# Chronicle composed in Syriac in A.D.507

Joshua the Stylite (fl. c. AD 507)

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**A HISTORY OF THE TIME OF AFFLICTION AT EDESSA AND AMIDA AND THROUGHOUT ALL MESOPOTAMIA.**

[Translated by William Wright] I. I have received the letter of your God-loving holiness, O most excellent of men, Sergius, priest and abbot, in which you have bidden me write for you, by way of record, (concerning the time) when the locusts came, and when the sun was darkened, and when there was earthquake and famine and pestilence, and (about) the war between the Romans and the Persians. But |2 besides these things, there were found in it great encomiums of myself, which made me much ashamed even when alone with my own soul, because not one of them pertains to me in reality. Now I would like to write the things that are in you, but the eye of my understanding is unable to examine and see, such as it actually is, the marvellous robe which your energetic will has woven for you and clothed you therewith; for it is clearly manifest that you burn with the love that fulfils the law, since you care not only for the brethren that are under your authority at this time, but also for all the lovers of learning that may hereafter enter your blessed monastery; and in your diligence you wish to leave in writing memorials of the chastisements which have been wrought in our times because of our sins, so that, when they read and see the things that have happened to us, they may take warning by our sins and be delivered from our punishments. One must wonder at the fulness of your love, which is poured out upon all men, that it is not exhausted nor fails. Indeed I am unable to speak of it as it is, because I have not been nigh unto its working; nor do I know how to tell about it from a single interview which I have had with you.

II. Like Jonathan, the true friend, you have bound yourself to me in love. But that the soul of Jonathan was drawn to the soul of David, after he saw that the giant was slain by his hands and the camp delivered, is not so marvellous as this, because he loved him for his good deeds; whereas you have loved me more than yourself, without having seen anything that was good in me. Nor is Jonathan’s delivering of David from death at the hands of Saul deserving of wonder in comparison with this (doing) of yours, because he still requited unto him something that was due to him;

for he first delivered him from death, and gave life unto him and all his father's house, that they should not die by the hands of the Philistine. And though nothing like this has been done by me unto you, you are at all times praying unto God for me, that I may be delivered from Satan, and that he may not slay me through sins. But this I must say, that you love me as David did Saul; for you are intoxicated by the greatness of your affection to such a degree that, because of the fervency of your love, you know not what my limit is, but imagine regarding me |3 things which are far beyond me. For in the time preceding this, you supplied my deficiencies by the teaching contained in your letters;

and you took such care for me as parents do, who, though they have not profited aught by their children, yet care for everything that they need. And today in your discretion you have humbled yourself, and have begged me to write for you things that are too hard for me, that hereby you might be especially exalted; and though you know them better than I do, you wish to learn them from me. So neither do I grudge you this, nor do I decline to do what you have commanded.

III. Know then that I too, when I saw these signs that were wrought and the chastisements that came after them, was thinking that they were worthy of being written down and preserved in some record, and not let fall into oblivion. But whereas I considered the weakness of my mind and my own utter ignorance, I declined to do this. Now however that you have bidden me do this very thing, I am in such fear as a man who, not knowing how to swim well, is ordered to go down into deep waters. But because I rely on your prayers to draw me out, which are constantly sent up by you unto God on my behalf, I believe that I shall be providentially saved from drowning and drawn forth from the sea into which you have cast me; since I shall swim as best I can in its shallows, because its depths cannot be explored. For who is able to tell fittingly concerning those things which God has wrought in His wisdom to wipe out sins and to chastise offences? For the exact nature of God's government is hidden even from the angels, as you may learn from the parable of the tares in the Gospel. For when his servants said unto the master of the house, "Do you want us to go and gather them up? he that knew the things as they were said unto them, "No, in case while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them.

This then we say according to our knowledge, that because of the multitude of our sins our chastisements were abundant; and had not the protection of God embraced the whole world so that it should not be dissolved, the lives of all mankind would probably have perished. For at |4 what times did afflictions like these happen with such violence, save in these (times) in which we live? And because the cause of them has not been removed, they have not even yet ceased. In addition to that which we saw with our own eyes and heard with our own ears, and amid which we lived, there terrified us also rumours from far and near, and calamities that

happened in various places; terrible earthquakes, overturnings of cities, famines and pestilences, wars and tumults, captivity and deportation of whole districts, razings and burning of churches. And whereas these things have amazed you by their frequency, you have sent unto me to write them down with words of grief and sorrow, which shall astonish both readers and hearers; and I know that you have said this through your zeal for good things, that there may be contrition also in those who hear them, and that they may draw nigh unto repentance.

IV. But know that it is one thing for a man to write sadly, and another (to write) truly; for any man who is endowed with natural eloquence can, if he chooses, write sad and melancholy tales. But I am a plain man in speech, and I record in this book those things which all men that are in our country can testify to be true; and it is for them who read and hear, when they have examined them, if they please, to draw nigh unto repentance. But perchance one may say, ”What profit have those who read from these things, if admonition be not mingled with the recital? I for my part, as one who is not able to do this, say that these chastisements which have come upon us are sufficient to rebuke us and our posterity, and to teach us by the memory and reading of them that they were sent upon us for our sins. If they did not teach us this, they would be quite useless to us. But this cannot be said, because chastisements supply to us the place of teaching; and that they are sent upon us for our sins all believers under heaven testify, in accordance with the words of S. Paul, who says, ”When we are chastened, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

For the whole object of men being chastened in this world is that they may be restrained from their sins, and that the judgement of the world to come may be made light for |5 them. As for those who are chastised because of sinners, whilst they themselves have not sinned, a double reward shall be added unto them. But there is mercy at all times even for those who are unworthy, because of the kindness and grace and longsuffering of God, who wills that this world should last until the time that is decreed in His knowledge, and doesn’t forget. And that these things are so is clear both from the evidences of holy Scripture and from the things that have taken place among us, which we purpose to write down.

V. For behold, there leaned heavily upon us the calamities of hunger and of pestilence in the time of the locusts, so that we were well nigh going to destruction; but God had mercy upon us, though we were unworthy, and gave us a little respite from the calamities that pressed upon us. And this, as I have said, was because of His goodness. But He changed our torments, after we had had some respite, and smote us by the hands of the Assyrian, who is called the rod of anger. Now I do not wish to deny the free will of the Persians, when I say that God smote us by their hands; nor do I, after God, bring forward any blame of their wickedness; but reflecting that, because of our sins, He has not inflicted any punishment on them, I

have set it down that He smote us by their hands. Now the pleasure of this wicked people is abundantly made evident by this, that they have not shown mercy unto those who were delivered up unto them; for they have been accustomed to show their pleasure and to rejoice in evil done to the children of men, wherewith the Prophet too taunts them and says, prophesying regarding the desolation of Babylon as it were by the mouth of the Lord: ”I was wroth with my people, who defiled mine inheritance; and I delivered them into your hands, and you showed them no mercy.

Unto us too, therefore, they have similarly wrought harm in their pitiless pleasure, according to their wont. For though the rod of their chastisement did not reach our bodies, and they were unable to make themselves masters of our city, (because it is not possible for the promise of Christ to be made void, who promised the believing king Abgar, saying, ”Thy city shall be blessed, and no enemy |6 shall ever make himself master of it”; yet, because of the believers who were spoiled and led away captive and slain and destroyed in the other cities which were captured, and who were like mud in the streets, all those have tasted no small degree of suffering who have learned to sympathise with them that suffer. And those too who were far away from this (sight) have been tortured with fear for their own lives by their lack of faith, for they thought that the enemy would make himself master of Edessa too, as he had done of other cities. About which things we are going to write unto you.

VI. Since then, according to the saying of the wise Solomon, ”War is brought about by provocation”; and you wish to learn this very thing, namely by what causes it was provoked; it is my intention to inform you whence these causes took their rise, even at the risk of its being thought that I speak of things the time of which is long past. And then, after a little, I will make known to you too how these causes acquired strength. For although this war was stirred up against us because of our sins, yet it took its origin in certain obvious facts, which I am going to relate to you, that you may be clearly acquainted with the whole subject, and not be led, along with some foolish persons, to blame the all-ruling and believing emperor Anastasius. For he was not the exciting cause of the war, but it was provoked from a much earlier time, as you may understand from the things that I am going to write unto you.

VII. In the year 609 (A.D. 297-8) the Romans got possession of the city of Nisibis, and it remained under their |7 sway for sixty-five years. After the death of Julian in Persia, which took place in the year 674 (A.D. 362-3), Jovinian , who reigned over the Romans after him, preferred peace above everything; and for the sake of this he allowed the Persians to take possession of Nisibis for one hundred and twenty years, after which they were to restore it to its (former) masters. These years came to an end in the time of the Roman emperor Zeno; but the Persians were unwilling to restore the city, and this thing stirred up strife. VIII. Further, there was a treaty

between the Romans and the Persians, that, if they had need of one another when carrying on war with any nation, they should help one another, by giving three hundred able-bodied men, with their arms and horses, or three hundred staters in lieu of each man, according to the wish of the party that had need. Now the Romans, by the help of God, the Lord of all, had never any need of assistance from the Persians; for believing emperors have always reigned from that time until the present day, and by the help of Heaven their power has been strengthened. But the kings of the Persians have been sending ambassadors and receiving money for their needs; but it was not in the way of tribute that they took it, as many thought.

IX. Even in our days Peroz, the king of the Persians, because of the wars that he had with the Kushanaye or Huns, very often received money from the Romans, not however demanding it as tribute, but exciting their religious zeal, as if he was carrying on his contests on their behalf, ”that,” said he, ”they may not pass over into your territory.” What made these words of his find credence was the devastation and depopulation which the Huns wrought in the Roman territory |8 in the year 707 (A.D. 395-6), in the days of the emperors Honorius and Arcadius, the sons of Theodosius the Great, when all Syria was delivered into their hands by the treachery of the prefect Rufinus and the supineness of the general Addai.

X. By the help of the money which he received from the Romans, Peroz subdued the Huns, and took many places from their land and added them to his own kingdom; but at last he was taken prisoner by them. When Zeno, the emperor of the Romans, heard this, he sent money of his own and freed him, and reconciled him with them. Peroz made a treaty with the Huns that he would not again cross the boundary of their territory to make war with them; but he went back from and broke his covenant, like Zedekiah, and went to war, and like him he was delivered into the hands of his enemies, and all his army was destroyed and dispersed, and he himself was taken alive. He promised in his pride that he would give for the safety of his life thirty mules laden with silver coin; and he sent to his country over which he ruled, but he could hardly collect twenty loads, for by his former wars he had completely emptied the treasury of the king who preceded him. Instead therefore of the other ten loads, he placed with them as a pledge and hostage his son Kawad, until he should send them, and he made an agreement with them for the second time that he would not again go to war.

XI. When he returned to his kingdom, he imposed a poll-tax on his whole country, and sent the ten loads of silver coin, and delivered his son. But he again collected an army and went to war; and the word of the Prophet was in very reality fulfilled regarding him, who says, ” I saw the wicked uplifted like the trees of the forest, but when I passed by he was not, and I sought him but did not find him.” For when a battle |9 took place, and the two hosts were mingled together in confusion, his whole force was destroyed, and he himself was sought but not found; nor to the

present day is it known what became of him, whether he was buried under the bodies of the slain, or threw himself into the sea, or hid himself in a cave under ground and perished of hunger, or concealed himself in a wood and was devoured by wild beasts.

XII. In the days of Peroz the Roman empire too was in disorder; for the officials of the palace hated the emperor Zeno because he was an Isaurian by race, and Basiliscus rebelled against him and became emperor in his stead. Afterwards, however, Zeno strengthened himself and was reestablished on the throne. And because he had had experience of the hatred of many towards him, he prepared for himself an impregnable fortress in his own country; so that, if any harm should happen to him, it might be a place of refuge for him. His confidant in this was the military governor of Antioch, by name Illus, who was likewise an Isaurian; for he bestowed posts of honour and authority upon all his countrymen, and for this reason he was much hated by the Romans.

XIII. When the fortress was fully equipped with everything necessary for it, and a countless sum of money had been deposited there by Illus, he came to the capital (Constantinople) to inform Zeno that he had executed his will. But Zeno, because he knew that he was a traitor and was aiming at the throne, ordered one of the soldiers to kill him. After the person to whom this commission had been given was for many days seeking an opportunity of executing it secretly, but found none, he accidentally met Illus inside the palace, and drew his sword and raised it to smite him. Instantly, however, one of the soldiers who formed the retinue of Illus struck him |10 with a knife on the arm, and the sword fell from his hand and merely cut off Illus's ear. Zeno, in order that his treachery towards Illus might not be disclosed, at once gave orders that that soldier's head should be cut off, without any inquiry. But this very circumstance only made Illus think the more that Zeno had ordered him; and he arose and departed thence and went down to Antioch, having made up his mind that, whenever an opportunity offered, he would take measures to requite him.

XIV. Zeno, being afraid of Illus, because he knew his evil design, despatched to him at Antioch certain men of standing, and sent him word to come up to him (to Constantinople), as if he wished to make excuses to him, pretending that that treachery was not committed at his instigation, but that he did not wish to kill him. However he could not soften the hard heart of Illus; for he despised him, and did not choose to obey his command and go to him. At last Zeno sent to him another general, whose name was Leontius, with the troops under his orders, and bade him bring Illus up to him by force, and if he offered any resistance even to kill him. When this man arrived at Antioch, he was corrupted by the gold of Illus, and disclosed to him the order which had been given to him to put him to death. And when Illus saw that he had hidden nothing from him, he too showed him a large

quantity of gold that he had in his hands, for the sake of which Zeno was wishing to kill him; and he persuaded Leontius to conspire with him and to rebel along with him, pointing out to him also the hatred of the Romans towards Zeno. After he had consented, Illus was able to disclose his design, for alone he could not rebel nor make himself emperor, because the Romans hated him too on account of his race and of his hardness of heart.

