

*489TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

MONDAY, JANUARY 4TH, 1909.

D. HOWARD, ESQ., D.L., F.C.S., F.I.C. (VICE-PRESIDENT),
IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

J. W. Thirtle, Esq., LL.D., M.R.A.S., was elected a Member, and W. Dale, Esq., F.S.A., F.G.S., Andrew P. Derr, Esq., M.A., The Rev. Professor Heckler, Miss A. E. Hemming, John Schwartz, Esq., Junr., The Rev. R. C. Turner, M.A., A. C. Turner, Esq., M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge, were elected Associates of the Institute.

The following paper was then read by the author:—

A COUNTRY TOWN OF LYCAONIA. A Description of the Conditions of Christian Life under the Eastern Empire.
By Professor Sir WILLIAM M. RAMSAY, F.R.S., D.C.L.
Aberdeen University.

MY subject is an attempt to set before you some slight picture of the main facts in the life of a country town in the centre of Anatolia in the province called in ancient time Lycaonia, during the Byzantine Empire. Now we read a great deal in books, in ancient history, and in the history of the Church about that period, but historians concern themselves chiefly with great men, the great religious leaders, generals, and statesmen; with the rarest exceptions we find nothing whatsoever with regard to the practical facts of life among the common people in that country during the period when these great men were living and working. There is some literary material, which has still to be collected, with regard to the life of that period in the private letters of Basil and other great men, which give a great deal of material for the facts of ordinary life. The ordinary people made it possible for Churchmen to exercise their leading power, for generals to have armies to conduct to victory or defeat; and without the knowledge of their common life, a knowledge of history becomes

* Held in the House of the Royal Society of Arts.

one-sided and misleading in the highest degree. We want therefore to know something of the common people, the way they live, their surroundings, their views of life, and how far they were affected by the great Church leaders, generals and statesmen.

The question may be asked with regard to the Byzantine Empire; Is it worth while to take up our time in making out some picture of a period rightly regarded as a period of decay in the history of the world? There is no doubt that Gibbons' title, *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, is correct. The fall was in great measure due to the pressure of what was going on in the Byzantine Empire, that is in Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Two remarks will bring out the importance of life in the Byzantine Empire.

In the first place it was the point of contact of the East and West. Now at the point of contact of East and West has always lain the central point in the movement of the world. Sometimes this point seems to lose its importance, and the centre of movement seems to shift to Europe, or even America. This, however, is only for a time, and we always come back to the inter-relation between Asia and Europe; Europe being taken to designate the whole West and to include America. The Mediterranean Sea was the centre round which the main forces of civilisation inter-acted with one another, and now for a time in the Atlantic Ocean is the point around which all the forces are moving. So in a comparatively near future, though probably none of us will live to see it, the Pacific Ocean may be the theatre across which the most important forces in the development of the world will act upon one another. Now, the fact that the Byzantine Empire was for many centuries the theatre of this inter-action, makes it an important factor in the history of the world.

In the second place, it was the Byzantine Empire that stood between the barbarism overwhelming Asia and the infant civilisation of Europe. There can, humanly speaking, be no doubt that Mahometanism would have swept over Europe had it not been for the staying power of the Byzantine Empire and the strength of Constantinople. One can understand how important it was that the Byzantine Empire was able, in the first place, to maintain itself though with great difficulty against the attack of Mahometanism and after a time to roll back the tide of Mahometanism towards the East, and then after a long time to withstand the Turkish power. In this way the West was given time to strengthen itself for the struggle against Asia.

The intercourse between Asia and Europe has been, in the past, far too much a history of war. In the near future it may be, not a history of war, but of peace, a peaceful inter-action of forces of civilisation.

