, only a statement of one side of the case; but the main facts cannot be doubted. We are struck, however, by the fact that Basil makes no attempt to get redress by ordinary process of law. He writes direct to a high officer, and asks that, as a punishment, the man be "apprehended by the district magistrate and locked up for a short period in the jail". Basil had too much of the aristocratic tone to take proceedings before the district magistrate against a vulgar rustic. His claim is that the governor should act at once on his representation, and should give a slight lesson to the neighbours that Basil was not a person whose property and house could be lightly insulted, even in his absence. It was probably after this event that Basil gave the use of the estate and the slaves on it for life to his foster-brother, Dorotheos, the presbyter of the village, reserving to himself an annual rent from it for his support. Mr. Blomfield Jackson has rightly brought out that this act had not the character, which has often been attributed to it, of a total renunciation of the property. Basil was not a man to retire wholly from the world and live in pure asceticism. He recognised rightly the duty incumbent on him of action in the world; and he knew that he could act far more usefully, if he were not in a position of penury. He was used to the position of a country gentleman with means and influence; and the thought of abandon-

ing this position and entering on a life of real poverty evidently never occurred to him as a serious possibility. When the assessment on the property was raised, he protested vigorously and asked that the ancient system of rating should be retained, as Dorotheos might throw up the property, making Basil himself responsible for the whole of the rate (*Ep.* 36).

Gregory Nazianzen in his *Panegyric on St. Basil*, § 56, tells how "the assessor of a judge was attempting to force into a distasteful marriage a lady of high birth, whose husband was but recently dead," and used all the powers of his position against her and Basil, who was trying to protect her, until the populace rose in defence of their bishop, especially the men from the small-arms factory and from the imperial weaving-sheds; for men at work in these trades are specially hot-tempered and daring, because of the liberty allowed them. Each man was armed with the tool he was using, or with whatever else came to hand at the moment. Torch in hand, amid showers of stones, with cudgels ready, all ran and shouted together. . . . Nor were the women weaponless; . . . they were by the strength of their eagerness endowed with masculine courage.

In the end Basil's help alone preserved the official from their violence.

The events which called forth Letters 72-73 illustrate this subject. They seem to have been the following, though the allusive way in which Basil refers to what was familiar to his correspondents makes several of the details doubtful. A certain Callisthenes, a man of great influence, probably an official (see p. 403), resided in some city of South-west Cappadocia. At Sasima (the town of which Gregory Nazianzen was made bishop, much against his will, by

Basil), where three great roads met, and where there was, doubtless, a post-station and a vast amount of traffic and travellers, there had occurred a quarrel between Callisthenes and a set of slaves belonging to Eustochius, who was apparently a merchant residing at or near Cæsareia. Some dispute about precedence, or other incident of travelling, caused such angry feeling that the slaves had even used personal violence to Callisthenes; and they had made themselves liable to some serious punishment. Callisthenes seems to have been sole arbiter of their fate; and the owners of the slaves, perhaps a trading company to which Eustochius belonged, had no way of preventing him from exacting the extreme penalty. Eustochius appealed to Basil, who exerted himself to the utmost to secure milder treatment for the slaves. He wrote to Callisthenes a letter (not preserved), and received a very polite reply, couched in that Oriental style of elaborate courtesy which means nothing, professing to leave the decision with Basil, but insisting that the slaves should come to Sasima to submit to punishment, and giving no pledge as to the penalty which would satisfy him. Basil replied, acknowledging the courtesy of the letter, but pointing out clearly that, unless Callisthenes gave some distinct promise before the slaves went to Sasima, the politeness of the letter was merely a matter of words. He allowed that, if Callisthenes insisted, the slaves must go to Sasima; but he hoped and begged that Callisthenes would be satisfied with their appearance there and submission to his will, and would remit further punishment. Especially, he desired a promise that Callisthenes would himself be present at Sasima, and not let himself be detained by business on the road, leaving to others the exaction of the legal penalty. This desire im-

plies that, if Callisthenes were not present to remit the penalty, no other person would have the power to do so; and that the slaves had been condemned to appear and suffer a certain punishment, unless Callisthenes chose to be satisfied with less. What the penalty was is not stated by Basil, but his language implies that it was very serious, possibly death. The decree had apparently been pronounced at Cæsareia, whither Callisthenes had sent a soldier to demand satisfaction, and his vigorous complaint at headquarters secured an order in his favour from the governor of the province.