XV. Leontius then became emperor at Antioch in name, whilst Illus was in fact the administrator of affairs. As some say, he was even scheming to kill Leontius, in case they should overcome Zeno. But there was in their following a certain rascally conjuror, by name Pamprepius, who confounded and upset all their plans by his perfidy. In order that their throne |11 might be firmly established, they sent ambassadors to Persia, with a large sum of money, to conclude a treaty of friendship, ..... or, if they required an army to help them, they should send it to them. When Zeno heard of what had happened at Antioch, he sent thither one of his generals, whose name was John , with a large army. XVI. When Illus and Leontius heard of the great force that was coming against them, their hearts trembled; and the people of Antioch too were afraid that they might not be able to stand a siege, and called on them tumultuously to quit the city, and, if they were able, to meet [John in] battle. This caused Illus and Leontius much anxiety, and they formed plans for quitting Antioch, and crossing the river Euphrates eastwards. And they sent one of their partisans, whose name was Matronianus, with five hundred horsemen, to establish their authority in Edessa as a seat of government. The Edessenes, however, rose up against him, and closed the gates of the city, and guarded the wall after the fashion of war, and did not let him enter.

XVII. When Illus and Leontius heard this, they were forced to meet John in battle; but they were not strong enough for this, because John fell upon them manfully, and destroyed the greater part of the troops that were with them, while the rest were scattered every man to his city. They themselves, being unable to bear his onslaught, took those that were left with them, and made their escape to the fortress of which I have said above that it was impregnable and well provided with stores of every kind (ch. xii). John pursued after them, but did not overtake them, and encamped around the fortress and kept watching it. They, because they relied upon the impregnability of the fortress, let the troops that were with them go |12 down, retaining with them only chosen men and valiant. John appeased his fury upon those who came down from the fortress, but was unable to harm Illus and Leontius in any way. Now because of the difficulty of the natural position of the fortress, it was also rendered wonderfully impregnable by the work of men’s hands, and there was no path leading up to it save one, by which, because of its narrowness, not even two persons could ascend at once. However, after a considerable time, when all John’s stratagems were exhausted, Illus and Leontius were betrayed by those who were with them, and were taken captive in their sleep. By the order

of Zeno both of them were put to death, as well as those who betrayed them, and the hands of all who were with them were cut off. Such were the troubles of the Roman empire in the days of Peroz.

XVIII. After the sudden disappearance of Peroz, which I have mentioned above (ch. xi), his brother Balash reigned over the Persians in his place. This was a humble man and fond of peace. He found nothing in the Persian treasury, and his land was laid waste and depopulated by the Huns, (for you in your wisdom dost not forget what expense and outlay kings incur in wars, even when they are victorious, and how much more when they are defeated,) and from the Romans he had no help of any kind such as his brother had. For he sent ambassadors to Zeno, asking him to send him money; but because he was occupied with the war against Illus and Leontius, and because he also remembered the money that had been sent by them at the commencement of their rebellion, which still remained there in Persia, he did not choose to send him anything, save this verbal message: ”The taxes of Nisibis which you receive are enough for you, which for many years past have been due to the Romans.”

XIX. Balash then, because he had no money to maintain his troops, was despised in their eyes. The priesthood too hated him, because he was trying to abolish their laws, and wishing to build baths in the cities for bathing; |13 and when they saw that he was not counted aught in the eyes of his troops, they took him and blinded him, and set up in his stead Kawad, the son of his brother Peroz, whose name we have mentioned above (ch. x), who was left as a hostage among the Huns, and who it was that stirred up the war with the Romans, because they did not give him money. For he sent ambassadors, and a large elephant as a present to the emperor, that he might send him money. But before the ambassadors reached Antioch in Syria, Zen6n died, and Anastasius became emperor after him. When the Persian ambassador informed his master Kawad of this change in the Roman government, he sent him word to go up with diligence and to demand the customary money, or else to say to the emperor, ”Take war.”

XX. And so, instead of speaking words of peace and salutation, as he ought to have done, and of rejoicing with him on the commencement of the soverainty which had been newly granted him by God, he irritated the mind of the believing emperor Anastasius with threatening words. But when he heard his boastful language, and learned about his evil conduct, and that he had reestablished the abominable sect of the magi which is called that of the Zaradushtakan , (which teaches that women should be in common, and that every one could sleep with whom he pleases,) and that he had wrought harm to the Armenians who were under his sway, because they would not worship fire, he despised him, and did not send him the money, but sent him word, saying, ”As Zeno, who reigned before me, did not send it, so neither will I send it, until you restore Nisibis to me; for the wars are not trifling which I

have to carry on with the barbarians who are called the Germans, and with those who are called the Blemyes , and with |14 many others: and I will not neglect the Roman troops and feed yours."

XXI. When the Armenians who were under the rule of Kawad heard that he had not received a peaceful answer from the Romans, they took courage and strengthened themselves, and destroyed the fire-temples that had been built by the Persians in their land, and massacred the magi who were among them. Kawad sent against them a general with an army to chastise them and make them return to the worship of fire; but they fought with him, and destroyed both him and his army, and sent ambassadors to our emperor, offering to become his subjects. He however was unwilling to receive them, that he might not be thought to be stirring up war with the Persians. Let those therefore who blame him because he did not give the money, rather blame him who demanded what was not his as if by force; for had he asked for it peaceably and by persuasion, it would have been sent to him; but he hardened his heart like Pharaoh, and used threats of war. But we place our trust in the justice of God, that He will bring upon him a greater punishment than that of the other because of his filthy laws, for be wished to violate the law of nature and to destroy the path of the fear of God.

XXII. Next the whole of the Kadishaye who were under his sway rebelled against him, and wanted to enter Nisibis, and to set up in it a king of their own; and they fought against it for a considerable time. The Tamuraye too, who dwell in the land of the Persians, when they saw that nothing was given to them by him, rebelled against him. These placed their trust in the lofty mountains amid which they dwelt, and used to come down and spoil and plunder the villages around them, and (rob) the merchants, both foreigners and natives of the place, and then go up again. The nobles too of his kingdom hated him, because he had allowed their wives to commit adultery. The |15 Arabs also who were under his sway, when they saw the confusion of his kingdom, likewise made predatory raids, as far as their strength permitted, throughout the whole Persian territory.

XXIII. There arose at this time another trouble in the Roman territory also; for the Isaurians, after the death of Zeno, rebelled against the emperor Anastasius, and were wishing to set up an emperor who was pleasing to themselves. When Kawad heard this, he thought that he had found his opportunity, and sent ambassadors to the Roman territory, thinking that they would be afraid and would send him money, since the Isaurians had rebelled against them. But the emperor Anastasius sent him word, saying, "If you ask it as a loan, I will send it to you; but if as a matter of custom, I will not neglect the Roman armies, which are sore put to it in the war with the Isaurians, and become a helper of the Persians." By these words the spirit of Kawad was humbled, because his plan had not succeeded. The Isaurians were overcome and destroyed and slaughtered, and all their cities were razed and

burned. The Persian grandees plotted in secret to slay Kawad, on account of his impure morals and perverse laws; and when this became known to him, he abandoned his kingdom, and fled to the territory of the Huns, to the king at whose court he had been brought up when he was a hostage.

XXIV. His brother Zamashp reigned in his stead over the Persians. Kawad himself took to wife among the Huns his sister's daughter. His sister had been led captive thither in the war in which his father was slain; and because she was a king's daughter, she became the wife of the king of the Huns, and he had a daughter by her. When Kawad fled thither, she gave him this daughter to wife. Being emboldened by having become the king's son-in-law, he used to weep before him every |16 day, imploring him to give him the aid of an army, that he might go and kill the grandees and establish himself on his throne. His father-in-law gave him a by no means small army, according to his request. When he reached the land of the Persians, his brother heard of it, and fled before him, and he accomplished his wish and slew the grandees. He also sent a message to the Tamuraye, threatening them that, if they did not submit to him of their own accord, they would be conquered in war; but, if they would join his army, that they should enter with him the Roman territory, and out of the spoil of that country he would distribute to them all that had been wrongly withheld from them (see ch. xxii). They were afraid of the Hunnish army, and yielded to him. The Kadishaye, who were encamped against Nisibis (ch. xxii), when they heard this, submitted likewise.

And the Arabs, when they learned that he was going to make war with the Romans, crowded to him with great alacrity. The Armenians, on the other hand, who were afraid lest he should take vengeance on them because of those fire-temples which they had razed in time past, were unwilling to obey him. But he collected an army and went to war with them; and though he was too strong for them, he did not destroy them, but promised them that he would not even compel them to worship fire, if they would be his auxiliaries in the war with the Romans. They consented most unwillingly, because they were afraid. What things Kawad did after he entered the Roman borders, I will tell you hereafter in their proper time; but just now, as you have bidden me to write unto you also about the signs and chastisements which took place, in their due order, and about the locusts and the pestilence and the dearth, and these are antecedent in point of time, I will turn my discourse unto them. And that the narrative may not be confused, I will set down the years separately, one by one, and under each of them, by and for itself, I will state what happened in it, God being my helper by the aid of the prayers of you His elect. |17

XXV. The year of Alexander 806 (A.D. 494-5). Concerning then the cause of the war, and how it was provoked, I have, as I think, sufficiently informed you, O our father, though I have written down these narratives in brief terms, because I was anxious to avoid prolixity. Some of them I found in old books; others I learned from

meeting with men who had acted as ambassadors to both monarchs; and others from those who were present at these occurrences. But now I am going to inform you of the things that happened with us, because with this year commenced the violent chastisements and the signs that have taken place in our own days.

XXVI. At this time our bodies were perfectly sound all over, but the pains and diseases of our souls were many. But God, who finds pleasure in sinners when they repent of their sins and live, made our bodies as it were a mirror for us, and filled our whole bodies with sores, that by means of our exterior He might show us what our interior was like unto, and that, by means of the scars of our bodies, we might learn how hideous were the scars of our souls. And as all the people had sinned, all of them were smitten with this plague. For there were swellings and tumours upon all the people of our city, and the faces of many gathered and became full of matter, and they presented a horrid sight. There were some whose whole bodies were full of boils or pustules, down even to the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet; whilst others had large holes in their several limbs. However, by the goodness of God which protected them, the pain did not last long with any one, nor did any defect or injury result in the body; but, though the scars of the sores were quite plain after healing, the limbs were preserved in such a state as to fulfil their functions in the body. At this time thirty modii of wheat were sold at Edessa for a dinar, and fifty of barley .

XXVII. The year 807 (A.D. 495-6). On the 17th of Iyar (May) in this year, when blessings were sent down |18 abundantly from heaven upon all men, and the crops by the blessing (of God) were abundant, and, rain was falling, and the fruits of the earth were growing in their season, the greater part of the citizens (of Edessa) cut off all hope of safety for their lives by sinning openly. Being plunged in all sorts of luxurious pleasures, they did not even send up thanks for the gifts of God, but were neglectful of [this duty], and corrupted by the diseases of sins. And as if the secret and open sins in which they were indulging were not enough for them, they were present on the day above specified, that is to say, on the night between the Friday and Saturday, [at the place] where the dancer who was named Trimerius was dancing. They kindled lamps without number in honour of this festival, a custom which was previously unknown in this city. These were arranged by them on the ground along the river from the gate of the Theatre as far as the gate of the Arches . They placed on its bank lighted lamps, and hung them in the porticoes, in the town-hall, in the upper streets , |19 and in many (other) places. Because of this wickedness a marvellous sign was wrought by God to reprove them.

For the symbol of the Cross, which the statue of the blessed emperor Constantine held in its hand, receded from the hand of the statue about one cubit, and remained thus during the Friday and Saturday until evening. On the Sunday the symbol came of its own accord and drew nigh to its place, and the statue took it in its hand, as

it had held it before. By means of this sign the discreet understood that the thing that had been done was very far removed from what was pleasing unto God.

XXVIII. The year 808 (A.D. 496-7). This sign from above was not sufficient for us to restrain us from our sins; on the contrary, we became more audacious, and gave ourselves up easily to sins. The small slandered their neighbours, and the great were full of respect of persons. Envy and treachery prevailed among all of us; and adultery and fornication abounded. The plague of boils became more prevalent among the people, and the eyes of many were destroyed both in the city and the (surrounding) villages. Mar Cyrus the bishop displayed a seemly zeal, and exhorted the citizens to make a small litter of silver in honour of the eucharistic vessels, that they might be placed in it when they were going to minister with them at the commemoration of one of the martyrs. Every one gave according to his means, but Eutychianus, the husband of Aurelia, was the first to show right good will, giving a hundred dinars of his own property.

XXIX. Anastasius the governor was dismissed, and Alexander came in his place at the end of this year. He cleared the streets of the city of filth, and swept away the |20 booths which had been built by the artisans in the porticoes and streets. He also placed a box in front of his palace, and made a hole in the lid of it, and wrote thereon, that, if any one wished to make known anything, and it was not easy for him to do so openly, he should write it down and throw it into it without fear. By reason of this he learned many things which many people wrote down and threw into it. He used to sit regularly every Friday in the church of S. John the Baptist and S. Addai the Apostle, and to settle legal causes without any expense. And the wronged took courage against their wrongers, and the plundered against their plunderers, and brought their causes before him, and he decided them. Some causes which were more than fifty years old, and had never been inquired into, were brought before him and settled. He constructed the covered walk, which was beside the gate of the Arches. He began also to build the public bath, which had been planned years before to be built beside the granary of corn. He gave orders that the artisans should hang over their shops on the eve of Sunday crosses with five lighted lamps attached to them.

XXX. The year 809 (a. d. 497-8). Whilst these things were taking place, there came round again the time of that festival at which the heathen tales were sung; and the citizens (of Edessa) took even more pains about it than usual. For seven days previously they were going up in crowds to the |21 theatre at eventide, clad in linen garments, and wearing turbans, with their loins ungirt. Lamps were lighted before them, and they were burning incense, and holding vigils the whole night, walking about the city and praising the dancer until morning, with singing and shouting and lewd behaviour. For these reasons they neglected also to go to prayer, and not one of them gave a thought to his duty, but in their pride they mocked at the

modesty of their fathers, who, they said, ”did not know how to do these things as we do”; and they kept saying that the inhabitants of the city in the olden times were simpletons and fools. In this way they became daring in their impiety, and there was none to warn or rebuke or admonish. For although Xenaias, the bishop of Mabbog , was at the time in Edessa,----of whom beyond all others it was thought that he had taken upon him to labour in teaching,----yet he did not speak with them on this subject more than one day. But God in His mercy showed them clearly the care which He had for them, that they might be restrained from their iniquity.