Now it fell to our lot in 1907 to attempt to form some picture of a small town which lies to the south-east of Anatolia, about fifty miles from Iconia, and eighteen miles from the German Baghdad railway. You have there a great volcanic mountain consisting of two great craters which forms an island of mountain rising directly out of the plain of Lycaonia, 3,500 feet above the general level of the plateau. On the extreme northern side is a little valley which runs in from the open plain and is nearly surrounded by the arms of the mountain, forming an oval plain about three miles long, and a mile and a half to two miles in breadth. The southern half of this little plain and the slope of the mountains which lie immediately above it to the south-west form the site of a city which it was our object to investigate. The city was very picturesque, and was called ordinarily the city of the thousand and one churches. In the East numbers move rapidly, you go on from three to ten, forty to a thousand and one, the main steps of enumeration.

The one striking character of the city, which is a very considerable one, quite one and a half miles in length and breadth at its extreme points, is the large number of churches. There are at any rate, at least thirty. Many travellers have examined in a superficial way, these churches, and given some brief accounts, others have been fascinated by the natural beauty of the scene.

It was our object in the first place to form some idea of the architectural character of the churches. The first question which started us on our investigation was the question of date. To what period should these churches be assigned? The question widened itself very much when we came to practical work. So many other points of interest always present themselves as soon as you get started on any investigation in Asia Minor, and the possibility of investigation is limited by the question of expense. We were only able to scratch the surface and uncover the churches far enough to find out their plan of construction and general relation to each other. Our programme was a double one. How were we to arrange any chronological order in the series of churches? There were another series of at least thirty which lie on the northern outskirts of the mountains. Could we arrange these in order

of construction, and thus acquire some idea of Byzantine architecture, on one single site through a number of centuries?

Secondly, the historical side. What is the history of this city? What name should we give it? and how should we acquire some idea of the people who lived there? What were they doing; what was their feeling towards the great struggle of Mahometanism? Here was a city Christian in the early centuries, now a Mahometan village of about thirty families. How did this change take place?

The architectural subject was taken by Miss Gertrude Bell. I only touch on architectural points so far as they affect the historical position. You cannot isolate architecture from history. You must date these buildings and you cannot date them on grounds of style alone.

It will doubtless become possible after further study to date a Byzantine church roughly from its style to at least a century, but at present this cannot be done. We know too little to venture upon any such method. Other ways of dating the churches have therefore to be found. So we are under the necessity of having recourse to the epigraphical date to find the order of their building. By this method the construction of these churches can be dated from the fourth or fifth to as late as the tenth century.

On the historical side we cannot do without these churches, for churches are almost the only historical monuments in the cities. The church is the centre and remains the only landmark. In the Greek and early Roman periods there are many other public monuments out of which to evolve materials for the historian. In the Byzantine period there are only the churches and remains that lie about the ground around them. Thus it is an interesting fact that in the country of Anatolia you come back again to the state of things at the beginning of Christianity. We find an organised life of men and society where religion and its influence on life is the main feature of the State. Religion and the relation of religion to the life of the community is the one great fact. Between the two great extremes there is the influence of the Greek civilisation over Europe and Western Asia. The Greek had the first idea of the development of individual character, individual freedom and individual property as apart from family life. The separation of property from the family, and making property the appanage for the individual under his own control, comes to us from the Greek idea of freedom developing for the individual. The Greek spirit hardly affected such a town as

this in Central Anatolia, which has hardly any trace of Greek character.

What we find here is, in the first place, the old primitive Anatolian condition. Of the Hittite periods there are now no remains. There is no doubt but that Anatolia was the centre, in the second millennium before Christ, of a great imperial governing power whose influence extended from the borders of the *Ægean* Sea to the borders of Egypt. Though this empire is mainly associated with the name of the Hittites, I am not at all sure that Anatolia may not be its correct name. We know, however, from the result of the German expedition that the names of all the Hittite kings who were previously recorded for us only in Syrian and Egyptian annals are now found in the capital of the northern parts of Anatolia. On this primitive Anatolia are super-induced the great Roman and Greek remains. Greek and Roman ideas begin to affect the country only when the old ideals had died out. This development seems to be based immediately upon the old Hittite or Anatolian stratum, and after it comes the Turkish invasion.

