HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE
Edward Gibbon, Esq.
With notes by the Rev. H. H. Milman
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Introduction

Preface By The Editor.

The great work of Gibbon is indispensable to the student of history. The literature of Europe offers no substitute for "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." It has obtained undisputed possession, as rightful occupant, of the vast period which it comprehends. However some subjects, which it embraces, may have undergone more complete investigation, on the general view of the whole period, this history is the sole undisputed authority to which all defer, and from which few appeal to the original writers, or to more modern compilers. The inherent interest of the subject, the inexhaustible labor employed upon it; the immense condensation of matter; the

luminous arrangement; the general accuracy; the style, which, however monotonous from its uniform stateliness, and sometimes wearisome from its elaborate ar., is throughout vigorous, animated, often picturesque always commands attention, always conveys its meaning with emphatic energy, describes with singular breadth and fidelity, and generalizes with unrivalled felicity of expression; all these high qualifications have secured, and seem likely to secure, its permanent place in historic literature.

This vast design of Gibbon, the magnificent whole into which he has cast the decay and ruin of the ancient civilization, the formation and birth of the new order of things, will of itself, independent of the laborious execution of his immense plan, render "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" an unapproachable subject to the future historian: 101 in the eloquent language of his recent French editor, M. Guizot:—

101 (return) [A considerable portion of this preface has already appeared before us public in the Quarterly Review.]

"The gradual decline of the most extraordinary dominion which has ever invaded and oppressed the world; the fall of that immense empire, erected on the ruins of so many kingdoms, republics, and states both barbarous and civilized; and forming in its turn, by its dismemberment, a multitude of states, republics, and kingdoms; the annihilation of the religion of Greece and Rome; the birth and the progress of the two new religions which have shared the most beautiful regions of the earth; the decrepitude of the ancient world, the spectacle of its expiring glory and degenerate manners; the infancy of the modern world, the picture of its first progress, of the new direction given to the mind and character of man—such a subject must necessarily fix the attention and excite the interest of men, who cannot behold with indifference those memorable epochs, during which, in the fine language of Corneille—

'Un grand destin commence, un grand destin s'acheve.'"

This extent and harmony of design is unquestionably that which distinguishes the work of Gibbon from all other great historical compositions. He has first bridged the abyss between ancient and modern times, and connected together the two great worlds of history. The great advantage which the classical historians possess over those of modern times is in unity of plan, of course greatly facilitated by the narrower sphere to which their researches were confined. Except Herodotus, the great historians of Greece—we exclude the more modern compilers, like Diodorus Siculus—limited themselves to a single period, or at 'east to the contracted sphere of Grecian affairs. As far as the Barbarians trespassed within the Grecian boundary, or were necessarily mingled up with Grecian politics, they were admitted into the pale of Grecian history; but to Thucydides and to Xenophon, excepting in the Persian inroad of the latter, Greece was the world. Natural unity confined their narrative almost to chronological order, the episodes were of rare occurrence and extremely brief. To the Roman historians the course was equally clear and defined. Rome was their centre of unity; and the uniformity with which the circle of the Roman dominion spread around, the regularity with which their civil polity expanded, forced, as it were, upon the Roman historian that plan which Polybius announces as

the subject of his history, the means and the manner by which the whole world became subject to the Roman sway. How different the complicated politics of the European kingdoms! Every national history, to be complete, must, in a certain sense, be the history of Europe; there is no knowing to how remote a quarter it may be necessary to trace our most domestic events; from a country, how apparently disconnected, may originate the impulse which gives its direction to the whole course of affairs.

In imitation of his classical models, Gibbon places Rome as the cardinal point from which his inquiries diverge, and to which they bear constant reference; yet how immeasurable the space over which those inquiries range; how complicated, how confused, how apparently inextricable the ca-\nuses which tend to the decline of the Roman empire! how countless the nations which swarm forth, in mingling and indistinct hordes, constantly changing the geographical limits—incessantly confounding the natural boundaries! At first sight, the whole period, the whole state of the world, seems to offer no more secure footing to an historical adventurer than the chaos of Milton—to be in a state of irreclaimable disorder, best described in the language of the poet:—

—"A dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and height,

And time, and place, are lost: where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand."

We feel that the unity and harmony of narrative, which shall comprehend this period of social disorganization, must be ascribed entirely to the skill and luminous disposition of the historian. It is in this sublime Gothic architecture of his work, in which the boundless range, the infinite variety, the, at first sight, incongruous gorgeousness of the separate parts, nevertheless are all subordinate to one main and predominant idea, that Gibbon is unrivalled. We cannot but admire the manner in which he masses his materials, and arranges his facts in successive groups, not according to chronological order, but to their moral or political connection; the distinctness with which he marks his periods of gradually increasing decay; and the skill with which, though advancing on separate parallels of history, he shows the common tendency of the slower or more rapid religious or civil innovations. However these principles of composition may demand more than ordinary attention on the part of the reader, they can alone impress upon the memory the real course, and the relative importance of the events. Whoever would justly appreciate the superiority of Gibbon's lucid arrangement, should attempt to make his way through the regular but wearisome annals of Tillemont, or even the less ponderous volumes of Le Beau. Both these writers adhere, almost entirely, to chronological order; the consequence is, that we are twenty times called upon to break off, and resume the thread of six or eight wars in different parts of the empire; to suspend the operations of a military expedition for a court intrigue; to hurry away from a siege to a council; and the same page places us in the middle of a campaign against the

barbarians, and in the depths of the Monophysite controversy. In Gibbon it is not always easy to bear in mind the exact dates but the course of events is ever clear and distinct; like a skilful general, though his troops advance from the most remote and opposite quarters, they are constantly bearing down and concentrating themselves on one point—that which is still occupied by the name, and by the waning power of Rome. Whether he traces the progress of hostile religions, or leads from the shores of the Baltic, or the verge of the Chinese empire, the successive hosts of barbarians—though one wave has hardly burst and discharged itself, before another swells up and approaches—all is made to flow in the same direction, and the impression which each makes upon the tottering fabric of the Roman greatness, connects their distant movements, and measures the relative importance assigned to them in the panoramic history. The more peaceful and didactic episodes on the development of the Roman law, or even on the details of ecclesiastical history, interpose themselves as resting-places or divisions between the periods of barbaric invasion. In short, though distracted first by the two capitals, and afterwards by the formal partition of the empire, the extraordinary felicity of arrangement maintains an order and a regular progression. As our horizon expands to reveal to us the gathering tempests which are forming far beyond the boundaries of the civilized world—as we follow their successive approach to the trembling frontier—the compressed and receding line is still distinctly visible; though gradually dismembered and the broken fragments assuming the form of regular states and kingdoms, the real relation of those kingdoms to the empire is maintained and defined; and even when the Roman dominion has shrunk into little more than the province of Thrace—when the name of Rome, confined, in Italy, to the walls of the city—yet it is still the memory, the shade of the Roman greatness, which extends over the wide sphere into which the historian expands his later narrative; the whole blends into the unity, and is manifestly essential to the double catastrophe of his tragic drama.

But the amplitude, the magnificence, or the harmony of design, are, though imposing, yet unworthy claims on our admiration, unless the details are filled up with correctness and accuracy. No writer has been more severely tried on this point than Gibbon. He has undergone the triple scrutiny of theological zeal quickened by just resentment, of literary emulation, and of that mean and invidious vanity which delights in detecting errors in writers of established fame. On the result of the trial, we may be permitted to summon competent witnesses before we deliver our own judgment.

M. Guizot, in his preface, after stating that in France and Germany, as well as in England, in the most enlightened countries of Europe, Gibbon is constantly cited as an authority, thus proceeds:—

"I have had occasion, during my labors, to consult the writings of philosophers, who have treated on the finances of the Roman empire; of scholars, who have investigated the chronology; of theologians, who have searched the depths of ecclesiastical history; of writers on law, who have studied with care the Roman jurisprudence; of Orientalists, who have occupied themselves with the Arabians and the Koran; of modern historians, who have entered upon extensive researches touching the crusades and their influence; each of these writers has remarked and

pointed out, in the 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' some negligences, some false or imperfect views some omissions, which it is impossible not to suppose voluntary; they have rectified some facts combated with advantage some assertions; but in general they have taken the researches and the ideas of Gibbon, as points of departure, or as proofs of the researches or of the new opinions which they have advanced."

M. Guizot goes on to state his own impressions on reading Gibbon's history, and no authority will have greater weight with those to whom the extent and accuracy of his historical researches are known:—

"After a first rapid perusal, which allowed me to feel nothing but the interest of a narrative, always animated, and, notwithstanding its extent and the variety of objects which it makes to pass before the view, always perspicuous, I entered upon a minute examination of the details of which it was composed; and the opinion which I then formed was, I confess, singularly severe. I discovered, in certain chapters, errors which appeared to me sufficiently important and numerous to make me believe that they had been written with extreme negligence; in others, I was struck with a certain tinge of partiality and prejudice, which imparted to the exposition of the facts that want of truth and justice, which the English express by their happy term misrepresentation. Some imperfect (tronquees) quotations; some passages, omitted unintentionally or designedly cast a suspicion on the honesty (bonne foi) of the author; and his violation of the first law of history—increased to my eye by the prolonged attention with which I occupied myself with every phrase, every note, every reflection—caused me to form upon the whole work, a judgment far too rigorous. After having finished my labors, I allowed some time to elapse before I reviewed the whole. A second attentive and regular perusal of the entire work, of the notes of the author, and of those which I had thought it right to subjoin, showed me how much I had exaggerated the importance of the reproaches which Gibbon really deserved; I was struck with the same errors, the same partiality on certain subjects; but I had been far from doing adequate justice to the immensity of his researches, the variety of his knowledge, and above all, to that truly philosophical discrimination (justesse d'esprit) which judges the past as it would judge the present; which does not permit itself to be blinded by the clouds which time gathers around the dead, and which prevent us from seeing that, under the toga, as under the modern dress, in the senate as in our councils, men were what they still are, and that events took place eighteen centuries ago, as they take place in our days. I then felt that his book, in spite of its faults, will always be a noble work—and that we may correct his errors and combat his prejudices, without ceasing to admit that few men have combined, if we are not to say in so high a degree, at least in a manner so complete, and so well regulated, the necessary qualifications for a writer of history."

The present editor has followed the track of Gibbon through many parts of his work; he has read his authorities with constant reference to his pages, and must pronounce his deliberate judgment, in terms of the highest admiration as to his general accuracy. Many of his seeming errors are almost inevitable from the close condensation of his matter. From the immense range of his history, it was sometimes necessary to compress into a single sentence, a whole vague and diffuse page of a Byzantine chronicler. Perhaps something of importance may have thus

escaped, and his expressions may not quite contain the whole substance of the passage from which they are taken. His limits, at times, compel him to sketch; where that is the case, it is not fair to expect the full details of the finished picture. At times he can only deal with important results; and in his account of a war, it sometimes requires great attention to discover that the events which seem to be comprehended in a single campaign, occupy several years. But this admirable skill in selecting and giving prominence to the points which are of real weight and importance—this distribution of light and shade—though perhaps it may occasionally betray him into vague and imperfect statements, is one of the highest excellencies of Gibbon's historic manner. It is the more striking, when we pass from the works of his chief authorities, where, after laboring through long, minute, and wearisome descriptions of the accessary and subordinate circumstances, a single unmarked and undistinguished sentence, which we may overlook from the inattention of fatigue, contains the great moral and political result.

Gibbon's method of arrangement, though on the whole most favorable to the clear comprehension of the events, leads likewise to apparent inaccuracy. That which we expect to find in one part is reserved for another. The estimate which we are to form, depends on the accurate balance of statements in remote parts of the work; and we have sometimes to correct and modify opinions, formed from one chapter by those of another. Yet, on the other hand, it is astonishing how rarely we detect contradiction; the mind of the author has already harmonized the whole result to truth and probability; the general impression is almost invariably the same. The quotations of Gibbon have likewise been called in question;—I have, in general, been more inclined to admire their exactitude, than to complain of their indistinctness, or incompleteness. Where they are imperfect, it is commonly from the study of brevity, and rather from the desire of compressing the substance of his notes into pointed and emphatic sentences, than from dishonesty, or uncandid suppression of truth.

These observations apply more particularly to the accuracy and fidelity of the historian as to his facts; his inferences, of course, are more liable to exception. It is almost impossible to trace the line between unfairness and unfaithfulness; between intentional misrepresentation and undesigned false coloring. The relative magnitude and importance of events must, in some respect, depend upon the mind before which they are presented; the estimate of character, on the habits and feelings of the reader. Christians, like M. Guizot and ourselves, will see some things, and some persons, in a different light from the historian of the Decline and Fall. We may deplore the bias of his mind; we may ourselves be on our guard against the danger of being misled, and be anxious to warn less wary readers against the same perils; but we must not confound this secret and unconscious departure from truth, with the deliberate violation of that veracity which is the only title of an historian to our confidence. Gibbon, it may be fearlessly asserted, is rarely chargeable even with the suppression of any material fact, which bears upon individual character; he may, with apparently invidious hostility, enhance the errors and crimes, and disparage the virtues of certain persons; yet, in general, he leaves us the materials for forming a fairer judgment; and if he is not exempt from his own prejudices, perhaps we might write passions, yet it must be candidly acknowledged, that his philosophical

bigotry is not more unjust than the theological partialities of those ecclesiastical writers who were before in undisputed possession of this province of history.
We are thus naturally led to that great misrepresentation which pervades his history—his false estimate of the nature and influence of Christianity.
But on this subject some preliminary caution is necessary, lest that should be expected from a new edition, which it is impossible that it should completely accomplish. We must first be prepared with the only sound preservative against the false impression likely to be produced by the perusal of Gibbon; and we must see clearly the real cause of that false impression. The former of these cautions will be briefly suggested in its proper place, but it may be as well to state it, here, somewhat more at length. The art of Gibbon, or at least the unfair impression produced by his two memorable chapters, consists in his confounding together, in one indistinguishable mass, the origin and apostolic propagation of the new religion, with its later progress. No argument for the divine authority of Christianity has been urged with greater force, or traced with higher eloquence, than that deduced from its primary development, explicable on no other hypothesis than a heavenly origin, and from its rapid extension through great part of the Roman empire. But this argument—one, when confined within reasonable limits, of unanswerable force—becomes more feeble and disputable in proportion as it recedes from the birthplace, as it were, of the religion. The further Christianity advanced, the more causes purely human were enlisted in its favor; nor can it be doubted that those developed with such artful exclusiveness by Gibbon did concur most essentially to its establishment. It is in the Christian dispensation, as in the material world. In both it is as the great First Cause, that the Deity is most undeniably manifest. When once launched in regular motion upon the bosom of space, and endowed with all their properties and relations of weight and mutual attraction, the heavenly bodies appear to pursue their courses according to secondary laws, which account for all their sublime regularity. So Christianity proclaims its Divine Author chiefly in its first origin and development. When it had once received its impulse from above—when it had once been infused into the minds of its first teachers—when it had gained full possession of the reason and affections of the favored few—it might be—and to the Protestant, the rationa Christian, it is impossible to define when it really was—left to make its way by its native force, under the ordinary secret agencies of all-ruling Providence. The main question, the divine origin of the religion, was dexterously eluded, or speciously conceded by Gibbon; his plan enabled him to commence his account, in most parts, below the apostolic times; and it was only by the strength of the dark coloring with which he brought out the failings and the follies of the succeeding ages, that a shadow of doubt and suspicion was thrown back upon the primitive period of Christianity.
"The theologian," says Gibbon, "may indulge the pleasing task of describing religion as she descended from heaven, arrayed in her native purity; a more melancholy duty is imposed upon the historian:—he must discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption which she contracted in a long residence upon earth among a weak and degenerate race of beings." Divest this passage of the latent sarcasm betrayed by the subsequent tone of the whole disquisition, and it might commence a Christian history written in the most Christian spirit of candor. But as the historian,

by seeming to respect, yet by dexterously confounding the limits of the sacred land, contrived to insinuate that it was an Utopia which had no existence but in the imagination of the theologian—as he suggested rather than affirmed that the days of Christian purity were a kind of poetic golden age;—so the theologian, by venturing too far into the domain of the historian, has been perpetually obliged to contest points on which he had little chance of victory—to deny facts established on unshaken evidence—and thence, to retire, if not with the shame of defeat, yet with but doubtful and imperfect success. Paley, with his intuitive sagacity, saw through the difficulty of answering Gibbon by the ordinary arts of controversy; his emphatic sentence, "Who can refute a sneer?" contains as much truth as point. But full and pregnant as this phrase is, it is not quite the whole truth; it is the tone in which the progress of Christianity is traced, in comparison with the rest of the splendid and prodigally ornamented work, which is the radical defect in the "Decline and Fall." Christianity alone receives no embellishment from the magic of Gibbon's language; his imagination is dead to its moral dignity; it is kept down by a general zone of jealous disparagement, or neutralized by a painfully elaborate exposition of its darker and degenerate periods. There are occasions, indeed, when its pure and exalted humanity, when its manifestly beneficial influence, can compel even him, as it were, to fairness, and kindle his unguarded eloquence to its usual fervor; but, in general, he soon relapses into a frigid apathy; affects an ostentatiously severe impartiality; notes all the faults of Christians in every age with bitter and almost malignant sarcasm; reluctantly, and with exception and reservation, admits their claim to admiration. This inextricable bias appears even to influence his manner of composition. While all the other assailants of the Roman empire, whether warlike or religious, the Goth, the Hun, the Arab, the Tartar, Alaric and Attila, Mahomet, and Zengis, and Tamerlane, are each introduced upon the scene almost with dramatic animation—their progress related in a full, complete, and unbroken narrative—the triumph of Christianity alone takes the form of a cold and critical disquisition. The successes of barbarous energy and brute force call forth all the consummate skill of composition; while the moral triumphs of Christian benevolence—the tranquil heroism of endurance, the blameless purity, the contempt of guilty fame and of honors destructive to the human race, which, had they assumed the proud name of philosophy, would have been blazoned in his brightest words, because they own religion as their principle—sink into narrow asceticism. The glories of Christianity, in short, touch on no chord in the heart of the writer; his imagination remains unkindled; his words, though they maintain their stately and measured march, have become cool, argumentative, and inanimate. Who would obscure one hue of that gorgeous coloring in which Gibbon has invested the dying forms of Paganism, or darken one paragraph in his splendid view of the rise and progress of Mahometanism? But who would not have wished that the same equal justice had been done to Christianity; that its real character and deeply penetrating influence had been traced with the same philosophical sagacity, and represented with more sober, as would become its quiet course, and perhaps less picturesque, but still with lively and attractive, descriptiveness? He might have thrown aside, with the same scorn, the mass of ecclesiastical fiction which envelops the early history of the church, stripped off the legendary romance, and brought out the facts in their

primitive nakedness and simplicity—if he had but allowed those facts the benefit of the glowing eloquence which he denied to them alone. He might have annihilated the whole fabric of post-apostolic miracles, if he had left uninjured by sarcastic insinuation those of the New Testament; he might have cashiered, with Dodwell, the whole host of martyrs, which owe their existence to the prodigal invention of later days, had he but bestowed fair room, and dwelt with his ordinary energy on the sufferings of the genuine witnesses to the truth of Christianity, the Polycarps, or the martyrs of Vienne. And indeed, if, after all, the view of the early progress of Christianity be melancholy and humiliating we must beware lest we charge the whole of this on the infidelity of the historian. It is idle, it is disingenuous, to deny or to dissemble the early depravations of Christianity, its gradual but rapid departure from its primitive simplicity and purity, still more, from its spirit of universal love. It may be no unsalutary lesson to the Christian world, that this silent, this unavoidable, perhaps, yet fatal change shall have been drawn by an impartial, or even an hostile hand. The Christianity of every age may take warning, lest by its own narrow views, its want of wisdom, and its want of charity, it give the same advantage to the future unfriendly historian, and disparage the cause of true religion.

The design of the present edition is partly corrective, partly supplementary: corrective, by notes, which point out (it is hoped, in a perfectly candid and dispassionate spirit with no desire but to establish the truth) such inaccuracies or misstatements as may have been detected, particularly with regard to Christianity; and which thus, with the previous caution, may counteract to a considerable extent the unfair and unfavorable impression created against rational religion: supplementary, by adding such additional information as the editor's reading may have been able to furnish, from original documents or books, not accessible at the time when Gibbon wrote.

The work originated in the editor's habit of noting on the margin of his copy of Gibbon references to such authors as had discovered errors, or thrown new light on the subjects treated by Gibbon. These had grown to some extent, and seemed to him likely to be of use to others. The annotations of M. Guizot also appeared to him worthy of being better known to the English public than they were likely to be, as appended to the French translation.

The chief works from which the editor has derived his materials are, I. The French translation, with notes by M. Guizot; 2d edition, Paris, 1828. The editor has translated almost all the notes of M. Guizot. Where he has not altogether agreed with him, his respect for the learning and judgment of that writer has, in general, induced him to retain the statement from which he has ventured to differ, with the grounds on which he formed his own opinion. In the notes on Christianity, he has retained all those of M. Guizot, with his own, from the conviction, that on such a subject, to many, the authority of a French statesman, a Protestant, and a rational and sincere Christian, would appear more independent and unbiassed, and therefore be more commanding, than that of an English clergyman.

The editor has not scrupled to transfer the notes of M. Guizot to the present work. The well-known zeal for knowledge, displayed in all the writings of that distinguished historian, has led to the natural inference, that he would not be

displeased at the attempt to make them of use to the English readers of Gibbon. The notes of M. Guizot are signed with the letter G.
II. The German translation, with the notes of Wenck. Unfortunately this learned translator died, after having completed only the first volume; the rest of the work was executed by a very inferior hand.
The notes of Wenck are extremely valuable; many of them have been adopted by M. Guizot; they are distinguished by the letter W. 102

102 (return) [The editor regrets that he has not been able to find the Italian translation, mentioned by Gibbon himself with some respect. It is not in our great libraries, the Museum or the Bodleian; and he has never found any bookseller in London who has seen it.]
III. The new edition of Le Beau's "Histoire du Bas Empire, with notes by M. St. Martin, and M. Brosset." That distinguished Armenian scholar, M. St. Martin (now, unhappily, deceased) had added much information from Oriental writers, particularly from those of Armenia, as well as from more general sources. Many of his observations have been found as applicable to the work of Gibbon as to that of Le Beau.
IV. The editor has consulted the various answers made to Gibbon on the first appearance of his work; he must confess, with little profit. They were, in general, hastily compiled by inferior and now forgotten writers, with the exception of Bishop Watson, whose able apology is rather a general argument, than an examination of misstatements. The name of Milner stands higher with a certain class of readers, but will not carry much weight with the severe investigator of history.
V. Some few classical works and fragments have come to light, since the appearance of Gibbon's History, and have been noticed in their respective places; and much use has been made, in the latter volumes particularly, of the increase to our stores of Oriental literature. The editor cannot, indeed, pretend to have followed his author, in these gleanings, over the whole vast field of his inquiries; he may have overlooked or may not have been able to command some works, which might have thrown still further light on these subjects; but he trusts that what he has adduced will be of use to the student of historic truth.
The editor would further observe, that with regard to some other objectionable passages, which do not involve misstatement or inaccuracy, he has intentionally abstained from directing particular attention towards them by any special protest.
The editor's notes are marked M.
A considerable part of the quotations (some of which in the later editions had fallen into great confusion) have been verified, and have been corrected by the latest and best editions of the authors.
June, 1845.
In this new edition, the text and the notes have been carefully revised, the latter by the editor.
Some additional notes have been subjoined, distinguished by the signature M. 1845.

Preface Of The Author.

It is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety or the importance of the subject, which I have undertaken to treat; since the merit of the choice would serve to render the weakness of the execution still more apparent, and still less excusable. But as I have presumed to lay before the public a first volume only 1 of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, it will, perhaps, be expected that I should explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

1 (return) [The first volume of the quarto, which contained the sixteen first chapters.]

The memorable series of revolutions, which in the course of about thirteen centuries gradually undermined, and at length destroyed, the solid fabric of human greatness, may, with some propriety, be divided into the three following periods:

I. The first of these periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full strength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and will extend to the subversion of the Western Empire, by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude ancestors of the most polished nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which subjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the sixth century.

II. The second period of the Decline and Fall of Rome may be supposed to commence with the reign of Justinian, who, by his laws, as well as by his victories, restored a transient splendor to the Eastern Empire. It will comprehend the invasion of Italy by the Lombards; the conquest of the Asiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Roman people against the feeble princes of Constantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year eight hundred, established the second, or German Empire of the West

III. The last and longest of these periods includes about six centuries and a half; from the revival of the Western Empire, till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to assume the titles of Caesar and Augustus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a single city; in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans, had been long since forgotten. The writer who should undertake to relate the events of this period, would find himself obliged to enter into the general history of the Crusades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek Empire; and he would scarcely be able to restrain his curiosity from making some inquiry into the state of the city of Rome, during the darkness and confusion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too hastily, to commit to the press a work which in every sense of the word, deserves the epithet of imperfect. I consider myself as contracting an engagement to finish, most probably in a second volume, 2a the first of these memorable periods; and to deliver to the Public the complete History of the Decline and Fall of Rome, from the age of the Antonines to the subversion of the Western Empire. With regard to the subsequent periods, though I may entertain

some hopes, I dare not presume to give any assurances. The execution of the extensive plan which I have described, would connect the ancient and modern history of the world; but it would require many years of health, of leisure, and of perseverance.

2a (return) [The Author, as it frequently happens, took an inadequate measure of his growing work. The remainder of the first period has filled two volumes in quarto, being the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes of the octavo edition.] Bentinck Street, February 1, 1776.