For the two colonnades and the tepidarium (or lukewarm-bathroom) of the summer bathhouse fell down; but by God’s goodness nobody was hurt there, although many people were at work in it both inside and outside, and no one perished of them except two men, who were crushed, as they were fleeing from the noise of the fall, at the door of the coldwater-bathroom. |22 Whilst they were laying hold of it from opposite sides, to make it revolve, they were delayed by this struggle as to which of them should get out first, and the stones fell upon them and they died. All sensible men gave thanks to God that He had preserved the city from having to mourn for many; for this bath was to have been opened in a few days. So complete was its downfall that even the lowest ranges of stone, which were laid on the surface of the ground, were uprooted from their places.

XXXI. In this same year was issued an edict of the emperor Anastasius that the money should be remitted which the artisans used to pay once in four years, and that they should be freed from the impost. This edict was issued, not only in Edessa, but in all the cities of the Roman empire. The Edessenes used to pay once in four years one hundred and forty pounds of gold. The whole city rejoiced, and they all put on white garments, both small and great, and carried lighted tapers and censers full of burning incense, and went forth with psalms and hymns, giving thanks to God and praising the emperor, to the church of S. Sergius and S. Simeon, where they celebrated the eucharist. They then reentered the city, and kept a glad and merry festival during the whole week, and enacted that they should celebrate this festival every year. All the artisans were reclining and enjoying themselves, bathing, and feasting in the court of the (great) Church and in all the porticoes of the city. |23

XXXII. In this year, on the 5th of the month of Khaziran (June), Mar Cyrus the bishop departed this life, and Peter succeeded him. He added to the festivals of the year that of Palm Sunday. He also established the custom of consecrating the water on the night immediately preceding the feast of the Epiphany; and he prayed over the oil of unction on the Thursday (in Passion Week) before the whole people; besides regulating the other feasts. Alexander the governor was dismissed, and Demosthenes succeeded him. By his order all the porticoes of the city were whitewashed, whereat persons of experience were much annoyed, for they said

that it was a warning sign of approaching evils that were to happen to their home. XXXIII. The year 810 (A.D. 498-9). A proof of God's justice was manifested towards us at this time, for the correction of our evil conduct; for in the month of Iyar (May) of this year, when the day arrived for the celebration of that wicked heathen festival, there came a vast quantity of locusts into our country from the south. They did not, however, destroy or harm anything in this year, but merely laid their eggs in our country in no small quantity. After their eggs were deposited in the ground, there were terrible earthquakes in the land; and it is clear that they took place to awaken the people out of the sin in which they were plunged, that they might not be (further) chastised by famine and pestilence.

XXXIV. In the month of Ab (August) of this year there came an edict from the emperor Anastasius that the fights of wild beasts in the amphitheatre should be suppressed in all the cities of the Roman empire. In the month of Ilul (September) there was a violent earthquake, and a great sound was heard from heaven over the land, so that the earth trembled from its foundations at the sound; and all the villages and towns heard that sound and felt the earthquake. |24 Alarming rumours and evil reports came to us from all quarters; and, as some said, a marvellous sign was seen in the river Euphrates and at the hot-spring of Abarne, in that the water which flowed from their fountains was dried up this day. It does not appear to me that this is false, because, whenever the earth is rent by earthquakes, it happens that the running waters in those places that are cleft are restrained from flowing, and are at times even turned into another direction; as the blessed David too, when telling in the eighteenth psalm of the punishments that came from God upon His enemies, by means of the shaking of the earth and the cleaving of the mountains, and the like, lets us know that this also took place. For he says: "The fountains of the waters were laid bare, and the foundations of the world were seen, at Thy rebuke, O Lord.

There came too in the course of this month a letter, which was read in church before the whole congregation, stating that Nicopolis had fallen to the ground of a sudden at midnight and overwhelmed all its inhabitants. Some strangers too who were there, and certain brethren from our schools who were travelling there and happened to be on the spot, were buried (in the ruins). Their companions who came (back from thence) told us (this). The whole wall of the city all round, and everything that was within it, was overturned in that night, and not one person of them remained alive, save the bishop of the town and two other men, who were sleeping behind the apse of the altar of the church. When the ceiling of the room in which they were sleeping fell, one end of its beams was propped up by the wall of the altar, and so it did |25 not bury them. A certain brother, whose veracity can be depended upon, has told me as follows. "At nightfall on the night when Nicopolis fell, we were lying down inside the town, I and a companion of mine.

He was very restless, and said to me, 'Get up, and let us go and pass the night outside of the town in yonder cave, as is our custom, for I cannot get rest here, because the air is so sultry and sleep will not come to me.' So we got up, I and he, and went out of the town, and passed the night in the cave, as was our custom. When the time of dawn drew nigh, I awakened the brother who was with me, and said to him, 'Get up, for it is daybreak, and let us go into the town, and attend to our business.' So we got up, I and he, and came into the town, and found all its houses overturned, and the people and the cattle, the oxen and the camels, buried therein; and the sound of their groaning was coming up from under the ground. Those who came together to the spot took out the bishop from beneath the beams (of the roof) by which he was sheltered. He asked for bread and wine, wherewith to celebrate the eucharist, [but could get none,] because the whole town was overturned and nothing in it left standing. Presently, however, there arrived a wayfarer, a good man, who gave him some small pieces of bread and a little wine, and he celebrated the eucharist and prayed, and made those who were there participate in the mystery of life.

He resembled at this time, as it seems to me, the just Lot when he made his escape from Sodom. Thus much is sufficient to tell.

XXXV. Again, in the north there was a church called that of Arsamosata, which was very strongly built and beautifully decorated. On a fixed day in each year, namely on the day of the commemoration of the martyrs who were deposited in it, many used to gather together thither from all quarters, partly for prayer and partly for traffic; for great provision was made for the people who were assembled on that occasion. When there was a great crowd collected of men and women and children, of |26 every age and class, there were terrible flashes of lightning and violent peals of thunder and frightful noises; and all the people fled to the church, to seek refuge with the bones of the saints. And while they were in great fear, and were engaged in prayer and service at midnight, the church fell in and crushed beneath it the greater part of the people who were in it. This happened on the same day on which Nicopolis fell.

XXXVI. The year 811 (A.D. 499-500). By all these earthquakes and calamities, however, not a man of us was restrained from his evil ways, so that our country and our city remained without excuse. Because we had been preserved from the chastisement inflicted on others, and rumours from afar had not alarmed us, we were (presently) smitten with a stroke for which there was no healing. Let us recognise therefore the justice of God and say, "Righteous is the Lord, and very upright are His judgments; for lo, in His longsuffering He was yet willing by means of signs and wonders to restrain us from our evil doings. In the month of the first Teshrin (October) of this year, on the 23d, which was a Saturday, at the rising of the sun, his brightness was taken away from him, and his sphere of light appeared like sil-

ver. He had no perceptible rays, and our eyes could easily gaze upon him without hindrance, for he had neither rays nor beams to hinder them from looking upon him. Just as it is easy for us to look upon the moon, so we could look upon him. He continued thus till towards the eighth hour. The ground over which shone the little light that there was, seemed as if ashes or sulphur had been sprinkled upon it. On this day another dreadful and terrible sign took place on the wall of the city.

This city, which, because of the faith of its king and the righteousness of its inhabitants in days of old, was deemed worthy to receive a blessing from our Lord (see ch. v), was well nigh overwhelming its inhabitants at the present day, because of the multitude of their sins. For there was a breach in the wall from the south to the Great Gate ; and some of the |27 stones at this spot were scattered to no inconsiderable distance from it. By the order of our father the bishop Mar Peter, public prayers were offered, and every one besought mercy from God. He took all his clergy and all the members of religious orders, both men and women, and all the lay members of the holy Church, both rich and poor, men women and children, and they traversed all the streets of the city, carrying crosses, with psalms and hymns, clad in black garments of humiliation. All the convents too in our district kept up continual services with great diligence; and so, by the prayers of all the holy ones, the light of the sun was restored to its place, and we were a little cheered.

XXXVII. In the latter Teshri (November) we saw three signs in the sky at midday. One of them was in the midst of the heavens in the south. It resembled in its colour the bow that is in the clouds, and with its concave surface it looked upwards; that is to say, its convex surface was downwards and its extremities were upwards. And there was one on the east, and another also on the west. Again, in the latter Kanun (January), we saw another sign in the exact southwest corner (of the heavens), which resembled a spear. Some people said of it that it was the besom of destruction, and others said that it was the spear of war.

XXXVIII. Till now we were chastised (only) with rumours and signs; but for the future who is able to tell of the affliction that surrounded our land on all sides? In the month of Adar (March) of this year the locusts came upon us out of the ground, so that, because of their number, we imagined that not only had the eggs that were in the ground been hatched to our harm, but that the very air was vomiting them against us, and that they were descending from the sky upon us. When they were only able to crawl, they devoured and consumed all the Arab territory and all that of Ras-’ain and Tella and Edessa. |28 But after they were able to fly, the stretch of their radii was from the border of Assyria to the Western Sea (the Mediterranean), and they went northwards as far as the boundary of the Ortaye. They ate up and desolated these districts and utterly consumed everything that was in them, so that, even before the war broke out, we could see with our own eyes what was said of the Babylonian, ”The land is as the garden of Eden before him, and behind him

a desolate wilderness. Had not the providence of God restrained them, they would have devoured human beings and cattle, as we have heard that they actually did in a certain village, where some people had put down a little baby in a field, while they were working;

and before they got from one end of the field to the other, the locusts leaped upon it and deprived it of life. Presently after, in the month of Nisan (April), there began to be a dearth of corn and of everything else, and four modii of wheat were sold for a dinar. In the months of Khaziran (June) and Tammuz (July) the inhabitants of these districts were reduced to all sorts of shifts to live. They sowed millet for their own use, but it was not enough for them, because it did not thrive. Before the year came to an end, misery from hunger had reduced the people to beggary, so that they sold their property for half its worth, horses and oxen and sheep and pigs. And because the locusts had devoured all the crop, and left neither pasture nor food for man or beast, many forsook their native places and removed to other districts of the north and west. And the sick who were in the villages, as well as the old men and boys and women and infants, and those who were tortured by hunger, being unable to walk far and go to distant places, entered into the cities to get a livelihood by begging; and thus many villages and hamlets were left destitute of inhabitants. They did not, however, escape punishment, not |29 even those who went to far off places;

but, as it is written concerning the Children of Israel, ”Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil,” so also it fared with them; for the pestilence came upon them in the places to which they went, and even overtook those who entered into Edessa; about which I shall tell (you) presently to the best of my ability, though no one, as I think, is able to describe it as it really was.

XXXIX. Now, however, I am going to write to you about the dearth, as you asked me. I did not, it is true, wish to set down anything regarding this, but I have constrained myself to do so, so that you don’t think that I treated your order slightingly. Wheat was sold at this time at the rate of four modii for a dinar, and barley six modii. Chickpeas were five hundred numia a kab; beans, four hundred numia a kab; and lentils, three hundred and sixty numia a kab; but meat was not as yet dear. As time went on, however, the dearth became greater, and the pain of hunger afflicted the people more and more. Everything that was not edible was cheap, such as clothes and household utensils and furniture, for these things were sold for a half or a third of their value, and did not suffice for the maintenance of their owners, because of the great dearth of bread. At this time our father Mar Peter set out to visit the emperor (at Constantinople), in order to beg him to remit the tax. The governor, however, laid hold of the landed proprietors, and |30 used great violence to them and extorted it from them, so that, before the bishop could persuade the emperor, the governor had sent the money to the capital. When the emperor saw that the

money had arrived, he did not like to remit it; but, in order not to send our father away empty, he remitted two folles to the villagers, and the price which they were paying , whilst he freed the citizens from the obligation of drawing water for the Roman soldiery.

XL. The governor himself too set out to visit the emperor, girt with his sword , and left Eusebius to hold his post and govern the city. When this Eusebius saw that the bakers were not sufficient to make bread for the market, because of the multitude of country people, of whom the city was full, and because of the poor who had no bread in their houses, he gave an order that every one who chose might make bread and sell it in the market. And there came Jewish women, to whom he gave wheat from the public granary, and they made bread for the market. But even so the poor were in straits, because they had not money wherewith to buy bread; and they wandered about the streets and porticoes and courtyards to beg a morsel of bread, but there was no one in whose house bread was in superfluity. And when one of them had begged (a few) pence, but was unable to buy bread therewith, he used to purchase therewith a turnip or a cabbage or a mallow, and eat it raw. And for this reason there was a scarcity of vegetables, and a lack of everything in the city and villages, so that people actually dared to enter the holy places and for sheer hunger to eat the consecrated bread as if it had been common bread. Others cut pieces off dead carcases, that ought not to be eaten, and cooked and ate them; to which things you in your truthfulness canst bear testimony. |31

XLI. The year 812 (a. d. 500-1). In this year, after the vintage, wine was sold at the rate of six measures for a dinar, and a kab of raisins for three hundred numia. The famine was sore in the villages and in the city; for those who were left in the villages were eating bitter-vetches, and others Were frying the withered fallen grapes and eating them, though even of them there was not enough to satisfy them. And those who were in the city were wandering about the streets, picking up the stalks and leaves of vegetables, all filthy with mud, and eating them. They were sleeping in the porticoes and streets, and wailing by night and day from the pangs of hunger; and their bodies wasted away, and they were in a sad plight, and became like jackals because of the leanness of their bodies. The whole city was full of them, and they began to die in the porticoes and in the streets.

XLII. After the governor Demosthenes had gone up to the emperor, he informed him of this calamity; and the emperor gave him no small sum of money to distribute among the poor. And when he came back from his presence to Edessa, he sealed many of them on their necks with leaden seals, and gave each of them a pound of bread a day. Still, however, they were not able to live, because they were tortured by the pangs of hunger, which wasted them away. The pestilence became worse about this time, namely the month of the latter Teshri (November); and still more in the month of the first Kanun (December), when there began to be frost and ice,

because they were passing the nights in the porticoes and streets, and the sleep of death came upon them during their natural sleep. Children and babes were crying in every street. |32 Of some the mothers were dead; others their mothers had left, and had run away from them, when they asked for something to eat, because they had nothing to give them. Dead bodies were lying exposed in every street, and the citizens were not able to bury them, because, whilst they were carrying out the first that had died, the moment that they returned, they found others. By the care of Mar Nonnus, the ξενοδόχος, the brethren used afterwards to go about the city, and to collect these dead bodies.

And all the people of the city used to assemble at the gate of the ξενοδοχεῖον and go forth and bury them, from morning to morning. The stewards of the (Great) Church, the priest Mar Tewath-il and Mar Stratonicus (who some time afterwards was deemed worthy of the office of bishop in the city of Harran), established an infirmary among the buildings attached to the (Great) Church of Edessa. Those who were very ill used to go in and lie down there; and many dead bodies were found in the infirmary, which they buried along with those at the ξενοδοχεῖον.