Basil also wrote to Hesychius, who lived in the same city as Callisthenes, and was apparently an official of the Church. He sent a deacon to carry these letters, and instructed him to take other steps in the business. The amount of trouble which Basil took furnishes a proof of the interest which he felt in the condition of slaves, and of the way in which he was ready to use the whole strength of the Church, as well as his own, to secure milder treatment for them (see p. 403).

Complaints about the burden of taxation were evidently often made. Thus: "everything nowadays is full of taxes demanded and called in . . . for even the Pythagoreans were not so fond of their Tetractys, as these modern tax-collectors of their four-times-as-much" (a rule imposing quadruple payment for arrears); an estate "is now left and abandoned on account of the weight of the rates imposed on it". In *Epist.* 110: "give orders that the tax paid by the inhabitants of iron-producing Taurus may be such as it is possible to pay". A new system, whereby the burdens on the clergy were much increased, is referred to elsewhere. The harsh treatment of the clergy by Maximus, the governor of Cappadocia, is complained of. The governors seem to have been far from just or good. We hear of the same

Maximus, persecuted by the next governor of Cappadocia, and of a governor in Africa so bad as to be excommunicated by the Church. The arbitrary conduct of governors, in violation of formal law or of equity, is a frequent subject of complaint.

In *Epist.* 54 we learn that "a large number of persons are presenting themselves for the ministry through fear of the conscription". The strong dislike for military service, by making the mass of the people entirely incapable of self-defence, undoubtedly rendered them an easier prey to the ravages of Parthians and afterwards of Saracens.

As to the conditions of labour, we learn little from the works here translated, though there are materials in the other works for a much more elaborate picture. In *Epist.* 18 Basil mentions the hired labourers engaged on a farm during the heat of summer; in the winter, when all agricultural work was suspended, they would not be needed. He distinguishes these hired farm-servants from the agriculturists proper, some of whom turned to other industry during the winter, like the father of Eunomius. The slaves who cultivated such estates as Basil's at Annesi must be distinguished from both hired labourers and free agriculturists.

Famine-relief operations were organised by the Church officials; for scarcity seems to have been common. Basil says that "the dearth is still with us, and I am therefore compelled to remain where I am, partly by the duty of distribution, and partly out of sympathy for the distressed" (*Ep.* 31). The letter is ordinarily assigned to A.D. 369, and was certainly earlier than the death of Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsareia, in A.D. 370.¹ It was followed by a long and

¹This famine and the relief operations are also described by Gregory Nazianzen, *Panegyric*, §§ 34-36.

severe scarcity which was raging at Nazianzus in A.D. 373, when Gregory Nazianzen delivered his Oration xvi. to his suffering and terrified congregation.

It is a highly elaborated and artificial civilisation that is set before us in these works; but there are many signs of the bad administration, which went from bad to worse during the following century and a half, until Justinian made a great and noble effort to reform the whole executive. His *Novellæ* present a terrible picture of provincial oppression and misgovernment;¹ but a rigorous diagnosis of the evil, such as is there given, is the first step towards improvement. Whether the changes in the executive which he made were ill-advised, or the evil was too deeply seated to be reached by changes on the surface, little permanent improvement was attained; but the attempt which was made to cure the evil, as well as the unsparing statement of its character and causes, deserve different treatment from the brief paragraph of unlimited condemnation, in which Gibbon sums up the character of the *Novellæ* in his chapter xlv., quoting and apparently endorsing the opinion of Montesquieu, that "these incessant and for the most part trifling alterations can be only explained by the venal spirit of a prince, who sold without shame his judgments and his laws". Change was urgently necessary, both on the surface and at the heart. In St. Basil of Cæsareia we have a great administrator, whose plans of cure for the deeper evils affecting his country were wise and statesmanlike, though, as was natural, too purely ecclesiastical to be complete. But he could make no provision to ensure a succession of Basils. The Roman Empire

¹ Entirely confirmed by other evidence, e.g., an inscription recently found in Pisidia of the year 527 (*Bulletin de Corresp. Hellénique*, 1893, p. 501 ff.).

had too much neglected its duty of creating a sufficient educational system for the people; and the society of the Roman Provinces was not fertile and vigorous enough to produce a series of men like Basil.