P. S. The entire History, which is now published, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, abundantly discharges my engagements with the Public. Perhaps their favorable opinion may encourage me to prosecute a work, which, however laborious it may seem, is the most agreeable occupation of my leisure hours.

Bentinck Street, March 1, 1781.

An Author easily persuades himself that the public opinion is still favorable to his labors; and I have now embraced the serious resolution of proceeding to the last period of my original design, and of the Roman Empire, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-three. The most patient Reader, who computes that three ponderous 3 volumes have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may, perhaps, be alarmed at the long prospect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the same minuteness on the whole series of the Byzantine history. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Justinian, and the conquests of the Mahometans, will deserve and detain our attention, and the last age of Constantinople (the Crusades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of Modern Europe. From the seventh to the eleventh century, the obscure interval will be supplied by a concise narrative of such facts as may still appear either interesting or important.

3 (return) [The first six volumes of the octavo edition.] Bentinck Street, March 1, 1782.

Preface To The First Volume.

Diligence and accuracy are the only merits which an historical writer may ascribe to himself; if any merit, indeed, can be assumed from the performance of an indispensable duty. I may therefore be allowed to say, that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illustrate the subject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete the extensive design which has been sketched out in the Preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors consulted during the progress of the whole work; and however such an attempt might incur the censure of ostentation, I am persuaded that it would be susceptible of entertainment, as well as information.

At present I shall content myself with a single observation.
The biographers, who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, composed, or rather compiled, the lives of the Emperors, from Hadrian to the sons of Carus, are usually mentioned under the names of Aelius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Aelius Lampridius, Vulcatius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio and Flavius Vopiscus. But there is so much perplexity in the titles of the MSS., and so many disputes have arisen among the critics (see Fabricius, Biblioth. Latin. l. iii. c. 6) concerning their number, their names, and their respective property, that for the most part I have quoted them without distinction, under the general and well-known title of the Augustan History.

Preface To The Fourth Volume Of The Original Quarto Edition.

I now discharge my promise, and complete my design, of writing the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, both in the West and the East. The whole period extends from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, to the taking of Constantinople by Mahomet the Second; and includes a review of the Crusades, and the state of Rome during the middle ages. Since the publication of the first volume, twelve years have elapsed; twelve years, according to my wish, "of health, of leisure, and of perseverance." I may now congratulate my deliverance from a long and laborious service, and my satisfaction will be pure and perfect, if the public favor should be extended to the conclusion of my work.
It was my first intention to have collected, under one view, the numerous authors, of every age and language, from whom I have derived the materials of this history; and I am still convinced that the apparent ostentation would be more than compensated by real use. If I have renounced this idea, if I have declined an undertaking which had obtained the approbation of a master-artist, 4 my excuse may be found in the extreme difficulty of assigning a proper measure to such a catalogue. A naked list of names and editions would not be satisfactory either to myself or my readers: the characters of the principal Authors of the Roman and Byzantine History have been occasionally connected with the events which they describe; a more copious and critical inquiry might indeed deserve, but it would demand, an elaborate volume, which might swell by degrees into a general library of historical writers. For the present, I shall content myself with renewing my serious protestation, that I have always endeavored to draw from the fountain-head; that my curiosity, as well as a sense of duty, has always urged me to study the originals; and that, if they have sometimes eluded my search, I have carefully marked the secondary evidence, on whose faith a passage or a fact were reduced to depend.

4 (return) [See Dr. Robertson's Preface to his History of America.]
I shall soon revisit the banks of the Lake of Lausanne, a country which I have known and loved from my early youth. Under a mild government, amidst a beauteous landscape, in a life of leisure and independence, and among a people of easy and elegant manners, I have enjoyed, and may again hope to enjoy, the varied pleasures

of retirement and society. But I shall ever glory in the name and character of an Englishman: I am proud of my birth in a free and enlightened country; and the approbation of that country is the best and most honorable reward of my labors. Were I ambitious of any other Patron than the Public, I would inscribe this work to a Statesman, who, in a long, a stormy, and at length an unfortunate administration, had many political opponents, almost without a personal enemy; who has retained, in his fall from power, many faithful and disinterested friends; and who, under the pressure of severe infirmity, enjoys the lively vigor of his mind, and the felicity of his incomparable temper. Lord North will permit me to express the feelings of friendship in the language of truth: but even truth and friendship should be silent, if he still dispensed the favors of the crown.

In a remote solitude, vanity may still whisper in my ear, that my readers, perhaps, may inquire whether, in the conclusion of the present work, I am now taking an everlasting farewell. They shall hear all that I know myself, and all that I could reveal to the most intimate friend. The motives of action or silence are now equally balanced; nor can I pronounce, in my most secret thoughts, on which side the scale will preponderate. I cannot dissemble that six quartos must have tried, and may have exhausted, the indulgence of the Public; that, in the repetition of similar attempts, a successful Author has much more to lose than he can hope to gain; that I am now descending into the vale of years; and that the most respectable of my countrymen, the men whom I aspire to imitate, have resigned the pen of history about the same period of their lives. Yet I consider that the annals of ancient and modern times may afford many rich and interesting subjects; that I am still possessed of health and leisure; that by the practice of writing, some skill and facility must be acquired; and that, in the ardent pursuit of truth and knowledge, I am not conscious of decay. To an active mind, indolence is more painful than labor; and the first months of my liberty will be occupied and amused in the excursions of curiosity and taste. By such temptations, I have been sometimes seduced from the rigid duty even of a pleasing and voluntary task: but my time will now be my own; and in the use or abuse of independence, I shall no longer fear my own reproaches or those of my friends. I am fairly entitled to a year of jubilee: next summer and the following winter will rapidly pass away; and experience only can determine whether I shall still prefer the freedom and variety of study to the design and composition of a regular work, which animates, while it confines, the daily application of the Author.

Caprice and accident may influence my choice; but the dexterity of self-love will contrive to applaud either active industry or philosophic repose.

Downing Street, May 1, 1788.

P. S. I shall embrace this opportunity of introducing two verbal remarks, which have not conveniently offered themselves to my notice. 1. As often as I use the definitions of beyond the Alps, the Rhine, the Danube, &c., I generally suppose myself at Rome, and afterwards at Constantinople; without observing whether this relative geography may agree with the local, but variable, situation of the reader, or the historian. 2. In proper names of foreign, and especially of Oriental origin, it should be always our aim to express, in our English version, a faithful copy of the original. But this rule, which is founded on a just regard to uniformity and truth, must often

be relaxed; and the exceptions will be limited or enlarged by the custom of the language and the taste of the interpreter. Our alphabets may be often defective; a harsh sound, an uncouth spelling, might offend the ear or the eye of our countrymen; and some words, notoriously corrupt, are fixed, and, as it were, naturalized in the vulgar tongue. The prophet Mohammed can no longer be stripped of the famous, though improper, appellation of Mahomet: the well-known cities of Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo, would almost be lost in the strange descriptions of Haleb, Demashk, and Al Cahira: the titles and offices of the Ottoman empire are fashioned by the practice of three hundred years; and we are pleased to blend the three Chinese monosyllables, Con-fu-tzee, in the respectable name of Confucius, or even to adopt the Portuguese corruption of Mandarin. But I would vary the use of Zoroaster and Zerdusht, as I drew my information from Greece or Persia: since our connection with India, the genuine Timour is restored to the throne of Tamerlane: our most correct writers have retrenched the Al, the superfluous article, from the Koran; and we escape an ambiguous termination, by adopting Moslem instead of Musulman, in the plural number. In these, and in a thousand examples, the shades of distinction are often minute; and I can feel, where I cannot explain, the motives of my choice.

Chapter I: The Extent Of The Empire In The Age Of The Antonines—Part I. Introduction.

The Extent And Military Force Of The Empire In The Age Of The Antonines.

In the second century of the Christian Aera, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valor. The gentle but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence: the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than fourscore years, the public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this, and of the two succeeding chapters, to describe the prosperous condition of their empire; and after wards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall; a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth.

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulations of the consuls, and the martial enthusiasm of the people. The seven first centuries were filled with

a rapid succession of triumphs; but it was reserved for Augustus to relinquish the ambitious design of subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of moderation into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and situation, it was easy for him to discover that Rome, in her present exalted situation, had much less to hope than to fear from the chance of arms; and that, in the prosecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious, and less beneficial. The experience of Augustus added weight to these salutary reflections, and effectually convinced him that, by the prudent vigor of his counsels, it would be easy to secure every concession which the safety or the dignity of Rome might require from the most formidable barbarians. Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honorable treaty, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which had been taken in the defeat of Crassus. 1a

1 (return) [Dion Cassius, (l. liv. p. 736,) with the annotations of Reimar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the subject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Augustus recorded his own exploits, asserted that he compelled the Parthians to restore the ensigns of Crassus.]

His generals, in the early part of his reign, attempted the reduction of Ethiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thousand miles to the south of the tropic; but the heat of the climate soon repelled the invaders, and protected the un-warlike natives of those sequestered regions. 2c The northern countries of Europe scarcely deserved the expense and labor of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom; and though, on the first attack, they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they soon, by a signal act of despair, regained their independence, and reminded Augustus of the vicissitude of fortune. 3a On the death of that emperor, his testament was publicly read in the senate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his successors, the advice of confining the empire within those limits which nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries: on the west, the Atlantic Ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and towards the south, the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa. 4a

2c (return) [Strabo, (l. xvi. p. 780,) Pliny the elder, (Hist. Natur. l. vi. c. 32, 35, [28, 29,]) and Dion Cassius, (l. liii. p. 723, and l. liv. p. 734,) have left us very curious details concerning these wars. The Romans made themselves masters of Mariaba, or Merab, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals. (See Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52) They were arrived within three days' journey of the spice country, the rich object of their invasion.

Note: It is the city of Merab that the Arabs say was the residence of Belkis, queen of Saba, who desired to see Solomon. A dam, by which the waters collected in its neighborhood were kept back, having been swept away, the sudden inundation destroyed this city, of which, nevertheless, vestiges remain. It bordered on a country called Adramout, where a particular aromatic plant grows: it is for this reason that we real in the history of the Roman expedition, that they were arrived within three

days' journey of the spice country.—G. Compare Malte-Brun, Geogr. Eng. trans. vol. ii. p. 215. The period of this flood has been copiously discussed by Reiske, (Program. de vetusta Epocha Arabum, ruptura cataractae Merabensis.) Add. Johannsen, Hist. Yemanae, p. 282. Bonn, 1828; and see Gibbon, note 16. to Chap. L.—M.
Note: Two, according to Strabo. The detailed account of Strabo makes the invaders fail before Marsuabae: this cannot be the same place as Mariaba. Ukert observes, that Aelius Gallus would not have failed for want of water before Mariaba. (See M. Guizot's note above.) "Either, therefore, they were different places, or Strabo is mistaken." (Ukert, Geographic der Griechen und Romer, vol. i. p. 181.) Strabo, indeed, mentions Mariaba distinct from Marsuabae. Gibbon has followed Pliny in reckoning Mariaba among the conquests of Gallus. There can be little doubt that he is wrong, as Gallus did not approach the capital of Sabaea. Compare the note of the Oxford editor of Strabo.—M.]

3a (return) [By the slaughter of Varus and his three legions. See the first book of the Annals of Tacitus. Sueton. in August. c. 23, and Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 117, &c. Augustus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmness that might have been expected from his character.]

4a (return) [Tacit. Annal. l. ii. Dion Cassius, l. lvi. p. 833, and the speech of Augustus himself, in Julian's Caesars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French translator, M. Spanheim.]
Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus, was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Caesars seldom showed themselves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer, that those triumphs which their indolence neglected, should be usurped by the conduct and valor of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent invasion of the Imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as interest, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers intrusted to his care, without aspiring to conquests which might have proved no less fatal to himself than to the vanquished barbarians. 5

5 (return) [Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola were checked and recalled in the course of their victories. Corbulo was put to death. Military merit, as it is admirably expressed by Tacitus, was, in the strictest sense of the word, imperatoria virtus.]
The only accession which the Roman empire received, during the first century of the Christian Aera, was the province of Britain. In this single instance, the successors of Caesar and Augustus were persuaded to follow the example of the former, rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its situation to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite their arms; the pleasing though doubtful intelligence of a pearl fishery, attracted their avarice; 6 and as Britain was viewed in the light of a distinct and insulated world, the conquest scarcely formed any exception to the general system of continental measures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the most stupid, 7 maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid

of all the emperors, the far greater part of the island submitted to the Roman yoke. 8 The various tribes of Britain possessed valor without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union. They took up arms with savage fierceness; they laid them down, or turned them against each other, with wild inconsistency; and while they fought singly, they were successively subdued. Neither the fortitude of Caractacus, nor the despair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticism of the Druids, could avert the slavery of their country, or resist the steady progress of the Imperial generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was disgraced by the weakest, or the most vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inspired, his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians, at the foot of the Grampian Hills; and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, displayed the Roman arms round every part of the island. The conquest of Britain was considered as already achieved; and it was the design of Agricola to complete and insure his success, by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were sufficient. 9 The western isle might be improved into a valuable possession, and the Britons would wear their chains with the less reluctance, if the prospect and example of freedom were on every side removed from before their eyes.

6 (return) [Caesar himself conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The British pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid color. Tacitus observes, with reason, (in Agricola, c. 12,) that it was an inherent defect. "Ego facilius crediderim, naturam margaritis deesse quam nobis avaritiam."]

7 (return) [Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expressed by Pomponius Mela, l. iii. c. 6, (he wrote under Claudius,) that, by the success of the Roman arms, the island and its savage inhabitants would soon be better known. It is amusing enough to peruse such passages in the midst of London.]

8 (return) [See the admirable abridgment given by Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, and copiously, though perhaps not completely, illustrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horsley.]

9 (return) [The Irish writers, jealous of their national honor, are extremely provoked on this occasion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola.]
But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain; and forever disappointed this rational, though extensive scheme of conquest. Before his departure, the prudent general had provided for security as well as for dominion. He had observed, that the island is almost divided into two unequal parts by the opposite gulfs, or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Across the narrow interval of about forty miles, he had drawn a line of military stations, which was afterwards fortified, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart, erected on foundations of stone. 10 This wall of Antoninus, at a small distance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, was fixed as the limit

of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preserved, in the northern extremity of the island, their wild independence, for which they were not less indebted to their poverty than to their valor. Their incursions were frequently repelled and chastised; but their country was never subdued. 11 The masters of the fairest and most wealthy climates of the globe turned with contempt from gloomy hills, assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the forest were chased by a troop of naked barbarians. 12

10 (return) [See Horsley's Britannia Romana, l. i. c. 10. Note: Agricola fortified the line from Dumbarton to Edinburgh, consequently within Scotland. The emperor Hadrian, during his residence in Britain, about the year 121, caused a rampart of earth to be raised between Newcastle and Carlisle. Antoninus Pius, having gained new victories over the Caledonians, by the ability of his general, Lollius, Urbicus, caused a new rampart of earth to be constructed between Edinburgh and Dumbarton. Lastly, Septimius Severus caused a wall of stone to be built parallel to the rampart of Hadrian, and on the same locality. See John Warburton's Vallum Romanum, or the History and Antiquities of the Roman Wall. London, 1754, 4to.—W. See likewise a good note on the Roman wall in Lingard's History of England, vol. i. p. 40, 4to edit—M.]

11 (return) [The poet Buchanan celebrates with elegance and spirit (see his Sylvae, v.) the unviolated independence of his native country. But, if the single testimony of Richard of Cirencester was sufficient to create a Roman province of Vespasiana to the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits.]

12 (return) [See Appian (in Prooem.) and the uniform imagery of Ossian's Poems, which, according to every hypothesis, were composed by a native Caledonian.] Such was the state of the Roman frontiers, and such the maxims of Imperial policy, from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general. 13 The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The first exploits of Trajan were against the Dacians, the most warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had insulted, with impunity, the Majesty of Rome. 14 To the strength and fierceness of barbarians they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality and transmigration of the soul. 15 Decebalus, the Dacian king, approved himself a rival not unworthy of Trajan; nor did he despair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confession of his enemies, he had exhausted every resource both of valor and policy. 16 This memorable war, with a very short suspension of hostilities, lasted five years; and as the emperor could exert, without control, the whole force of the state, it was terminated by an absolute submission of the barbarians. 17 The new province of Dacia, which formed a second exception to the precept of Augustus, was about thirteen hundred miles in

circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Niester, the Teyss or Tibiscus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. The vestiges of a military road may still be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighborhood of Bender, a place famous in modern history, and the actual frontier of the Turkish and Russian empires. 18

13 (return) [See Pliny's Panegyric, which seems founded on facts.]

14 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxvii.]

15 (return) [Herodotus, l. iv. c. 94. Julian in the Caesars, with Spanheims observations.]

16 (return) [Plin. Epist. viii. 9.]

17 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxviii. p. 1123, 1131. Julian in Caesaribus Eutropius, viii. 2, 6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome.]

18 (return) [See a Memoir of M. d'Anville, on the Province of Dacia, in the Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 444—468.]
Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him, the Roman emperor undertook an expedition against the nations of the East; but he lamented with a sigh, that his advanced age scarcely left him any hopes of equalling the renown of the son of Philip. 19 Yet the success of Trajan, however transient, was rapid and specious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by intestine discord, fled before his arms. He descended the River Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian Gulf. He enjoyed the honor of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals, who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravaged the coast of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching towards the confines of India. 20 Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations, that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, were reduced into the state of provinces. 21 But the death of Trajan soon clouded the splendid prospect; and it was justly to be dreaded, that so many distant nations would throw off the unaccustomed yoke, when they were no longer restrained by the powerful hand which had imposed it.

19 (return) [Trajan's sentiments are represented in a very just and lively manner in the Caesars of Julian.]

20 (return) [Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavored to perpetuate the illusion. See a very sensible dissertation of M. Freret in the Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxi. p. 55.]
21 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxviii.; and the Abbreviators.]

Chapter I: The Extent Of The Empire In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part II.
It was an ancient tradition, that when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who presided over boundaries, and was represented, according to the fashion of that age, by a large stone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself. A favorable inference was drawn from his obstinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs as a sure presage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede. 22 During many ages, the prediction, as it is usual, contributed to its own accomplishment. But though Terminus had resisted the Majesty of Jupiter, he submitted to the authority of the emperor Hadrian. 23 The resignation of all the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his reign. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign; withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria; and, in compliance with the precept of Augustus, once more established the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire. 24 Censure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has ascribed to envy, a conduct which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meanest and the most generous sentiments, may afford some color to the suspicion. It was, however, scarcely in his power to place the superiority of his predecessor in a more conspicuous light, than by thus confessing himself unequal to the task of defending the conquests of Trajan.

22 (return) [Ovid. Fast. l. ii. ver. 667. See Livy, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, under the reign of Tarquin.]

23 (return) [St. Augustin is highly delighted with the proof of the weakness of Terminus, and the vanity of the Augurs. See De Civitate Dei, iv. 29. * Note: The turn of Gibbon's sentence is Augustin's: "Plus Hadrianum regem hominum, quam regem Deorum timuisse videatur."—M]

24 (return) [See the Augustan History, p. 5, Jerome's Chronicle, and all the Epitomizers. It is somewhat surprising, that this memorable event should be omitted by Dion, or rather by Xiphilin.]
The martial and ambitious of spirit Trajan formed a very singular contrast with the moderation of his successor. The restless activity of Hadrian was not less remarkable when compared with the gentle repose of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of

the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty.
Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bare-headed, over the snows of Caledonia, and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire which, in the course of his reign, was not honored with the presence of the monarch. 25 But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was spent in the bosom of Italy, and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public administration, the longest journeys of that amiable prince extended no farther than from his palace in Rome to the retirement of his Lanuvian villa. 26

25 (return) [Dion, l. lxix. p. 1158. Hist. August. p. 5, 8. If all our historians were lost, medals, inscriptions, and other monuments, would be sufficient to record the travels of Hadrian. Note: The journeys of Hadrian are traced in a note on Solvet's translation of Hegewisch, Essai sur l'Epoque de Histoire Romaine la plus heureuse pour Genre Humain Paris, 1834, p. 123.—M.]

26 (return) [See the Augustan History and the Epitomes.]
Notwithstanding this difference in their personal conduct, the general system of Augustus was equally adopted and uniformly pursued by Hadrian and by the two Antonines. They persisted in the design of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honorable expedient they invited the friendship of the barbarians; and endeavored to convince mankind that the Roman power, raised above the temptation of conquest, was actuated only by the love of order and justice. During a long period of forty-three years, their virtuous labors were crowned with success; and if we except a few slight hostilities, that served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace. 27 The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor; and we are informed by a contemporary historian that he had seen ambassadors who were refused the honor which they came to solicit of being admitted into the rank of subjects. 28

27 (return) [We must, however, remember, that in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a single province. Pausanias (l. viii. c. 43) mentions two necessary and successful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius: 1st. Against the wandering Moors, who were driven into the solitudes of Atlas. 2d. Against the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province. Both these wars (with several other hostilities) are mentioned in the Augustan History, p. 19.]

28 (return) [Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his History of the Roman Wars.]
The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines, that they were as little disposed to endure, as to offer an injury. The military strength,

which it had been sufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to display, was exerted against the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hostilities of the barbarians provoked the resentment of that philosophic monarch, and, in the prosecution of a just defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many signal victories, both on the Euphrates and on the Danube. 29 The military establishment of the Roman empire, which thus assured either its tranquillity or success, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

29 (return) [Dion, l. lxxi. Hist. August. in Marco. The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible historians, whose memory has been rescued from oblivion and exposed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticism of Lucian.]
In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws, which it was their interest as well as duty to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade. 30 The legions themselves, even at the time when they were recruited in the most distant provinces, were supposed to consist of Roman citizens. That distinction was generally considered, either as a legal qualification or as a proper recompense for the soldier; but a more serious regard was paid to the essential merit of age, strength, and military stature. 31 In all levies, a just preference was given to the climates of the North over those of the South: the race of men born to the exercise of arms was sought for in the country rather than in cities; and it was very reasonably presumed, that the hardy occupations of smiths, carpenters, and huntsmen, would supply more vigor and resolution than the sedentary trades which are employed in the service of luxury. 32 After every qualification of property had been laid aside, the armies of the Roman emperors were still commanded, for the most part, by officers of liberal birth and education; but the common soldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate, of mankind.

30 (return) [The poorest rank of soldiers possessed above forty pounds sterling, (Dionys. Halicarn. iv. 17,) a very high qualification at a time when money was so scarce, that an ounce of silver was equivalent to seventy pounds weight of brass. The populace, excluded by the ancient constitution, were indiscriminately admitted by Marius. See Sallust. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 91. * Note: On the uncertainty of all these estimates, and the difficulty of fixing the relative value of brass and silver, compare Niebuhr, vol. i. p. 473, &c. Eng. trans. p. 452. According to Niebuhr, the relative disproportion in value, between the two metals, arose, in a great degree from the abundance of brass or copper.—M. Compare also Dureau 'de la Malle Economie Politique des Romains especially L. l. c. ix.—M. 1845.]

31 (return) [Caesar formed his legion Alauda of Gauls and strangers; but it was during the license of civil war; and after the victory, he gave them the freedom of the city for their reward.]

32 (return) [See Vegetius, de Re Militari, l. i. c. 2—7.]
That public virtue, which among the ancients was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince; and it became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature — honor and religion. The peasant, or mechanic, imbibed the useful prejudice that he was advanced to the more dignified profession of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valor; and that, although the prowess of a private soldier must often escape the notice of fame, his own behavior might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honors he was associated. On his first entrance into the service, an oath was administered to him with every circumstance of solemnity. He promised never to desert his standard, to submit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the emperor and the empire. 33 The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honor. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion; nor was it esteemed less impious than it was ignominious, to abandon that sacred ensign in the hour of danger. 34 These motives, which derived their strength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more substantial kind. Regular pay, occasional donatives, and a stated recompense, after the appointed time of service, alleviated the hardships of the military life, 35 whilst, on the other hand, it was impossible for cowardice or disobedience to escape the severest punishment. The centurions were authorized to chastise with blows, the generals had a right to punish with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. From such laudable arts did the valor of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmness and docility unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians.

33 (return) [The oath of service and fidelity to the emperor was annually renewed by the troops on the first of January.]

34 (return) [Tacitus calls the Roman eagles, Bellorum Deos. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worship of the troops. * Note: See also Dio. Cass. xl. c. 18. —M.]

35 (return) [See Gronovius de Pecunia vetere, l. iii. p. 120, &c. The emperor Domitian raised the annual stipend of the legionaries to twelve pieces of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, somewhat higher than our own, had been, and was afterwards, gradually increased, according to the progress of wealth and military government. After twenty years' service, the veteran received three thousand denarii, (about one hundred pounds sterling,) or a proportionable allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general, about double those of the legions.]

And yet so sensible were the Romans of the imperfection of valor without skill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise. 36 Military exercises were the important and unremitted object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained, both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large sheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their useful labors might not receive any interruption from the most tempestuous weather; and it was carefully observed, that the arms destined to this imitation of war, should be of double the weight which was required in real action. 37 It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark, that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every species of arms that was used either for offence or for defence, either in distant engagement or in a closer onset; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes in the Pyrrhic or martial dance. 38 In the midst of peace, the Roman troops familiarized themselves with the practice of war; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the only circumstance which distinguished a field of battle from a field of exercise. 39 It was the policy of the ablest generals, and even of the emperors themselves, to encourage these military studies by their presence and example; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condescended to instruct the unexperienced soldiers, to reward the diligent, and sometimes to dispute with them the prize of superior strength or dexterity. 40 Under the reigns of those princes, the science of tactics was cultivated with success; and as long as the empire retained any vigor, their military instructions were respected as the most perfect model of Roman discipline.