XLIII. The governor blocked up the gates of the colonnades attached to the winter bath, and laid down in it straw and mats, and they used to sleep there, but it was not sufficient for them. When the grandees of the city saw this, they too established infirmaries, and many went in and found shelter in them. The Roman soldiers too set up places in which the sick slept, and charged themselves with their expenses. They died by a painful and melancholy death; and though many of them were buried every day, the number still went on increasing. For a report had gone forth |33 throughout the province of Edessa, that the Edessenes took good care of those who were in want; and for this reason a countless multitude of people entered the city. The bath too that was under the Church of the Apostles, beside the Great Gate, was full of sick, and many dead bodies were carried forth from it every day. All the inhabitants of the city were careful to attend in a body the funeral of those who were carried forth from the ξενοδοχεῖον with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs that were full of the hope of the resurrection. The women too (were there) with bitter weeping and loud cries. And at their head went the diligent shepherd Mar Peter; and with them too was the governor, and all the nobles. When these were buried, then every one came back, and accompanied the funeral of those who had died in his own neighbourhood.

And when the graves of the ξενοδοχεῖον and the Church were full, the governor went forth and opened the old graves that were beside the church of Mar Kona, which had been constructed by the ancients with great pains, and they filled them. Then they opened others, and they were not sufficient for them; and at last they opened any old grave, no matter what, and filled it. For more than a hundred bodies were carried out every day from the ξενοδοχεῖον, and many a day a hundred and

twenty, and up to a hundred and thirty, from the beginning of the latter Teshri (November) till the end of Adar (March). During that time nothing could be heard in all the streets of the city but either weeping over the dead or the lamentable cries of those in pain. Many too were dying in the courts of the (Great) Church, and in the courts of the city and in the inns: and they were dying also on the roads, as they were coming to enter the city. In the month of Shebat (February) too the dearth was very great, and the pestilence |34 increased. Wheat was sold at the rate of thirteen kabs for a dinar, and barley eighteen kabs. A pound of meat was a hundred numia, and a pound of fowl three hundred numia, and an egg forty numia. In short there was a dearth of everything edible.

XLIV. There were public prayers in the month of Adar (March) on account of the pestilence, that it might be restrained from the strangers; and the people of the city, while interceding on their behalf, resembled the blessed David when he was saying to the Angel who destroyed his people, ”If I have sinned and have done perversely, wherein have these innocent sheep sinned? Let your hand be against me and against my father’s house.” In the month of Msan (April) the pestilence began among the people of the city, and many biers were carried out in one day, but no one could tell their number. And not only in Edessa was this sword of the pestilence, but also from Antioch as far as Nisibis the people were destroyed and tortured in the same way by famine and pestilence. Many of the rich died, who were not starved; and many of the grandees too died in this year. In the months of Khaziran (June) and Tammuz (July), after the harvest, we thought that we might now be relieved from dearth. However our expectations were not fulfilled as we thought, but the wheat of the new harvest was sold so dear as five modii for a dinar.

XLV. The year 813 (A.D. 501-2). After these afflictions of locusts and famine and pestilence, about which I have written to you, a little respite was granted us by the mercy of God, that we might be able to endure what was to come, as we learned from the actual facts. There was an abundant vintage, and wine from the press was sold at the rate of twenty-five measures for a dinar; and the poor were amply supplied from the vineyards by means of the crop of dried grapes. For the husbandmen and farmers said that the crop of dried grapes was more abundant than that of wheat, because there was a hot wind when the grapes began to ripen, and the greater part of them dried up. By the discreet it was said that this took place by the good providence of God, the Lord of all, and that this thing was a mingling of mercy with chastisement, that the |35 villagers might be supported by this supply of dried grapes, and not die of hunger as in the past year; because at this time wheat was sold at the rate of only four modii for a dinar, and barley six modii. During the two Teshris (October and November) there was the following sign of mercy. The whole winter of this year was excessively rainy; and the seed that was sown shot up here and there to more than the height of a man, before the month of Nisan (April) was come.

Even barren spots of land produced nearly as much as those that were sown. The very roofs of the houses produced much grass, which some people reaped and sold like the dog's grass of the fields; and because it had spikes and was of the full height, the buyers did not perceive (the difference). We were expecting and hoping this year too that corn would be very cheap, as in the years of old; but our hopes came to nothing, for in the month of Iyar (May) there blew a hot wind for three days, and all the corn of our land was dried up save in a few places.

XLVI. In this month, when the day came on which the wicked festival of the tales of the (ancient) Romans was held, of which we have spoken above, there came an edict from the emperor Anastasius that the dancers should not dance any more, not even in a single city throughout his empire. Any one, therefore, who looks to the issue of things, will not blame us because of our having said that, by reason of the wickedness which the people of the city perpetrated at this festival, the chastisements of hunger and pestilence came upon us in succession. For, behold, within thirty days after it was abolished, wheat, which had been sold at the rate of four modii for a dinar, was sold at the rate of twelve; and barley, which had been sold at the rate of six, was sold at the rate of twenty-two. And it was clearly made known to every one, that the will of God is able to bless a small crop, and to give abundance to those who repent of their sins; for although the whole crop of grain was dried up, as I have said, yet from the little remnant that was left came all this relief within thirty days.

Perhaps, |36 however, even now some one may say that I have not reasoned well, for this repentance was in no way a voluntary one, that mercy should be shown for it, seeing that it was the emperor who abolished the festival by force, in that he ordered that the dancers should not dance at all. We, on the contrary, say that God, because of the multitude of His goodness, was seeking an occasion to show mercy even unto those who were not worthy. Of this we have a proof from the fact that He had mercy upon Ahab, when he was put to shame by the rebuke of Elijah, and did not bring in his days the evil which had been before decreed against his house. I do not, however, by any means assert that this was the only sin which was perpetrated in our city, for many were the sins that were wrought secretly and openly; but because the rulers too participated in them, I do not choose to specify these sins distinctly, that I may not give occasion to those who like it of finding fault and of saying of me that I speak against the chiefs.

That I may not, however, leave the matter in complete obscurity,----because I promised above to make known to you how this war was stirred up against us,---- and that I may not moreover say anything against the offenders, I will (merely) set down the words of the Prophet, from which you may understand (my meaning), who, when he saw his fellow-citizens committing acts like these which are this day committed in our city, especially where you live, and throughout the whole

province, said to them as if from the mouth of the Lord: ”Woe to him that says to a father, What are you fathering? and to the woman, What are you giving birth to? About other matters it is better to be silent, for it is fitting to hearken to the passage of Scripture which says: ”Let him that is prudent keep silence in that time, because it is a time of evil. But if our Lord grants that we see you in health, we will speak with you of these things according as we are able.

XLVII. Now then listen to the calamities that happened in this year, and to the sign that appeared on the day when they happened, for this too you have required at my hands. On the 22d of Ab (August) in this year, on the night preceding |37 Friday , a great fire appeared to us blazing in the northern quarter the whole night, and we thought that the whole earth was going to be destroyed that night by a deluge of fire; but the mercy of our Lord preserved us without harm. We received, however, a letter from some acquaintances of ours, who were travelling to Jerusalem, in which it was stated that, on the same night in which that great blazing fire appeared, the city of Ptolemais or ’Akko was overturned, and nothing in it left standing. Again, a few days after, there came unto us some Tyrians and Sidonians, and told us that, on the very same day on which the fire appeared and Ptolemais was overturned, the half of their cities fell, namely of Tyre and Sidon. In Berytus (Beirut) only the synagogue of the Jews fell down on the day when ’Akko was overturned. The people of Nicomedia (in Bithynia) were delivered over to Satan to be chastised, and many of them were tormented by demons, until they remembered the words of our Lord, and persevered in fasting and prayer, and received healing.

XLVIII. On the very same day on which that fire was seen, Kawad, the son of Peroz, the king of the Persians, collected the whole Persian army, and went up against the north. He entered the Roman territory with the force of Huns that he had with him, and encamped against Theodosiupolis of Armenia, and took it in a few days; for the governor of the place, whose name was Constantine, rebelled against the Romans, and surrendered it, because of some enmity that he had against the emperor. Kawad consequently plundered the city, and destroyed and burned it; and he laid waste all the villages in the region of the north, and the fugitives that were left he carried off captive. Constantine he made one of his generals, and left a garrison in Theodosiupolis, and marched thence. |38

XLIX. The year 814 (A.D. 502-3). On the region of Mesopotamia also, in which we dwell, great calamities weighed heavily in this year, so that the things which Christ our Lord decreed in His Gospel against Jerusalem, and actually brought to pass, and the things too which have been spoken regarding the end of this world, would be well fitting to those which happened us at this time. For after there had been earthquakes in various places, as I have written unto you, and famines and pestilences, and alarms and terrors, and after great signs had been shown from heaven, nation arose against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and we fell by

the edge of the sword, and were led away captive into every region, and our land was trampled under foot by strange nations; so that, had it not been for the words of our Lord, who has said, ”When you hear of wars and tumults, do not be afraid, for these things must needs first come to pass, but the end is not yet come,” we would have dared to say that the end of the world was come, because many thought and said thus. But we ourselves reflected that this war did not extend over the whole world; and besides we remembered too the words of S. Paul, wherewith he warned the Thessalonians concerning the coming of our Lord, saying that they should not be astonished either by word, or by spirit, or by beguiling epistle, as if it were from him, declaring the day of the Lord to be now come; and (how) he showed that it is not possible that the end should be until the false Christ is revealed. From these words then of our Lord and of His Apostle we understood that these things did not happen to us because it was the latter time, but that they took place for our chastisement, because our sins were great.

L. Kawad, the king of the Persians, came from the north on the fifth of the first Teshrt (October), on a Saturday, and encamped against the city of Amid, which is beside us in Mesopotamia, he and his whole army. When Anastasius, the Roman emperor, heard that Kawad had collected his forces, he was unwilling to meet him in battle, that blood might not be shed on both sides; but he sent him money by the hand of Rufinus, to whom he gave orders that, if Kawad was on the frontier and had not yet crossed over into the Roman territory, |39 he should give him the money and send him away. But when Rufinus came to Caesarea of Cappadocia, and heard that Kawad had laid waste Agel and Suph and Armenia and the Arabs, he left the money at Caesarea, and went to him, and told him that he should recross the border and take the money. He however would not, but seized Rufinus and ordered him to be kept under guard. He fought against Amid, he and his whole army, with every manner of warfare, by night and by day, and built against it (the mound called) a mule; but the people of Amid built and added to the height of the wall. When the mule was raised high, the Persians applied the battering-ram; and after they had struck the wall violently, the part newly built became loosened, because it had not yet settled, and fell. But the Amidenes dug a hole in the wall under the mule, and secretly drew away inside the city the earth which was heaped up to form it, propping it up with beams as they worked; and so the mule collapsed and fell.

LI. When Kawad found that he was not a match for the city, he sent Na’man, the king of the Arabs (of al-Hirah), with his whole force, to go southwards to the district of Harran . Some of the Persian troops advanced as far as the city of |40 Constantina or Tella, and were plundering and harrying and laying waste the whole country. On the 19th of the latter Teshri (November) Olympius, the dux of Tella, and Eugenius, the dux of Melitene (who had come down at that time), went forth, they and their troops, and destroyed the Persians whom they found in the villages around Tella.

And when they had turned to go back to the city, some one told them that there were five hundred men in a ravine not very far from them. They were ready to go against them, but the Roman troops that were with them had dispersed themselves to strip the slain; and because it was night, Olympius gave orders to light a fire on the top of an eminence and to blow trumpets, that those who were scattered might rejoin them. But the Persian generals, who were encamped at the village of Tell Beshmai, when they saw the light of the fire and heard the sound of the trumpets, armed all their force and came against them. When the Roman cavalry saw that the Persians were too many for them, they turned (their backs); but the infantry were unable to escape and were constrained to fight.

So they came together and drew up in battle array, forming what is called the χελώνη or tortoise, and fought for a long time. But as the army of the Persians was too many for them, and there were added to these the Huns and Arabs, their ranks were broken, and they were thrown into disorder, and mixed up among the cavalry, and trampled and crushed under the hoofs of the horses of the Arabs. So many of the Romans were killed, and the rest were made prisoners.

LII. On the 26th of this month Na'man came from the south and entered the territory of the Harranites, and laid waste and plundered and took captive the people and cattle |41 and property of the whole territory of Harran. He came also as far as Edessa, harrying and plundering and taking captive all the villages. The number of persons whom he led away into captivity was 18,500, besides those who were killed, and besides the cattle and property and spoil of all kinds. The reason that all these people were found in the villages was its being the time of the vintage, for not only did the villagers go out to the vintage, but also many of the Harranites and Edessenes went out, and were taken prisoners. Because of these things Edessa was closed and guarded, and ditches were dug, and the wall was repaired; and the gates of the city were stopped up with blocks of stone, because they were decayed. They were going to put new ones, and to make bars for the sluices of the river, lest any one should enter thereby ; but they could not find iron enough for the work, and an order was issued that every house in Edessa should furnish ten pounds of iron. When this was done, the work was finished. When Eugenius saw that he could not meet all the Persians (in battle), he took what troops were left him, and went against the garrison which they had at Theodosiupolis, and destroyed those who were in it, and retook the town.

LIII. Kawad was still fighting against Amid, and striving and labouring to set up again the mule that had fallen in. He ordered the Persians to fill it up with stones and beams, and to bring cloths of hair and wool and linen, and make them into bags or sacks, and fill them with earth, and pile them up on the mule which they had made, so that it might be raised quickly against the wall. Then the Amidenes constructed |42 a machine which the Persians named "the Crusher", because it

thwarted all their labour and destroyed themselves. For the Amidenes cast with this engine huge stones, each of which weighed more than three hundred pounds; and so the cotton awning under which the Persians concealed themselves was rent in pieces, and those who were standing beneath it were crushed. The battering ram too was broken by the constant shower of stones which were cast without cessation; for the Amidenes were not able to damage the Persians so much in any other way as by means of large stones, because of the cotton awning which was folded many times over (the mule). Upon this the Persians used to pour water, and it could neither be damaged by arrows on account of its thickness, nor by fire because it was damp. But these large stones that were hurled from ”the Crusher” destroyed both awning and men and weapons.

