

**CONVERSION OF
THE WEST.
THE SLAVS**

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Conversion of the West. The Slavs by G. F. Maclear

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G. F. MACLEAR

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P R E F A C E .



THE present Volume forms a sequel to and closes the series of those which have been projected on the Conversion of Europe.

In its preparation, as in that of the former Volumes, the most recent and trustworthy authorities have been consulted, and where it has been deemed expedient notes have been subjoined, and references given to larger works.

These it is hoped will increase its value and usefulness.

I cannot, however, allow it to appear without acknowledging the great assistance I have received in its compilation from my sister, Mrs. Herman Gaskoin, who has rendered easy a task which would otherwise have been difficult, if not impossible, amidst my numerous pressing engagements.

G. F. M.

KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL, LONDON.

March, 1879.

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CONVERSION OF THE SLAVS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

It has been observed that the place of the Slavonic nations in history bears a very small proportion to the space occupied by them on the surface of the globe. They belong to the great Aryan or Indo-European family, and of all its tribes they were almost the last to fall within the focus of historic light. "Their domicile was so remote from the centres of ancient culture, that the Greeks and Romans could scarcely come into direct contact with them ; and having always been, as they are still, by nature a peaceable people, they themselves never greatly interfered in the affairs of their borderlands."¹

Nevertheless, although until the 6th century these races are unnoticed in the records of Byzantium and of Western Europe, some knowledge of them can be traced back even to the days of Herodotus.

¹ Dr. Vilhelm Thomsen's Lectures on 'The relations between Ancient Russia and Scandinavia,' &c. Lect. i. p. 2. See also Krasinski's 'Lectures on Slavonia' [Ed. of 1869], p. 1.

The "father of history" himself speaks of the Callipedæ, the Alazones, and the husbandmen of Scythia, who have been identified with the Slavonians.

The first Latin author who mentions them is Pliny the elder, A.D. 79; by him, and by Tacitus, allusion is made to them under the names of Venedi, Serbi, and Stavani. By a form of the first of these names, "unknown to the Slavonians themselves, the Teutonic tribes have from the first designated these their eastern neighbours, viz., *Wends*; and the use of this appellation by the Roman authors plainly shows that their knowledge of the Slavonians was derived only from the Germans. The old German form of this name was *Winedâ*, and *Wenden* is the name which the Germans of the present day give to the remnants of a Slavonic population, formerly large, who now inhabit Lusatia, while they give the name of *Winden* to the Slovians in Carinthia, Carniola, and Styria. We find the Anglo-Saxon form, *Winedas*, *Weonodas*, in King Alfred's *Orosius*, as a designation of the Wends, or Slavonians, south of the Baltic; and *Vender* (in the Old Norse, *Vindr*) was the name under which this wild heathen people was known in the North, especially in Denmark, during the middle ages."¹

"The fifth branch," writes Professor Max Müller, enumerating the Aryan forms of speech, "which is commonly called *Slavonic*, I prefer to designate by the name of *Windic*, *Winida* being one of the most

¹ Dr. Vilhelm Thomsen, Lectures, p. 3.