36 (return) [Exercitus ab exercitando, Varro de Lingua Latina, l. iv. Cicero in Tusculan. l. ii. 37. 15. There is room for a very interesting work, which should lay open the connection between the languages and manners of nations. * Note I am not aware of the existence, at present, of such a work; but the profound observations of the late William von Humboldt, in the introduction to his posthumously published Essay on the Language of the Island of Java, (uber die Kawi-sprache, Berlin, 1836,) may cause regret that this task was not completed by that accomplished and universal scholar.—M.]

37 (return) [Vegatius, l. ii. and the rest of his first book.]

38 (return) [The Pyrrhic dance is extremely well illustrated by M. le Beau, in the Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxxv. p. 262, &c. That learned academician, in a series of memoirs, has collected all the passages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion.]

39 (return) [Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. iii. c. 5. We are indebted to this Jew for some very curious details of Roman discipline.]

40 (return) [Plin. Panegyr. c. 13. Life of Hadrian, in the Augustan History.]
Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the service many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are described by Polybius, 41 in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from those which achieved the victories of Caesar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines.
The constitution of the Imperial legion may be described in a few words. 42 The heavy-armed infantry, which composed its principal strength, 43 was divided into ten cohorts, and fifty-five companies, under the orders of a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honor and the custody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five soldiers, the most approved for valor and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts consisted each of five hundred and fifty-five; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to six thousand one hundred men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their service: an open helmet, with a lofty crest; a breastplate, or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable pilum, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about six feet, and which was terminated by a massy triangular point of steel of eighteen inches. 44 This instrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-arms; since it was exhausted by a single discharge, at the distance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet when it was launched by a firm and skilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durst venture within its reach, nor any shield or corselet that could sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the Roman had darted his pilum, he drew his sword, and rushed forwards to close with the enemy. His sword was a short well-tempered Spanish blade, that carried a double edge, and was alike suited to the purpose of striking or of pushing; but the soldier was always instructed to prefer the latter use of his weapon, as his own body remained less exposed, whilst he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adversary. 45 The legion was usually drawn up eight deep; and the regular distance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks. 46 A body of troops, habituated to preserve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themselves prepared to execute every disposition which the circumstances of war, or the skill of their leader, might suggest. The soldier possessed a free space for his arms and motions, and sufficient intervals were allowed, through which seasonable reenforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhausted combatants. 47 The tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians were formed on very different principles. The strength of the phalanx depended on sixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the closest array. 48 But it was soon discovered by reflection, as well as by the event, that the strength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion. 49

41 (return) [See an admirable digression on the Roman discipline, in the sixth book of his History.]

42 (return) [Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 4, &c. Considerable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he describes it, cannot suit any other age of the Roman empire.]
43 (return) [Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 1. In the purer age of Caesar and Cicero, the word miles was almost confined to the infantry. Under the lower empire, and the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almost as exclusively to the men at arms, who fought on horseback.]

44 (return) [In the time of Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, (l. v. c. 45,) the steel point of the pilum seems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius, it was reduced to a foot, or even nine inches. I have chosen a medium.]

45 (return) [For the legionary arms, see Lipsius de Militia Romana, l. iii. c. 2—7.]

46 (return) [See the beautiful comparison of Virgil, Georgic ii. v. 279.]

47 (return) [M. Guichard, Memoires Militaires, tom. i. c. 4, and Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. p. 293—311, has treated the subject like a scholar and an officer.]

48 (return) [See Arrian's Tactics. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather chose to describe the phalanx, of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded.]

49 (return) [Polyb. l. xvii. (xviii. 9.)]
The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten troops or squadrons; the first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of a hundred and thirty-two men; whilst each of the other nine amounted only to sixty-six. The entire establishment formed a regiment, if we may use the modern expression, of seven hundred and twenty-six horse, naturally connected with its respective legion, but occasionally separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the wings of the army. 50 The cavalry of the emperors was no longer composed, like that of the ancient republic, of the noblest youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military service on horseback, prepared themselves for the offices of senator and consul; and solicited, by deeds of valor, the future suffrages of their countrymen. 51 Since the alteration of manners and government, the most wealthy of the equestrian order were engaged in the administration of justice, and of the revenue; 52 and whenever they embraced the profession of arms, they were immediately intrusted with a troop of horse, or a cohort of foot. 53 Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the same provinces, and the same class of their subjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horses were bred, for the most part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers despised the complete armor with which the cavalry of the East was encumbered. Their more useful arms consisted in a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a

coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad sword, were their principal weapons of offence. The use of lances and of iron maces they seem to have borrowed from the barbarians. 54

50 (return) [Veget. de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 6. His positive testimony, which might be supported by circumstantial evidence, ought surely to silence those critics who refuse the Imperial legion its proper body of cavalry. Note: See also Joseph. B. J. iii. vi. 2.—M.]

51 (return) [See Livy almost throughout, particularly xlii. 61.]

52 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxiii. 2. The true sense of that very curious passage was first discovered and illustrated by M. de Beaufort, Republique Romaine, l. ii. c. 2.]

53 (return) [As in the instance of Horace and Agricola. This appears to have been a defect in the Roman discipline; which Hadrian endeavored to remedy by ascertaining the legal age of a tribune. * Note: These details are not altogether accurate. Although, in the latter days of the republic, and under the first emperors, the young Roman nobles obtained the command of a squadron or a cohort with greater facility than in the former times, they never obtained it without passing through a tolerably long military service. Usually they served first in the praetorian cohort, which was intrusted with the guard of the general: they were received into the companionship (contubernium) of some superior officer, and were there formed for duty. Thus Julius Caesar, though sprung from a great family, served first as contubernalis under the praetor, M. Thermus, and later under Servilius the Isaurian. (Suet. Jul. 2, 5. Plut. in Par. p. 516. Ed. Froben.) The example of Horace, which Gibbon adduces to prove that young knights were made tribunes immediately on entering the service, proves nothing. In the first place, Horace was not a knight; he was the son of a freedman of Venusia, in Apulia, who exercised the humble office of coactor exauctionum, (collector of payments at auctions.) (Sat. i. vi. 45, or 86.) Moreover, when the poet was made tribune, Brutus, whose army was nearly entirely composed of Orientals, gave this title to all the Romans of consideration who joined him. The emperors were still less difficult in their choice; the number of tribunes was augmented; the title and honors were conferred on persons whom they wished to attack to the court. Augustus conferred on the sons of senators, sometimes the tribunate, sometimes the command of a squadron. Claudius gave to the knights who entered into the service, first the command of a cohort of auxiliaries, later that of a squadron, and at length, for the first time, the tribunate. (Suet in Claud. with the notes of Ernesti.) The abuses that arose caused by the edict of Hadrian, which fixed the age at which that honor could be attained. (Spart. in Had. &c.) This edict was subsequently obeyed; for the emperor Valerian, in a letter addressed to Mulvius Gallinnus, praetorian praefect, excuses himself for having violated it in favor of the young Probus afterwards emperor, on whom he had conferred the tribunate at an earlier age on account of his rare talents. (Vopisc. in Prob. iv.)—W. and G. Agricola,

though already invested with the title of tribune, was contubernalis in Britain with Suetonius Paulinus. Tac. Agr. v.—M.]

54 (return) [See Arrian's Tactics.]
The safety and honor of the empire was principally intrusted to the legions, but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honorable distinction of Romans. Many dependent princes and communities, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service. 55 Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valor in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state. 56 All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom much inferior to those of the legions themselves. 57 Among the auxiliaries, the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of praefects and centurions, and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline; but the far greater part retained those arms, to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this institution, each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons; and was capable of encountering every nation, with the advantages of its respective arms and discipline. 58 Nor was the legion destitute of what, in modern language, would be styled a train of artillery. It consisted in ten military engines of the largest, and fifty-five of a smaller size; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, discharged stones and darts with irresistible violence. 59

55 (return) [Such, in particular, was the state of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.]

56 (return) [Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquished Quadi and Marcomanni to supply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately sent into Britain. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. (c. 16.)]

57 (return) [Tacit. Annal. iv. 5. Those who fix a regular proportion of as many foot, and twice as many horse, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors with the Italian allies of the republic.]

58 (return) [Vegetius, ii. 2. Arrian, in his order of march and battle against the Alani.]

59 (return) [The subject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the Chevalier Folard, (Polybe, tom. ii. p. 233-290.) He prefers them in many respects to our modern cannon and mortars. We may observe, that the use of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as personal

valor and military skill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines. See Vegetius, ii. 25. Arrian.]

Chapter I: The Extent Of The Empire In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part III.

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city. 60 As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate, that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midst of the camp, the praetorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries occupied their respective stations; the streets were broad and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labor was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves; to whom the use of the spade and the pickaxe was no less familiar than that of the sword or pilum. Active valor may often be the present of nature; but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline. 61

60 (return) [Vegetius finishes his second book, and the description of the legion, with the following emphatic words:—"Universa quae in quoque belli genere necessaria esse creduntur, secum legio debet ubique portare, ut in quovis loco fixerit castra, armatam faciat civitatem."]

61 (return) [For the Roman Castrametation, see Polybius, l. vi. with Lipsius de Militia Romana, Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 5. Vegetius, i. 21—25, iii. 9, and Memoires de Guichard, tom. i. c. 1.]

Whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantly broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confusion. Besides their arms, which the legendaries scarcely considered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days. 62 Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of a modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance, in about six hours, near twenty miles. 63 On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aside their baggage, and by easy and rapid evolutions converted the column of march into an order of battle. 64 The slingers and archers skirmished in the front; the auxiliaries formed the first line, and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the legions; the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

62 (return) [Cicero in Tusculan. ii. 37, [15.]—Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. 5, Frontinus, iv. 1.]

63 (return) [Vegetius, i. 9. See Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxv. p. 187.]

64 (return) [See those evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. p. 141—234.]

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests, and preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism. If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their numbers, we shall not find it easy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itself a body of six thousand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thousand five hundred men. The peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors was composed of no less than thirty of these formidable brigades; and most probably formed a standing force of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men. Instead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their stations, for the most part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to describe the distribution of the troops. Three legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and consisted of sixteen legions, in the following proportions: two in the Lower, and three in the Upper Germany; one in Rhaetia, one in Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Maesia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was intrusted to eight legions, six of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquillity of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. Above twenty thousand chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of City Cohorts and Praetorian Guards, watched over the safety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the Praetorians will, very soon, and very loudly, demand our attention; but, in their arms and institutions, we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance, and a less rigid discipline. 65

65 (return) [Tacitus (Annal. iv. 5) has given us a state of the legions under Tiberius; and Dion Cassius (l. lv. p. 794) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavored to fix on the proper medium between these two periods. See likewise Lipsius de Magnitudine Romana, l. i. c. 4, 5.]

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the most

remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than of curiosity; 66 the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage, and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views, Augustus stationed two permanent fleets in the most convenient ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, the other at Misenum, in the Bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients, that as soon as their galleys exceeded two, or at the most three ranks of oars, they were suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (they were called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival. 67 Of these Liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to command, the one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean; and to each of the squadrons he attached a body of several thousand marines. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded by forty ships, and three thousand soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians. 68 If we review this general state of the Imperial forces; of the cavalry as well as infantry; of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy; the most liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land at more than four hundred and fifty thousand men: a military power, which, however formidable it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire. 69

66 (return) [The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretence of religious awe their ignorance and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34.]

67 (return) [Plutarch, in Marc. Anton. [c. 67.] And yet, if we may credit Orosius, these monstrous castles were no more than ten feet above the water, vi. 19.]

68 (return) [See Lipsius, de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.]

69 (return) [Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It must, however, be remembered, that France still feels that extraordinary effort.]

We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavor, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but, at present, divided into so many independent and hostile states. Spain, the western extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenaean Mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so

unequally divided between two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Baetica, and Tarraconensis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians; and the loss sustained by the former on the side of the East, is compensated by an accession of territory towards the North. The confines of Grenada and Andalusia correspond with those of ancient Baetica. The remainder of Spain, Gallicia, and the Asturias, Biscay, and Navarre, Leon, and the two Castiles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon, all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona. 70 Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs.

70 (return) [See Strabo, l. ii. It is natural enough to suppose, that Arragon is derived from Tarraconensis, and several moderns who have written in Latin use those words as synonymous. It is, however, certain, that the Arragon, a little stream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, first gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, Geographie du Moyen Age, p. 181.]
Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the Ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the duchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburgh, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father, he introduced a division of Gaul, equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to the principal national distinctions, which had comprehended above a hundred independent states. 71 The sea-coast of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphine, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Caesar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valor, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Basil to Leyden, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany. 72 Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the six provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, the Celtic, or Lyonnese, the Belgic, and the two Germanies.

71 (return) [One hundred and fifteen cities appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this appellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each state. But Plutarch and Appian increase the number of tribes to three or four hundred.]

72 (return) [D'Anville. Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule.]
We have already had occasion to mention the conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman Province in this island. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland, as far as the Friths of Dumbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain lost her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgae in the West, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk. 73 As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission, they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

73 (return) [Whittaker's History of Manchester, vol. i. c. 3.] Before the Roman conquest, the country which is now called Lombardy, was not considered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the Apennine.
The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn; but the territories of that state, which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians. 74 The middle part of the peninsula, that now composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of civilized life. 75 The Tyber rolled at the foot of the seven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs, their successors adorned villas, and their posterity have erected convents. 76 Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of Naples; the rest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marsi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the sea-coasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Augustus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Istria was annexed to that seat of Roman sovereignty. 77

74 (return) [The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. See M. Freret, Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii. * Note: Or Liburnian, according to Niebuhr. Vol. i. p. 172.—M.]

75 (return) [See Maffei Verona illustrata, l. i. * Note: Add Niebuhr, vol. i., and Otfried Muller, die Etrusker, which contains much that is known, and much that is conjectured, about this remarkable people. Also Micali, Storia degli antichi popoli Italiani. Florence, 1832—M.]

76 (return) [The first contrast was observed by the ancients. See Florus, i. 11. The second must strike every modern traveller.]

77 (return) [Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. iii.) follows the division of Italy by Augustus.]
The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at the distance of only thirty miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the most part to the south-east, collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is, at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears scarcely equal to such an accession of waters. 78 The provinces of the Danube soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier, 79 and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire; but they deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhaetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Maesia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

78 (return) [Tournefort, Voyages en Grece et Asie Mineure, lettre xviii.]

79 (return) [The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the sea-coast of the Adriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine Sea. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 3.]
The province of Rhaetia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its source, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augsburg is protected by the constitution of the German empire; the Grisons are safe in their mountains, and the country of Tirol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the house of Austria.
The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save,—Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Sclavonia,—was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence, their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German prince, who styles himself Emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe, that if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary between the Teyss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the House of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman Empire.
Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long, but narrow tract, between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the sea-coast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa. The inland parts have assumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the latter a Turkish pacha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Christian and Mahometan power. 80

80 (return) [A Venetian traveller, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us some account of those very obscure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the western Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its sovereign.]

After the Danube had received the waters of the Teyss and the Save, it acquired, at least among the Greeks, the name of Ister. 81 It formerly divided Maesia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already seen, was a conquest of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the present state of those countries, we shall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeswar and Transylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilst the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia acknowledge the supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Maesia, which, during the middle ages, was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkish slavery.

81 (return) [The Save rises near the confines of Istria, and was considered by the more early Greeks as the principal stream of the Danube.]

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preserves the memory of their ancient state under the Roman empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Haemus and Rhodope, to the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province. Notwithstanding the change of masters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has ever since remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia, derived more solid advantages from the policy of the two Philips; and with its dependencies of Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Aegean to the Ionian Sea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can scarcely persuade ourselves, that so many immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in a single province of the Roman empire, which, from the superior influence of the Achaean league, was usually denominated the province of Achaia. Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But, instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed with some propriety to the peninsula, which, confined betwixt the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district, westward of Mount Taurus and the River Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus possessed the northern side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side, the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria: the inland country, separated from

the Roman Asia by the River Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe, that the northern shores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Asia, and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries. 82

82 (return) [See the Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coasts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.]

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria was the seat of the Seleucidae, who reigned over Upper Asia, till the successful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became subject to the Romans, it formed the eastern frontier of their empire: nor did that province, in its utmost latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and towards the south, the confines of Egypt, and the Red Sea. Phoenicia and Palestine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The former of these was a narrow and rocky coast; the latter was a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent. 821 Yet Phoenicia and Palestine will forever live in the memory of mankind; since America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other. 83 A sandy desert, alike destitute of wood and water, skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence; and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to for many settled habitations, they soon became subjects to the Roman empire. 84

821 (return) [This comparison is exaggerated, with the intention, no doubt, of attacking the authority of the Bible, which boasts of the fertility of Palestine. Gibbon's only authorities were that of Strabo (l. xvi. 1104) and the present state of the country. But Strabo only speaks of the neighborhood of Jerusalem, which he calls barren and arid to the extent of sixty stadia round the city: in other parts he gives a favorable testimony to the fertility of many parts of Palestine: thus he says, "Near Jericho there is a grove of palms, and a country of a hundred stadia, full of springs, and well peopled." Moreover, Strabo had never seen Palestine; he spoke only after reports, which may be as inaccurate as those according to which he has composed that description of Germany, in which Gluverius has detected so many errors. (Gluv. Germ. iii. 1.) Finally, his testimony is contradicted and refuted by that of other ancient authors, and by medals. Tacitus says, in speaking of Palestine, "The inhabitants are healthy and robust; the rains moderate; the soil fertile." (Hist. v. 6.) Ammianus Macellinus says also, "The last of the Syrias is Palestine, a country of considerable extent, abounding in clean and well-cultivated land, and containing some fine cities, none of which yields to the other; but, as it were, being on a parallel, are rivals."—xiv. 8. See also the historian Josephus, Hist. vi. 1. Procopius of Caeserea, who lived in the sixth century, says that Chosroes, king of Persia, had a great desire to make himself master of Palestine, on account of its extraordinary fertility, its opulence, and the great number of its inhabitants. The Saracens thought the same,

and were afraid that Omar. when he went to Jerusalem, charmed with the fertility of the soil and the purity of the air, would never return to Medina. (Ockley, Hist. of Sarac. i. 232.) The importance attached by the Romans to the conquest of Palestine, and the obstacles they encountered, prove also the richness and population of the country. Vespasian and Titus caused medals to be struck with trophies, in which Palestine is represented by a female under a palm-tree, to signify the richness of he country, with this legend: Judea capta. Other medals also indicate this fertility; for instance, that of Herod holding a bunch of grapes, and that of the young Agrippa displaying fruit. As to the present state of he country, one perceives that it is not fair to draw any inference against its ancient fertility: the disasters through which it has passed, the government to which it is subject, the disposition of the inhabitants, explain sufficiently the wild and uncultivated appearance of the land, where, nevertheless, fertile and cultivated districts are still found, according to the testimony of travellers; among others, of Shaw, Maundrel, La Rocque, &c.—G. The Abbe Guenee, in his Lettres de quelques Juifs a Mons. de Voltaire, has exhausted the subject of the fertility of Palestine; for Voltaire had likewise indulged in sarcasm on this subject. Gibbon was assailed on this point, not, indeed, by Mr. Davis, who, he slyly insinuates, was prevented by his patriotism as a Welshman from resenting the comparison with Wales, but by other writers. In his Vindication, he first established the correctness of his measurement of Palestine, which he estimates as 7600 square English miles, while Wales is about 7011. As to fertility, he proceeds in the following dexterously composed and splendid passage: "The emperor Frederick II., the enemy and the victim of the clergy, is accused of saying, after his return from his crusade, that the God of the Jews would have despised his promised land, if he had once seen the fruitful realms of Sicily and Naples." (See Giannone, Istor. Civ. del R. di Napoli, ii. 245.) This raillery, which malice has, perhaps, falsely imputed to Frederick, is inconsistent with truth and piety; yet it must be confessed that the soil of Palestine does not contain that inexhaustible, and, as it were, spontaneous principle of fertility, which, under the most unfavorable circumstances, has covered with rich harvests the banks of the Nile, the fields of Sicily, or the plains of Poland. The Jordan is the only navigable river of Palestine: a considerable part of the narrow space is occupied, or rather lost, in the Dead Sea whose horrid aspect inspires every sensation of disgust, and countenances every tale of horror. The districts which border on Arabia partake of the sandy quality of the adjacent desert. The face of the country, except the sea-coast, and the valley of the Jordan, is covered with mountains, which appear, for the most part, as naked and barren rocks; and in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, there is a real scarcity of the two elements of earth and water. (See Maundrel's Travels, p. 65, and Reland's Palestin. i. 238, 395.) These disadvantages, which now operate in their fullest extent, were formerly corrected by the labors of a numerous people, and the active protection of a wise government. The hills were clothed with rich beds of artificial mould, the rain was collected in vast cisterns, a supply of fresh water was conveyed by pipes and aqueducts to the dry lands. The breed of cattle was encouraged in those parts which were not adapted for tillage, and almost every spot was compelled to yield some production for the use of the inhabitants.

Pater ispe colendi Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque par artem Movit agros; curis acuens mortalia corda, Nec torpere gravi passus sua Regna veterno. Gibbon, Misc. Works, iv. 540.
But Gibbon has here eluded the question about the land "flowing with milk and honey." He is describing Judaea only, without comprehending Galilee, or the rich pastures beyond the Jordan, even now proverbial for their flocks and herds. (See Burckhardt's Travels, and Hist of Jews, i. 178.) The following is believed to be a fair statement: "The extraordinary fertility of the whole country must be taken into the account. No part was waste; very little was occupied by unprofitable wood; the more fertile hills were cultivated in artificial terraces, others were hung with orchards of fruit trees the more rocky and barren districts were covered with vineyards." Even in the present day, the wars and misgovernment of ages have not exhausted the natural richness of the soil. "Galilee," says Malte Brun, "would be a paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people under an enlightened government. No land could be less dependent on foreign importation; it bore within itself every thing that could be necessary for the subsistence and comfort of a simple agricultural people. The climate was healthy, the seasons regular; the former rains, which fell about October, after the vintage, prepared the ground for the seed; that latter, which prevailed during March and the beginning of April, made it grow rapidly. Directly the rains ceased, the grain ripened with still greater rapidity, and was gathered in before the end of May. The summer months were dry and very hot, but the nights cool and refreshed by copious dews. In September, the vintage was gathered. Grain of all kinds, wheat, barley, millet, zea, and other sorts, grew in abundance; the wheat commonly yielded thirty for one. Besides the vine and the olive, the almond, the date, figs of many kinds, the orange, the pomegranate, and many other fruit trees, flourished in the greatest luxuriance. Great quantity of honey was collected. The balm-tree, which produced the opobalsamum,a great object of trade, was probably introduced from Arabia, in the time of Solomon. It flourished about Jericho and in Gilead."—Milman's Hist. of Jews. i. 177.—M.]

83 (return) [The progress of religion is well known. The use of letter was introduced among the savages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Christ; and the Europeans carried them to America about fifteen centuries after the Christian Aera. But in a period of three thousand years, the Phoenician alphabet received considerable alterations, as it passed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.]

84 (return) [Dion Cassius, lib. lxviii. p. 1131.]
The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt. 85 By its situation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman praefect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron sceptre of the Mamelukes is now in the hands of a Turkish pacha. The Nile flows down the country, above five hundred miles from the tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks on either side of the extent of fertility by the measure of

its inundations. Cyrene, situate towards the west, and along the sea-coast, was first a Greek colony, afterwards a province of Egypt, and is now lost in the desert of Barca. 851

85 (return) [Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the Isthmus of Suez as the boundary of Asia and Africa. Dionysius, Mela, Pliny, Sallust, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for that purpose the western branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or descent, which last would assign to Asia, not only Egypt, but part of Libya.]

851 (return) [The French editor has a long and unnecessary note on the History of Cyrene. For the present state of that coast and country, the volume of Captain Beechey is full of interesting details. Egypt, now an independent and improving kingdom, appears, under the enterprising rule of Mahommed Ali, likely to revenge its former oppression upon the decrepit power of the Turkish empire.—M.—This note was written in 1838. The future destiny of Egypt is an important problem, only to be solved by time. This observation will also apply to the new French colony in Algiers.—M. 1845.]

From Cyrene to the ocean, the coast of Africa extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet so closely is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or sandy desert, that its breadth seldom exceeds fourscore or a hundred miles. The eastern division was considered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phoenician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage, it became the centre of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and disorderly states of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppresses the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Massinissa and Jugurtha; but in the time of Augustus, the limits of Numidia were contracted; and, at least, two thirds of the country acquiesced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Caesariensis. The genuine Mauritania, or country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, or Tangier, was distinguished by the appellation of Tingitana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Salle, on the Ocean, so infamous at present for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the Emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear, that his more southern dominions, Morocco itself, and Segelmessa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of Mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets; 86 but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent. 87

86 (return) [The long range, moderate height, and gentle declivity of Mount Atlas, (see Shaw's Travels, p. 5,) are very unlike a solitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and seems to support the heavens. The peak of Teneriff, on the contrary, rises a league and a half above the surface of the sea; and, as it was

frequently visited by the Phoenicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. i. p. 312. Histoire des Voyages, tom. ii.]