In this way the Persians were discomfited, and gave up working at the mule, and took counsel to return to their own country, because, during the three months that they had sat before it, 50,000 of them had perished in the battles that were fought daily both by night and day. But the Amidenes became overconfident in their victory, and fell into careless ways, and did not guard the wall with the same diligence as before. On the 10th of the month of the latter Kanun (January) the guardians of the wall drank a great deal of wine because of the cold, and when it was night, they fell asleep and were sunk in a heavy slumber; and some of them quitted their posts, because it was raining, and went down to seek shelter in their houses. Whether then through this remissness, as we think, or by an act of treachery, as people said, or as a chastisement from God, the Persians got possession of the walls of Amid by means of a ladder, without the gates being opened or the wall breached. They laid waste the city, and sacked all the property in it, and trampled the eucharist under foot, and mocked at its service, and stripped bare its churches, and led its inhabitants into |43 captivity, except the old and the maimed and those who hid themselves. They left there a garrison of three thousand men, and all (the rest) of them went down to the mountains of Shigar.

That the Persians who remained might not be annoyed by the smell of the dead bodies of the Amidenes, they carried them out and piled them up in two heaps outside of the north gate. The number of those who were carried out by the north gate was more than 80,000; besides those whom they led forth alive and stoned outside of the city, and those whom they stabbed on the top of the mule that they had constructed, and those who were thrown into the Tigris (Deklath), and those who died by all sorts of deaths, regarding which we are unable to speak.

LIV. Then Kawad let Rufinus go, that he might go and tell the emperor what had been done; and he was speaking of these atrocities everywhere, and by these reports the cities to the east of the Euphrates were alarmed, and (their inhabitants) made ready to flee to the west. The honoured Jacob , the periodeutes, who has composed many homilies on passages of the Scriptures, and written various po-

ems and hymns regarding the time of the locusts, was not neglectful at this time too of his duty, but wrote letters of admonition to all the cities, bidding them trust in the Divine deliverance, and exhorting them not to flee. The emperor Anastasius too, when he heard this, sent a large army of Roman soldiers to winter in the cities and garrison them. All the booty that he had taken, and the captives that he had carried off, were" not, however, enough for Kawad, nor was he sated with the great quantity of blood that he had shed; but he (again) sent ambassadors to the emperor, saying, |44 "Send me the money or accept war. This was in the month of Nisan (April). The emperor, however, did not send the money, but made preparations to avenge himself and to exact satisfaction for those who had perished. In the month of Iyar (May) he sent against him three generals, Areobindus, Patricius, and Hypatius, and many officers with them. Areobindus went down and encamped on the border by Dara and 'Ammudin, towards the city of Nisibis; he had with him 12,000 men.

Patricius and Hypatius beseiged Amid, to drive out the Persian garrison there; they had with them 40,000 men. There came down too at this time the hyparch Appion, and dwelt at Edessa, to look after the provisioning of the Roman troops that were with them. As the bakers were not able to make bread enough, he ordered that wheat should be supplied to all the houses of Edessa and that they should make soldiers' bread at their own cost. The Edessenes turned out at the first baking 630,000 modii.

LV. When Kawad saw that those who were with Areobindus were few in number, he sent against them the troops that he had with him in Shigar, (namely) 20,000 Persians; but Areobindus routed them once and again, until they were driven to the gate of Nisibis, and many of the fugitives were suffocated at the gate as they were pressing to get in. In the month of Tammuz (July) the Huns and Arabs joined the Persians to come against him, with Constantine (see ch. xlviii) at their head. When he learned this from spies, he sent Calliopius the Aleppine to Patricius and Hypatius, saying, "Come to me and help me, because a large army is about to come against me." They, however, did not listen to him, but stayed where they were beside Amid. When the Persians came against the army of Areobindus, he could not contend with them, but left his camp, and made his escape to Tella and Edessa; and all their baggage was plundered and carried off. |45

LVI. The troops of Patricius and Hypatius were (meanwhile) constructing three towers of wood, wherewith to scale the walls of Amid. But when they had finished building the towers at a great expense, and they were girded with iron so as not to be harmed by anything, then they found out what had happened on the frontier, and they burned the towers, and departed thence, and went after the Persians but did not overtake them. One of the officers, whose name was Pharazman, and another named Theodore, sent by stratagem a flock of sheep to pass by Amid, while

they and their troops lay in ambush. When the Persians saw the sheep from within Amid, about four hundred chosen men of them sallied forth to carry them off; but the Romans who were lying in ambush arose and destroyed them, and took their leader alive. He promised them that he would give up Amid to them, and for this reason Patricius and Hypatius returned thither; but when that general was unable to fulfil his promise, because those in the city would not be persuaded by him, the generals ordered him to be impaled.

LVII. The Arabs of the Persian territory advanced as far as the Khabur, and Timostratus the dux of Callinicus, went out against them and routed them. The Arabs of the Roman territory also, who are called the Tha'labites , went to Hirta |46 (the capital) of Na'man, and found a caravan which was going up to him, and camels that were carrying up to him.....They fell upon them and destroyed them and took the camels, but they did not make any stay at al-Hirah, because its inhabitants had withdrawn into the inner desert. Again, in the month of Ab (August), the whole Persian army assembled, along with the Huns and the Kadishaye and the Armenians, and came against Opadna. Patricius and his troops heard of this, and arose to go against them; but while the Romans were yet on the march, and not drawn up for battle, the Persians met the vanguard and smote them. When these who were beaten fell back, the rest of the Roman army saw that the vanguard was smitten, and fear fell upon them, and they did not wait to fight, but Patricius himself was the first to turn, and all his army after him. They crossed the Euphrates, and made their escape to the city of Shemishat. In this battle Na'man too, the king of the Persian Arabs, was wounded. One of the Roman officers, whose name was Peter, fled to the castle of Ashparin; and when the Persians surrounded the castle, the inhabitants were afraid of them, and gave him up to them, and the Persians took him away prisoner. They slew the Roman soldiers who were with him, but the people of the castle they did not harm in any way.

LVIII. Kawad, the king of the Persians, was thinking of going against Areobindus to Edessa; for Na'man, the king of |47 the Arabs, kept urging him on because of what had happened to his caravan (see ch. lvii). But a shaikh from Hirta of Na'man, who was a Christian, answered and said: "Let not your majesty take the trouble of going to war against Edessa, because there is the infallible word of Christ, whom we worship, regarding it, that no enemy shall ever make himself master of it" (see ch. v). When Na'man heard this, he threatened that he would do at Edessa worse things than had been done at Amid, and uttered blasphemous words. And Christ showed a manifest sign in him, for at the very time when he blasphemed, the wound which he had received on his head swelled, and his whole head became swollen, and he arose and went to his tent, and lingered in this pain for two days and died . Not even this sign, however, restrained the wicked mind of Kawad from his evil purpose; but he set up a king in place of Na'man, and arose and went to battle. When he came to Tella, he encamped against it; and the Jews

who were there plotted to surrender the city to him. They dug a hole in the tower of their synagogue, which had been committed to them to guard, and sent word to the Persians regarding it that they might dig into it (from the outside) and enter by it.

This was found out by the count Peter, who was in captivity (see ch. lvii), and he persuaded those who were guarding him to let him come near the wall, saying that there were clothes and articles of his of different kinds which he had left in the city, and he wished to ask the Tellenes to give them to him. The guards granted his request and let him go near. He said to the soldiers who were standing on the wall to call the count Leontius, who at that time had charge of the city, and they called him and the officers. Peter spoke with them in Roman, and disclosed to them the treachery of the Jews. In order that the matter might not become known to the Persians, he asked them to give him a pair of trousers. They at first made a pretence of being angry with him; but afterwards they threw |48 down to him from the wall a pair of trousers, because in reality he had need of clothes to wear. Then they went down from the wall, and as if they had learned nothing about the treachery of the Jews and did not know which was the place, they went round and examined the foundations of the whole wall, as if they wished to see whether it required strengthening. This they did for the sake of Peter, lest the Persians might become aware that he had disclosed the thing and might treat him much worse.

At last they came to the place which the Jews were guarding, and found that it was mined, and that they had made ready in the centre of the tower a great hole, as they had been told. When the Romans saw what was there, they sallied out against them with great fury, and went round the whole city, and killed all the Jews whom they could find, men and women, old men and children. This they did for (several) days, and they would scarcely cease from killing them at the order of the count Leontius and the entreaty of the blessed Bar-hadad the bishop. They guarded the city carefully by night and by day, and the holy Bar-hadad himself used to go round and visit them and pray for them and bless them, commending their care and encouraging them, and sprinkling holy water on them and on the wall of the city. He also carried with him on his rounds the eucharist, in order to let them receive the mystery at their stations, lest for this reason any one of them should quit his post and come down from the wall. He also went out boldly to the king of the Persians and spoke with him and appeased him. When Kawad saw the dignified bearing of the man, and perceived too the vigilance of the Romans, it seemed to him of no use to remain idle before Tella, with all that host which he had with him;

firstly, because sustenance could not be found for it in a district that had already been ravaged; and secondly, because he was afraid lest the Roman generals might join one another and come against him in a body. For these reasons he moved off

quickly towards Edessa, and encamped by the river |49 Gallab, otherwise called (the river) of the Medes, for about twenty days.

LIX. Some of the more daring men in his army traversed the district and laid it waste. On the 6th of Ilul (September) the Edessenes pulled down all the convents and inns that were close to the wall, and burned the village of Kephar Selem, also called Negbath. They cut down all the hedges of the gardens and parks that were around, and felled the trees which were in them. They brought in the bones of all the martyrs (from the churches) which were around the city; and set up engines on the wall, and tied coverings of haircloth over the battlements. On the 9th of this month Kawad sent a message to Areobindus, that he should either receive into the city his general, or come out to him into the plain, as he wished to conclude a treaty of peace with him. He gave secret orders however to his troops that, if Areobindus allowed them to enter the city, they should turn and seize the gate and entrance, until he could come and enter after them; and that, if he came forth to them, they should lie in ambush for him and carry him off alive and bring him to him. But Areobindus, because he was afraid to allow them to enter the city, went forth to them outside, without going very far from the city, but (only) as far as the |50 church of S. Sergius.

There came to him Bawi, who was the astabid, which is, being interpreted, the magister (militum) of the Persians, and said to Areobindus, ”If you wishest to make peace, give us 10,000 pounds of gold, and make an agreement with us that we shall receive every year the customary sum of money. Areobindus promised to give as much as 7,000 pounds, but they would not accept it, and kept wrangling with him from morning until the ninth hour. And since they found no opportunity for their treachery, on account of the Roman soldiers who were guarding him, and because they were afraid to make war again with Edessa in consequence of what had happened to Na’man, they left Areobindus at Edessa, and went to fight against Harran, whilst they sent all the Arabs to Serug. But the Rifite who was in (command of) Harran sallied forth secretly from the city, and fell upon them, and slew of them sixty men, and took alive the chief of the Huns. As this was a man of mark, and in great honour with the king of the Persians, he promised the Harranites that he would not make war upon them, if they would give him up alive; and they were afraid to fight and gave up that Hun, sending along with him as a present to him fifteen hundred rams and other things. |51

LX. The Persian Arabs, who had been sent to Serug, went as far as the Euphrates, laying waste and taking captive and plundering all that they could. Patriciolus , one of the Roman officers, with his son Vitalianus, came at this time from the west to go down to the war; and he was confident and fearless, because he had not as yet been in the neighbourhood of the things that had previously happened. When he crossed the River , he met one of the Persian officers and fought with him and

destroyed all the Persians that were with him. Then he set his face to go to Edessa; but he heard from the fugitives that Kawad had surrounded the city, so he recrossed the river and stopped at Shemishat (Samosata). On the 17th of this month, which was Wednesday, we saw the words of Christ and His promises to Abgar (see ch. v) really fulfilled. For Kawad collected his whole force, and marched from the river Euphrates, and came and encamped against Edessa. His camp extended from the church of SS. Cosmas and Damianus, past all the gardens and the church of S. Sergius and the village of Bekin|, as far as the church of the Confessors; and its breadth was as far as the steep descent of Serrin. This whole host |52 without number surrounded Edessa in one day, besides the pickets which it had left on the hills and rising grounds (to the west of the city). In fact the whole plain (to the E. and S.

was full of them. The gates of the city were all standing open, but the Persians were unable to enter it because of the blessing of Christ. On the contrary, fear fell upon them, and they remained at their posts, no one fighting with them, from morning till towards the ninth hour. Then some went forth from the city and fought with them; and they slew many Persians, but of them there fell but one man. Women too were bearing water, and carrying it outside of the wall, that those who were fighting might drink; and little boys were throwing stones with slings. So then a few people who had gone out of the city drove them away and repulsed them far from the wall, for they were not farther off from it than about a bowshot; and they went and encamped beside the village of Kubbe.

LXI. Next day Areobindus too went forth outside of the Great Gate; and while he was standing opposite the Persian army, he sent word to Kawad, saying, ”Now you see by experience that the city is not yours, nor Anastasius’, but it is the city of Christ, who blessed it, and has withstood your hosts, so that they cannot become masters of it. Kawad sent word to him, saying, ”Give me hostages so that you will not come out after me when I have struck my camp to depart; and send me those men whom you took yesterday, and the gold which you promised, and I will go far away from the city. Areobindus gave him the count Basil, and the men whom they had taken from him, who were fourteen in number, and made an agreement with him to give him 2000 pounds of gold at [the end] of twelve days. Kawad struck his camp, and went and pitched at |53 Dahbana. He did not, however, wait till the appointed time, but sent the very next day one of his men, named Hormizd, and ordered him to fetch three hundred pounds of gold. Areobindus summoned to him the grandees of the city, that they might consider how this money could be collected. When they saw that Hormizd had come in haste, they strengthened themselves in reliance on Christ, and took heart and said to Areobindus:

”We will not send the money to this false man, because, just as he has gone back from his word, and has not waited till the day came which you appointed for him,

so will he go back and deceive when he has got the money. We believe that, if he fights with us, he will be again put to shame, because Christ stands in front of our city. Then Areobindus too took courage and sent to Kawad, saying: ”Now we know that you are no king; for he is not a king who says a word and goes back (from it) and deceives. And if he deceives, he is no king. Therefore, as falsehood is manifest in you, send me back the count Basil, and do your worst.”