Twelve years ago, the greatest of living historians, Professor Theodor Mommsen, said to the present writer that, if he were now beginning a new life of scholarship, he would take up the period between Diocletian and Justinian. The scholar who devotes himself to that period will be filled with a growing admiration for Basil; and he will recognise the merits and the scholarly insight of the books which we have taken as the text of this paper. Any ambitious young scholar, who wishes to do real service by increasing our knowledge of past history, will find here an open field; and he could not better begin than by a systematic study of the society presented to us in the pages of the three great Fathers. The voluminous writings of the three contemporary Cappadocians, Basil and the two Gregories, apart from the purely theological and ecclesiastical interest, possess a high value as storing up many facts about the state of society and of education, about the administration and law of the late Roman Empire as practically affecting the people, about the taxpayers' views on taxation, the travellers' views as to the roads and the seasons, the householder's views on the safety of his property, the merchants' and the investors' views on the public credit and the standard of commercial honesty; in short, about the ordinary life of a highly organised community, in which the Oriental style of society and manners was being replaced by the European; and, above all, they show us the views entertained by three men of power and education as to the duties of the Church in its relation to all these various interests. A study of the three

great Cappadocians from this point of view would make a most instructive and interesting work.

After this glance at the times and surroundings of Basil, it is fair to look at the man himself.

He was probably the most vigorous, striking and manly figure in the Church of Asia Minor under the Empire of Constantinople, though some blemishes of temper and of pride have combined with a certain hardness and want of sympathy in his nature to render him an object of less interest in history than he deserves. Mr. Jackson's translation is at once pleasant to read as English, and true to the letter and to the spirit of the original; and we may hope that it will succeed (as it deserves) in drawing more attention on the part of classical scholars to the varied interest of the Christian writers of the period in question.

In Mr. Jackson's prolegomena we have a careful account of the life of Basil, and a very full account of the works which are not translated here. In the biography, the results of earlier writers, Tillemont and Maran (the Benedictine editor), are worked up; and there is added to them a much more precise localisation of the scenes, in which recent geographical discoveries are utilised. Naturally, however, the biography is secondary to the translation; and there is still need for a careful study of the life of Basil and for a more exact determination of the dates of his letters as well as of the larger works. Several interesting incidents in his history seem to me not to have been properly understood; and the dates assigned to some letters by the Benedictine editor (and accepted by Mr. Jackson) are in several cases not convincing and even quite unsatisfactory.¹ While we cannot enter on

¹The biography of Basil in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, meritorious and useful as it is, is too much guided by the earlier modern authorities.

any such wider questions within our narrow limits, we may profitably devote some few pages here to studying, under the guidance of Mr. Jackson, a few passages which bring out some personal characteristics of "St. Basil the Great"; and, at the same time, the quotations will exemplify the spirit and excellence of the translation in this volume.

The letter which faced me, as I first opened the volume, No. 135, may be taken as a specimen, selected at random, of the translation and of Basil's expression. Basil acknowledges two books which Diodorus, Presbyter of Antioch (afterwards Bishop of Tarsus), had sent him for perusal. "With the second," he says, "I was delighted, not only with its brevity . . . but because it is at once full of thought and so arranged that the objections of opponents and the answers to them stand out distinctly. . . . The former work, which has practically the same force, but is much more elaborately adorned with rich diction, many figures, and niceties of dialogue, seems to me to require considerable time to read and much mental labour, both to gather its meaning and retain it in the memory. The abuse of our opponents and the support of our own side, which are thrown in, although they may seem to add some charms of dialectic to the treatise, do yet break the continuity of the thought and weaken the strength of the argument by causing interruption and delay. . . . If the subject of the dialogue be wide and general, digressions against persons interrupt its continuity and tend to no good end. . . . So much I have written to prove that you did not send your work to a flatterer. . . . I have, however, now sent back the larger and earlier of the two volumes, after perusing it as far as I have been able.¹

¹The effect of this rather suggestive statement is toned down in the original by a sentence here omitted about Basil's weak health.