87 (return) [M. de Voltaire, tom. xiv. p. 297, unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary Islands on the Roman empire.] Having now finished the circuit of the Roman empire, we may observe, that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, so famous among the ancients, were two mountains which seemed to have been torn asunder by some convulsion of the elements; and at the foot of the European mountain, the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean Sea, its coasts and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baleares, which derive their name of Majorca and Minorca from their respective size, are subject at present, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. 871 It is easier to deplore the fate, than to describe the actual condition, of Corsica. 872 Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms, whilst the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military Order, into fame and opulence. 873

871 (return) [Minorca was lost to Great Britain in 1782. Ann. Register for that year.—M.]

872 (return) [The gallant struggles of the Corsicans for their independence, under Paoli, were brought to a close in the year 1769. This volume was published in 1776. See Botta, Storia d'Italia, vol. xiv.—M.]

873 (return) [Malta, it need scarcely be said, is now in the possession of the English. We have not, however, thought it necessary to notice every change in the political state of the world, since the time of Gibbon.—M]

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to forget, the outlying countries which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence; and they gradually usurped the license of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth. 88 But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern historian, require a more sober and accurate language. He may impress a juster image of the greatness of Rome, by observing that the empire was above two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to Mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer; that it extended in length more than three thousand miles from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates; that it was situated in the finest part of the Temperate Zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degrees of northern latitude; and that it was supposed to contain above sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and well-cultivated land. 89

88 (return) [Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, l. iii. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, a very useful collection.]

89 (return) [See Templeman's Survey of the Globe; but I distrust both the Doctor's learning and his maps.]

Chapter II: The Internal Prosperity In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part I.

Of The Union And Internal Prosperity Of The Roman Empire, In The Age Of The Antonines.

It is not alone by the rapidity, or extent of conquest, that we should estimate the greatness of Rome. The sovereign of the Russian deserts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the seventh summer after his passage of the Hellespont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphasis. 1 Within less than a century, the irresistible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, spread their cruel devastations and transient empire from the Sea of China, to the confines of Egypt and Germany. 2 But the firm edifice of Roman power was raised and preserved by the wisdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws, and adorned by arts. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wise, simple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their ancestors, whilst in civil honors and advantages they were exalted, by just degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

1 (return) [They were erected about the midway between Lahor and Delhi. The conquests of Alexander in Hindostan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great streams of the Indus. * Note: The Hyphasis is one of the five rivers which join the Indus or the Sind, after having traversed the province of the Pendj-ab—a name which in Persian, signifies five rivers. * * * G. The five rivers were, 1. The Hydaspes, now the Chelum, Behni, or Bedusta, (Sanscrit, Vitastha, Arrow-swift.) 2. The Acesines, the Chenab, (Sanscrit, Chandrabhaga, Moon-gift.) 3. Hydraotes, the Ravey, or Iraoty, (Sanscrit, Iravati.) 4. Hyphasis, the Beyah, (Sanscrit, Vepasa, Fetterless.) 5. The Satadru, (Sanscrit, the Hundred Streamed,) the Sutledj, known first to the Greeks in the time of Ptolemy. Rennel. Vincent, Commerce of Anc. book 2. Lassen, Pentapotam. Ind. Wilson's Sanscrit Dict., and the valuable memoir of Lieut. Burnes, Journal of London Geogr. Society, vol. iii. p. 2, with the travels of that very able writer. Compare Gibbon's own note, c. lxv. note 25.—M substit. for G.]

2 (return) [See M. de Guignes, Histoire des Huns, l. xv. xvi. and xvii.]

I. The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people, as equally true; by the

philosopher, as equally false; and by the magistrate, as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.
The superstition of the people was not imbittered by any mixture of theological rancor; nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth. 3 Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder, or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the Pagan mythology was interwoven with various but not discordant materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived or who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed, that they deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence, of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed, in peace, their local and respective influence; nor could the Romans who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of nature, the planets, and the elements were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes, in the most distant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interests required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent, and an Omnipotent Monarch. 4 Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference, than to the resemblance, of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves, that under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities. 5 The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful, and almost a regular form, to the polytheism of the ancient world.

3 (return) [There is not any writer who describes in so lively a manner as Herodotus the true genius of polytheism. The best commentary may be found in Mr. Hume's Natural History of Religion; and the best contrast in Bossuet's Universal History. Some obscure traces of an intolerant spirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians, (see Juvenal, Sat. xv.;) and the Christians, as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception; so important indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work. * Note: M. Constant, in his very learned and eloquent work, "Sur la Religion," with the two additional volumes, "Du Polytheisme Romain," has considered the whole history of polytheism in a tone of philosophy, which, without subscribing to all his opinions, we may be permitted to admire. "The boasted tolerance of polytheism did not rest upon the respect due from society to the freedom of individual opinion. The polytheistic nations, tolerant as they were towards each other, as separate states, were not the less ignorant of the eternal principle, the only basis of enlightened toleration, that every one has a right to worship God in the manner which seems to him the best. Citizens, on the

contrary, were bound to conform to the religion of the state; they had not the liberty to adopt a foreign religion, though that religion might be legally recognized in their own city, for the strangers who were its votaries." —Sur la Religion, v. 184. Du. Polyth. Rom. ii. 308. At this time, the growing religious indifference, and the general administration of the empire by Romans, who, being strangers, would do no more than protect, not enlist themselves in the cause of the local superstitions, had introduced great laxity. But intolerance was clearly the theory both of the Greek and Roman law. The subject is more fully considered in another place.—M.]

4 (return) [The rights, powers, and pretensions of the sovereign of Olympus are very clearly described in the xvth book of the Iliad; in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has improved the theology of Homer. * Note: There is a curious coincidence between Gibbon's expressions and those of the newly-recovered "De Republica" of Cicero, though the argument is rather the converse, lib. i. c. 36. "Sive haec ad utilitatem vitae constitute sint a principibus rerum publicarum, ut rex putaretur unus esse in coelo, qui nutu, ut ait Homerus, totum Olympum converteret, idemque et rex et patos haberetur omnium."—M.]

5 (return) [See, for instance, Caesar de Bell. Gall. vi. 17. Within a century or two, the Gauls themselves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, Apollo, &c.] The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man, rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature, as a very curious and important speculation; and in the profound inquiry, they displayed the strength and weakness of the human understanding. 6 Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and the Platonists endeavored to reconcile the jaring interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the first cause; but, as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work; whilst, on the contrary, the spiritual God of Plato and his disciples resembled an idea, rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less religious cast; but whilst the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The spirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation, and supported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philosophy into a variety of contending sects; but the ingenious youth, who, from every part, resorted to Athens, and the other seats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike instructed in every school to reject and to despise the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible that a philosopher should accept, as divine truths, the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity; or that he should adore, as gods, those imperfect beings whom he must have despised, as men? Against such unworthy adversaries, Cicero condescended to employ the arms of reason and eloquence; but the satire of Lucian was a much more adequate, as well as more efficacious, weapon. We may be well assured, that a writer, conversant with the world, would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society. 7

6 (return) [The admirable work of Cicero de Natura Deorum is the best clew we have to guide us through the dark and profound abyss. He represents with candor, and confutes with subtlety, the opinions of the philosophers.]

7 (return) [I do not pretend to assert, that, in this irreligious age, the natural terrors of superstition, dreams, omens, apparitions, &c., had lost their efficacy.] Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interest of the priests and the credulity of the people were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation, the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing, with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods; and sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith, or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached with the same inward contempt, and the same external reverence, the altars of the Libyan, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter. 8

8 (return) [Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, and Plutarch always inculcated a decent reverence for the religion of their own country, and of mankind. The devotion of Epicurus was assiduous and exemplary. Diogen. Laert. x. 10.]
It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind, though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators; and the office of Supreme Pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination as a convenient instrument of policy; and they respected, as the firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion, that, either in this or in a future life, the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods. 9 But whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes; and that, in every country, the form of superstition, which had received the sanction of time and experience, was the best adapted to the climate, and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods, and the rich ornaments of their temples; 10 but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of

abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous power of the Druids: 11 but the priests themselves, their gods and their altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism. 12

9 (return) [Polybius, l. vi. c. 53, 54. Juvenal, Sat. xiii. laments that in his time this apprehension had lost much of its effect.]

10 (return) [See the fate of Syracuse, Tarentum, Ambracia, Corinth, &c., the conduct of Verres, in Cicero, (Actio ii. Orat. 4,) and the usual practice of governors, in the viiith Satire of Juvenal.]

11 (return) [Seuton. in Claud.—Plin. Hist. Nat. xxx. 1.]

12 (return) [Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes, tom. vi. p. 230—252.]
Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world, 13 who all introduced and enjoyed the favorite superstitions of their native country. 14 Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies; and the Roman senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed, to check this inundation of foreign rites. 141 The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited: the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy. 15 But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed over the cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendor, and Isis and Serapis at length assumed their place among the Roman Deities. 151 16 Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Aesculapius had been invited by solemn embassies; 17 and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities, by the promise of more distinguished honors than they possessed in their native country. 18 Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind. 19

13 (return) [Seneca, Consolat. ad Helviam, p. 74. Edit., Lips.]

14 (return) [Dionysius Halicarn. Antiquitat. Roman. l. ii. (vol. i. p. 275, edit. Reiske.)]

141 (return) [Yet the worship of foreign gods at Rome was only guarantied to the natives of those countries from whence they came. The Romans administered the priestly offices only to the gods of their fathers. Gibbon, throughout the whole preceding sketch of the opinions of the Romans and their subjects, has shown through what causes they were free from religious hatred and its consequences. But, on the other hand the internal state of these religions, the infidelity and hypocrisy of the upper orders, the indifference towards all religion, in even the better part of the common people, during the last days of the republic, and under the Caesars, and the

corrupting principles of the philosophers, had exercised a very pernicious influence on the manners, and even on the constitution.—W.]

15 (return) [In the year of Rome 701, the temple of Isis and Serapis was demolished by the order of the Senate, (Dion Cassius, l. xl. p. 252,) and even by the hands of the consul, (Valerius Maximus, l. 3.) After the death of Caesar it was restored at the public expense, (Dion. l. xlvii. p. 501.) When Augustus was in Egypt, he revered the majesty of Serapis, (Dion, l. li. p. 647;) but in the Pomaerium of Rome, and a mile round it, he prohibited the worship of the Egyptian gods, (Dion, l. liii. p. 679; l. liv. p. 735.) They remained, however, very fashionable under his reign (Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. i.) and that of his successor, till the justice of Tiberius was provoked to some acts of severity. (See Tacit. Annal. ii. 85. Joseph. Antiquit. l. xviii. c. 3.) * Note: See, in the pictures from the walls of Pompeii, the representation of an Isiac temple and worship. Vestiges of Egyptian worship have been traced in Gaul, and, I am informed, recently in Britain, in excavations at York.— M.]

151 (return) [Gibbon here blends into one, two events, distant a hundred and sixty-six years from each other. It was in the year of Rome 535, that the senate having ordered the destruction of the temples of Isis and Serapis, the workman would lend his hand; and the consul, L. Paulus himself (Valer. Max. 1, 3) seized the axe, to give the first blow. Gibbon attribute this circumstance to the second demolition, which took place in the year 701 and which he considers as the first.—W.]

16 (return) [Tertullian in Apologetic. c. 6, p. 74. Edit. Havercamp. I am inclined to attribute their establishment to the devotion of the Flavian family.]

17 (return) [See Livy, l. xi. [Suppl.] and xxix.]

18 (return) [Macrob. Saturnalia, l. iii. c. 9. He gives us a form of evocation.]

19 (return) [Minutius Faelix in Octavio, p. 54. Arnobius, l. vi. p. 115.]
II. The narrow policy of preserving, without any foreign mixture, the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune, and hastened the ruin, of Athens and Sparta. The aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honorable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own wheresoever they were found, among slaves or strangers, enemies or barbarians. 20 During the most flourishing aera of the Athenian commonwealth, the number of citizens gradually decreased from about thirty 21 to twenty-one thousand. 22 If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover, that, notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the social war, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men, able to bear arms in the service of their country. 23 When the allies of Rome claimed an equal share of honors and privileges, the senate indeed preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious

concession. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the severe penalty of their rashness; but the rest of the Italian states, as they successively returned to their duty, were admitted into the bosom of the republic, 24 and soon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government, the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterwards lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But when the popular assemblies had been suppressed by the administration of the emperors, the conquerors were distinguished from the vanquished nations, only as the first and most honorable order of subjects; and their increase, however rapid, was no longer exposed to the same dangers. Yet the wisest princes, who adopted the maxims of Augustus, guarded with the strictest care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffused the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality. 25

20 (return) [Tacit. Annal. xi. 24. The Orbis Romanus of the learned Spanheim is a complete history of the progressive admission of Latium, Italy, and the provinces, to the freedom of Rome. * Note: Democratic states, observes Denina, (delle Revoluz. d' Italia, l. ii. c. l.), are most jealous of communication the privileges of citizenship; monarchies or oligarchies willingly multiply the numbers of their free subjects. The most remarkable accessions to the strength of Rome, by the aggregation of conquered and foreign nations, took place under the regal and patrician—we may add, the Imperial government.—M.]

21 (return) [Herodotus, v. 97. It should seem, however, that he followed a large and popular estimation.]

22 (return) [Athenaeus, Deipnosophist. l. vi. p. 272. Edit. Casaubon. Meursius de Fortuna Attica, c. 4. * Note: On the number of citizens in Athens, compare Boeckh, Public Economy of Athens, (English Tr.,) p. 45, et seq. Fynes Clinton, Essay in Fasti Hel lenici, vol. i. 381.—M.]

23 (return) [See a very accurate collection of the numbers of each Lustrum in M. de Beaufort, Republique Romaine, l. iv. c. 4. Note: All these questions are placed in an entirely new point of view by Nicbuhr, (Romische Geschichte, vol. i. p. 464.) He rejects the census of Servius fullius as unhistoric, (vol. ii. p. 78, et seq.,) and he establishes the principle that the census comprehended all the confederate cities which had the right of Isopolity.—M.]

24 (return) [Appian. de Bell. Civil. l. i. Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 15, 16, 17.]

25 (return) [Maecenas had advised him to declare, by one edict, all his subjects citizens. But we may justly suspect that the historian Dion was the author of a counsel so much adapted to the practice of his own age, and so little to that of Augustus.]

Chapter II: The Internal Prosperity In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part II.
Till the privileges of Romans had been progressively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important distinction was preserved between Italy and the provinces. The former was esteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm basis of the constitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at least the residence, of the emperors and the senate. 26 The estates of the Italians were exempt from taxes, their persons from the arbitrary jurisdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital, 261 were intrusted, under the immediate eye of the supreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial distinctions were obliterated, and they insensibly coalesced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil institutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the merit and services of her adopted sons. Had she always confined the distinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of some of its noblest ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he should call himself an Apulian or a Lucanian; it was in Padua that an historian was found worthy to record the majestic series of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tusculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honor of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deserved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be styled the Third Founder of Rome; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence. 27

26 (return) [The senators were obliged to have one third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. l. vi. ep. 19. The qualification was reduced by Marcus to one fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had sunk nearer to the level of the provinces.]

261 (return) [It may be doubted whether the municipal government of the cities was not the old Italian constitution rather than a transcript from that of Rome. The free government of the cities, observes Savigny, was the leading characteristic of Italy. Geschichte des Romischen Rechts, i. p. G.—M.]

27 (return) [The first part of the Verona Illustrata of the Marquis Maffei gives the clearest and most comprehensive view of the state of Italy under the Caesars. * Note: Compare Denina, Revol. d' Italia, l. ii. c. 6, p. 100, 4 to edit.]
The provinces of the empire (as they have been described in the preceding chapter) were destitute of any public force, or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece, 28 and in Gaul, 29 it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies, which taught mankind that, as the Roman arms prevailed by division, they might be resisted by union. Those princes, whom the ostentation of gratitude or generosity permitted for a while to hold a precarious sceptre, were dismissed

from their thrones, as soon as they had per formed their appointed task of fashioning to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was every where exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute, and without control. 291 But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the peace and obedience of Italy were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

28 (return) [See Pausanias, l. vii. The Romans condescended to restore the names of those assemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.]

29 (return) [They are frequently mentioned by Caesar. The Abbe Dubos attempts, with very little success, to prove that the assemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. Histoire de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Francoise, l. i. c. 4.]

291 (return) [This is, perhaps, rather overstated. Most cities retained the choice of their municipal officers: some retained valuable privileges; Athens, for instance, in form was still a confederate city. (Tac. Ann. ii. 53.) These privileges, indeed, depended entirely on the arbitrary will of the emperor, who revoked or restored them according to his caprice. See Walther Geschichte les Romischen Rechts, i. 324—an admirable summary of the Roman constitutional history.—M.]
"Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits," is a very just observation of Seneca, 30 confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may remark, that, about forty years after the reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day, by the cruel orders of Mithridates. 31 These voluntary exiles were engaged, for the most part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled with their families in the country, where they had honorably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts, and the most convenient situations, were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent; and they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance, they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire, which was seldom disappointed, of sharing, in due time, its honors and advantages. 32 The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendor of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian, it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome. 33 The right of Latium, as it was called, 331 conferred on the cities to which it had been granted, a more partial favor. The

magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families. 34 Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions; 35 those who exercised any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public service, or displayed any personal talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet even, in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to those whose pretensions were seconded by favor or merit. The grandsons of the Gauls, who had besieged Julius Caesar in Alcsia, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome. 36 Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.

30 (return) [Seneca in Consolat. ad Helviam, c. 6.]

31 (return) [Memnon apud Photium, (c. 33,) [c. 224, p. 231, ed Bekker.] Valer. Maxim. ix. 2. Plutarch and Dion Cassius swell the massacre to 150,000 citizens; but I should esteem the smaller number to be more than sufficient.]

32 (return) [Twenty-five colonies were settled in Spain, (see Plin. Hist. Nat. iii. 3, 4; iv. 35;) and nine in Britain, of which London, Colchester, Lincoln, Chester, Gloucester, and Bath still remain considerable cities. (See Richard of Cirencester, p. 36, and Whittaker's History of Manchester, l. i. c. 3.)]

33 (return) [Aul. Gel. Noctes Atticae, xvi 13. The Emperor Hadrian expressed his surprise, that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Italica, which already enjoyed the rights of Municipia, should solicit the title of colonies. Their example, however, became fashionable, and the empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum Dissertat. xiii.]

331 (return) [The right of Latium conferred an exemption from the government of the Roman praefect. Strabo states this distinctly, l. iv. p. 295, edit. Caesar's. See also Walther, p. 233.—M]

34 (return) [Spanheim, Orbis Roman. c. 8, p. 62.]

35 (return) [Aristid. in Romae Encomio. tom. i. p. 218, edit. Jebb.]

36 (return) [Tacit. Annal. xi. 23, 24. Hist. iv. 74.]
So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue. 37 The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the east was less docile than the

west to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colors, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendor of prosperity, became gradually more visible, as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were open to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul Britain, and Pannonia, 38 that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains, or among the peasants. 39 Education and study insensibly inspired the natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They solicited with more ardor, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honors of the state; supported the national dignity in letters 40 and in arms; and at length, in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have disowned for their countryman. The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long since civilized and corrupted. They had too much taste to relinquish their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues, of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power. 41 Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and sentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progress of colonies and conquest, had been diffused from the Adriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Asia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts, those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the East, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects. Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and especially in Egypt, the use of their ancient dialects, by secluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians. 42 The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the contempt, the sullen ferociousness of the latter excited the aversion, of the conquerors. 43 Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city: and it was remarked, that more than two hundred and thirty years elapsed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome. 44

37 (return) [See Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5. Augustin. de Civitate Dei, xix 7 Lipsius de Pronunciatione Linguae Latinae, c. 3.]

38 (return) [Apuleius and Augustin will answer for Africa; Strabo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus, for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inscriptions. * Note: Mr. Hallam contests this assertion as regards Britain. "Nor did the Romans ever establish their

language—I know not whether they wished to do so—in this island, as we perceive by that stubborn British tongue which has survived two conquests." In his note, Mr. Hallam examines the passage from Tacitus (Agric. xxi.) to which Gibbon refers. It merely asserts the progress of Latin studies among the higher orders. (Midd. Ages, iii. 314.) Probably it was a kind of court language, and that of public affairs and prevailed in the Roman colonies.—M.]

39 (return) [The Celtic was preserved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica. We may observe, that Apuleius reproaches an African youth, who lived among the populace, with the use of the Punic; whilst he had almost forgot Greek, and neither could nor would speak Latin, (Apolog. p. 596.) The greater part of St. Austin's congregations were strangers to the Punic.]

40 (return) [Spain alone produced Columella, the Senecas, Lucan, Martial, and Quintilian.]

41 (return) [There is not, I believe, from Dionysius to Libanus, a single Greek critic who mentions Virgil or Horace. They seem ignorant that the Romans had any good writers.]

42 (return) [The curious reader may see in Dupin, (Bibliotheque Ecclesiastique, tom. xix. p. 1, c. 8,) how much the use of the Syriac and Egyptian languages was still preserved.]

43 (return) [See Juvenal, Sat. iii. and xv. Ammian. Marcellin. xxii. 16.]

44 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii. p. 1275. The first instance happened under the reign of Septimius Severus.]
It is a just though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe, soon became the favorite object of study and imitation in Italy and the western provinces. But the elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government. 45 The two languages exercised at the same time their separate jurisdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business were equally conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

45 (return) [See Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 2, n. 2. The emperor Claudius disfranchised an eminent Grecian for not understanding Latin. He was probably in some public office. Suetonius in Claud. c. 16. * Note: Causes seem to have been

pleaded, even in the senate, in both languages. Val. Max. loc. cit. Dion. l. lvii. c. 15.—M]

It was by such institutions that the nations of the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity, the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigor of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, 451 taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price, 46 accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction, 47 the most severe 471 regulations, 48 and the most cruel treatment, seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. 481 In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. 482 The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude. 49 The existence of a slave became an object of greater value, and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance, or a less cruel master. 50

451 (return) [It was this which rendered the wars so sanguinary, and the battles so obstinate. The immortal Robertson, in an excellent discourse on the state of the world at the period of the establishment of Christianity, has traced a picture of the melancholy effects of slavery, in which we find all the depth of his views and the strength of his mind. I shall oppose successively some passages to the reflections of Gibbon. The reader will see, not without interest, the truths which Gibbon appears to have mistaken or voluntarily neglected, developed by one of the best of modern historians. It is important to call them to mind here, in order to establish the facts and their consequences with accuracy. I shall more than once have occasion to employ, for this purpose, the discourse of Robertson. "Captives taken in war were, in all probability, the first persons subjected to perpetual servitude; and, when the necessities or luxury of mankind increased the demand for slaves, every new war recruited their number, by reducing the vanquished to that wretched condition. Hence proceeded the fierce and desperate spirit with which wars were carried on

among ancient nations. While chains and slavery were the certain lot of the conquered, battles were fought, and towns defended with a rage and obstinacy which nothing but horror at such a fate could have inspired; but, putting an end to the cruel institution of slavery, Christianity extended its mild influences to the practice of war, and that barbarous art, softened by its humane spirit, ceased to be so destructive. Secure, in every event, of personal liberty, the resistance of the vanquished became less obstinate, and the triumph of the victor less cruel. Thus humanity was introduced into the exercise of war, with which it appears to be almost incompatible; and it is to the merciful maxims of Christianity, much more than to any other cause, that we must ascribe the little ferocity and bloodshed which accompany modern victories."—G.]

46 (return) [In the camp of Lucullus, an ox sold for a drachma, and a slave for four drachmae, or about three shillings. Plutarch. in Lucull. p. 580. * Note: Above 100,000 prisoners were taken in the Jewish war.—G. Hist. of Jews, iii. 71. According to a tradition preserved by S. Jerom, after the insurrection in the time of Hadrian, they were sold as cheap as horse. Ibid. 124. Compare Blair on Roman Slavery, p. 19.—M., and Dureau de la blalle, Economie Politique des Romains, l. i. c. 15. But I cannot think that this writer has made out his case as to the common price of an agricultural slave being from 2000 to 2500 francs, (80l. to 100l.) He has overlooked the passages which show the ordinary prices, (i. e. Hor. Sat. ii. vii. 45,) and argued from extraordinary and exceptional cases.—M. 1845.]

47 (return) [Diodorus Siculus in Eclog. Hist. l. xxxiv. and xxxvi. Florus, iii. 19, 20.]

471 (return) [The following is the example: we shall see whether the word "severe" is here in its place. "At the time in which L. Domitius was praetor in Sicily, a slave killed a wild boar of extraordinary size. The praetor, struck by the dexterity and courage of the man, desired to see him. The poor wretch, highly gratified with the distinction, came to present himself before the praetor, in hopes, no doubt, of praise and reward; but Domitius, on learning that he had only a javelin to attack and kill the boar, ordered him to be instantly crucified, under the barbarous pretext that the law prohibited the use of this weapon, as of all others, to slaves." Perhaps the cruelty of Domitius is less astonishing than the indifference with which the Roman orator relates this circumstance, which affects him so little that he thus expresses himself: "Durum hoc fortasse videatur, neque ego in ullam partem disputo." "This may appear harsh, nor do I give any opinion on the subject." And it is the same orator who exclaims in the same oration, "Facinus est cruciare civem Romanum; scelus verberare; prope parricidium necare: quid dicam in crucem tollere?" "It is a crime to imprison a Roman citizen; wickedness to scourge; next to parricide to put to death, what shall I call it to crucify?"
In general, this passage of Gibbon on slavery, is full, not only of blamable indifference, but of an exaggeration of impartiality which resembles dishonesty. He endeavors to extenuate all that is appalling in the condition and treatment of the slaves; he would make us consider those cruelties as possibly "justified by necessity." He then describes, with minute accuracy, the slightest mitigations of

their deplorable condition; he attributes to the virtue or the policy of the emperors the progressive amelioration in the lot of the slaves; and he passes over in silence the most influential cause, that which, after rendering the slaves less miserable, has contributed at length entirely to enfranchise them from their sufferings and their chains,—Christianity. It would be easy to accumulate the most frightful, the most agonizing details, of the manner in which the Romans treated their slaves; whole works have been devoted to the description. I content myself with referring to them. Some reflections of Robertson, taken from the discourse already quoted, will make us feel that Gibbon, in tracing the mitigation of the condition of the slaves, up to a period little later than that which witnessed the establishment of Christianity in the world, could not have avoided the acknowledgment of the influence of that beneficent cause, if he had not already determined not to speak of it.