LXII. Then Kawad became furious, and armed the elephants which were with him, and set out, he and all his host, and came again to fight with Edessa, on the 24th of the month of Ilul (September), a Wednesday. He surrounded the city on all sides, more than on the former occasion, all its gates being open. Areobindus ordered the Roman soldiers not to fight with him, that no falsehood might appear on his part; but some few of the villagers who were in the city went out against him with slings, and smote many of his mail-clad warriors, whilst of themselves not one fell. His legions were daring enough to try to enter the city; but when they came near its gates, like an upraised mound of earth , they were humbled and repressed and turned back. Because, however, of the |54 swiftness of the charge of their cavalry, the slingers became mixed up among them; and though the Persians were shooting arrows, and the Huns were brandishing maces, and the Arabs were levelling spears at them, they were unable to harm a single one of them; but like those Philistines who went up against Samson, ’who, though they were many and armed, were unable to slay him, whilst he, though destitute of weapons, slew a thousand of them with the jaw-bone of an ass, so also the Persians and Huns and Arabs, though they and their horses were falling by the stones which the slingers were throwing, were unable to slay even a single one of them. After they saw that they were able neither to enter the city nor to harm the unarmed men who were mixed up with them, they set fire to the church of S. Sergius and the church of the Confessors and to all the convents that had been left (standing), and to the church of (the village of) Negbath, which the people of the city had spared.

LXIII. When the general Areobindus saw the zeal of the villagers, and that they were not put to shame, but that (the Divine) help went with them, he summoned all the villagers that were in Edessa next day to the (Great) Church, and gave them three hundred dinars as a present. Kawad departed from Edessa, and went and pitched on the river Euphrates; and thence he sent ambassadors to the emperor to inform him of his coming. The Arabs that were with him crossed the river westwards, and plundered and laid waste and took captive and burned everything in their way. Some few of the Persian cavalry went to Batnan (Batnae), and because its wall was broken down, they could not resist them, but admitted them without fighting and surrendered the town to them. LXIV. The year 815 (A.D. 503-4). When the Roman emperor learned what had happened, he sent his magister Celer with a large army. When Kawad heard this, he |55 directed his marches along the river Euphrates that he might go and stay in that province of his which is called Beth

Armaye. When he came nigh Callinicus (ar-Rakkah), he sent thither a general to fight with them. The dux Timostratus came out against him, and destroyed his whole army and took him alive. When Kawad arrived at the city, he drew up his whole force against it, threatening to rase it and to put all its inhabitants to the sword or carry them off as captives, if they did not give him up to him. The dux was afraid of the vast host of the Persians, and gave him up.

LXV. When the magister Celerius arrived at Mabbog, which is on the river Euphrates , and saw that Kawad had moved away his camp before him, and moreover that the winter season was come, and that he could not go after him, he called the Roman generals, and rebuked them because they had not hearkened one to another, and assigned them cities in which to winter till the time for campaigning came again.

LXVI. On the 25th of the first Kanun (December) there came an edict from the emperor that the tax should be remitted to all Mesopotamia. The Persians who were in Amid, when they saw that the Roman army had gone far away from them, opened the gates of the city of Amid, and went forth and entered where they pleased, and sold to the merchants copper and iron and lead and old clothes and whatever was to be had in it, and established in it a public magazine. When Patricius heard this, he set out from Melitene (Malatia), where he was wintering, and came and pitched against Amid. All the merchants whom he found carrying down thither grain and oil, and those too who were buying things from thence, he slew. He found also the Persians who were sent by Kawad to convey thither arms and grain and cattle, and destroyed them, and took all that was with them. When Kawad learned this, he sent against him a |56 general to take vengeance on him. When they came near one another to fight, the Romans, because of the fear inspired by their former defeat, counselled Patricius to flee, and he hearkened to this. In their haste, not knowing whither they were going, they came upon the river Kallath; and because it was winter and there was a great flood in it, they were not able to cross it, but every one of them who hastened to cross was drowned in the river with his horse.

When Patricius saw this, he exhorted the Romans, saying: ”O men of Rome, let us not put to shame our race and our profession, and flee from our enemies, but let us turn against them, and perhaps we may be a match for them. And if they be too strong for us, it is better to die by the edge of the sword with a good name for valour than to perish like cowards by drowning. Then the Romans listened to his advice, being constrained by the river; and they turned against the Persians with fury and destroyed them, and took their generals alive. Thereafter they again encamped against Amid, and Patricius sent and collected unto him artisans from other cities and many of the villagers, and bade them dig in the ground and make a mine beneath the wall, that it might be weakened and fall.

LXVII. In the month of Adar (March), when the rest of the Romans were assembling to go down with the magister, a certain sign was given them from God, that they might be encouraged and be confident of victory. We were informed of this in writing by the people of the church of Zeugma. That it may not be thought that I say anything on my own authority, or that I have hearkened to and believed a false rumour, I quote the very words of the letter that came to us, which are as follows. |57

LXVIII. ”Listen now to a marvel and a glorious sight, such as has never been, because this concerns us and you and all the Romans. For it is a wondrous thing, which it is hard for the understanding of men to believe. But we have seen it with our eyes, and touched it (with our hands), and read it with our lips. You should therefore believe it without any scruple. On the 19th of Adar (March), a Friday, which is the day that our Saviour was slain, a goose laid an egg in the village of ’Agar in the district of Zeugma, and thereon were written Roman letters, fair and legible, which formed as it were the body of the egg and were raised to the sight and touch, like the letters which monks trace on the eucharistic cups, so that even the blind could feel their shape. They were thus. A cross was traced on the side of the egg, and going completely round the egg, from it until it came to it again, was written THE ROMANS. And again there was traced another cross, and [going round the egg,] from it until it came to it again, was written SHALL CONQUER. The crosses were traced one above the other, and the words were written one above the other. There was none that saw this marvel, Christian or Jew, who restrained his mouth from uttering praise. But as for the letters which the right hand of God traced in the ovary (of the bird), we do not dare to imitate them, for they are very beautiful. Whosoever therefore hears it, let him believe it without hesitation.” These are the words of the letter of the Zeugmatites. As for the egg, those in whose village it was laid gave it to Areobindus.

LXIX. The Romans collected a large army, and went down and encamped beside the city of Ras-’ain. By Kawad too |58 about 10,000 men were sent to go against Patricius. They took up their quarters in Nislbis, that they might rest there, and they sent their cattle to pasture in the hills of Shigar. When the Magister heard this, he sent Timostratus, the dux of Callinicus, with 6000 cavalry, and he went and fell upon those who were tending the horses and destroyed them, and carried off the horses and sheep and much booty, and returned to the Roman army at Ras-’ain. Then they all set out in a body, and went and encamped against the city of Amid beside Patricius. LXX. In the month of Iyar (May) Calliopius the Aleppine became hyparch. He came and settled at Edessa, and gave the Edessenes wheat to make bread for the soldiers at their own expense. They baked at this time 850,000 modii of wheat. Appion went to Alexandria, that he might make soldiers’ bread there also and send a supply.

LXXI. As soon as Patricius had got under the wall of Amid by means of the mine which he had dug, he propped it up with beams and set fire to them, whereby the outer face of the wall was loosened and fell down, but the inner part remained standing. He then thought of digging on by that mine and entering the city. When they had carried the excavation through, and the Romans had begun to ascend, a woman of Amid saw them and cried out suddenly for joy, ”The Romans are entering the city! The Persians heard her, and ran at the first who came up and stabbed him. After him there came up a Goth, whose name was Ald , who had been made tribune at Harran, and he stabbed three of those Persians. Not another one of the Romans came up after him, because the Persians had perceived them. When Ald saw that no one was coming up, he became afraid and turned back; but he thought that he would take down with him the dead body of the Roman |59 who had fallen, that the Persians might not insult it. As he was dragging away the dead body and going down into the mouth of the mine, the Persians smote him too and wounded him; and they directed thither the water from a large well that was near to it, and drowned four of the mail-clad Romans who were about to come up. The rest fled and escaped thence.

The Persians collected stones from within the city and blocked up the mine, and piled up a great quantity of earth over it, and all of them kept watch carefully round it, lest it should be excavated at some other spot. They dug ditches within along the whole wall all round, and filled them with water, so that, if the Romans should make another mine, the water might trickle into it, and it so become known. When Patricius heard this from a deserter who had come down to him, he gave up constructing mines.

LXXII. One day, when the whole Roman army was still and quiet, fighting was stirred up in this way. A boy was feeding the camels and asses; and an ass, as it grazed, walked gradually close up to the wall. The boy was afraid to go in and fetch it; and one of the Persians, when he saw it, descended by a rope from the wall, and was going to cut it in pieces and carry it up to be food for them, for there was no meat at all inside the city. But one of the Roman soldiers, a Galilaean by race, drew his sword, and took his shield in his left hand, and ran at the Persian to kill him. As he had come close up to the wall, those who were standing on the wall threw down a large stone and crushed the Galilaean; and the Persian began to ascend to his place by the rope. When he had got halfway up the wall, one of the Roman officers drew nigh, with two shield-bearers walking before him, and shot an arrow from between them, and struck the Persian, and laid him beside the Galilaean. A shout went up from both sides, and because of this they became excited and rose up to fight, All the Roman troops surrounded the city in a dense mass, and there fell of them forty men, while one hundred and fifty were wounded. Of the Persians who were on the wall only nine were seen to be killed, and a few were wounded; for it was difficult to fight with them, the more so as they were on the top of the

wall, because they had made for |60 themselves small houses all along the wall, and they were standing within them and fighting, and could not be seen by those who were without.

LXXIII. The Magister and the generals then thought that it was not fitting for them to fight with them, because victory did not depend for the Romans upon the slaying of these, seeing that they had to carry on war against the whole of the Persians; and if Kawad were to be defeated, these would have to surrender or to perish in their prison. Therefore they gave orders that no one should fight with them, lest by reason of those who were slain or wounded among the Romans, a great part of the army should disperse out of fear. LXXIV. In the month of Khaziran (June), Constantine, who had gone over to the Persians (see ch. xlviii), after he saw that their cause did not prosper, fled from them, he and two women of rank from Amid, who had been given to him (as wives) by the Persian king. For fourteen days he travelled night and day through the uninhabited desert with a few followers; and when he reached an inhabited spot, he made himself known to the Roman Arabs, and they took him and brought him to the fort which is called Shura , and thence they sent him to Edessa. When the emperor heard of his arrival (there), he sent for him (to Constantinople); and when he had come up to him, he ordered one of the bishops to ordain him priest, and bade him go and dwell in the city of Nicaea, and not come into his presence nor meddle with affairs (of state).

LXXV. As Kawad, when he took Amid, had gone into its public bath and experienced the benefit of bathing, |61 he gave orders, as soon as he went down to his own country, that baths should be built in all the towns of the Persian territory. ’Adid the Arab, who was under the rule of the Persians, surrendered with all his troops and became subject to the Romans. Again, in the month of Tammuz (July), the Romans fought with the Persians who were in Amid, and Gainas, the dux of Arabia , smote many of them with arrows. When the day became hot, his armour got too warm for him, and he loosened the belt of his mail a little; whereupon they shot from Amid arrows from the ballistae, and smote him, and he died. When the Magister saw that he suffered harm by sitting before Amid, he took his army and went down to the Persian territory, leaving Patricius at Amid. Areobindus too took his army and entered Persian Armenia; and they destroyed of the Armenians and Persians 10,000 men, and took captive 30,000 women and children, and plundered and burned many villages. When they came back to return to Amid, they brought 120,000 sheep and oxen and horses. As they were passing by Nisibis, the Romans lay in ambush, and the few whose charge it was drove them past the city. When a certain general who was there saw that they were few in number, he armed his troops and sallied forth to take them from them. They pretended to flee, and the Persians took courage and pursued them. When they had gone a long way from their supports, the Romans arose from the ambush and destroyed them, and not one of them escaped. They were about 7000 men. Mushlek (Mushegh) the Arme-

nian, who was under the Persians, surrendered with his whole force and became subject to the Romans.

LXXVI. The year 816 (A.D. 504-5). The fugitives and those who had escaped the sword, that were left in Amid of its inhabitants, were in sore trouble and distress from famine. The Persians were afraid of them lest they should give up the |62 city to the Romans; and they bound all the men that were there, and threw them into the amphitheatre, and there they perished of hunger and of endless bonds. But to the women they gave part of their food, because they used them to satisfy their lust, and because they had need of them to grind and bake for them. When, however, food became scarce, they neglected them, and left them without sustenance. For none of them received more than one handful of barley daily during this year; whilst of meat, or wine, or any other article of food, they had absolutely none at all. And because they were very much afraid of the Romans, they never stirred from their posts, but made for themselves small furnaces upon the wall, and brought up hand-mills, and ground that handful of barley where they were, and baked and ate it. They also brought up large kneading-troughs, and placed them between the battlements, and filled them with earth, and sowed in them vegetables, and whatever grew in them they ate.

LXXVII. In narrating what the women of the place did, I may perhaps not be believed by those who come after us, (but) at the present day there is no one of those who care to learn things that has not heard all that was done, even though he be at a great distance from us. Many women then met and conspired together, and used to go forth by stealth into the streets of the city in the evening or morning; and whomsoever they met, woman or child or man, for whom they were a match, they used to carry him by force into a house and kill and eat him, either boiled or roasted. When this was betrayed by the smell of the roasting, and the thing became known to the general who was there (in command), he made an example of many of them and put them to death, and told the rest with threats that they should not do this again nor kill any one. He gave them leave however to eat those that were dead, and this they did openly, eating the flesh of dead men; and the rest of them were picking up shoes and old soles and other nasty things from the streets and courtyards, and eating them. To the Roman troops however nothing was lacking, but everything was supplied to them in its season, and came down with great care by the order of the emperor. Indeed the things that were sold in their camps were more abundant than in the cities, |63 whether meat or drink or shoes or clothing. All the cities were baking soldiers' bread by their bakers, and sending it to them, especially the Edessenes; for the citizens baked in their houses this year too. by order of Calliopius the hyparch, 630,000 modii, besides what the villagers baked throughout the whole district, and the bakers, both strangers and natives.

LXXVIII. This year Mar Peter the bishop went up again to the emperor to ask him to remit the tax. The emperor answered him harshly, and rebuked him for having neglected the charge of the poor at a time like this and having come up to him (at Constantinople); for he said that God himself would have put it into his heart, if it had been right, without any one persuading him, to do a favour to the blessed city (of Edessa). Whilst the bishop was still there, however, the emperor sent the remission for all Mesopotamia by the hands of another, without his being aware of it. To the district of Mabbog also he remitted one-third of the tax.