The second I have retained with the wish to transcribe it, but hitherto without finding any quick writer."¹

This letter conveys a very favourable impression (and a correct impression) of Basil's tone to his friends, and to those who thought like himself: it is judicious in its criticism, pointed and simple in expression, polite and kindly in tone; it advises without assumption, and encourages without flattering.

Everywhere the warmth of Basil's affection for friends and relatives, and the pleasant recollection of old associations, combined with his good sense and lofty tone, convey a most favourable impression. Take a few examples: "One would rather see his friend, though angry with him, than anybody else, flattering him. Do not, then, cease preferring charges like the last! The very charge will mean a letter; and nothing can be more precious or delightful to me" (*Ep.* 21). Or this: "Now for my sins, I have lost my mother, the only comfort I had in life. Do not smile if, old as I am, I lament my orphanhood. Forgive me if I cannot endure separation from a soul, to compare with whom I see nothing in the future that lies before me. So once more my complaints have come back to me; once more I am confined to my bed, tossing about in my weakness, and every hour all but looking for the end of life" (*Ep.* 30). Or again, these recollections of childhood from *Ep.* 271: "To travel once again in memory to our young days, and to be reminded of old times, when for both of us there was one home, one hearth,

¹ This shows a rather low standard of the book-trade in Cæsarea, one of the greatest commercial cities of the East. Without such scribes, the publication of an edition of a book was impossible. A similar statement is made by Gregory Nyss., *Ep.* 15 (Migne).

the same schoolmaster, the same leisure, the same work, the same treats, the same hardships, and everything shared in common! What do you think I would not have given to recall all this by actually meeting you, to rid me of the heavy weight of my old age, and to seem to be turned from an old man into a lad again!"

But it was not pleasant to be on the opposite side from Basil. Speaking of the Arians, he is hardly to be trusted even as to facts. He felt too bitterly; and he exaggerated so rhetorically, that his words cannot be taken literally. Thus in *Ep.* 242 he declares that in the thirteen years of Arian persecution "the Churches have suffered more tribulations than all those that are on record since Christ's gospel was first preached"—an utterly unjustifiable statement (against which Mr. Jackson rightly, perhaps too mildly, protests, as "not to be taken literally"). The harsh and rude invective which Basil uses about his opponents is the fault of his age, and, while we regret it, we cannot wonder at it.

Difficult, however, as it is to appreciate the real character of the Arian controversy as a question of social life, on the whole we gather, I think, that the progressive tendencies were on the side of Basil, and acquiescence in the existing standard of morality characterised the Arian point of view. The "Orthodox" Church was still the champion of higher aspirations, and Basil, however harsh he was to all who differed from him, was an ennobling and upward-struggling force in the life of his time. At a later period the facts changed; and, in the Iconoclast period, the sympathy of the modern student must, I think, be almost wholly against the successors of Basil, and in favour of the maligned and despised heretics.

The contest in which Basil was involved against the Imperial power in regard to the division of Cappadocia into two provinces produced the most striking scenes of his life, and displayed both his strongest qualities and his worst faults of character. The questions at issue in this contest seem not to have been correctly apprehended by writers on the life of Basil. The policy of the Byzantine rule had been uniformly directed to subdividing the great provinces, and thus diminishing the power of provincial governors. Subdivision was the natural result of the centralisation of authority, the exaggeration of the power of the court, and the diminishing of the power of officials at a distance from the court. Cappadocia was by far the largest of the provinces; its turn had now come to be subdivided, and in 371 the Arian Emperor Valens resolved on this step. He may probably have been roused to it by the fact that the influence of Cæsareia, under its vigorous and uncompromising "orthodox" bishop, was dead against his ecclesiastical policy. It was natural that he should wish to diminish that influence; but in itself the subdivision would naturally have been soon made even by an orthodox emperor; and at a later time Justinian divided Cappadocia into three parts. The bias of Valens was shown, however, by his leaving the smaller part of Cappadocia to the metropolis Cæsareia, and making the new province of Secunda Cappadocia decidedly larger. The officials who lived at Cæsareia, and the business which came to it, were much diminished, as the province of which it was the metropolis shrank to less than half its former size. The city, naturally, regarded the change with dismay, and protested strongly. Basil exerted himself to the utmost; but the three letters which he wrote intreating the intercession of certain influential persons with Valens in favour of Cæsareia,