"Upon establishing despotic government in the Roman empire, domestic tyranny rose, in a short time, to an astonishing height. In that rank soil, every vice, which power nourishes in the great, or oppression engenders in the mean, thrived and grew up apace. * * * It is not the authority of any single detached precept in the gospel, but the spirit and genius of the Christian religion, more powerful than any particular command, which hath abolished the practice of slavery throughout the world. The temper which Christianity inspired was mild and gentle; and the doctrines it taught added such dignity and lustre to human nature, as rescued it from the dishonorable servitude into which it was sunk."

It is in vain, then, that Gibbon pretends to attribute solely to the desire of keeping up the number of slaves, the milder conduct which the Romans began to adopt in their favor at the time of the emperors. This cause had hitherto acted in an opposite direction; how came it on a sudden to have a different influence? "The masters," he says, "encouraged the marriage of their slaves; * * * the sentiments of nature, the habits of education, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude." The children of slaves were the property of their master, who could dispose of or alienate them like the rest of his property. Is it in such a situation, with such notions, that the sentiments of nature unfold themselves, or habits of education become mild and peaceful? We must not attribute to causes inadequate or altogether without force, effects which require to explain them a reference to more influential causes; and even if these slighter causes had in effect a manifest influence, we must not forget that they are themselves the effect of a primary, a higher, and more extensive cause, which, in giving to the mind and to the character a more disinterested and more humane bias, disposed men to second or themselves to advance, by their conduct, and by the change of manners, the happy results which it tended to produce.—G.

I have retained the whole of M. Guizot's note, though, in his zeal for the invaluable blessings of freedom and Christianity, he has done Gibbon injustice. The condition of the slaves was undoubtedly improved under the emperors. What a great authority has said, "The condition of a slave is better under an arbitrary than under a free government," (Smith's Wealth of Nations, iv. 7,) is, I believe, supported by the history of all ages and nations. The protecting edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines are historical facts, and can as little be attributed to the influence of Christianity, as the milder language of heathen writers, of Seneca, (particularly Ep. 47,) of Pliny, and

of Plutarch. The latter influence of Christianity is admitted by Gibbon himself. The subject of Roman slavery has recently been investigated with great diligence in a very modest but valuable volume, by Wm. Blair, Esq., Edin. 1833. May we be permitted, while on the subject, to refer to the most splendid passage extant of Mr. Pitt's eloquence, the description of the Roman slave-dealer. on the shores of Britain, condemning the island to irreclaimable barbarism, as a perpetual and prolific nursery of slaves? Speeches, vol. ii. p. 80.
Gibbon, it should be added, was one of the first and most consistent opponents of the African slave-trade. (See Hist. ch. xxv. and Letters to Lor Sheffield, Misc. Works)—M.]

48 (return) [See a remarkable instance of severity in Cicero in Verrem, v. 3.]

481 (return) [An active slave-trade, which was carried on in many quarters, particularly the Euxine, the eastern provinces, the coast of Africa, and British must be taken into the account. Blair, 23—32.—M.]

482 (return) [The Romans, as well in the first ages of the republic as later, allowed to their slaves a kind of marriage, (contubernium:) notwithstanding this, luxury made a greater number of slaves in demand. The increase in their population was not sufficient, and recourse was had to the purchase of slaves, which was made even in the provinces of the East subject to the Romans. It is, moreover, known that slavery is a state little favorable to population. (See Hume's Essay, and Malthus on population, i. 334.—G.) The testimony of Appian (B.C. l. i. c. 7) is decisive in favor of the rapid multiplication of the agricultural slaves; it is confirmed by the numbers engaged in the servile wars. Compare also Blair, p. 119; likewise Columella l. viii.—M.]

49 (return) [See in Gruter, and the other collectors, a great number of inscriptions addressed by slaves to their wives, children, fellow-servants, masters, &c. They are all most probably of the Imperial age.]

50 (return) [See the Augustan History, and a Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxvth volume of the Academy of Inscriptions, upon the Roman slaves.]
Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse. 51
It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honorable distinction was confined to

such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honors. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, they likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation. 52 Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honors was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

51 (return) [See another Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxviith volume, on the Roman freedmen.]

52 (return) [Spanheim, Orbis Roman. l. i. c. 16, p. 124, &c.] It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit; but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers. 53 Without interpreting, in their utmost strictness, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads, 54 we may venture to pronounce, that the proportion of slaves, who were valued as property, was more considerable than that of servants, who can be computed only as an expense. 55 The youths of a promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and their price was ascertained by the degree of their skill and talents. 56 Almost every profession, either liberal 57 or mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury. 58 It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase, than to hire his workmen; and in the country, slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general observation, and to display the multitude of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were maintained in a single palace of Rome. 59 The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her property. 60 A freedman, under the name of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves. 61

53 (return) [Seneca de Clementia, l. i. c. 24. The original is much stronger, "Quantum periculum immineret si servi nostri numerare nos coepissent."]

54 (return) [See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii.) and Athenaeus (Deipnosophist. l. vi. p. 272.) The latter boldly asserts, that he knew very many Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves.]

55 (return) [In Paris there are not more than 43,000 domestics of every sort, and not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. Messange, Recherches sui la Population, p. 186.]

56 (return) [A learned slave sold for many hundred pounds sterling: Atticus always bred and taught them himself. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. c. 13, [on the prices of slaves. Blair, 149.]—M.]

57 (return) [Many of the Roman physicians were slaves. See Dr. Middleton's Dissertation and Defence.]

58 (return) [Their ranks and offices are very copiously enumerated by Pignorius de Servis.]

59 (return) [Tacit. Annal. xiv. 43. They were all executed for not preventing their master's murder. * Note: The remarkable speech of Cassius shows the proud feelings of the Roman aristocracy on this subject.—M]

60 (return) [Apuleius in Apolog. p. 548. edit. Delphin]

61 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. 47.]
The number of subjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of slaves, cannot now be fixed with such a degree of accuracy, as the importance of the object would deserve. We are informed, that when the Emperor Claudius exercised the office of censor, he took an account of six millions nine hundred and forty-five thousand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, must have amounted to about twenty millions of souls. The multitude of subjects of an inferior rank was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumstance which could influence the balance, it seems probable that there existed, in the time of Claudius, about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either sex, and of every age; and that the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. The total amount of this imperfect calculation would rise to about one hundred and twenty millions of persons; a degree of population which possibly exceeds that of modern Europe, 62 and forms the most numerous society that has ever been united under the same system of government.

611] (return) [According to Robertson, there were twice as many slaves as free citizens.—G. Mr. Blair (p. 15) estimates three slaves to one freeman, between the conquest of Greece, B.C. 146, and the reign of Alexander Severus, A. D. 222, 235. The proportion was probably larger in Italy than in the provinces.—M. On the other hand, Zumpt, in his Dissertation quoted below, (p. 86,) asserts it to be a gross error in Gibbon to reckon the number of slaves equal to that of the free population. The luxury and magnificence of the great, (he observes,) at the commencement of the empire, must not be taken as the groundwork of calculations for the whole Roman world. "The agricultural laborer, and the artisan, in Spain, Gaul, Britain, Syria, and

Egypt, maintained himself, as in the present day, by his own labor and that of his household, without possessing a single slave." The latter part of my note was intended to suggest this consideration. Yet so completely was slavery rooted in the social system, both in the east and the west, that in the great diffusion of wealth at this time, every one, I doubt not, who could afford a domestic slave, kept one; and generally, the number of slaves was in proportion to the wealth. I do not believe that the cultivation of the soil by slaves was confined to Italy; the holders of large estates in the provinces would probably, either from choice or necessity, adopt the same mode of cultivation. The latifundia, says Pliny, had ruined Italy, and had begun to ruin the provinces. Slaves were no doubt employed in agricultural labor to a great extent in Sicily, and were the estates of those six enormous landholders who were said to have possessed the whole province of Africa, cultivated altogether by free coloni? Whatever may have been the case in the rural districts, in the towns and cities the household duties were almost entirely discharged by slaves, and vast numbers belonged to the public establishments. I do not, however, differ so far from Zumpt, and from M. Dureau de la Malle, as to adopt the higher and bolder estimate of Robertson and Mr. Blair, rather than the more cautious suggestions of Gibbon. I would reduce rather than increase the proportion of the slave population. The very ingenious and elaborate calculations of the French writer, by which he deduces the amount of the population from the produce and consumption of corn in Italy, appear to me neither precise nor satisfactory bases for such complicated political arithmetic. I am least satisfied with his views as to the population of the city of Rome; but this point will be more fitly reserved for a note on the thirty-first chapter of Gibbon. The work, however, of M. Dureau de la Malle is very curious and full on some of the minuter points of Roman statistics.—M. 1845.]

62 (return) [Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy with its islands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Russia, six in Poland, six in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five, or one hundred and seven millions. See Voltaire, de l'Histoire Generale. * Note: The present population of Europe is estimated at 227,700,000. Malts Bran, Geogr. Trans edit. 1832 See details in the different volumes Another authority, (Almanach de Gotha,) quoted in a recent English publication, gives the following details:—
France, 32,897,521 Germany, (including Hungary, Prussian and Austrian Poland,) 56,136,213 Italy, 20,548,616 Great Britain and Ireland, 24,062,947 Spain and Portugal, 13,953,959. 3,144,000 Russia, including Poland, 44,220,600 Cracow, 128,480 Turkey, (including Pachalic of Dschesair,) 9,545,300 Greece, 637,700 Ionian Islands, 208,100 Sweden and Norway, 3,914,963 Denmark, 2,012,998 Belgium, 3,533,538 Holland, 2,444,550 Switzerland, 985,000. Total, 219,344,116
Since the publication of my first annotated edition of Gibbon, the subject of the population of the Roman empire has been investigated by two writers of great industry and learning; Mons. Dureau de la Malle, in his Economie Politique des Romains, liv. ii. c. 1. to 8, and M. Zumpt, in a dissertation printed in the Transactions of the Berlin Academy, 1840. M. Dureau de la Malle confines his inquiry almost

entirely to the city of Rome, and Roman Italy. Zumpt examines at greater length the axiom, which he supposes to have been assumed by Gibbon as unquestionable, "that Italy and the Roman world was never so populous as in the time of the Antonines." Though this probably was Gibbon's opinion, he has not stated it so peremptorily as asserted by Mr. Zumpt. It had before been expressly laid down by Hume, and his statement was controverted by Wallace and by Malthus. Gibbon says (p. 84) that there is no reason to believe the country (of Italy) less populous in the age of the Antonines, than in that of Romulus; and Zumpt acknowledges that we have no satisfactory knowledge of the state of Italy at that early age. Zumpt, in my opinion with some reason, takes the period just before the first Punic war, as that in which Roman Italy (all south of the Rubicon) was most populous. From that time, the numbers began to diminish, at first from the enormous waste of life out of the free population in the foreign, and afterwards in the civil wars; from the cultivation of the soil by slaves; towards the close of the republic, from the repugnance to marriage, which resisted alike the dread of legal punishment and the offer of legal immunity and privilege; and from the depravity of manners, which interfered with the procreation, the birth, and the rearing of children. The arguments and the authorities of Zumpt are equally conclusive as to the decline of population in Greece. Still the details, which he himself adduces as to the prosperity and populousness of Asia Minor, and the whole of the Roman East, with the advancement of the European provinces, especially Gaul, Spain, and Britain, in civilization, and therefore in populousness, (for I have no confidence in the vast numbers sometimes assigned to the barbarous inhabitants of these countries,) may, I think, fairly compensate for any deduction to be made from Gibbon's general estimate on account of Greece and Italy. Gibbon himself acknowledges his own estimate to be vague and conjectural; and I may venture to recommend the dissertation of Zumpt as deserving respectful consideration.—M 1815.]

Chapter II: The Internal Prosperity In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part III.

Domestic peace and union were the natural consequences of the moderate and comprehensive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Asia, we shall behold despotism in the centre, and weakness in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the administration of justice, enforced by the presence of an army; hostile barbarians established in the heart of the country, hereditary satraps usurping the dominion of the provinces, and subjects inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquished nations, blended into one great people, resigned the hope, nay, even the wish, of resuming their independence, and scarcely considered their own existence as distinct from the existence of Rome. The established authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exercised with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tyber. The legions

were destined to serve against the public enemy, and the civil magistrate seldom required the aid of a military force. 63 In this state of general security, the leisure, as well as opulence, both of the prince and people, were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

63 (return) [Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. ii. c. 16. The oration of Agrippa, or rather of the historian, is a fine picture of the Roman empire.]

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture constructed by the Romans, how many have escaped the notice of history, how few have resisted the ravages of time and barbarism! And yet, even the majestic ruins that are still scattered over Italy and the provinces, would be sufficient to prove that those countries were once the seat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention: but they are rendered more interesting, by two important circumstances, which connect the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful history of human manners. Many of those works were erected at private expense, and almost all were intended for public benefit.

It is natural to suppose that the greatest number, as well as the most considerable of the Roman edifices, were raised by the emperors, who possessed so unbounded a command both of men and money. Augustus was accustomed to boast that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble. 64 The strict economy of Vespasian was the source of his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the stamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire, were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inspection. He was himself an artist; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the monarch. They were encouraged by the Antonines, as they contributed to the happiness of the people. But if the emperors were the first, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was universally imitated by their principal subjects, who were not afraid of declaring to the world that they had spirit to conceive, and wealth to accomplish, the noblest undertakings. Scarcely had the proud structure of the Coliseum been dedicated at Rome, before the edifices, of a smaller scale indeed, but of the same design and materials, were erected for the use, and at the expense, of the cities of Capua and Verona. 65 The inscription of the stupendous bridge of Alcantara attests that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Lusitanian communities. When Pliny was intrusted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richest or most considerable of the empire, he found the cities within his jurisdiction striving with each other in every useful and ornamental work, that might deserve the curiosity of strangers, or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the proconsul to supply their deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation. 66 The opulent senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honor, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendor of their age and country; and the influence of fashion very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors, we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

64 (return) [Sueton. in August. c. 28. Augustus built in Rome the temple and forum of Mars the Avenger; the temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Capitol; that of Apollo Palatine, with public libraries; the portico and basilica of Caius and Lucius; the porticos of Livia and Octavia; and the theatre of Marcellus. The example of the sovereign was imitated by his ministers and generals; and his friend Agrippa left behind him the immortal monument of the Pantheon.] [See Theatre Of Marcellus: Augustus built in Rome the theatre of Marcellus.]

65 (return) [See Maffei, Veroni Illustrata, l. iv. p. 68.]

66 (return) [Footnote 66: See the xth book of Pliny's Epistles. He mentions the following works carried on at the expense of the cities. At Nicomedia, a new forum, an aqueduct, and a canal, left unfinished by a king; at Nice, a gymnasium, and a theatre, which had already cost near ninety thousand pounds; baths at Prusa and Claudiopolis, and an aqueduct of sixteen miles in length for the use of Sinope.]

The family of Herod, at least after it had been favored by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Aeacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigor of the law, the emperor might have asserted his claim, and the prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confession, the officiousness of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refused to accept any part of it, and commanded him to use, without scruple, the present of fortune. The cautious Athenian still insisted, that the treasure was too considerable for a subject, and that he knew not how to use it. Abuse it then, replied the monarch, with a good-natured peevishness; for it is your own. 67 Many will be of opinion, that Atticus literally obeyed the emperor's last instructions; since he expended the greatest part of his fortune, which was much increased by an advantageous marriage, in the service of the public. He had obtained for his son Herod the prefecture of the free cities of Asia; and the young magistrate, observing that the town of Troas was indifferently supplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian three hundred myriads of drachms, (about a hundred thousand pounds,) for the construction of a new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work, the charge amounted to more than double the estimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus silenced their complaints, by requesting that he might be permitted to take upon himself the whole additional expense. 68

67 (return) [Hadrian afterwards made a very equitable regulation, which divided all treasure-trove between the right of property and that of discovery. Hist. August. p. 9.]

68 (return) [Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. p. 548.]

The ablest preceptors of Greece and Asia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil soon became a celebrated orator,

according to the useless rhetoric of that age, which, confining itself to the schools, disdained to visit either the Forum or the Senate.
He was honored with the consulship at Rome: but the greatest part of his life was spent in a philosophic retirement at Athens, and his adjacent villas; perpetually surrounded by sophists, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the superiority of a rich and generous rival. 69 The monuments of his genius have perished; some considerable ruins still preserve the fame of his taste and munificence: modern travellers have measured the remains of the stadium which he constructed at Athens. It was six hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finished in four years, whilst Herod was president of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla he dedicated a theatre, scarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar, very curiously carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum, 691 designed by Pericles for musical performances, and the rehearsal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over barbaric greatness; as the timbers employed in the construction consisted chiefly of the masts of the Persian vessels. Notwithstanding the repairs bestowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to decay. Herod restored its ancient beauty and magnificence. Nor was the liberality of that illustrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The most splendid ornaments bestowed on the temple of Neptune in the Isthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a stadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylae, and an aqueduct at Canusium in Italy, were insufficient to exhaust his treasures. The people of Epirus, Thessaly, Euboea, Boeotia, and Peloponnesus, experienced his favors; and many inscriptions of the cities of Greece and Asia gratefully style Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor. 70

69 (return) [Aulus Gellius, in Noct. Attic. i. 2, ix. 2, xviii. 10, xix. 12. Phil ostrat. p. 564.]

691 (return) [The Odeum served for the rehearsal of new comedies as well as tragedies; they were read or repeated, before representation, without music or decorations, &c. No piece could be represented in the theatre if it had not been previously approved by judges for this purpose. The king of Cappadocia who restored the Odeum, which had been burnt by Sylla, was Araobarzanes. See Martini, Dissertation on the Odeons of the Ancients, Leipsic. 1767, p. 10—91.—W.]

70 (return) [See Philostrat. l. ii. p. 548, 560. Pausanias, l. i. and vii. 10. The life of Herodes, in the xxxth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions.]
In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modest simplicity of private houses announced the equal condition of freedom; whilst the sovereignty of the people was represented in the majestic edifices designed to the public use; 71 nor was this republican spirit totally extinguished by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honor and benefit, that the most virtuous of the emperors affected to display their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a just indignation, but the vast extent of ground which had been usurped by his selfish luxury was more nobly filled under the succeeding reigns by the Coliseum, the baths

of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddess of Peace, and to the genius of Rome. 72 These monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the most beautiful productions of Grecian painting and sculpture; and in the temple of Peace, a very curious library was open to the curiosity of the learned. 721 At a small distance from thence was situated the Forum of Trajan. It was surrounded by a lofty portico, in the form of a quadrangle, into which four triumphal arches opened a noble and spacious entrance: in the centre arose a column of marble, whose height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which still subsists in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact representation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran soldier contemplated the story of his own campaigns, and by an easy illusion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen associated himself to the honors of the triumph. All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire, were embellished by the same liberal spirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphi theatres, theatres, temples, porticoes, triumphal arches, baths and aqueducts, all variously conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleasures of the meanest citizen. The last mentioned of those edifices deserve our peculiar attention. The boldness of the enterprise, the solidity of the execution, and the uses to which they were subservient, rank the aqueducts among the noblest monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a just preeminence; but the curious traveller, who, without the light of history, should examine those of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude that those provincial towns had formerly been the residence of some potent monarch. The solitudes of Asia and Africa were once covered with flourishing cities, whose populousness, and even whose existence, was derived from such artificial supplies of a perennial stream of fresh water. 73

71 (return) [It is particularly remarked of Athens by Dicaearchus, de Statu Graeciae, p. 8, inter Geographos Minores, edit. Hudson.]

72 (return) [Donatus de Roma Vetere, l. iii. c. 4, 5, 6. Nardini Roma Antica, l. iii. 11, 12, 13, and a Ms. description of ancient Rome, by Bernardus Oricellarius, or Rucellai, of which I obtained a copy from the library of the Canon Ricardi at Florence. Two celebrated pictures of Timanthes and of Protogenes are mentioned by Pliny, as in the Temple of Peace; and the Laocoon was found in the baths of Titus.]

721 (return) [The Emperor Vespasian, who had caused the Temple of Peace to be built, transported to it the greatest part of the pictures, statues, and other works of art which had escaped the civil tumults. It was there that every day the artists and the learned of Rome assembled; and it is on the site of this temple that a multitude of antiques have been dug up. See notes of Reimar on Dion Cassius, lxvi. c. 15, p. 1083.—W.]

73 (return) [Montfaucon l'Antiquite Expliquee, tom. iv. p. 2, l. i. c. 9. Fabretti has composed a very learned treatise on the aqueducts of Rome.]

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works, of the Roman empire. The observation of the number and greatness of its cities will serve to confirm the former, and to multiply the latter. It may not be unpleasing to collect a few scattered instances relative to that subject without forgetting, however, that from the vanity of nations and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and upon Laurentum.

I. Ancient Italy is said to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities; and for whatsoever aera of antiquity the expression might be intended, 74 there is not any reason to believe the country less populous in the age of the Antonines, than in that of Romulus. The petty states of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whose superior influence they had been attracted. 741 Those parts of Italy which have so long languished under the lazy tyranny of priests and viceroys, had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the first symptoms of decay which they experienced, were amply compensated by the rapid improvements of the Cisalpine Gaul. The splendor of Verona may be traced in its remains: yet Verona was less celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan or Ravenna.

II. The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boast of her twelve hundred cities; 75 and though, in the northern parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itself, were little more than the rude and imperfect townships of a rising people, the southern provinces imitated the wealth and elegance of Italy. 76 Many were the cities of Gaul, Marseilles, Arles, Nismes, Narbonne, Thoulouse, Bourdeaux, Autun, Vienna, Lyons, Langres, and Treves, whose ancient condition might sustain an equal, and perhaps advantageous comparison with their present state. With regard to Spain, that country flourished as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhausted by the abuse of her strength, by America, and by superstition, her pride might possibly be confounded, if we required such a list of three hundred and sixty cities, as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Vespasian. 77 III. Three hundred African cities had once acknowledged the authority of Carthage, 78 nor is it likely that their numbers diminished under the administration of the emperors: Carthage itself rose with new splendor from its ashes; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, soon recovered all the advantages which can be separated from independent sovereignty.

IV. The provinces of the East present the contrast of Roman magnificence with Turkish barbarism. The ruins of antiquity scattered over uncultivated fields, and ascribed, by ignorance to the power of magic, scarcely afford a shelter to the oppressed peasant or wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Caesars, the proper Asia alone contained five hundred populous cities, 79 enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had once disputed the honor of dedicating a temple of Tiberius, and their respective merits were examined by the senate. 80 Four of them were immediately rejected as unequal to the burden; and among these was Laodicea, whose splendor is still displayed in its ruins. 81 Laodicea collected a very considerable revenue from its flocks of sheep, celebrated for the fineness of their wool, and had received, a little

before the contest, a legacy of above four hundred thousand pounds by the testament of a generous citizen. 82 If such was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have been the wealth of those cities, whose claim appeared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Ephesus, who so long disputed with each other the titular primacy of Asia? 83 The capitals of Syria and Egypt held a still superior rank in the empire; Antioch and Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities, 84 and yielded, with reluctance, to the majesty of Rome itself.

74 (return) [Aelian. Hist. Var. lib. ix. c. 16. He lived in the time of Alexander Severus. See Fabricius, Biblioth. Graeca, l. iv. c. 21.]

741 (return) [This may in some degree account for the difficulty started by Livy, as to the incredibly numerous armies raised by the small states around Rome where, in his time, a scanty stock of free soldiers among a larger population of Roman slaves broke the solitude. Vix seminario exiguo militum relicto servitia Romana ab solitudine vindicant, Liv. vi. vii. Compare Appian Bel Civ. i. 7.—M. subst. for G.]

75 (return) [Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. The number, however, is mentioned, and should be received with a degree of latitude. Note: Without doubt no reliance can be placed on this passage of Josephus. The historian makes Agrippa give advice to the Jews, as to the power of the Romans; and the speech is full of declamation which can furnish no conclusions to history. While enumerating the nations subject to the Romans, he speaks of the Gauls as submitting to 1200 soldiers, (which is false, as there were eight legions in Gaul, Tac. iv. 5,) while there are nearly twelve hundred cities.—G. Josephus (infra) places these eight legions on the Rhine, as Tacitus does.—M.]

76 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5.]

77 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 3, 4, iv. 35. The list seems authentic and accurate; the division of the provinces, and the different condition of the cities, are minutely distinguished.]

78 (return) [Strabon. Geograph. l. xvii. p. 1189.]

79 (return) [Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. p. 548, edit. Olear.]

80 (return) [Tacit. Annal. iv. 55. I have taken some pains in consulting and comparing modern travellers, with regard to the fate of those eleven cities of Asia. Seven or eight are totally destroyed: Hypaepe, Tralles, Laodicea, Hium, Halicarnassus, Miletus, Ephesus, and we may add Sardes. Of the remaining three, Pergamus is a straggling village of two or three thousand inhabitants; Magnesia, under the name of Guzelhissar, a town of some consequence; and Smyrna, a great

city, peopled by a hundred thousand souls. But even at Smyrna, while the Franks have maintained a commerce, the Turks have ruined the arts.]