LXXIX. The Roman generals who were encamped by Amid were going down on forays into the Persian territory, plundering and taking captive and destroying, and the Persians migrated before them, and crossed the Tigris. They found there the Persian cavalry, who were gathered together to come against the Romans, and so they took heart against them, and halted on the farther bank of the Tigris. The Romans crossed after them, and destroyed all the Persian cavalry, who were about 10,000 men, and plundered the property of all the fugitives. They burned many villages, and killed every male that was in them from twelve years old and upwards, but the women and children they took prisoners. For the Magister had thus commanded all the generals, that if any one of the Romans was found saving a male from twelve years old and upwards, he should be put to death in his stead; and whatsoever village they entered, that they should not leave a single house standing in it. For this reason he set apart some stalwart men of the Romans, and many villagers that accompanied them as they went down; and after the roofs were burned and the fire was gone out, they used to pull down the walls too. They also cut down and destroyed the vines and olives and all the trees. |64 The Roman Arabs too crossed the Tigris in front of them, and plundered and took captive and destroyed all that they found in the Persian territory. As I know you study everything with great care, your holiness must be well aware of this, that to the Arabs on both sides this war was a source of much profit, and they wrought their will upon both kingdoms.

LXXX. When Kawad saw that the Romans were ravaging the country, and that there was no one to oppose them, he wished to go and meet them. For this reason he sent an Astabid to the Magister to speak of peace, having with him an army of about 20,000 men. He sent all the men of note whom he had led captive from Amid, and Peter, whom he had brought from Ashparin (see ch. lvii), and Basil, whom he had taken from Edessa as a hostage (see ch. lxi). He sent also the dead body of the dux Olympius (see ch. li), who had gone down to him on an embassy and died, sealed up in a coffin, to show that he had not died by any other than a natural death, whereof his servants and those who came down with him were witnesses. The Magister received them, and sent them to Edessa, with the exception of the governor of Amid and the count Peter; for he was very angry and provoked, and wanted to put them to death, saying that by their remissness the places which they guarded had been betrayed, and the Persians themselves testified that the wall of

Amid was impregnable. The Astabid was begging and imploring of him to give him the Persians who were shut up in Amid in place of those whom he had brought to him; because, though they were holding out from fear, yet they were in great distress through hunger.

But the Magister said, ”Do not mention the subject of these to me, because they are shut up in our city, and they are our slaves. The Astabid says to him, ”Well then, allow me to send them food, for it is unseemly for you that your slaves should die of hunger; for whenever you pleasest, it is easy for you to kill them. He says to him, ”Send it. The Astabid says, ”Do you swear unto me, and all your generals and officers that are with you, that no one shall kill those whom I send. They all |65 took the oath, save the dux Nonnosus, who was not with them by preconcerted arrangement, for the Magister had left him behind on purpose, so that, if there should be any oath taken, he might not be bound by it. The Astabid therefore sent three hundred camels laden with sacks of bread, in the middle of which were placed arrows. Nonnosus fell upon them and took them from them, and slew those who were with them. When the Astabid complained of this, and asked the Magister to punish the man who had done it, the Magister said to him, ”I cannot find out who has done this, because of the great size of the army that is with me; but if you know who it is, and have strength to take vengeance on him, I will not hinder you. The Astabid however was afraid to do this, and kept asking for peace.

LXXXI. When many days had passed after his asking (for peace), great cold set in, with much snow and ice, and the Romans left their camps, one by one. Each man carried off what booty he had got, and set out to convey it to his own place. Those who remained and did not go to their homes, went into Tella and Ras-’ain and Edessa, to shelter themselves from the cold. When the Astabid saw that the Romans had become remiss and could not withstand the cold, he sent word to the Magister, saying, ”Either make peace, and let the Persians go forth from Amid, or accept war.” The Magister commanded the count Justin to reassemble the army, but he was unable. When he saw that the greater part of the Romans were dispersed and had left him, he made peace and let the Persians come out from Amid on these terms, that, if the peace which they had concluded pleased the two soverains (Anastasius and Kawad), and they set their seal to what they had done, (it should stand); but if not, the war should go on between them. When the Roman emperor learned these things, he gave orders that a public magazine should be established in every city, but especially at Amid, with the view of putting an |66 end to hostility and drawing closer the bonds of peace, he also sent gifts and presents to Kawad by the hand of a man named Leon, and a service for his table, all the pieces of which were of gold.

LXXXII. How much the Edessenes suffered, who conveyed corn down to Amid, no man knows but those who were actually engaged in the work; for the greater part

of them died by the way, themselves and their cattle. LXXXIII. The excellent John, bishop of Amid, went to his rest before the Persians laid siege to it; and its clergy went up to the holy and God-loving, the adorned with all divine beauties, the strenuous and illustrious Mar Flavian , patriarch of Antioch, to ask him to appoint a bishop for them. He treated them with great honour during the whole time that they stayed there. Afterwards, when the excellent Nonnus, priest and steward of the church of Amid, escaped from captivity, the clergy asked the patriarch and he made him their bishop. When the excellent Nonnus had been ordained bishop, he sent his suffragan Thomas to Constantinople, to fetch the Amidenes who were there and to ask a donation from the emperor. Those who were there conspired with him, and asked the emperor that Thomas himself might be their bishop. The emperor granted their prayer, and sent word to the patriarch not to constrain them. The emperor also gave them the governor whom they asked for. The emperor and the patriarch gave presents to the church of Amid, and a large sum of money to be distributed among the poor. For this reason there flocked thither all those who were wandering about in other places, and they were carrying forth the corpses of the dead every day out of Amid, and were then receiving what was appointed for them.

LXXXIV. Urbicius, the emperor's minister, who had bestowed large gifts in the district of Jerusalem and in other places, went down thither also, and gave there a dinar a piece (to the inhabitants). He returned thence to Edessa, where he gave to every woman who chose to take it a |67 trimesion , and to every child a dirham. Nearly all the women took it, both those that were needy and those that were not. LXXXV. In this same year, after the fighting had ceased, the wild beasts became very ferocious against us. In consequence of the great number of dead bodies of those who had fallen in these battles, they had acquired a taste for eating human flesh; and when the bodies of the slain rotted and disappeared, the wild beasts entered the villages and carried off children and devoured them. They also fell upon single men on the roads and killed them. At last they became so afraid that, at the time of threshing, not a man in the whole district would pass the night in his threshing-floor without a hut (to shelter him), for fear of the beasts of prey. But by the help of our Lord, who is always careful for us and delivers us from all trials by His mercy, some of them fell by the hands of the villagers, who stabbed them, and sent their dead carcases to Edessa; and others were caught by huntsmen, who bound them and brought them (thither) alive, so that every one saw them and praised God, who has said, "The fear of you and the dread of you I will put upon every beast of the earth." For although, because of our sins, war and famine and pestilence and captivity and noxious beasts and other chastisements, written and unwritten, were sent upon us, yet by His grace we have been delivered from them all.

LXXXVI. Me too, a feeble man, He has strengthened because of His mercy, through your prayers, that I should write to the best of my ability some of the things that have happened, as a reminder to those who endured them, and for the instruction of those who shall come after us, that, if they please, they may be enabled to become wise through these few things which I have written. For the things that I have omitted are far more than those which I have recorded; and indeed I said from the beginning that I was not able to recount them all; because the sufferings which each individual alone endured, if they were written down, would form long narratives, for which a big book would not suffice. And you must know from what |68 others have written, that those too who came to our aid under the name of deliverers, both when going down and when coming up, plundered us almost as much as enemies . Many poor people they turned out of their beds and slept in them, whilst their owners lay on the ground in cold weather. Others they drove out of their own houses, and went in and dwelt in them. The cattle of some they carried off by force as if it were spoil of war; the clothes of others they stripped off their persons and took away. Some they beat violently for a mere trifle; with others they quarrelled in the streets and reviled them for a small cause.

They openly plundered every one's little stock of provisions, and the stores that some had laid up in the villages and cities. Many they fell upon in the highways. Because the houses and inns of the city (of Edessa) were not sufficient for them, they lodged with the artisans in their shops. Before the eyes of every one they ill-used the women in the streets and houses. From old women, widows and poor, they took oil, wood, salt, and other things, for their own expenses; and they kept them from their own work to wait upon them. In short, they harassed every one, both great and small, and there was not a person left who did not suffer some harm from them. Even the nobles of the land, who were set to keep them in order and to give them their billets, stretched out their hands for bribes; and as they took them from every one, they spared nobody, but after a few days sent other soldiers to those upon whom they had quartered them in the first instance. They were billeted even upon the priests and deacons, though these had a letter from the emperor exempting them from this. But why need I weary myself in setting forth many things, which even those who are greater than I are unable to recount?

LXXXVII. After he had recrossed the river Euphrates westwards, the Magister went to the emperor (at Constantinople); and Areobindus went to Antioch, Patricius to Melitene (Malatia), Pharazman to Apameia (Famiyah), Theodore to Darmesuk (Damascus), and Calliopius to Mabbog (Menbij). So there was a little breathing-space at Edessa, and the few |69 people that remained in it were glad. Eulogius the governor was busying himself in rebuilding the town; and the emperor [gave him] two hundred pounds (of gold) for the expenses of the building. He rebuilt and restored the [whole] outer wall that goes round the city. He also restored and repaired the two aqueducts that come in from the village of Tell-Zema and from

Maudad ; and rebuilt and finished the public bath that fell down (see ch. xxx). He likewise repaired his own palace, and built a great deal throughout the whole city. The emperor too gave the bishop twenty pounds (of gold) for the expenses of repairing the wall; and the minister Urbicius gave him ten pounds to build a church to the blessed Mary. But the oil which had been supplied to the churches and convents from the public oil-store, amounting to 6800 keste (per annum), the governor took away from them, and ordered it to be used for burning in the porticoes of the city. The vergers besought him much regarding it, but he would not listen to them. That he might not be thought, however, to despise the churches built for God, he gave of his own property to every church two hundred keste. Up to this year wheat had been sold at the rate of four modii for a dinar, and barley six modii, and wine two measures; but after the new harvest wheat was sold at the rate of six modii for a dinar, and barley ten modii.

LXXXVIII. The Persian Arabs were never at peace or rest, but they crossed over into the Roman territory, without the Persians, and took captive (the people of) two villages. When the general of the Persians, who was at Nisibis, learned this, he took their shaikhs and put them to |70 death. The Roman Arabs too crossed over without orders into the Persian territory, and took captive (the people of) a hamlet. When the Magister heard this, for he had gone down at the end of this year to Apameia, he sent (orders) to Timostratus, the dux of Callinicus, and he seized five of their shaikhs, two of whom he slew with the sword and impaled the other three. Pharazman set out from Apameia after the Magister had gone down thither, and came and stayed at Edessa, and he received authority from the emperor to become general in place of Hypatius.

LXXXIX. The wall of Batnan-kastra, in Serug, which was all out of repair and breached, was rebuilt and renovated by the care of Eulogius, the governor of Edessa. The excellent priest Aedesius plated with copper the doors of the men’s aisle in the (Great) Church of Edessa. XC. The year 817 (A.D. 505-6). The generals of the Roman army informed the emperor that the troops suffered great harm from their not having any (fortified) town situated on the border. For whenever the Romans went forth from Tella or Amid to go about on expeditions among the Arabs, they were in constant fear, whenever they halted, of the treachery of enemies; and if it happened that they fell in with a larger force than their own, and thought of turning back, they had to endure great fatigue, because there was no town near them in which they could find shelter. For this reason the emperor gave orders that a wall should be built for the village of Dara, which is situated on the frontier. They selected workmen from all Syria (for this task), and they went down thither and were building it; and the Persians were sallying forth from Nisibis and forcing them to stop. On this account Pharazman set out from Edessa, and went down and dwelt at Amid, whence he used to go forth to those who were building and to give them aid. He also used to make great hunts after the wild beasts, especially the

wild boars, which had become numerous there after the country was laid waste. He used to catch more than forty of these in one day; and as a proof of his skill he even sent some of them to Edessa, both alive and dead. |71

XCI. The excellent Sergius, bishop of Birta-kastraf, which is situated beside us on the river Euphrates, began likewise to build a wall to his town; and the emperor gave him no small sum of money for his expenses. The Magister also gave orders that a wall should be built to Europus, which is situated to the west of the River in the prefecture of Mabbog; and the people of the place worked at it as best they could. XCII. After Pharazman went down to Amid, the dux Romanus came in his place, and settled at Edessa with his troops, and bestowed large alms upon the poor. The emperor added in this year to all his former good deeds, and sent a remission of the tax to the whole of Mesopotamia, whereat all the landed proprietors rejoiced and praised the emperor. XCIII. But the common people were murmuring, and crying out and saying, ”The Goths ought not to be billeted upon us, but upon the landed proprietors, because they have been benefited by this remission.” The prefect gave orders that their request should be granted. When this began to be done, all the grandees of the city assembled unto the dux Romanus and asked of him, saying, ”Let your highness give orders what each of these Goths should receive by the month, lest, when they enter the houses of wealthy people, they plunder them as they have plundered the common people.” He granted their request, and ordered that they should receive an espada of oil per month, and two hundred pounds of wood, and a bed and bedding between each two of them. |72

XCIV. When the Goths heard this order, they ran to attack the dux Romanus in the house of the family of Barsa and to kill him. As they were ascending the stairs of his lodging, he heard the sound of their tumult and uproar, and perceived what they wanted to do. He quickly put on his armour, and took up his weapons, and drew his sword, and stood at the upper door of the house in which he lodged. He did not however kill any one of the Goths, but (merely) kept brandishing his sword and hindering the first that came up from forcing their way in upon him. Those who were below were in their anger compelling those who were above them to ascend and force their way in upon him. Thus a great many people occupied the stairs of the house, as your holiness well knows. When therefore the first who had gone up were unable to get in, because of their fear of the sword, and those behind were pressing upon them, many men occupied the stairs; and because of the weight they broke and fell upon them. A few of them were killed, but many had their limbs broken and were maimed, so that they could not be cured again. When Romanus had found an opportunity because of this accident, he fled upon the roof from one house to another and made his escape; but he said nothing more to them, and for this reason they remained where they were billeted, behaving exactly as they pleased, for there was none to check them or restrain or admonish them.