are among the poorest in the collection.¹ They are inflated and exaggerated in their description of the loss that would result to Cæsareia; they show no appreciation either on the one hand of the real causes that recommended the subdivision, or on the other of the weighty reasons that might have been urged against the centralising policy. In fact the whole system of the Orthodox Church was in favour of centralisation; and Basil himself would have been the most vigorous supporter of that policy in any case where it did not affect his own city and his own archbishopric. He could not argue on strong grounds against the change, for his whole system of thought debarred him from those grounds, and his protests are weak and hysterical.

The true greatness of Basil, however, shone forth immediately afterwards, when Valens came to Cæsareia. The archbishop triumphantly resisted the efforts made by the creatures of Valens to overawe him and bend him to the will of the Arian Emperor. Valens himself was not blind to the nobility and dignity of Basil's character; he left the archbishop in secure possession of his rank and the freedom of his opinions; he attended Divine service performed by him in the cathedral; he held private conference with him; and he gave land² to endow Basil's new foundation, the hospital, etc., near Cæsareia. Considering how bitter was

¹ *Epp.* 74, 75, 76. The first is addressed to Martinianus, who had some personal friendship with Basil; otherwise he is unknown, but he evidently was not a Cappadocian official. The profusion of literary allusions in the letter, and the compliments to the knowledge of history and of mankind that Martinianus possessed, suggest that he was a philosopher or man of letters. He evidently lived at some distance both from Constantinople and from Cappadocia. Mr. Jackson's statement that he was an official of Cappadocia rests on no ancient authority, and seems to me not to suit the letter.

² Mr. Jackson's suggestion that they were part of the Imperial estate of Maçellum, beside Cæsareia, is very probable.

the quarrel at this time between the Arian and the orthodox party, Valens deserves more credit in this case than he has generally received. But, as to Basil, every one must say, with Mr. Jackson, that "his attitude seems to have been dignified without personal haughtiness, and to have shown sparks of that quiet humour which is rarely exhibited in great emergencies except by men who are conscious of right and careless of consequences to self".

But, in the following months, the quarrel with Anthimus, Bishop of Tyana, the metropolis of the new province of Cappadocia Secunda, shows Basil at his worst. He struggled to maintain his former rights over the churches and monasteries of the new province with undignified pertinacity. He created new bishoprics, not on account of the needs of the Church, but to increase the number of his supporters and their weight; and his old friend Gregory of Nazianzos could hardly forget or forgive the way in which Basil used him for his own purposes by almost forcing him to become Bishop of Sasima, one of these new sees. He went in person to collect the revenues of St. Orestes (what Gregory calls sarcastically his "supply of sucking-pigs and poultry from St. Orestes"), and his servants came almost to a battle with those of his rival. Basil certainly would have justified his action in the same terms that Innocent, Bishop of Rome, used shortly afterwards, about 408, that it was not right that the Church of God should be altered to suit the changes of this world.¹ But every attempt made to maintain that principle, fine as it seems in words, was a failure under the Empire, and must be a failure. The classification of dioceses was not of the essence of the Church; it naturally and properly varied with the changes of society, and prosperity, and

¹ See *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 93.

political arrangement. The reason why Cæsareia had been an ecclesiastical centre lay originally in its being the political capital, and therefore the natural centre from which the province could best be affected and its churches directed. But, when Tyana had become the metropolis of considerable part of Cappadocia, it was merely introducing confusion to maintain that the cities of that province should look to Cæsareia ecclesiastically, when they must look to Tyana in political, legal and social respects. Neither Anthimus nor Basil showed in this case true dignity, or self-respect, or the respect due to a colleague; but, while no one cares about Anthimus, it is painful to those who respect and admire a great man to read about Basil's action, and above all to read his condemnation in the estrangement of his old friend Gregory, who had at first supported him in the case.

Many touches of the raillery which became rude and unpleasant towards his opponents,¹ appear in a much more pleasant style when he writes to his friends.