81 (return) [See a very exact and pleasing description of the ruins of Laodicea, in Chandler's Travels through Asia Minor, p. 225, &c.]

82 (return) [Strabo, l. xii. p. 866. He had studied at Tralles.]

83 (return) [See a Dissertation of M. de Boze, Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xviii. Aristides pronounced an oration, which is still extant, to recommend concord to the rival cities.]

84 (return) [The inhabitants of Egypt, exclusive of Alexandria, amounted to seven millions and a half, (Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16.) Under the military government of the Mamelukes, Syria was supposed to contain sixty thousand villages, (Histoire de Timur Bec, l. v. c. 20.)]

Chapter II: The Internal Prosperity In The Age Of The Antonines. Part IV.

All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, issuing from the Forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the distance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jerusalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication, from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thousand and eighty Roman miles. 85 The public roads were accurately divided by mile-stones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams. 86 The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace which commanded the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in some places near the capital, with granite. 87 Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; out their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish, throughout their extensive dominions, the regular institution of posts. 88 Houses were every where erected at the distance only of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel a hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads. 89 891 The use of posts was allowed

to those who claimed it by an Imperial mandate; but though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or conveniency of private citizens. 90 Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean: and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake. The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbors; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tyber, and formed by the emperor Claudius, was a useful monument of Roman greatness. 91 From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favorable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten, to Alexandria in Egypt. 92
[See Remains Of Claudian Aquaduct]

85 (return) [The following Itinerary may serve to convey some idea of the direction of the road, and of the distance between the principal towns. I. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. II. London, 227. III. Rhutupiae or Sandwich, 67. IV. The navigation to Boulogne, 45. V. Rheims, 174. VI. Lyons, 330. VII. Milan, 324. VIII. Rome, 426. IX. Brundusium, 360. X. The navigation to Dyrrachium, 40. XI. Byzantium, 711. XII. Ancyra, 283. XIII. Tarsus, 301. XIV. Antioch, 141. XV. Tyre, 252. XVI. Jerusalem, 168. In all 4080 Roman, or 3740 English miles. See the Itineraries published by Wesseling, his annotations; Gale and Stukeley for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy.]

86 (return) [Montfaucon, l'Antiquite Expliquee, (tom. 4, p. 2, l. i. c. 5,) has described the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Nismes, &c.]

87 (return) [Bergier, Histoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, l. ii. c. l. l—28.]

88 (return) [Procopius in Hist. Arcana, c. 30. Bergier, Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv. Codex Theodosian. l. viii. tit. v. vol. ii. p. 506—563 with Godefroy's learned commentary.]

89 (return) [In the time of Theodosius, Caesarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was 725 Roman, or 665 English miles. See Libanius, Orat. xxii., and the Itineria, p. 572—581. Note: A courier is mentioned in Walpole's Travels, ii. 335, who was to travel from Aleppo to Constantinople, more than 700 miles, in eight days, an unusually short journey.—M.]

891 (return) [Posts for the conveyance of intelligence were established by Augustus. Suet. Aug. 49. The couriers travelled with amazing speed. Blair on Roman Slavery, note, p. 261. It is probable that the posts, from the time of Augustus, were

confined to the public service, and supplied by impressment Nerva, as it appears from a coin of his reign, made an important change; "he established posts upon all the public roads of Italy, and made the service chargeable upon his own exchequer. Hadrian, perceiving the advantage of this improvement, extended it to all the provinces of the empire." Cardwell on Coins, p. 220.—M.]

90 (return) [Pliny, though a favorite and a minister, made an apology for granting post-horses to his wife on the most urgent business. Epist. x. 121, 122.]

91 (return) [Bergier, Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv. c. 49.]

92 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. xix. i. [In Prooem.] * Note: Pliny says Puteoli, which seems to have been the usual landing place from the East. See the voyages of St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 13, and of Josephus, Vita, c. 3—M.]

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The East was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury; whilst the West was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilized nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe from Asia and Egypt: 93 but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy, and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavor of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the island of Sicily, and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste, of the savage inhabitants. 94 A thousand years afterwards, Italy could boast, that of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two thirds were produced from her soil. 95 The blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul. 96 This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquished; and there is some reason to believe, that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines. 97 3. The olive, in the western world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy

and Africa were strangers to that useful plant: it was naturalized in those countries; and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighborhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience. 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown. 99 5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the Lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media. 100 The assured supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter, multiplied the number of the docks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added an assiduous attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich and the subsistence of the poor. The elegant treatise of Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be observed, that those famines, which so frequently afflicted the infant republic, were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbors.

93 (return) [It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phoenicians introduced some new arts and productions into the neighborhood of Marseilles and Gades.]

94 (return) [See Homer, Odyss. l. ix. v. 358.]

95 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xiv.]

96 (return) [Strab. Geograph. l. iv. p. 269. The intense cold of a Gallic winter was almost proverbial among the ancients. * Note: Strabo only says that the grape does not ripen. Attempts had been made in the time of Augustus to naturalize the vine in the north of Gaul; but the cold was too great. Diod. Sic. edit. Rhodom. p. 304.—W. Diodorus (lib. v. 26) gives a curious picture of the Italian traders bartering, with the savages of Gaul, a cask of wine for a slave.—M. —It appears from the newly discovered treatise of Cicero de Republica, that there was a law of the republic prohibiting the culture of the vine and olive beyond the Alps, in order to keep up the value of those in Italy. Nos justissimi homines, qui transalpinas gentes oleam et vitem serere non sinimus, quo pluris sint nostra oliveta nostraeque vineae. Lib. iii. 9. The restrictive law of Domitian was veiled under the decent pretext of encouraging the cultivation of grain. Suet. Dom. vii. It was repealed by Probus Vopis Strobus, 18.—M.]

97 (return) [In the beginning of the fourth century, the orator Eumenius (Panegyr. Veter. viii. 6, edit. Delphin.) speaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the first plantation of which was totally unknown. The Pagus Arebrignus is supposed by M. d'Anville to be the district of Beaune, celebrated, even at present for one of the first growths of Burgundy. * Note: This is proved by a passage of Pliny the Elder, where he speaks of a certain kind of grape

(vitis picata. vinum picatum) which grows naturally to the district of Vienne, and had recently been transplanted into the country of the Arverni, (Auvergne,) of the Helvii, (the Vivarias.) and the Burgundy and Franche Compte. Pliny wrote A.D. 77. Hist. Nat. xiv. 1.— W.]

99 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xix.]

100 (return) [See the agreeable Essays on Agriculture by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have said of Lucerne.]
Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; since the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the Roman empire, the labor of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly, employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favorites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendor, whatever could soothe their pride or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities, of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.
But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forests of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. 101 There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets, and other manufactures of the East; but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of a hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt, on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon, 102 was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported on the backs of camels, from the Red

Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire. 103 The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling; silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold; 104 precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond; 105 and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals. The labor and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expense of the public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only 1051 instrument of commerce. It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that, in the purchase of female ornaments, the wealth of the state was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations. 106 The annual loss is computed, by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling. 107 Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet, if we compare the proportion between gold and silver, as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine, we shall discover within that period a very considerable increase. 108 There is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce; it is therefore evident that silver was grown more common; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

101 (return) [Tacit. Germania, c. 45. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvii. 13. The latter observed, with some humor, that even fashion had not yet found out the use of amber. Nero sent a Roman knight to purchase great quantities on the spot where it was produced, the coast of modern Prussia.]

102 (return) [Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Serindib by the Arabs. It was discovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the East.]

103 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. l. vi. Strabo, l. xvii.]

104 (return) [Hist. August. p. 224. A silk garment was considered as an ornament to a woman, but as a disgrace to a man.]

105 (return) [The two great pearl fisheries were the same as at present, Ormuz and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Jumelpur, in Bengal, which is described in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. ii. p. 281.]

1051 (return) [Certainly not the only one. The Indians were not so contented with regard to foreign productions. Arrian has a long list of European wares, which they received in exchange for their own; Italian and other wines, brass, tin, lead, coral,

chrysolith, storax, glass, dresses of one or many colors, zones, &c. See Periplus Maris Erythraei in Hudson, Geogr. Min. i. p. 27.—W. The German translator observes that Gibbon has confined the use of aromatics to religious worship and funerals. His error seems the omission of other spices, of which the Romans must have consumed great quantities in their cookery. Wenck, however, admits that silver was the chief article of exchange.—M. In 1787, a peasant (near Nellore in the Carnatic) struck, in digging, on the remains of a Hindu temple; he found, also, a pot which contained Roman coins and medals of the second century, mostly Trajans, Adrians, and Faustinas, all of gold, many of them fresh and beautiful, others defaced or perforated, as if they had been worn as ornaments. (Asiatic Researches, ii. 19.)—M.]

106 (return) [Tacit. Annal. iii. 53. In a speech of Tiberius.]

107 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. xii. 18. In another place he computes half that sum; Quingenties H. S. for India exclusive of Arabia.]

108 (return) [The proportion, which was 1 to 10, and 12 1/2, rose to 14 2/5, the legal regulation of Constantine. See Arbuthnot's Tables of ancient Coins, c. 5.] Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past, and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt, and honestly confessed, by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true principles of social life, laws, agriculture, and science, which had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly established by the power of Rome, under whose auspicious influence the fiercest barbarians were united by an equal government and common language. They affirm, that with the improvement of arts, the human species were visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing splendor of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden; and the long festival of peace which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of the ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger." 109 Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation, which seems to prevail in these passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

109 (return) [Among many other passages, see Pliny, (Hist. Natur. iii. 5.) Aristides, (de Urbe Roma,) and Tertullian, (de Anima, c. 30.)]
It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valor remained, but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independence, the sense of national honor, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for their defence to a mercenary army.

The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and refinement, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit. 110 The sciences of physic and astronomy were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are studied by those who have improved their discoveries and corrected their errors; but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, still reigned in the schools; and their systems, transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exercise the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile mitations: or if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigor of the imagination, after a long repose, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by a uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with those bold ancients, who, by expressing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honor. The name of Poet was almost forgotten; that of Orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.1101

110 (return) [Herodes Atticus gave the sophist Polemo above eight thousand pounds for three declamations. See Philostrat. l. i. p. 538. The Antonines founded a school at Athens, in which professors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great sects of philosophy were maintained at the public expense for the instruction of youth. The salary of a philosopher was ten thousand drachmae, between three and four hundred pounds a year. Similar establishments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuch. tom. ii. p. 352, edit. Reitz. Philostrat. l. ii. p. 566. Hist. August. p. 21. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. p. 1195. Juvenal himself, in a morose satire, which in every line betrays his own disappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to say,—"—O Juvenes, circumspicit et stimulat vos. Materiamque sibi Ducis indulgentia quaerit."—Satir. vii. 20. Note: Vespasian first gave a salary to professors: he assigned to each professor of rhetoric, Greek and Roman, centena sestertia. (Sueton. in Vesp. 18). Hadrian and the Antonines, though still liberal, were less profuse.—G. from W. Suetonius wrote annua centena L. 807, 5, 10.—M.]

1101 (return) [This judgment is rather severe: besides the physicians, astronomers, and grammarians, among whom there were some very distinguished men, there were still, under Hadrian, Suetonius, Florus, Plutarch; under the Antonines, Arrian, Pausanias, Appian, Marcus Aurelius himself, Sextus Empiricus, &c. Jurisprudence gained much by the labors of Salvius Julianus, Julius Celsus, Sex. Pomponius, Caius, and others.—G. from W. Yet where, among these, is the writer of original genius, unless, perhaps Plutarch? or even of a style really elegant? — M.] The sublime Longinus, who, in somewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," says he, "as some children always remain pygmies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined, thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand themselves, or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients; who, living under a popular government, wrote with the same freedom as they acted." 111 This diminutive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pygmies; when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

111 (return) [Longin. de Sublim. c. 44, p. 229, edit. Toll. Here, too, we may say of Longinus, "his own example strengthens all his laws." Instead of proposing his sentiments with a manly boldness, he insinuates them with the most guarded caution; puts them into the mouth of a friend, and as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a show of refuting them himself.]

Chapter III: The Constitution In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part I.

Of The Constitution Of The Roman Empire, In The Age Of The Antonines.

The obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state, in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is intrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But, unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism. The influence of the clergy, in an age of superstition, might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind; but so intimate is the connection between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people. 101 A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against enterprises of an aspiring prince.

101 (return) [Often enough in the ages of superstition, but not in the interest of the people or the state, but in that of the church to which all others were subordinate. Yet the power of the pope has often been of great service in repressing the excesses of sovereigns, and in softening manners.—W. The history of the Italian republics proves the error of Gibbon, and the justice of his German translator's comment.—M.]

Every barrier of the Roman constitution had been levelled by the vast ambition of the dictator; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the triumvir. After the victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, surnamed Caesar, by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards Augustus, by the flattery of the senate. The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions, 1 conscious of their own strength, and of the weakness of the constitution, habituated, during twenty years' civil war, to every act of blood and violence, and passionately devoted to the house of Caesar, from whence alone they had received, and expected the most lavish rewards. The provinces, long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, sighed for the government of a single person, who would be the master, not the accomplice, of those petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing, with a secret pleasure, the humiliation of the aristocracy, demanded only bread and public shows; and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almost universally embraced the philosophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, and suffered not the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the senate had lost its dignity; many of the most noble families were extinct. The republicans of spirit and ability had perished in the field of battle, or in the proscription. The door of the assembly had been designedly left open, for a mixed multitude of more than a thousand persons, who reflected disgrace upon their rank, instead of deriving honor from it. 2

1 (return) [Orosius, vi. 18. * Note: Dion says twenty-five, (or three,) (lv. 23.) The united triumvirs had but forty-three. (Appian. Bell. Civ. iv. 3.) The testimony of Orosius is of little value when more certain may be had.—W. But all the legions, doubtless, submitted to Augustus after the battle of Actium.—M.]

2 (return) [Julius Caesar introduced soldiers, strangers, and half-barbarians into the senate (Sueton. in Caesar. c. 77, 80.) The abuse became still more scandalous after his death.]

The reformation of the senate was one of the first steps in which Augustus laid aside the tyrant, and professed himself the father of his country. He was elected censor; and, in concert with his faithful Agrippa, he examined the list of the senators, expelled a few members, 201 whose vices or whose obstinacy required a public example, persuaded near two hundred to prevent the shame of an expulsion by a voluntary retreat, raised the qualification of a senator to about ten thousand pounds, created a sufficient number of patrician families, and accepted for himself the honorable title of Prince of the Senate, 202 which had always been bestowed, by the censors, on the citizen the most eminent for his honors and services. 3 But whilst he thus restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence, of the senate.

The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost, when the legislative power is nominated by the executive.

201 (return) [Of these Dion and Suetonius knew nothing.—W. Dion says the contrary.—M.]

202 (return) [But Augustus, then Octavius, was censor, and in virtue of that office, even according to the constitution of the free republic, could reform the senate, expel unworthy members, name the Princeps Senatus, &c. That was called, as is well known, Senatum legere. It was customary, during the free republic, for the censor to be named Princeps Senatus, (S. Liv. l. xxvii. c. 11, l. xl. c. 51;) and Dion expressly says, that this was done according to ancient usage. He was empowered by a decree of the senate to admit a number of families among the patricians. Finally, the senate was not the legislative power.—W]

3 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. liii. p. 693. Suetonius in August. c. 35.]
Before an assembly thus modelled and prepared, Augustus pronounced a studied oration, which displayed his patriotism, and disguised his ambition. "He lamented, yet excused, his past conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge of his father's murder; the humanity of his own nature had sometimes given way to the stern laws of necessity, and to a forced connection with two unworthy colleagues: as long as Antony lived, the republic forbade him to abandon her to a degenerate Roman, and a barbarian queen. He was now at liberty to satisfy his duty and his inclination. He solemnly restored the senate and people to all their ancient rights; and wished only to mingle with the crowd of his fellow-citizens, and to share the blessings which he had obtained for his country." 4

4 (return) [Dion (l. liii. p. 698) gives us a prolix and bombast speech on this great occasion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the general language of Augustus.]
It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had assisted at this assembly) to describe the various emotions of the senate, those that were suppressed, and those that were affected. It was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus; to seem to distrust it was still more dangerous. The respective advantages of monarchy and a republic have often divided speculative inquirers; the present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the license of the soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy; and these general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amidst this confusion of sentiments, the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept the resignation of Augustus; they conjured him not to desert the republic, which he had saved. After a decent resistance, the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate; and consented to receive the government of the provinces, and the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known names of Proconsul and Imperator. 5 But he would receive them only for ten years. Even before the expiration of that period, he hope that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed, and that the republic, restored to its pristine

health and vigor, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was preserved to the last ages of the empire, by the peculiar pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnized the tenth years of their reign. 6

5 (return) [Imperator (from which we have derived Emperor) signified under her republic no more than general, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman emperors assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it.]

6 (return) [Dion. l. liii. p. 703, &c.]
Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a right to command the service of the Roman youth; and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious penalties, by striking the offender out of the list of citizens, by confiscating his property, and by selling his person into slavery. 7 The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were suspended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exercised an absolute power of life and death; his jurisdiction was not confined by any forms of trial, or rules of proceeding, and the execution of the sentence was immediate and without appeal. 8 The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legislative authority. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great distance from Italy, the general assumed the liberty of directing them against whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged most advantageous for the public service. It was from the success, not from the justice, of their enterprises, that they expected the honors of a triumph. In the use of victory, especially after they were no longer controlled by the commissioners of the senate, they exercised the most unbounded despotism. When Pompey commanded in the East, he rewarded his soldiers and allies, dethroned princes, divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and distributed the treasures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome, he obtained, by a single act of the senate and people, the universal ratification of all his proceedings. 9 Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or assumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the same time, the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the state.

7 (return) [Livy Epitom. l. xiv. [c. 27.] Valer. Maxim. vi. 3.]

8 (return) [See, in the viiith book of Livy, the conduct of Manlius Torquatus and Papirius Cursor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they asserted those of military discipline; and the people, who abhorred the action, was obliged to respect the principle.]

9 (return) [By the lavish but unconstrained suffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command scarcely inferior to that of Augustus. Among the extraordinary acts of power executed by the former we may remark the foundation of twenty-nine cities, and the distribution of three or four millions sterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with some opposition and delays in the senate See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Cassius, and the first book of the epistles to Atticus.]

From what has already been observed in the first chapter of this work, some notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus intrusted to the ruling hand of Augustus. But as it was impossible that he could personally command the regions of so many distant frontiers, he was indulged by the senate, as Pompey had already been, in the permission of devolving the execution of his great office on a sufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority these officers seemed not inferior to the ancient proconsuls; but their station was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commissions at the will of a superior, to whose auspicious influence the merit of their action was legally attributed. 10 They were the representatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his jurisdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conquests of Rome. It was some satisfaction, however, to the senate, that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The imperial lieutenants were of consular or praetorian dignity; the legions were commanded by senators, and the praefecture of Egypt was the only important trust committed to a Roman knight.

10 (return) [Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general, who was authorized to take the Auspices in the name of the people. By an exact consequence, drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reserved to the emperor; and his most successful lieutenants were satisfied with some marks of distinction, which, under the name of triumphal honors, were invented in their favor.]

Within six days after Augustus had been compelled to accept so very liberal a grant, he resolved to gratify the pride of the senate by an easy sacrifice. He represented to them, that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuse the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers; but he must insist on being allowed to restore the more peaceful and secure provinces to the mild administration of the civil magistrate. In the division of the provinces, Augustus provided for his own power and for the dignity of the republic. The proconsuls of the senate, particularly those of Asia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honorable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by lictors, the latter by soldiers. 105 A law was passed, that wherever the emperor was present, his extraordinary commission should

supersede the ordinary jurisdiction of the governor; a custom was introduced, that the new conquests belonged to the imperial portion; and it was soon discovered that the authority of the Prince, the favorite epithet of Augustus, was the same in every part of the empire.

105 (return) [This distinction is without foundation. The lieutenants of the emperor, who were called Propraetors, whether they had been praetors or consuls, were attended by six lictors; those who had the right of the sword, (of life and death over the soldiers.—M.) bore the military habit (paludamentum) and the sword. The provincial governors commissioned by the senate, who, whether they had been consuls or not, were called Pronconsuls, had twelve lictors when they had been consuls, and six only when they had but been praetors. The provinces of Africa and Asia were only given to ex-consuls. See, on the Organization of the Provinces, Dion, liii. 12, 16 Strabo, xvii 840.—W]

In return for this imaginary concession, Augustus obtained an important privilege, which rendered him master of Rome and Italy. By a dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he was authorized to preserve his military command, supported by a numerous body of guards, even in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital. His command, indeed, was confined to those citizens who were engaged in the service by the military oath; but such was the propensity of the Romans to servitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magistrates, the senators, and the equestrian order, till the homage of flattery was insensibly converted into an annual and solemn protestation of fidelity.

Although Augustus considered a military force as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it, as a very odious instrument of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect, in his own person, all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view, he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the consular 11 and tribunitian offices, 12 which were, in the same manner, continued to all his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome, and represented the dignity of the state. They superintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and presided in the assemblies both of the senate and people. The general control of the finances was intrusted to their care; and though they seldom had leisure to administer justice in person, they were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction; but whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised by that decree above the laws, and exercised, in the defence of liberty, a temporary despotism. 13 The character of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. The appearance of the former was modest and humble; but their persons were sacred and inviolable. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, to stop, by a single word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic subsisted, the dangerous influence, which either the consul or the tribune might derive from their respective jurisdiction, was diminished by

several important restrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten persons; and, as both in their private and public interest they were averse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution. 131 But when the consular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were vested for life in a single person, when the general of the army was, at the same time, the minister of the senate and the representative of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative.

11 (return) [Cicero (de Legibus, iii. 3) gives the consular office the name of egia potestas; and Polybius (l. vi. c. 3) observes three powers in the Roman constitution. The monarchical was represented and exercised by the consuls.]

12 (return) [As the tribunitian power (distinct from the annual office) was first invented by the dictator Caesar, (Dion, l. xliv. p. 384,) we may easily conceive, that it was given as a reward for having so nobly asserted, by arms, the sacred rights of the tribunes and people. See his own Commentaries, de Bell. Civil. l. i.]

13 (return) [Augustus exercised nine annual consulships without interruption. He then most artfully refused the magistracy, as well as the dictatorship, absented himself from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the senate to invest him with a perpetual consulship. Augustus, as well as his successors, affected, however, to conceal so invidious a title.]

131 (return) [The note of M. Guizot on the tribunitian power applies to the French translation rather than to the original. The former has, maintenir la balance toujours egale, which implies much more than Gibbon's general expression. The note belongs rather to the history of the Republic than that of the Empire.—M]
To these accumulated honors, the policy of Augustus soon added the splendid as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff, and of censor. By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes, of the Roman people. If so many distinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaisance of the senate was prepared to supply every deficiency by the most ample and extraordinary concessions. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws: they were authorized to convoke the senate, to make several motions in the same day, to recommend candidates for the honors of the state, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their discretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and by a most comprehensive clause, they were empowered to execute whatsoever they should judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majesty of things private or public, human of divine. 14

14 (return) [See a fragment of a Decree of the Senate, conferring on the emperor Vespasian all the powers granted to his predecessors, Augustus, Tiberius, and

Claudius. This curious and important monument is published in Gruter's Inscriptions, No. ccxlii. * Note: It is also in the editions of Tacitus by Ryck, (Annal. p. 420, 421,) and Ernesti, (Excurs. ad lib. iv. 6;) but this fragment contains so many inconsistencies, both in matter and form, that its authenticity may be doubted—W.] When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the Imperial magistrate, the ordinary magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigor, and almost without business. The names and forms of the ancient administration were preserved by Augustus with the most anxious care. The usual number of consuls, praetors, and tribunes, 15 were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, and continued to discharge some of their least important functions. Those honors still attracted the vain ambition of the Romans; and the emperors themselves, though invested for life with the powers of the consul ship, frequently aspired to the title of that annual dignity, which they condescended to share with the most illustrious of their fellow-citizens. 16 In the election of these magistrates, the people, during the reign of Augustus, were permitted to expose all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, instead of discovering the least symptom of impatience, humbly solicited their suffrages for himself or his friends, and scrupulously practised all the duties of an ordinary candidate. 17 But we may venture to ascribe to his councils the first measure of the succeeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the senate. 18 The assemblies of the people were forever abolished, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without restoring liberty, might have disturbed, and perhaps endangered, the established government.

15 (return) [Two consuls were created on the Calends of January; but in the course of the year others were substituted in their places, till the annual number seems to have amounted to no less than twelve. The praetors were usually sixteen or eighteen, (Lipsius in Excurs. D. ad Tacit. Annal. l. i.) I have not mentioned the Aediles or Quaestors Officers of the police or revenue easily adapt themselves to any form of government. In the time of Nero, the tribunes legally possessed the right of intercession, though it might be dangerous to exercise it (Tacit. Annal. xvi. 26.) In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneship was an office or a name, (Plin. Epist. i. 23.)]

16 (return) [The tyrants themselves were ambitious of the consulship. The virtuous princes were moderate in the pursuit, and exact in the discharge of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and swore before the consul's tribunal that he would observe the laws, (Plin. Panegyric c. 64.)]