XCV. Our bishop Mar Peter was very dangerously ill all this year. In the month of Nisan (April) the distress became again much greater in our city; for the Magister collected his whole army, and arose to go down to the Persian territory to make and renew with them a treaty of peace. When he entered Edessa, ambassadors from the Persians came to him and informed him that the Astabid who had come to meet him and conclude a peace with him was dead; and they begged of him and said that, if he came down for peace, he |73 ought not to go beyond Edessa until another Astabid should be sent by the Persian king. He granted their request and stayed at Edessa for five months. And because the city was not sufficient for the Goths who were with him, they were quartered also in the villages, and likewise in all the convents, large and small, that were around the city. Not even those who lived in solitude were allowed to dwell in the quiet which they loved, because upon them too they were quartered in their convents.

XCVI. Because they did not live at their own expense from the very first day they came, they became so gluttonous in their eating and drinking, that some of them, who had regaled themselves on the tops of the houses, went forth by night, quite stupefied with too much wine, and stepped out into empty space, and fell headlong down, and so departed this life by an evil end. Others, as they were sitting and drinking, sank into slumber, and fell from the housetops, and died on the spot. Others again suffered agonies on their beds from eating too much. Some poured boiling water into the ears of those who waited upon them for trifling faults. Others went into a garden to take vegetables, and when the gardener arose to prevent them from taking them, they slew him with an arrow, and his blood was not avenged. Others still, as their wickedness increased and there was no one to check them, since those on whom they were quartered behaved with great discretion and did everything exactly as they wished, because they gave them no opportunity for doing them harm, were overcome by their own rage and slew one another. That there were among them others who lived decently is not concealed from your knowledge; for it is impossible that in a large army like this there should not be some such persons found. The wickedness of the bad, however, went so far in evildoing that those too who were ill-disposed among the Edessenes dared to do something unseemly;

for they wrote down on sheets of paper complaints against the Magister, and fastened them up secretly in the customary places of the city (for public notices). When he heard this, he was not angered, as he well might have been, neither did he make any search after those who had done this, nor think of doing any harm to the city, because of his good nature; but he used all the diligence possible to quit Edessa with haste and speed. |74

XCVII. The year 818 (A.D. 506-7) . The Magister therefore took his whole army, and went down to the border. And there came to him a Persian ambassador to

the town of Dara, bringing with him hostages, who had been sent by the Astabid; and they also asked him, saying that, if he wished to make peace, he too ought to send hostages in place of those whom he had received, and afterwards both parties would draw nigh to one another in friendship, and they would meet one another with five hundred horsemen apiece unarmed, and then they would sit in council, and would do what was fitting. He agreed to do what they asked, and sent hostages, and went unarmed to meet the Astabid on the day appointed. But because he was afraid lest the Persians should commit some treachery against him, he drew up the whole Roman army opposite them under arms, and gave them a sign, and ordered them, if they saw that sign, to come to him quickly. When the Astabid too was come to meet him, and the Romans and all the generals who were with them had seated themselves in council, one of the Roman soldiers gave good heed and perceived that all those who had come with the Astabid wore armour under their clothes.

He made this known to the general Pharazman and the dux Timostratus, and they displayed that signal to the troops, whereupon they at once set up a shout and came to them, and took prisoners the Astabid and those who were with him among them. The troops that were in the Persian camp, when they learned that the Astabid and his companions were taken prisoners, fled for fear of them, and entered Nisibis. The Romans wished to take the Astabid and to kill those who were with him; but the Magister begged them not to give an occasion for war and to drive away (all hopes of) peace. With difficulty did they consent, but at last they hearkened to him, and let the Astabid and his companions depart from among them, without having done them any hurt; for even when victorious, the Roman generals were gentle. When the Astabid went to his camp, and saw that the Persians had retired into Nisibis, he was afraid to remain alone, and went in also to join them. He tried to force them to go out of the city with him, but they were unwilling to go out for fear. |75 In order that their fear might not become evident to the Romans, the Astabid sent and fetched his daughter to Nisibis, and according to Persian custom took her to wife.

When the Magister sent him a message to say, ”No man will harm you, even if you come forth alone ”, he returned for answer, ”It is not out of fear that I do not go forth, but in order that the days of the wedding-feast may be fulfilled. Although the Magister knew the whole thing quite well, he passed it over just as if he did not.

XCVIII. And some days after, when the Astabid came out to him, he gave up, for love of peace, all the things which he had determined to require of the Persians, and made a covenant with them, and concluded peace. They drew up documents between them, and appointed a fixed time, during which they were not to make war with one another; and all the armies were glad and rejoiced in the peace that was made. XCIX. While they were still there on the frontier, Celerius the magister and Calliopius received a letter from the emperor Anastasius, which was full of

care and compassion for the whole region of Mesopotamia; and thus he wrote to them, that, if they thought that the tax ought to be remitted, they had full power to remit it without delay. They decided that the whole tax should be remitted to the district of Amid, and the half of it to that of Edessa, and they sent and made this known in Edessa. And after a little while they sent another letter with the news of the peace.

C. On the 28th of the month of the latter Teshri (November A.D. 506), he took his whole army and came up from the border. When he arrived at Edessa, the Magister had a mind not to enter it, because of their murmuring against him (see ch. xcvi). But the blessed Bar-hadad, bishop of Tella, begged him not to allow resentment to get the better of him, nor to leave behind the feeling of vexation or annoyance in any one's mind. He readily acceded to his request; and all the Edessenes too came forth with much alacrity to meet him, carrying wax tapers, both young and old. All the clergy likewise, and the members of religious orders, and the monks, came out with them; and they entered the city with great rejoicing. He sent on all his troops the very same day to |76 continue their march; but he himself remained for three days, and gave the governor two hundred dinars to distribute in presents. And the people of the city, rejoicing in the peace that was made, and exulting in the immunity which they would henceforth enjoy from the distress in which they now were, and dancing for joy at the hope of the good things which they expected to arrive, and lauding God, who in His goodness and mercy had cast peace over the two kingdoms, escorted him as he set forth with songs of praise that befitted him and him who had sent him .

46. CI. If this emperor appears in a different aspect towards the end of his life, let no one be offended at his praises, but let him remember the things that Solomon did at the close of his life. These few things out of many I have written to the best of my ability unto your charity, unwillingly and yet willingly. Unwillingly, on the one hand, in order that I might not weary the wise friend who knows these things better than I do. Willingly, on the other hand, for the sake of obeying your command. Now therefore I beg of you that you too would fulfil the promise contained in your letter (see ch. i) to offer up prayer constantly on behalf of me a sinner. For now that I have learned your wish, it shall be my greatest care, and whatever happens in the times that are coming and is worthy of record, I will write it down and send it to you my father, if I remain alive. Let us therefore pray from this place, and you my father from yonder, and all the children of men everywhere, that history may speak of the great change that is going to take place in the world; and just as we have been unable to describe the wants of these evil times as they really were, because of the abundance of their afflictions, so also may we be unable to tell of those that are coming, because of the multitude of their blessings. And may our words be too feeble to speak of the happy life of our fellow-citizens, and of the calm and peace that shall reign throughout the world, and of the great plenty that there

shall be, and of the superabundance of the harvest of the blessing of God, who has said, ”The former troubles shall be forgotten and shall be hidden from before us.” To Him be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

[Extracts from the copious footnotes follow] 1. * On the promise of our Lord to king Abgar that Edessa should never be captured by an enemy, see Cureton, Ancient Syriac Documents, p. 10 and p. 152; Phillips, The Doctrine of Addai, p.D and p. 5. 2. § The era of Alexander, or of the Romans, begins with October 312 B.C. 3. * That is, Jovian. 4. * The first alternative in their proposal seems to have been accidentally omitted by the scribe. 5. + John the Scythian. 6. + The followers of Mazdak, the son of Bamdadh, who was the disciple of Zaradusht, the son of Khoragan. 7. ++ Blemmyes, an Ethiopian or negro race who used to harry Upper Egypt. 8. * The word in the original is marzebana or marzban, which signifies in Persian ”warden of the marches,” or what the Germans call ”Markgraf.” It ia nearly equivalent to the older term of ”satrap.” See Noeldeke, Gesch. d. Perser u. s. w., p. 102, note 2, and p. 446.

9. + They dwelt in the neighbourhood of Sinjar and Dara. 10. * In the text Taiyaye, which originally designated the Arabs of the tribe of Taiyi, one of the most powerful in northern Arabia. 11. + By dinar (the Latin denarius), is here meant the Byzantine aureus. 12. ++ The Daisan, or Kara Koyun, which now flows round the northern part of the city, but in ancient times ran right through it from N.W. to S.E., parallel to, or perhaps coinciding with, the modern ’Ain al-Khalil or ’Ain Ibrahim. 13. § This was apparently on the eastern side of the city, at the exit of the Daisan. 14. || My friend Professor G. Hoffmann, of Kiel, reads ”to the gate of the Grottoes” or ”Tombs,” meaning thereby the grottoes or tombs cut out in the range of heights to the west of the city. At any rate, this gate lay on the west side of the city, at or near the entrance of the Daisan.

15. ** If this conjecture is right, the ”upper streets” are those in the S.W. corner of the city, where there is a hill, on which lay the old town of king Abgar with its buildings and fortifications. See the account of the great flood, A. Gr. 513, a. d. 201, in Assemani, Bibl. Orient, t. i, pp. 390-3. The reading of the MS. is, however, very uncertain. 16. * Mar, shortened from Mari, means ”my lord.” 17. ++ Mabbog or Mabug, Hierapolis, now Membij. Xenaias or Philoxenus was the friend of Severus, patriarch of Antioch. 18. || By ”the Church” par excellence we are, I suppose, to understand ”the great Church of S. Thomas the Apostle” (see Assemani, Bibl. Orient., t. i, p. 399). It is uncertain, however, whether the actual reading of the manuscript is not ”in the courts of the churches.” 19. § Another name for Emmaus, in Palestine, about halfway between Jaffa and Jerusalem.

20. § The Great Gate lay at the S.E. corner of the town, leading out to Harran. 21. + There is evidently some error or omission here in the text. 22. § To show that he was still in office, and had not been deposed. 23. * We would say, ”on Thursday

night." This display of the aurora borealis must have been unusually magnificent. 24. ** Carrae still retains its ancient name of Harran. 25. ++ At this time the Daisan ran through the city, not round it. 26. + Jacob, at present periodeutes or visitor, afterwards bishop of Batnan (Batnae) in Serug, one of the most prolific of Syriac writers. He died A. Gr. 833 (A.D. 521). BL Add. 14587 contains several of the letters referred to in the text. 27. || The Benu Tha'labah, the leading branch of the great tribe of Bekr ibn Wail. (Wustenfeld, Tabellen, 2te Abth., b,c), who, in alliance with the southern tribe of Kindah (ibid., 1ste Abth., 4), occupied a large portion of the Syrian desert, between the kingdom of al-Hirah on the east and that of the Ghassanides on the west. They were ruled over by the kings of Kindah, of the house of Akil al-morar, and the reigning king at this time was al-Harith ibn 'Amr. See Lebeau, op. cit., t. vii, p. 250; Caussin de Perceval, Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes, t. ii, p. 69; Reiske, Primae Lineae, p. 98; and above all the sketch by my lamented friend Dr. O. Loth, at p. 10 of the pamphlet entitled " Otto Loth. Ein Gedenkblatt fur seine Freunde. 1881."

28. ¶ al-Hirah, the chief town of the petty kingdom of the Lakhmite Arabs. See Caussin de Perceval, Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes, t. ii, p. 1 sqq.; Reiske, Primae Lineae, p. 25 sqq. It lay within a few miles of the more modern town of al-Kufah. 29. * The word in the Syriac text, if correctly written, is wholly unknown to me; but is evidently the name of some valuable commodity. 30. * Of erysipelas, the natural result of his wound and of exposure or excitement. 31. * Patricius, the son of Aspar, a Goth. 32. + The Euphrates, 33. + The comparison seems to be that of the compact mass of shield-bearing warriors in their charge to a moving mound of earth. 34. + This is not strictly correct. 35. + I am not at all sure that I have called the Gothic warrior by his right name. The Syriac letters give us only Ald, Eld or Ild, which might be Aldo, Haldo (Forstemann, Altdeutsches Namenbuch, Bd i, col. 45); or Helido, Allido (ibid., col. 597); or Hildi, Hildo (ibid., col. 665). The well known name of Alatheus, Alotheus, or Allothus (ibid., col. 41), would probably have been spelled by our author with a soft t.

36. * The Latin word castrum remained appended to many Syrian names in the form of ... , (whence the Arabic ...), like caster, cester, Chester, in our own country. 37. + When we last heard of this traitor, he was at Nisibis (ch. lv). He probably fled thence, and crossed the desert in a southwesterly direction till he approached the Euphrates near Suriyeh, above ar-Kakkah. There seems to be no reason for believing him to have been shut up in Amid, as Lebeau thinks (op. cit., t. vii, p. 872), following Assemani (Bibl. Orient., t. i, p. 279, col. 1). 38. ++ Meaning the district around Damascus. 39. + Flavian II. 40. * ...the third of an aureus. 41. * The description of the Gothic mercenaries in this and the following chapters is not without its peculiar interest and value. 42. * Both these villages evidently lay to the N. of Edessa. The Germish-Chai rises, two or three hours' journey from the city, near a place called Burac or Berik, a little south of which are the remains of the arches

of an ancient aqueduct, which entered Edessa on the north side, somewhere near the Gate of Beth-Shemesh. In the neighbourhood of Burac, therefore, Professor G. Hoffmann places Maudad (Modad) and Tell-Zema; though for the latter another locality may, he thinks, be possibly found. In the valley of the Ras-al-'ain Chai, near a place called Jurban, Julban, or Julman, the ruins of another ancient aqueduct have been seen, and in this neighbourhood, a little way south of Dagouly or Tagula, Pococke mentions a place named Zoumey, which may perhaps be identical with Tell-Zema.

43. + Say quarts. 44. * There was a bishop of Edessa of this name. See Assemani, Bibl. Orient., t. i, pp. 396 and 398. 45. * In the MS. there is a marginal note, no longer distinctly legible: "In this year died the holy Mar Shila (Silas) of the village of B....." 47. * That befitted Celer and his master the emperor. 48. + This sentence is no doubt a later addition, probably from the pen of Dionysius of Tell-Mahre.

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