He has found out that "there does seem something thinner than I was—I am thinner than ever".

In *Ep.* 4 he acknowledges a gift under the guise of a complaint that the giver is "evicting from our retreat my dear friend and nurse of philosophy, Poverty".

Twitting Gregory with the shortness of his letters, he says, "The letter is shown to be yours, not so much by the writing as by the style of the communication: in few words much is expressed".

The tone of these quotations doubtless gives the key to explain the rather enigmatic *Ep.* 1, where he speaks as if his travels through Syria and Egypt had been undertaken

¹As when (*Ep.* 231) he calls one (perhaps Demosthenes, the agent of Valens) "the fat sea-monster" and "the old muleteer".

for the single purpose of meeting Eustathius, the philosopher to whom the letter is addressed.

In *Ep.* 56, apologising for leaving a letter unanswered until his correspondent wrote again, he says, "I naturally forget very easily, and I have had lately many things to do, and so my natural infirmity is increased. I have no doubt, therefore, that you wrote to me, although I have no recollection of having received any letter from your excellency. . . . Really this letter of mine, as it is more than twice as bulky (as yours), will fulfil a double purpose. You see to what sophisms my idleness [surely laziness] drives me. . . . But, my dear sir, do not in a few words bring serious charges, indeed the most serious of all. Forgetfulness of one's friends, and neglect of them arising from high place, are faults which involve every kind of wrong. . . . I shall begin to forget you when I cease to know myself. Never, then, think that, because a man is a very busy man he is a man of faulty character."

The dignity, mingled with humility and desire for peace, shown in the two letters to his uncle Gregory, 59, 60, may be referred to as illustrating the graver and loftier side of his character.

As examples of the sound and high judgment, which placed him on the right side in most great social questions, we may quote the opinion which, when he writes to a physician, he states about his profession as being at the head and front of life's pursuits (see p. 380).

He refers in *Ep.* 191 with longing admiration to the hospitable intercourse which "was once the boast of the Church. Brothers from each Church, travelling from one end of the world to the other, were provided with little tokens, and found all men fathers and brothers. But now,"

he says, "we are confined each in his own city, and every one looks at his neighbour with distrust".

Basil was ready to defend the weak against the strong. In *Ep.* 73 he uses the whole influence of his position and of the Church to save some slaves from harsh punishment at the hands of Callisthenes, a government official¹ to whom they had behaved rudely. "Though you have sworn to deliver them to execution as the law enjoins, my rebuke is still of no less value, nor is the Divine law of less account than the laws current in the world." See p. 388.

Basil's tone in addressing women lacks the charming ease that generally characterises his letters to his male correspondents. An illustration is supplied in the two letters which he addressed to Nectarius, a noble of Cilicia, and his wife, on the death of their only son. The letter to Nectarius (No. 5), in spite of the rhetorical touch (which may be pardoned, as it stands alone), "if all the streams run tears, they will not adequately weep our woe," is very fine, and the conclusion is charming, "Let us wait a little while, and we shall be once more with him. The time of our separation is not long, for in this life we are all like travellers on a journey, hastening on to the same shelter"; and so on in terms that have now become, through familiarity and repetition, less impressive than they were to Basil's contemporaries. But the letter to the bereaved mother is far inferior. "Alas, for the mighty mischief that the contact with an evil demon was able to wreak. Earth! what a calamity thou hast been compelled to sustain! If the sun had any feeling, one would think he might have shuddered," etc. After these bombastic commonplaces of rhetoric, he

¹ He is shown to be an official by his having the power to send a soldier to Cæsareia with a message on the subject.

addresses the bereaved mother in almost equally frigid consolations. "When first you were made a mother, . . . you knew that, a mortal yourself, you had given birth to a mortal. What is there astonishing in the death of a mortal? . . . Look round at all the world in which you live; remember that everything you see is mortal, and all subject to corruption. Look up to heaven, even it shall be dissolved; look at the sun, not even the sun will last for ever. All the stars together," etc., etc., "are subject to decay." In the early part of the letter Basil says, "I know what a mother's heart is"; but Mr. Jackson, in his note on the words, well remarks that the mother might have replied in the words of Constance to Pandulph: "He talks to me that never had a son". A certain externality and hardness of tone characterises the letter, and makes it more of a rhetorical exercise than a spontaneous outburst of sympathy.