17 (return) [Quoties Magistratuum Comitiis interesset. Tribus cum candidatis suis circunbat: supplicabatque more solemni. Ferebat et ipse suffragium in tribubus, ut unus e populo. Suetonius in August c. 56.]

18 (return) [Tum primum Comitia e campo ad patres translata sunt. Tacit. Annal. i. 15. The word primum seems to allude to some faint and unsuccessful efforts which were made towards restoring them to the people. Note: The emperor Caligula made

the attempt: he rest red the Comitia to the people, but, in a short time, took them away again. Suet. in Caio. c. 16. Dion. lix. 9, 20. Nevertheless, at the time of Dion, they preserved still the form of the Comitia. Dion. lviii. 20.—W.]

By declaring themselves the protectors of the people, Marius and Caesar had subverted the constitution of their country. But as soon as the senate had been humbled and disarmed, such an assembly, consisting of five or six hundred persons, was found a much more tractable and useful instrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the senate that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occasion, to adopt the language and principles of Patricians. In the administration of their own powers, they frequently consulted the great national council, and seemed to refer to its decision the most important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces, were subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the senate. With regard to civil objects, it was the supreme court of appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal, constituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public station, or that affected the peace and majesty of the Roman people. The exercise of the judicial power became the most frequent and serious occupation of the senate; and the important causes that were pleaded before them afforded a last refuge to the spirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of state, and as a court of justice, the senate possessed very considerable prerogatives; but in its legislative capacity, in which it was supposed virtually to represent the people, the rights of sovereignty were acknowledged to reside in that assembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their sanction. Their regular meetings were held on three stated days in every month, the Calends, the Nones, and the Ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themselves, who gloried in the name of senators, sat, voted, and divided with their equals. To resume, in a few words, the system of the Imperial government; as it was instituted by Augustus, and maintained by those princes who understood their own interest and that of the people, it may be defined an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed. 19

19 (return) [Dion Cassius (l. liii. p. 703—714) has given a very loose and partial sketch of the Imperial system. To illustrate and often to correct him, I have meditated Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and consulted the following moderns: the Abbe de la Bleterie, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xix. xxi. xxiv. xxv. xxvii. Beaufort Republique Romaine, tom. i. p. 255—275. The Dissertations of Noodt and Gronovius de lege Regia, printed at Leyden, in the year 1731 Gravina de Imperio Romano, p. 479—544 of his Opuscula. Maffei, Verona Illustrata, p. i. p. 245, &c.]

The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. The emperors, if we except those tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, disdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life, they

affected to confound themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourse of visits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were suited only to the rank of an opulent senator. Their family, however numerous or splendid, was composed entirely of their domestic slaves and freedmen. 20 Augustus or Trajan would have blushed at employing the meanest of the Romans in those menial offices, which, in the household and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are so eagerly solicited by the proudest nobles of Britain.

20 (return) [A weak prince will always be governed by his domestics. The power of slaves aggravated the shame of the Romans; and the senate paid court to a Pallas or a Narcissus. There is a chance that a modern favorite may be a gentleman.]

The deification of the emperors 21 is the only instance in which they departed from their accustomed prudence and modesty. The Asiatic Greeks were the first inventors, the successors of Alexander the first objects, of this servile and impious mode of adulation. 211 It was easily transferred from the kings to the governors of Asia; and the Roman magistrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of festivals and sacrifices. 22 It was natural that the emperors should not refuse what the proconsuls had accepted; and the divine honors which both the one and the other received from the provinces, attested rather the despotism than the servitude of Rome. But the conquerors soon imitated the vanquished nations in the arts of flattery; and the imperious spirit of the first Caesar too easily consented to assume, during his lifetime, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his successor declined so dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the madness of Caligula and Domitian. Augustus permitted indeed some of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honor, on condition that they should associate the worship of Rome with that of the sovereign; he tolerated private superstition, of which he might be the object; 23 but he contented himself with being revered by the senate and the people in his human character, and wisely left to his successor the care of his public deification. A regular custom was introduced, that on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods: and the ceremonies of his apotheosis were blended with those of his funeral. 231 This legal, and, as it should seem, injudicious profanation, so abhorrent to our stricter principles, was received with a very faint murmur, 24 by the easy nature of Polytheism; but it was received as an institution, not of religion, but of policy. We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the characters of Caesar or Augustus were far superior to those of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of such a mixture of fable and mystery, as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As soon as their divinity was established by law, it sunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame, or to the dignity of succeeding princes.

21 (return) [See a treatise of Vandale de Consecratione Principium. It would be easier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.]

211 (return) [This is inaccurate. The successors of Alexander were not the first deified sovereigns; the Egyptians had deified and worshipped many of their kings; the Olympus of the Greeks was peopled with divinities who had reigned on earth; finally, Romulus himself had received the honors of an apotheosis (Tit. Liv. i. 16) a long time before Alexander and his successors. It is also an inaccuracy to confound the honors offered in the provinces to the Roman governors, by temples and altars, with the true apotheosis of the emperors; it was not a religious worship, for it had neither priests nor sacrifices. Augustus was severely blamed for having permitted himself to be worshipped as a god in the provinces, (Tac. Ann. i. 10:) he would not have incurred that blame if he had only done what the governors were accustomed to do.—G. from W. M. Guizot has been guilty of a still greater inaccuracy in confounding the deification of the living with the apotheosis of the dead emperors. The nature of the king-worship of Egypt is still very obscure; the hero-worship of the Greeks very different from the adoration of the "praesens numen" in the reigning sovereign.—M.]

22 (return) [See a dissertation of the Abbe Mongault in the first volume of the Academy of Inscriptions.]

23 (return) [Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus aras, says Horace to the emperor himself, and Horace was well acquainted with the court of Augustus. Note: The good princes were not those who alone obtained the honors of an apotheosis: it was conferred on many tyrants. See an excellent treatise of Schaepflin, de Consecratione Imperatorum Romanorum, in his Commentationes historicae et criticae. Bale, 1741, p. 184.—W.]

231 (return) [The curious satire in the works of Seneca, is the strongest remonstrance of profaned religion.—M.]

24 (return) [See Cicero in Philippic. i. 6. Julian in Caesaribus. Inque Deum templis jurabit Roma per umbras, is the indignant expression of Lucan; but it is a patriotic rather than a devout indignation.]

In the consideration of the Imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Augustus, which was not, however, conferred upon him till the edifice was almost completed. The obscure name of Octavianus he derived from a mean family, in the little town of Aricia. 241 It was stained with the blood of the proscription; and he was desirous, had it been possible, to erase all memory of his former life. The illustrious surname of Caesar he had assumed, as the adopted son of the dictator: but he had too much good sense, either to hope to be confounded, or to wish to be compared with that extraordinary man. It was proposed in the senate to dignify their minister with a new appellation; and after a serious discussion, that of Augustus was chosen, among several others,

as being the most expressive of the character of peace and sanctity, which he uniformly affected. 25 Augustus was therefore a personal, Caesar a family distinction. The former should naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was bestowed; and however the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honors of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inseparably connected those appellations with the Imperial dignity, and they have been preserved by a long succession of emperors, Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans, from the fall of the republic to the present time. A distinction was, however, soon introduced. The sacred title of Augustus was always reserved for the monarch, whilst the name of Caesar was more freely communicated to his relations; and, from the reign of Hadrian, at least, was appropriated to the second person in the state, who was considered as the presumptive heir of the empire. 251

241 (return) [Octavius was not of an obscure family, but of a considerable one of the equestrian order. His father, C. Octavius, who possessed great property, had been praetor, governor of Macedonia, adorned with the title of Imperator, and was on the point of becoming consul when he died. His mother Attia, was daughter of M. Attius Balbus, who had also been praetor. M. Anthony reproached Octavius with having been born in Aricia, which, nevertheless, was a considerable municipal city: he was vigorously refuted by Cicero. Philip. iii. c. 6.—W. Gibbon probably meant that the family had but recently emerged into notice.—M.]

25 (return) [Dion. Cassius, l. liii. p. 710, with the curious Annotations of Reimar.]

251 (return) [The princes who by their birth or their adoption belonged to the family of the Caesars, took the name of Caesar. After the death of Nero, this name designated the Imperial dignity itself, and afterwards the appointed successor. The time at which it was employed in the latter sense, cannot be fixed with certainty. Bach (Hist. Jurisprud. Rom. 304) affirms from Tacitus, H. i. 15, and Suetonius, Galba, 17, that Galba conferred on Piso Lucinianus the title of Caesar, and from that time the term had this meaning: but these two historians simply say that he appointed Piso his successor, and do not mention the word Caesar. Aurelius Victor (in Traj. 348, ed. Artzen) says that Hadrian first received this title on his adoption; but as the adoption of Hadrian is still doubtful, and besides this, as Trajan, on his death-bed, was not likely to have created a new title for his successor, it is more probable that Aelius Verus was the first who was called Caesar when adopted by Hadrian. Spart. in Aelio Vero, 102.—W.]

Chapter III: The Constitution In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part II.

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed, can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle

tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition, prompted him at the age of nineteen to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterwards laid aside. With the same hand, and probably with the same temper, he signed the proscription of Cicero, and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial; and according to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and at last the father, of the Roman world. 26 When he framed the artful system of the Imperial authority, his moderation was inspired by his fears. He wished to deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government.

26 (return) [As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Caesars, his color changed like that of the chameleon; pale at first, then red, afterwards black, he at last assumed the mild livery of Venus and the Graces, (Caesars, p. 309.) This image, employed by Julian in his ingenious fiction, is just and elegant; but when he considers this change of character as real and ascribes it to the power of philosophy, he does too much honor to philosophy and to Octavianus.]

I. The death of Caesar was ever before his eyes. He had lavished wealth and honors on his adherents; but the most favored friends of his uncle were in the number of the conspirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority against open rebellion; but their vigilance could not secure his person from the dagger of a determined republican; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus, 27 would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Caesar had provoked his fate, as much as by the ostentation of his power, as by his power itself. The consul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation, that the senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion, as long as it was supported by the virtue, or even by the prudence, of the successors of Augustus. It was a motive of self-preservation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conspirators against Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked the person of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

27 (return) [Two centuries after the establishment of monarchy, the emperor Marcus Antoninus recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue. * Note: In a very ingenious essay, Gibbon has ventured to call in question the preeminent virtue of Brutus. Misc Works, iv. 95.—M.]

There appears, indeed, one memorable occasion, in which the senate, after seventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to re-assume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the consuls convoked that assembly in the Capitol, condemned the memory of the Caesars, gave the watchword liberty to the few cohorts who faintly adhered to their standard, and during eight-and-forty hours acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the praetorian guards had resolved. The stupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, invested with the Imperial purple, and prepared to support his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end; and

the senate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable servitude. Deserted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble assembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the praetorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amnesty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generosity to observe. 28
[See The Capitol: When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the consuls convoked that assembly in the Capitol.]

28 (return) [It is much to be regretted that we have lost the part of Tacitus which treated of that transaction. We are forced to content ourselves with the popular rumors of Josephus, and the imperfect hints of Dion and Suetonius.]

II. The insolence of the armies inspired Augustus with fears of a still more alarming nature. The despair of the citizens could only attempt, what the power of the soldiers was, at any time, able to execute. How precarious was his own authority over men whom he had taught to violate every social duty! He had heard their seditious clamors; he dreaded their calmer moments of reflection. One revolution had been purchased by immense rewards; but a second revolution might double those rewards. The troops professed the fondest attachment to the house of Caesar; but the attachments of the multitude are capricious and inconstant. Augustus summoned to his aid whatever remained in those fierce minds of Roman prejudices; enforced the rigor of discipline by the sanction of law; and, interposing the majesty of the senate between the emperor and the army, boldly claimed their allegiance, as the first magistrate of the republic.

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. The soldiers were seldom roused to that fatal sense of their own strength, and of the weakness of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of such dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were assassinated in their palace by their own domestics: 281 the convulsions which agitated Rome on the death of the former, were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the space of eighteen months, four princes perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this short, though violent eruption of military license, the two centuries from Augustus 29 to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by the authority of the senate, and the consent of the soldiers. 30 The legions respected their oath of fidelity; and it requires a minute inspection of the Roman annals to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle. 31

281 (return) [Caligula perished by a conspiracy formed by the officers of the praetorian troops, and Domitian would not, perhaps, have been assassinated without the participation of the two chiefs of that guard in his death.—W.]

29 (return) [Augustus restored the ancient severity of discipline. After the civil wars, he dropped the endearing name of Fellow-Soldiers, and called them only

Soldiers, (Sueton. in August. c. 25.) See the use Tiberius made of the Senate in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions, (Tacit. Annal. i.)]

30 (return) [These words seem to have been the constitutional language. See Tacit. Annal. xiii. 4. * Note: This panegyric on the soldiery is rather too liberal. Claudius was obliged to purchase their consent to his coronation: the presents which he made, and those which the praetorians received on other occasions, considerably embarrassed the finances. Moreover, this formidable guard favored, in general, the cruelties of the tyrants. The distant revolts were more frequent than Gibbon thinks: already, under Tiberius, the legions of Germany would have seditiously constrained Germanicus to assume the Imperial purple. On the revolt of Claudius Civilis, under Vespasian, the legions of Gaul murdered their general, and offered their assistance to the Gauls who were in insurrection. Julius Sabinus made himself be proclaimed emperor, &c. The wars, the merit, and the severe discipline of Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines, established, for some time, a greater degree of subordination.—W]

31 (return) [The first was Camillus Scribonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia against Claudius, and was deserted by his own troops in five days, the second, L. Antonius, in Germany, who rebelled against Domitian; and the third, Avidius Cassius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two last reigned but a few months, and were cut off by their own adherents. We may observe, that both Camillus and Cassius colored their ambition with the design of restoring the republic; a task, said Cassius peculiarly reserved for his name and family.]

In elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and mischief. The Roman emperors, desirous to spare the legions that interval of suspense, and the temptation of an irregular choice, invested their designed successor with so large a share of present power, as should enable him, after their decease, to assume the remainder, without suffering the empire to perceive the change of masters. Thus Augustus, after all his fairer prospects had been snatched from him by untimely deaths, rested his last hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law, by which the future prince was invested with an authority equal to his own, over the provinces and the armies. 32 Thus Vespasian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. Titus was adored by the eastern legions, which, under his command, had recently achieved the conquest of Judaea. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were suspected. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the Imperial dignity; and the grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father. 33

32 (return) [Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 26.]

33 (return) [Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Plin. in Praefat. Hist. Natur.]

The good sense of Vespasian engaged him indeed to embrace every measure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath, and the fidelity

of the troops, had been consecrated, by the habits of a hundred years, to the name and family of the Caesars; and although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans still revered, in the person of Nero, the grandson of Germanicus, and the lineal successor of Augustus. It was not without reluctance and remorse, that the praetorian guards had been persuaded to abandon the cause of the tyrant. 34 The rapid downfall of Galba, Otho, and Vitellus, taught the armies to consider the emperors as the creatures of their will, and the instruments of their license. The birth of Vespasian was mean: his grandfather had been a private soldier, his father a petty officer of the revenue; 35 his own merit had raised him, in an advanced age, to the empire; but his merit was rather useful than shining, and his virtues were disgraced by a strict and even sordid parsimony. Such a prince consulted his true interest by the association of a son, whose more splendid and amiable character might turn the public attention from the obscure origin, to the future glories, of the Flavian house. Under the mild administration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a transient felicity, and his beloved memory served to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian.

34 (return) [This idea is frequently and strongly inculcated by Tacitus. See Hist. i. 5, 16, ii. 76.]

35 (return) [The emperor Vespasian, with his usual good sense, laughed at the genealogists, who deduced his family from Flavius, the founder of Reate, (his native country,) and one of the companions of Hercules Suet in Vespasian, c. 12.]
Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple from the assassins of Domitian, before he discovered that his feeble age was unable to stem the torrent of public disorders, which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predecessor. His mild disposition was respected by the good; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character, whose justice should strike terror into the guilty. Though he had several relations, he fixed his choice on a stranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany; and immediately, by a decree of the senate, declared him his colleague and successor in the empire. 36 It is sincerely to be lamented, that whilst we are fatigued with the disgustful relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus, and the virtue of Trajan. 37

36 (return) [Dion, l. lxviii. p. 1121. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric.]

37 (return) [Felicior Augusto, Melior Trajano. Eutrop. viii. 5.]
We may readily believe, that the father of his country hesitated whether he ought to intrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments the arts of the empress Plotina either fixed the

irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption; 38 the truth of which could not be safely disputed, and Hadrian was peaceably acknowledged as his lawful successor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views, and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and vanity. As they prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet in the first days of his reign, he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tediousness of a painful illness rendered him, at last, peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant; and the honors decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus. 39

38 (return) [Dion (l. lxix. p. 1249) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who, being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of sifting this mysterious transaction. Yet Dodwell (Praelect. Camden. xvii.) has maintained that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire, during the lifetime of Trajan.]

39 (return) [Dion, (l. lxx. p. 1171.) Aurel. Victor.]
The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a successor.
After revolving in his mind several men of distinguished merit, whom he esteemed and hated, he adopted Aelius Verus a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous. 40 But whilst Hadrian was delighting himself with his own applause, and the acclamations of the soldiers, whose consent had been secured by an immense donative, the new Caesar 41 was ravished from his embraces by an untimely death. He left only one son. Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius; and, on the accession of Marcus, was invested with an equal share of sovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus, he possessed one virtue; a dutiful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philosophic emperor dissembled his follies, lamented his early death, and cast a decent veil over his memory.

40 (return) [The deification of Antinous, his medals, his statues, temples, city, oracles, and constellation, are well known, and still dishonor the memory of Hadrian. Yet we may remark, that of the first fifteen emperors, Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct. For the honors of Antinous, see Spanheim, Commentaire sui les Caesars de Julien, p. 80.]

41 (return) [Hist. August. p. 13. Aurelius Victor in Epitom.]
As soon as Hadrian's passion was either gratified or disappointed, he resolved to deserve the thanks of posterity, by placing the most exalted merit on the Roman

throne. His discerning eye easily discovered a senator about fifty years of age, clameless in all the offices of life; and a youth of about seventeen, whose riper years opened a fair prospect of every virtue: the elder of these was declared the son and successor of Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himself should immediately adopt the younger. The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now peaking,) governed the Roman world forty-two years, with the same invariable spirit of wisdom and virtue. Although Pius had two sons, 42 he preferred the welfare of Rome to the interest of his family, gave his daughter Faustina, in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the senate the tribunitian and proconsular powers, and, with a noble disdain, or rather ignorance of jealousy, associated him to all the labors of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor, loved him as a parent, obeyed him as his sovereign, 43 and, after he was no more, regulated his own administration by the example and maxims of his predecessor. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.

42 (return) [Without the help of medals and inscriptions, we should be ignorant of this fact, so honorable to the memory of Pius. Note: Gibbon attributes to Antoninus Pius a merit which he either did not possess, or was not in a situation to display.
1. He was adopted only on the condition that he would adopt, in his turn, Marcus Aurelius and L. Verus.
2. His two sons died children, and one of them, M. Galerius, alone, appears to have survived, for a few years, his father's coronation. Gibbon is also mistaken when he says (note 42) that "without the help of medals and inscriptions, we should be ignorant that Antoninus had two sons." Capitolinus says expressly, (c. 1,) Filii mares duo, duae-foeminae; we only owe their names to the medals. Pagi. Cont. Baron, i. 33, edit Paris.—W.]

43 (return) [During the twenty-three years of Pius's reign, Marcus was only two nights absent from the palace, and even those were at different times. Hist. August. p. 25.]
Titus Antoninus Pius has been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice, and peace, was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of those virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighboring villages from plundering each other's harvests. Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history; which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life, he was an amiable, as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniences of his fortune, and the innocent pleasures of society; 44 and the benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper.

44 (return) [He was fond of the theatre, and not insensible to the charms of the fair sex. Marcus Antoninus, i. 16. Hist. August. p. 20, 21. Julian in Caesar.]

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of severer and more laborious kind. 45 It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent. 46 His meditations, composed in the tumult of the camp, are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons of philosophy, in a more public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of sage, or the dignity of an emperor. 47 But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfections of others, just and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted that Avidius Cassius, who excited a rebellion in Syria, had disappointed him, by a voluntary death, 471 of the pleasure of converting an enemy into a friend;; and he justified the sincerity of that sentiment, by moderating the zeal of the senate against the adherents of the traitor. 48 War he detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human nature; 481 but when the necessity of a just defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns, on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful posterity, and above a century after his death, many persons preserved the image of Marcus Antoninus among those of their household gods. 49

45 (return) [The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocrisy, and with a want of that simplicity which distinguished Pius and even Verus. (Hist. August. 6, 34.) This suspicions, unjust as it was, may serve to account for the superior applause bestowed upon personal qualifications, in preference to the social virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite; but the wildest scepticism never insinuated that Caesar might probably be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valor are qualifications more easily ascertained than humanity or the love of justice.]

46 (return) [Tacitus has characterized, in a few words, the principles of the portico: Doctores sapientiae secutus est, qui sola bona quae honesta, main tantum quae turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, aeteraque extra... bonis neque malis adnumerant. Tacit. Hist. iv. 5.]

47 (return) [Before he went on the second expedition against the Germans, he read lectures of philosophy to the Roman people, during three days. He had already done the same in the cities of Greece and Asia. Hist. August. in Cassio, c. 3.]

471 (return) [Cassius was murdered by his own partisans. Vulcat. Gallic. in Cassio, c. 7. Dion, lxxi. c. 27.—W.]

48 (return) [Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1190. Hist. August. in Avid. Cassio. Note: See one of the newly discovered passages of Dion Cassius. Marcus wrote to the senate, who urged the execution of the partisans of Cassius, in these words: "I entreat and beseech you to preserve my reign unstained by senatorial blood. None of your order must perish either by your desire or mine." Mai. Fragm. Vatican. ii. p. 224.—M.]

481 (return) [Marcus would not accept the services of any of the barbarian allies who crowded to his standard in the war against Avidius Cassius. "Barbarians," he said, with wise but vain sagacity, "must not become acquainted with the dissensions of the Roman people." Mai. Fragm Vatican l. 224.—M.]

49 (return) [Hist. August. in Marc. Antonin. c. 18.]
If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honor of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom. The labors of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just but melancholy reflection imbittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power, which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and ministers prepared to serve, the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their master. These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history. In the conduct of those monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue; the most exalted perfection, and the meanest degeneracy of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark, unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, 50 and the timid, inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During fourscore years (excepting only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign) 51 Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue and every talent that arose in that unhappy period.

50 (return) [Vitellius consumed in mere eating at least six millions of our money in about seven months. It is not easy to express his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog, but it is by substituting for a coarse word a very fine image. "At Vitellius, umbraculis hortorum abditus, ut ignava animalia, quibus si cibum suggeras, jacent torpentque, praeterita, instantia, futura, pari oblivione dimiserat. Atque illum nemore Aricino desidem et marcentum," &c. Tacit. Hist. iii. 36, ii. 95. Sueton. in Vitell. c. 13. Dion. Cassius, l xv. p. 1062.]

51 (return) [The execution of Helvidius Priscus, and of the virtuous Eponina, disgraced the reign of Vespasian.]

Under the reign of these monsters, the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived, 1. The exquisite sensibility of the sufferers; and, 2. The impossibility of escaping from the hand of the oppressor.

I. When Persia was governed by the descendants of Sefi, a race of princes whose wanton cruelty often stained their divan, their table, and their bed, with the blood of their favorites, there is a saying recorded of a young nobleman, that he never departed from the sultan's presence, without satisfying himself whether his head was still on his shoulders. The experience of every day might almost justify the scepticism of Rustan. 52 Yet the fatal sword, suspended above him by a single thread, seems not to have disturbed the slumbers, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Persian. The monarch's frown, he well knew, could level him with the dust; but the stroke of lightning or apoplexy might be equally fatal; and it was the part of a wise man to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with the appellation of the king's slave; had, perhaps, been purchased from obscure parents, in a country which he had never known; and was trained up from his infancy in the severe discipline of the seraglio. 53 His name, his wealth,his honors, were the gift of a master, who might, without injustice, resume what he had bestowed. Rustan's knowledge, if he possessed any, could only serve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except absolute monarchy. The history of the East informed him, that such had ever been the condition of mankind. 54 The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, inculcated to him, that the sultan was the descendant of the prophet, and the vicegerent of heaven; that patience was the first virtue of a Mussulman, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a subject.

52 (return) [Voyage de Chardin en Perse, vol. iii. p. 293.]

53 (return) [The practice of raising slaves to the great offices of state is still more common among the Turks than among the Persians. The miserable countries of Georgia and Circassia supply rulers to the greatest part of the East.]

54 (return) [Chardin says, that European travellers have diffused among the Persians some ideas of the freedom and mildness of our governments. They have done them a very ill office.]
The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for slavery. Oppressed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preserved the sentiments, or at least the ideas, of their free-born ancestors. The education of Helvidius and Thrasea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the same as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philosophy, they had imbibed the justest and most liberal notions of the dignity of human nature, and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth; to abhor the successful crimes of Caesar and Augustus; and inwardly to despise those tyrants whom they adored with the most abject flattery. As magistrates and senators they were admitted into the great council, which had once dictated laws to the earth, whose authority was so often prostituted to the vilest purposes of tyranny. Tiberius, and those emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to disguise their murders by the formalities of justice, and perhaps enjoyed a secret pleasure in rendering the senate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this assembly, the last of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accusers assumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country; and the public service was rewarded by riches and honors. 55 The servile judges professed to assert the majesty of the commonwealth, violated in the person of its first magistrate, 56 whose clemency they most applauded when they trembled the most at his inexorable and impending cruelty. 57 The tyrant beheld their baseness with just contempt, and encountered their secret sentiments of detestation with sincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the senate.