Now one great thing which disengages itself in this long process and strikes the spectator first of all is the continued degeneration. We have a region which must have been at one period a fertile, delightful place of residence, well cultivated, fortified, with such a civilisation as to be able even in the latest Byzantine period to build up remarkable works of church architecture. Now it has died down to the limits of food supply, and there remains only a wretched little village of thirty families, who are rapidly dying out. As the people grow less and less able to use the opportunity given them, the water supply also disappears, till now there is no food and a great dearth of water. In fact, no water which is not poisoned can be got, except at a distance of about two hours' journey from the village. The inhabitants have habituated themselves to live upon the poisonous water that is kept in the ancient cisterns which have never been cleaned out for three or four hundred years. In ancient times, in contrast to this water supply or dearth of water supply, there were aqueducts to bring the water, which can be traced running under the ground, but they have all fallen away to ruin, and do not bring a drop of water. There were also cisterns of about 50 feet in length and the same in height, and 40 feet in breadth. In these cisterns was stored up water for household purposes. Then for agricultural purposes the water of the tiny streams, which are now entirely dry except during and immediately after the rainfall,

was stored in a series of dams. It is still possible to trace the way in which the water was banked in, and the sediment left by the water in the dams. In modern times agriculture is dependent entirely upon the precarious supply which comes from the heavens in rain. Such changes have occurred since this city was a sanatorium for the country round, presenting in the summer a delightful series of residences surrounded by trees and even a forest. Now you observe in the development of that ancient agricultural system how much knowledge, how much accumulated experience was required, before the natural condition of the steep mountain could be transformed to make it a series of orchards and fertile fields. There was nothing in ancient times which is not there at the present day except the skill and the forethought of men. The people are as industrious now as they were at the beginning, but they have not the knowledge, forethought, or power of adapting means to ends which will give them the needful forethought. We found ten or twelve kinds of trees which have gone back from a cultivated state to a state of wildness and nature.

It was the ancient religion that taught the people how to act, and gave them a series of rules through the cycle of culture. It was this religion which created the civilisation, agriculture and comfort which once existed in the mountain region, but has now entirely disappeared.

With regard to that early Hittite or Anatolian period, the monuments which we find are all of the highest character.

At the peak of the mountain where there are now two churches and a monastery, the latter merely an establishment to keep up the services in the church, there remains still a passage cut in the rock just underneath the north side, and two Hittite inscriptions. All trace of the idolater had disappeared, but the remains of the inscriptions show that there was one of the places on the mountain top, the high places, which are known to have been the sanctuaries of the primitive religion. The churches represent a Christian transformation of the original pagan sacred place.

In the second place there is an outlying fort on the north-west side. A little hill rises 400 feet out of the plain ground, crowned by a little fortress, on the gate of which is a Hittite inscription in hieroglyphics. A pinnacle of rock standing out about forty feet from the hill is carved in the form of a chair, on which is inscribed the form of a god and of a lamb. These two monuments alone are sufficient to show that this was a centre of the Anatolian or Hittite civilisation, which lasted through the

Greek and early Roman time, gradually modifying itself, but only really changing its character in the beginning of the Christian period.

Now take the position of the Christians in this city in the fourth century after Christ; there were the heirs to slaves, the agriculturists, etc., and all the benefits which had been gained for them through the influence of the old religion and the ancient religious belief had been formed into part of the nature of the people. I do not think that it would be right that the Christian religion should eradicate the old *idea* absolutely. The paganisation of Christianity is the adaptation of old ideas, many of which are in themselves right and good, and no person who has taken part in the German celebration of Christmas, and observed the old pagan ceremony of the Christmas tree, can imagine that I speak of a process which is in itself entirely wrong. There was such a process going on in Lycaonia; the deity or goddess who had taught all the arts on which life depended to mankind had become an inalienable part in the national mind, temper, and character. Through the influence of the old idea of the mother goddess there was that in the mind of the Anatolians which we have to take into account, the idea of the divine nature of the mother, nurse, protector, guide and teacher.