A few passages occur to me in which it may be doubted whether Mr. Jackson has fully caught the meaning. For example, *Ep.* 8, 1, when, evidently, Basil is replying to a letter of the people of Cæsareia, asking him to return from his sojourn with Gregory, he says: "Give me, therefore, I beg you, a little time. I am not embracing a city life." Mr. Jackson adds the note: "*i.e.*, the life of the city, presumably Nazianzus, from which he is writing". But surely a person who writes to the great city of Cæsareia from the small town of Nazianzus, and speaks of "city life" (*τὴν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι διατριβήν*), must be referring to life in Cæsareia, not life in Nazianzus. Moreover, I cannot doubt, both from the context and the localities, that Basil was at the moment dwelling, not in Nazianzus, but in Carbala or Caprales (still called Gelvere), where Gregory's home was situated, where he was (as he intimates) enjoying the life of retirement and

contemplation, and where to this day the memorials of Gregory are preserved, and the rock-cells mark the abode of many hermits in the succeeding ages.¹ I should venture to suggest that a thought has been left unexpressed by Basil from brevity and rapidity, and that the sense is, "a little time, pray, a little time grant me, I beg; [and then I shall come to you,] not welcoming the life of cities (for I am quite well aware of the danger caused to the soul in that life), but judging that the society of the saints [as contrasted with the solitary life of the hermit] is the most practically useful. [But grant me the delay,] for in the constant free interchange of ideas [with 'Gregory, Christ's mouth'] I am acquiring a deep-seated habit of contemplation." Elsewhere, also, Basil declares plainly his opinion that the life of action and public work is the more honourable, as it is the more wearisome and difficult and unpleasant side of the truly religious life.

As another example, take *Ep.* 190, §1: "The most careless observer must at once perceive that it is in all respects more advantageous for care and anxiety to be divided among several bishops". This reads like a general maxim intended for wide application; but the Greek seems to me to need a different sense, applying solely to the case of Isaura, now under consideration, "it is more advantageous that the care of the district be divided² among several bishops". The case, which had been referred to Basil by Amphilochius, Arch-

¹ The exact localisation of the home of Gregory, on the estate Arianzos, beside the village Carbala (or Caprales, Basil, *Ep.* 308), about eight miles south-west of Nazianzus (now called Nenizi), is made in *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 286; see also Sir C. Wilson's *Handbook to Asia Minor*, etc. (Murray), p. 169. The modern village of Gelvere is built in the Tiberina, described by Gregory Naz., *Ep.* 6, 7, a narrow, rocky, picturesque glen, like a hole in the plain (4,500 feet above sea-level), "the very pit of the whole earth," as Basil calls it (*Ep.* 14).

² εἰς πλείονας ἐπισκόπους καταδιαιρεθῆναι τὴν μέριμναν.

bishop of Iconium, for advice, was a remarkable one. The large district round the great city Isaura had fallen into utter disorganisation (probably owing to the unruly character of the Isaurians, who were frequently in rebellion). Several bishops were needed for the care of so large a district. Basil would prefer that a bishop for the city should first be appointed, who might afterwards associate others with himself, as his experience showed him that they might be most usefully placed. But, owing to the danger that the bishop might be tempted by ambition to rule over a larger diocese, and might not consent to the ordination of others, he felt it safer to appoint in the first place bishops (*προϊσταμένους*) to the small towns or villages which were formerly the seats of bishops, and thereafter to select the bishop of the city.¹ We have here a good example of the decay of bishoprics in political troubles, of the revival of disused bishoprics, and of the trouble that might be caused by an ambitious prelate.

Some other examples have struck me where opinions as to the meaning are likely to differ. But when we consider how little care has been devoted to the elucidation of Basil, and contrast it with the voluminous studies that have contributed to the long and difficult growth of the interpretation of Horace, or Virgil, or Sophocles, we can better appreciate the difficulties that Mr. Jackson had to face, and better estimate the gratitude we owe him.

¹ On the desire of bishops to extend their authority over smaller cities and to diminish the number of bishops, see *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1906), p. 28 f.