In the fourth and following centuries you find a series of facts. In the first place there are the church buildings. Now, exactly in accordance with the old condition, the church building is the centre of religious life. In the church at Tyre, which was built to take the place of one destroyed in the persecution of Diocletian, this is plainly seen. We must understand that in the Eastern Church generally, the church is the centre of municipal life, and that this condition has its origin in times long before the Christian era. There are hints sufficient just to show the beauty of the churches, and what was the reason why there existed within the walls such charming surroundings. One might pursue to a considerable length this topic of the Christian Church being the centre of this Byzantine life. I want to hurry on to the next. I must simply assume now that the Church and ecclesiastical buildings are the centre of the town life, the sum of the town, and the social life of the community as a whole.

Next we want to know what was the development of this country town in the terrible strife of the long wars against the barbarians of Asia, and especially against the Mahometan. It is not that I regard Mahometanism as necessarily a barbarian

religion, but circumstances have made Mahometanism a centre of Western barbarism. It was a central power which ravaged the civilised town. We are accustomed to think that the weakness of the Byzantine Empire lay in the fact that the unarmed people was guarded by a professional army. The population of clergy and tradesmen, entirely untrained to war, and unsuited to contend for themselves and to defend their homes against the barbarian armies, looked entirely to the defence of the soldiery. The soldiery was mismanaged in the decay of the Empire. When this was the case the little rustic town adapted itself to the changed conditions.

We find the proof that the Church did adapt itself to the new situation and surroundings. The churches are our main historical authority. They show the close relation which there was between the people and the defences. There is an imperial church built to a citizen who died in the war, another to one who had endured many wounds, another to a general.

The largest and most magnificent church in the whole town was decorated and painted by a general who was monk, presbyter, and eponimus, which shows the influence of Christianity though diluted and watered down. The fifth church is dedicated to a tribune, that is an officer. So taking these evidences together you have a conception of a Church which marshalls the people, and has tribunes decorating and adorning churches. The angle of the fortifications are made by the churches. The church forms the corner-stone in the actual defences of the city. In the upper city monasteries make part of the lines of defence, and the little hillocks immediately round, forming part of the defence, are each crowned by a church. In all this we see that the church is used as a defence against the Mahometan.

Then when one remembers from literature the facts of the late defence against the Turks, we do know that in the case of Philadelphia there was in the fourteenth century after Christ a town which, though left isolated for fifty or sixty years, defended itself against the Turks, and finally fell only because it had to yield to a combined army of Byzantine imperial forces, and subject Turks. It was somewhat different in Smyrna; there the defence was conducted by Europeans, the Knights of St. John, and was not purely national.

Finally we come down to the transition from the Christian period to the Turkish. After the Anatolian invasion had been rolled back once again to the limits of the East, a new invasion of the Turks began in 1070, and this little town was in the

track and must have passed in 1072 under Turkish rule. Later it was fortified by a Christian people, and though the relation between the two was not entirely friendly, there is no reason to think that it was entirely hostile. The Sultans tried as much as was in their power to maintain the Christian customs and Christian people. The hostility shows itself inasmuch as each part is defended by separate fortifications. A new town was made to defend this lower town, and in the south-west corner is one of the old churches—now the Imperial Church, the Orthodox Eastern Church. We gather from this evidence that the Church was very much closer to the hearts of the people than the Empire which was too far off. It was the Church that stood so close to the people, and guided and taught them. At the same time the price had to be paid, and a good deal of the old character of the Orthodox Church was sacrificed as it adapted itself to the character of the people. The power of writing became as rare in the East as it was in the West in the dark ages. Even in the fifth century when one bishop attended the Council held at Ephesus in 449, to determine the views of the Universal Church, he was obliged to append his mark, and get his name penned by another person, as he did not know his letters! When even a bishop cannot write his name, we can gather what was the ignorance of the people. The inscriptions on the churches are the work of an uneducated people.

I will just conclude by recalling to your minds the fact that this church whose history we have been following in two or three isolated moments,—this oriental church is not completely dead or lost, it lives as a religion of slaves, and may and will revive among the people as education is restored. The deterioration is marked not only by the want of education, and means of writing, but in the architecture. The church architecture down to the Turkish conquest continued to be in the good old style, the plans excellent, but the work carried out hastily. There is no love shown by the workman, he is building a church, and that is all; there is no love for making the church as beautiful as possible. The later churches produce the impression of a decade of slaves and an epoch of ignorance, and gradually as you get further into the period of slavery, the Byzantine architecture really disappears, and in modern times there are only the churches of an enslaved race.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN having declared the discussion open :

Lieut.-Col. G. MACKINLAY said that all were greatly obliged to the lecturer for his most instructive account of Early Anatolian Christianity. No one who heard of the Mother Goddess, the protectress of the agriculturists of Asia Minor, could fail to be put in mind of Diana of the Ephesians, Acts xix, 28. (Artemis in Greek.)

Might it not be said that the worship of the Virgin Mary had its origin in Asia Minor, and was directly traceable to the adoration of Artemis ?

Professor Sir W. M. RAMSAY replied that it was undoubtedly true that this Virgin worship or Mariolatry was to be found in Asia Minor at a very early date, and, indeed, that it was at an Ephesian Council that it became part of the dogma of the Church. It was interesting to observe that there was too, in Anatolia, a pilgrimage in honour of the Virgin Mother of God which was actually made to an ancient shrine of Artemis the great goddess ; and that this pilgrimage continued even after the population had ceased to be definitely Christian. But the doctrine of the *Θεοτοκος* was more wide-spreading and was, indeed, part of the humanising influence of religion in almost all countries. In the Christian churches its influence was of varying strength. He himself belonged to a church which was as extreme in exclusion of this influence as the Roman Church, on the other hand, in upholding it. But he thought that he could not be justified in condemning it for that reason. In regard to the actual origin of the belief and doctrine he thought that Egypt contended with Anatolia for first place.

Dr. A. T. SCHOFIELD said that it was extremely interesting to note the connection between the church and civic life and to see how definitely the one became a part of the other whether organised for development or defence. He thought that they might observe some connection between the Roman word *Curia*, the Council of the Roman city, and the Greek *Κύριος*. He would draw particular attention to the feast of the *Curia*, a central festival of civic life, and the Lord's Supper, the central festival of the Christian life. It

would be interesting if Professor Ramsay could trace the connection between Roman life and Church life, and especially the remarkable passage in the “*διδάχη, ἡ ἡμέρα τῆ κυριακή τῶν κυρίων,*” the day of the Curia of the Lord.

Professor Sir W. M. RAMSAY said that he took the view that the church communities had been in the habit of looking upon themselves as cities even in the first century. For instance, the letter to the seven churches is the letter to the seven cities. The Christians in Thyatira were looked upon as being the true city of Thyatira. This idea of the Church and the city as one doubtless had a strong and abiding influence on both Eastern and Western Christianity.

Professor LANGHORNE ORCHARD thought Sir W. Ramsay would concur that the worship of the Mother-goddess went back earlier than Ephesus.

This was not the first time they had been given the pleasure of a paper by Sir William, and they hoped it would not be the last. One and all they thanked him. He had led them, as personally-conducted tourists, to far-off Anatolia, and down the centuries to that Byzantine period commonly so little known. The paper especially emphasised two facts; the one was the importance of cultivating in a people the love of liberty, of freedom, the other was that religion is the supreme factor in civic and communal life. According to the purity of the religion and the value attached to it, is the purity and prosperity of the people's life; if the religion decay, that life will decay. It were well to bear this in mind in face of the present conflict of opinion in regard to national education. Education without religion is a maimed and truncated thing. It is worse. To educate the head without educating the heart; to neglect a child's character while fostering his ability; is to train him to be a curse to the country which has shirked its responsibility and has betrayed its trust.