55 (return) [They alleged the example of Scipio and Cato, (Tacit. Annal. iii. 66.) Marcellus Epirus and Crispus Vibius had acquired two millions and a half under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Vespasian. See Tacit. Hist. iv. 43. Dialog. de Orator. c. 8. For one accusation, Regulus, the just object of Pliny's satire, received from the senate the consular ornaments, and a present of sixty thousand pounds.]

56 (return) [The crime of majesty was formerly a treasonable offence against the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Augustus and Tiberius applied tit to their own persons, and extended it to an infinite latitude. Note: It was Tiberius, not Augustus, who first took in this sense the words crimen laesae majestatis. Bachii Trajanus, 27. —W.]

57 (return) [After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the senate for his clemency. she had not been publicly strangled; nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Gemoniae, where those of common male factors were exposed. See Tacit. Annal. vi. 25. Sueton. in Tiberio c. 53.]

II. The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other by the general resemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own breast, or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restrain from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and when the empire fell into the hands of a single person, he would became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of Imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in rome and the senate, or to were out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen bank of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. 58 To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive. 59 "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror." 60

58 (return) [Seriphus was a small rocky island in the Aegean Sea, the inhabitants of which were despised for their ignorance and obscurity. The place of Ovid's exile is well known, by his just, but unmanly lamentations. It should seem, that he only received an order to leave rome in so many days, and to transport himself to Tomi. Guards and jailers were unnecessary.]

59 (return) [Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was stopped in the straits of Sicily; but so little danger did there appear in the example, that the most jealous of tyrants disdained to punish it. Tacit. Annal. vi. 14.]

60 (return) [Cicero ad Familiares, iv. 7.]

Chapter IV: The Cruelty, Follies And Murder Of Commodus.—Part I.

The Cruelty, Follies, And Murder Of Commodus—Election Of Pertinax—His Attempts To Reform The State—His Assassination By The Praetorian Guards.

The mildness of Marcus, which the rigid discipline of the Stoics was unable to eradicate, formed, at the same time, the most amiable, and the only defective part of his character. His excellent understanding was often deceived by the unsuspecting goodness of his heart. Artful men, who study the passions of princes, and conceal their own, approached his person in the disguise of philosophic sanctity, and

acquired riches and honors by affecting to despise them. 1 His excessive indulgence to his brother, 105 his wife, and his son, exceeded the bounds of private virtue, and became a public injury, by the example and consequences of their vices.

1 (return) [See the complaints of Avidius Cassius, Hist. August. p. 45. These are, it is true, the complaints of faction; but even faction exaggerates, rather than invents.]

105 (return) [His brother by adoption, and his colleague, L. Verus. Marcus Aurelius had no other brother.—W.]
Faustina, the daughter of Pius and the wife of Marcus, has been as much celebrated for her gallantries as for her beauty. The grave simplicity of the philosopher was ill calculated to engage her wanton levity, or to fix that unbounded passion for variety, which often discovered personal merit in the meanest of mankind. 2 The Cupid of the ancients was, in general, a very sensual deity; and the amours of an empress, as they exact on her side the plainest advances, are seldom susceptible of much sentimental delicacy. Marcus was the only man in the empire who seemed ignorant or insensible of the irregularities of Faustina; which, according to the prejudices of every age, reflected some disgrace on the injured husband. He promoted several of her lovers to posts of honor and profit, 3 and during a connection of thirty years, invariably gave her proofs of the most tender confidence, and of a respect which ended not with her life. In his Meditations, he thanks the gods, who had bestowed on him a wife so faithful, so gentle, and of such a wonderful simplicity of manners. 4 The obsequious senate, at his earnest request, declared her a goddess. She was represented in her temples, with the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres; and it was decreed, that, on the day of their nuptials, the youth of either sex should pay their vows before the altar of their chaste patroness. 5

2 (return) [Faustinam satis constat apud Cajetam conditiones sibi et nauticas et gladiatorias, elegisse. Hist. August. p. 30. Lampridius explains the sort of merit which Faustina chose, and the conditions which she exacted. Hist. August. p. 102.]

3 (return) [Hist. August. p. 34.]

4 (return) [Meditat. l. i. The world has laughed at the credulity of Marcus but Madam Dacier assures us, (and we may credit a lady,) that the husband will always be deceived, if the wife condescends to dissemble.]
5 (return) [Footnote 5: Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. [c. 31,] p. 1195. Hist. August. p. 33. Commentaire de Spanheim sur les Caesars de Julien, p. 289. The deification of Faustina is the only defect which Julian's criticism is able to discover in the all-accomplished character of Marcus.]
The monstrous vices of the son have cast a shade on the purity of the father's virtues. It has been objected to Marcus, that he sacrificed the happiness of millions to a fond partiality for a worthless boy; and that he chose a successor in his own family, rather than in the republic. Nothing however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he summoned to his assistance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices, and to

render him worthy of the throne for which he was designed. But the power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy, except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous. The distasteful lesson of a grave philosopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whisper of a profligate favorite; and Marcus himself blasted the fruits of this labored education, by admitting his son, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, to a full participation of the Imperial power. He lived but four years afterwards: but he lived long enough to repent a rash measure, which raised the impetuous youth above the restraint of reason and authority.

Most of the crimes which disturb the internal peace of society, are produced by the restraints which the necessary but unequal laws of property have imposed on the appetites of mankind, by confining to a few the possession of those objects that are coveted by many. Of all our passions and appetites, the love of power is of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since the pride of one man requires the submission of the multitude. In the tumult of civil discord, the laws of society lose their force, and their place is seldom supplied by those of humanity. The ardor of contention, the pride of victory, the despair of success, the memory of past injuries, and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind, and to silence the voice of pity. From such motives almost every page of history has been stained with civil blood; but these motives will not account for the unprovoked cruelties of Commodus, who had nothing to wish and every thing to enjoy. The beloved son of Marcus succeeded to his father, amidst the acclamations of the senate and armies; 6 and when he ascended the throne, the happy youth saw round him neither competitor to remove, nor enemies to punish. In this calm, elevated station, it was surely natural that he should prefer the love of mankind to their detestation, the mild glories of his five predecessors to the ignominious fate of Nero and Domitian.

6 (return) [Commodus was the first Porphyrogenitus, (born since his father's accession to the throne.) By a new strain of flattery, the Egyptian medals date by the years of his life; as if they were synonymous to those of his reign. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. ii. p. 752.]

Yet Commodus was not, as he has been represented, a tiger born with an insatiate thirst of human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of the most inhuman actions. 7 Nature had formed him of a weak rather than a wicked disposition. His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind. His cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul. 8

7 (return) [Hist. August. p. 46.]

8 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. p. 1203.]

Upon the death of his father, Commodus found himself embarrassed with the command of a great army, and the conduct of a difficult war against the Quadi and Marcomanni. 9 The servile and profligate youths whom Marcus had banished, soon regained their station and influence about the new emperor. They exaggerated the hardships and dangers of a campaign in the wild countries beyond the Danube; and they assured the indolent prince that the terror of his name, and the arms of his

lieutenants, would be sufficient to complete the conquest of the dismayed barbarians, or to impose such conditions as were more advantageous than any conquest. By a dexterous application to his sensual appetites, they compared the tranquillity, the splendor, the refined pleasures of Rome, with the tumult of a Pannonian camp, which afforded neither leisure nor materials for luxury. 10 Commodus listened to the pleasing advice; but whilst he hesitated between his own inclination and the awe which he still retained for his father's counsellors, the summer insensibly elapsed, and his triumphal entry into the capital was deferred till the autumn. His graceful person, 11 popular address, and imagined virtues, attracted the public favor; the honorable peace which he had recently granted to the barbarians, diffused a universal joy; 12 his impatience to revisit Rome was fondly ascribed to the love of his country; and his dissolute course of amusements was faintly condemned in a prince of nineteen years of age.

9 (return) [According to Tertullian, (Apolog. c. 25,) he died at Sirmium. But the situation of Vindobona, or Vienna, where both the Victors place his death, is better adapted to the operations of the war against the Marcomanni and Quadi.]

10 (return) [Herodian, l. i. p. 12.]

11 (return) [Herodian, l. i. p. 16.]

12 (return) [This universal joy is well described (from the medals as well as historians) by Mr. Wotton, Hist. of Rome, p. 192, 193.] During the three first years of his reign, the forms, and even the spirit, of the old administration, were maintained by those faithful counsellors, to whom Marcus had recommended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his profligate favorites revelled in all the license of sovereign power; but his hands were yet unstained with blood; and he had even displayed a generosity of sentiment, which might perhaps have ripened into solid virtue. 13 A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

13 (return) [Manilius, the confidential secretary of Avidius Cassius, was discovered after he had lain concealed several years. The emperor nobly relieved the public anxiety by refusing to see him, and burning his papers without opening them. Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. p. 1209.]

One evening, as the emperor was returning to the palace, through a dark and narrow portico in the amphitheatre, 14 an assassin, who waited his passage, rushed upon him with a drawn sword, loudly exclaiming, "The senate sends you this." The menace prevented the deed; the assassin was seized by the guards, and immediately revealed the authors of the conspiracy. It had been formed, not in the state, but within the walls of the palace. Lucilla, the emperor's sister, and widow of Lucius Verus, impatient of the second rank, and jealous of the reigning empress, had armed the murderer against her brother's life. She had not ventured to communicate the black design to her second husband, Claudius Pompeiarus, a senator of distinguished merit and unshaken loyalty; but among the crowd of her lovers (for

she imitated the manners of Faustina) she found men of desperate fortunes and wild ambition, who were prepared to serve her more violent, as well as her tender passions. The conspirators experienced the rigor of justice, and the abandoned princess was punished, first with exile, and afterwards with death. 15

14 (return) [See Maffei degli Amphitheatri, p. 126.]

15 (return) [Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1205 Herodian, l. i. p. 16 Hist. August p. 46.]

But the words of the assassin sunk deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impression of fear and hatred against the whole body of the senate. 151 Those whom he had dreaded as importunate ministers, he now suspected as secret enemies. The Delators, a race of men discouraged, and almost extinguished, under the former reigns, again became formidable, as soon as they discovered that the emperor was desirous of finding disaffection and treason in the senate. That assembly, whom Marcus had ever considered as the great council of the nation, was composed of the most distinguished of the Romans; and distinction of every kind soon became criminal. The possession of wealth stimulated the diligence of the informers; rigid virtue implied a tacit censure of the irregularities of Commodus; important services implied a dangerous superiority of merit; and the friendship of the father always insured the aversion of the son. Suspicion was equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation. The execution of a considerable senator was attended with the death of all who might lament or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had once tasted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorse.

151 (return) [The conspirators were senators, even the assassin himself. Herod. 81.—G.]

Of these innocent victims of tyranny, none died more lamented than the two brothers of the Quintilian family, Maximus and Condianus; whose fraternal love has saved their names from oblivion, and endeared their memory to posterity. Their studies and their occupations, their pursuits and their pleasures, were still the same. In the enjoyment of a great estate, they never admitted the idea of a separate interest: some fragments are now extant of a treatise which they composed in common; 152 and in every action of life it was observed that their two bodies were animated by one soul. The Antonines, who valued their virtues, and delighted in their union, raised them, in the same year, to the consulship; and Marcus afterwards intrusted to their joint care the civil administration of Greece, and a great military command, in which they obtained a signal victory over the Germans. The kind cruelty of Commodus united them in death. 16

152 (return) [This work was on agriculture, and is often quoted by later writers. See P. Needham, Proleg. ad Geoponic. Camb. 1704.—W.]

16 (return) [In a note upon the Augustan History, Casaubon has collected a number of particulars concerning these celebrated brothers. See p. 96 of his learned commentary.]

The tyrant's rage, after having shed the noblest blood of the senate, at length recoiled on the principal instrument of his cruelty. Whilst Commodus was immersed

in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public business on Perennis, a servile and ambitious minister, who had obtained his post by the murder of his predecessor, but who possessed a considerable share of vigor and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited estates of the nobles sacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immense treasure. The Praetorian guards were under his immediate command; and his son, who already discovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aspired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the same crime, he was capable of aspiring to it, had he not been prevented, surprised, and put to death. The fall of a minister is a very trifling incident in the general history of the empire; but it was hastened by an extraordinary circumstance, which proved how much the nerves of discipline were already relaxed. The legions of Britain, discontented with the administration of Perennis, formed a deputation of fifteen hundred select men, with instructions to march to Rome, and lay their complaints before the emperor. These military petitioners, by their own determined behaviour, by inflaming the divisions of the guards, by exaggerating the strength of the British army, and by alarming the fears of Commodus, exacted and obtained the minister's death, as the only redress of their grievances. 17 This presumption of a distant army, and their discovery of the weakness of government, was a sure presage of the most dreadful convulsions.

17 (return) [Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1210. Herodian, l. i. p. 22. Hist. August. p. 48. Dion gives a much less odious character of Perennis, than the other historians. His moderation is almost a pledge of his veracity. Note: Gibbon praises Dion for the moderation with which he speaks of Perennis: he follows, nevertheless, in his own narrative, Herodian and Lampridius. Dion speaks of Perennis not only with moderation, but with admiration; he represents him as a great man, virtuous in his life, and blameless in his death: perhaps he may be suspected of partiality; but it is singular that Gibbon, having adopted, from Herodian and Lampridius, their judgment on this minister, follows Dion's improbable account of his death. What likelihood, in fact, that fifteen hundred men should have traversed Gaul and Italy, and have arrived at Rome without any understanding with the Praetorians, or without detection or opposition from Perennis, the Praetorian praefect? Gibbon, foreseeing, perhaps, this difficulty, has added, that the military deputation inflamed the divisions of the guards; but Dion says expressly that they did not reach Rome, but that the emperor went out to meet them: he even reproaches him for not having opposed them with the guards, who were superior in number. Herodian relates that Commodus, having learned, from a soldier, the ambitious designs of Perennis and his son, caused them to be attacked and massacred by night.—G. from W. Dion's narrative is remarkably circumstantial, and his authority higher than either of the other writers. He hints that Cleander, a new favorite, had already undermined the influence of Perennis.—M.]

The negligence of the public administration was betrayed, soon afterwards, by a new disorder, which arose from the smallest beginnings. A spirit of desertion began to prevail among the troops: and the deserters, instead of seeking their safety in flight or concealment, infested the highways. Maternus, a private soldier, of a daring boldness above his station, collected these bands of robbers into a little army, set

open the prisons, invited the slaves to assert their freedom, and plundered with impunity the rich and defenceless cities of Gaul and Spain. The governors of the provinces, who had long been the spectators, and perhaps the partners, of his depredations, were, at length, roused from their supine indolence by the threatening commands of the emperor. Maternus found that he was encompassed, and foresaw that he must be overpowered. A great effort of despair was his last resource. He ordered his followers to disperse, to pass the Alps in small parties and various disguises, and to assemble at Rome, during the licentious tumult of the festival of Cybele. 18 To murder Commodus, and to ascend the vacant throne, was the ambition of no vulgar robber. His measures were so ably concerted that his concealed troops already filled the streets of Rome. The envy of an accomplice discovered and ruined this singular enterprise, in a moment when it was ripe for execution. 19

18 (return) [During the second Punic war, the Romans imported from Asia the worship of the mother of the gods. Her festival, the Megalesia, began on the fourth of April, and lasted six days. The streets were crowded with mad processions, the theatres with spectators, and the public tables with unbidden guests. Order and police were suspended, and pleasure was the only serious business of the city. See Ovid. de Fastis, l. iv. 189, &c.]

19 (return) [Herodian, l. i. p. 23, 23.]
Suspicious princes often promote the last of mankind, from a vain persuasion, that those who have no dependence, except on their favor, will have no attachment, except to the person of their benefactor. Cleander, the successor of Perennis, was a Phrygian by birth; of a nation over whose stubborn, but servile temper, blows only could prevail. 20 He had been sent from his native country to Rome, in the capacity of a slave. As a slave he entered the Imperial palace, rendered himself useful to his master's passions, and rapidly ascended to the most exalted station which a subject could enjoy. His influence over the mind of Commodus was much greater than that of his predecessor; for Cleander was devoid of any ability or virtue which could inspire the emperor with envy or distrust. Avarice was the reigning passion of his soul, and the great principle of his administration. The rank of Consul, of Patrician, of Senator, was exposed to public sale; and it would have been considered as disaffection, if any one had refused to purchase these empty and disgraceful honors with the greatest part of his fortune. 21 In the lucrative provincial employments, the minister shared with the governor the spoils of the people. The execution of the laws was penal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain, not only the reversal of the sentence by which he was justly condemned, but might likewise inflict whatever punishment he pleased on the accuser, the witnesses, and the judge.

20 (return) [Cicero pro Flacco, c. 27.]

21 (return) [One of these dear-bought promotions occasioned a current... that Julius Solon was banished into the senate.]

By these means, Cleander, in the space of three years, had accumulated more wealth than had ever yet been possessed by any freedman. 22 Commodus was perfectly satisfied with the magnificent presents which the artful courtier laid at his feet in the most seasonable moments. To divert the public envy, Cleander, under the emperor's name, erected baths, porticos, and places of exercise, for the use of the people. 23 He flattered himself that the Romans, dazzled and amused by this apparent liberality, would be less affected by the bloody scenes which were daily exhibited; that they would forget the death of Byrrhus, a senator to whose superior merit the late emperor had granted one of his daughters; and that they would forgive the execution of Arrius Antoninus, the last representative of the name and virtues of the Antonines. The former, with more integrity than prudence, had attempted to disclose, to his brother-in-law, the true character of Cleander. An equitable sentence pronounced by the latter, when proconsul of Asia, against a worthless creature of the favorite, proved fatal to him. 24 After the fall of Perennis, the terrors of Commodus had, for a short time, assumed the appearance of a return to virtue. He repealed the most odious of his acts; loaded his memory with the public execration, and ascribed to the pernicious counsels of that wicked minister all the errors of his inexperienced youth. But his repentance lasted only thirty days; and, under Cleander's tyranny, the administration of Perennis was often regretted.

22 (return) [Dion (l. lxxii. p. 12, 13) observes, that no freedman had possessed riches equal to those of Cleander. The fortune of Pallas amounted, however, to upwards of five and twenty hundred thousand pounds; Ter millies.]

23 (return) [Dion, l. lxxii. p. 12, 13. Herodian, l. i. p. 29. Hist. August. p. 52. These baths were situated near the Porta Capena. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 79.]

24 (return) [Hist. August. p. 79.]

Chapter IV: The Cruelty, Follies And Murder Of Commodus.—Part II.

Pestilence and famine contributed to fill up the measure of the calamities of Rome. 25 The first could be only imputed to the just indignation of the gods; but a monopoly of corn, supported by the riches and power of the minister, was considered as the immediate cause of the second. The popular discontent, after it had long circulated in whispers, broke out in the assembled circus. The people quitted their favorite amusements for the more delicious pleasure of revenge, rushed in crowds towards a palace in the suburbs, one of the emperor's retirements, and demanded, with angry clamors, the head of the public enemy. Cleander, who commanded the Praetorian guards, 26 ordered a body of cavalry to sally forth, and disperse the seditious multitude. The multitude fled with precipitation towards the city; several were slain, and many more were trampled to death; but when the cavalry entered the streets, their pursuit was checked by a shower of stones and

darts from the roofs and windows of the houses. The foot guards, 27 who had been long jealous of the prerogatives and insolence of the Praetorian cavalry, embraced the party of the people. The tumult became a regular engagement, and threatened a general massacre. The Praetorians, at length, gave way, oppressed with numbers; and the tide of popular fury returned with redoubled violence against the gates of the palace, where Commodus lay, dissolved in luxury, and alone unconscious of the civil war. It was death to approach his person with the unwelcome news. He would have perished in this supine security, had not two women, his eldest sister Fadilla, and Marcia, the most favored of his concubines, ventured to break into his presence. Bathed in tears, and with dishevelled hair, they threw themselves at his feet; and with all the pressing eloquence of fear, discovered to the affrighted emperor the crimes of the minister, the rage of the people, and the impending ruin, which, in a few minutes, would burst over his palace and person. Commodus started from his dream of pleasure, and commanded that the head of Cleander should be thrown out to the people. The desired spectacle instantly appeased the tumult; and the son of Marcus might even yet have regained the affection and confidence of his subjects. 28

25 (return) [Herodian, l. i. p. 28. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1215. The latter says that two thousand persons died every day at Rome, during a considerable length of time.]

26 (return) [Tuneque primum tres praefecti praetorio fuere: inter quos libertinus. From some remains of modesty, Cleander declined the title, whilst he assumed the powers, of Praetorian praefect. As the other freedmen were styled, from their several departments, a rationibus, ab epistolis, Cleander called himself a pugione, as intrusted with the defence of his master's person. Salmasius and Casaubon seem to have talked very idly upon this passage. * Note: M. Guizot denies that Lampridius means Cleander as praefect a pugione. The Libertinus seems to me to mean him.—M.]

27 (return) [Herodian, l. i. p. 31. It is doubtful whether he means the Praetorian infantry, or the cohortes urbanae, a body of six thousand men, but whose rank and discipline were not equal to their numbers. Neither Tillemont nor Wotton choose to decide this question.]

28 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. p. 1215. Herodian, l. i. p. 32. Hist. August. p. 48.] But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus. Whilst he thus abandoned the reins of empire to these unworthy favorites, he valued nothing in sovereign power, except the unbounded license of indulging his sensual appetites. His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women, and as many boys, of every rank, and of every province; and, wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had recourse to violence. The ancient historians 29 have expatiated on these abandoned scenes of prostitution, which scorned every restraint of nature or modesty; but it would not be easy to translate their too faithful descriptions into the decency of modern language. The intervals of lust were filled up with the basest amusements. The influence of a polite age, and the labor of an attentive education, had never been able to infuse into his

rude and brutish mind the least tincture of learning; and he was the first of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the pleasures of the understanding. Nero himself excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts of music and poetry: nor should we despise his pursuits, had he not converted the pleasing relaxation of a leisure hour into the serious business and ambition of his life. But Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal, and a fond attachment to the amusements of the populace; the sports of the circus and amphitheatre, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beasts. The masters in every branch of learning, whom Marcus provided for his son, were heard with inattention and disgust; whilst the Moors and Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin and to shoot with the bow, found a disciple who delighted in his application, and soon equalled the most skilful of his instructors in the steadiness of the eye and the dexterity of the hand.

29 (return) [Sororibus suis constupratis. Ipsas concubinas suas sub oculis...stuprari jubebat. Nec irruentium in se juvenum carebat infamia, omni parte corporis atque ore in sexum utrumque pollutus. Hist. Aug. p. 47.]
The servile crowd, whose fortune depended on their master's vices, applauded these ignoble pursuits. The perfidious voice of flattery reminded him, that by exploits of the same nature, by the defeat of the Nemaean lion, and the slaughter of the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Grecian Hercules had acquired a place among the gods, and an immortal memory among men. They only forgot to observe, that, in the first ages of society, when the fiercer animals often dispute with man the possession of an unsettled country, a successful war against those savages is one of the most innocent and beneficial labors of heroism. In the civilized state of the Roman empire, the wild beasts had long since retired from the face of man, and the neighborhood of populous cities. To surprise them in their solitary haunts, and to transport them to Rome, that they might be slain in pomp by the hand of an emperor, was an enterprise equally ridiculous for the prince and oppressive for the people. 30 Ignorant of these distinctions, Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious resemblance, and styled himself (as we still read on his medals 31 the Roman Hercules. 311 The club and the lion's hide were placed by the side of the throne, amongst the ensigns of sovereignty; and statues were erected, in which Commodus was represented in the character, and with the attributes, of the god, whose valor and dexterity he endeavored to emulate in the daily course of his ferocious amusements. 32

30 (return) [The African lions, when pressed by hunger, infested the open villages and cultivated country; and they infested them with impunity. The royal beast was reserved for the pleasures of the emperor and the capital; and the unfortunate peasant who killed one of them though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty. This extraordinary game-law was mitigated by Honorius, and finally repealed by Justinian. Codex Theodos. tom. v. p. 92, et Comment Gothofred.]

31 (return) [Spanheim de Numismat. Dissertat. xii. tom. ii. p. 493.]

311 (return) [Commodus placed his own head on the colossal statue of Hercules with the inscription, Lucius Commodus Hercules. The wits of Rome, according to a new fragment of Dion, published an epigram, of which, like many other ancient jests, the point is not very clear. It seems to be a protest of the god against being confounded with the emperor. Mai Fragm. Vatican. ii. 225.—M.]

32 (return) [Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1216. Hist. August. p. 49.]
Elated with these praises, which gradually extinguished the innate sense of shame, Commodus resolved to exhibit before the eyes of the Roman people those exercises, which till then he had decently confined within the walls of his palace, and to the presence of a few favorites. On the appointed day, the various motives of flattery, fear, and curiosity, attracted to the amphitheatre an innumerable multitude of spectators; and some degree of applause was deservedly bestowed on the uncommon skill of the Imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows whose point was shaped into the form of crescent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career, and cut asunder the long, bony neck of the ostrich. 33 A panther was let loose; and the archer waited till he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the same instant the shaft flew, the beast dropped dead, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the amphitheatre disgorged at once a hundred lions: a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Commodus laid them dead as they run raging round the Arena. Neither the huge bulk of the elephant, nor the scaly hide of the rhinoceros, could defend them from his stroke. Aethiopia and India yielded their most extraordinary productions; and several animals were slain in the amphitheatre, which had been seen only in the representations of art, or perhaps of fancy. 34 In all these exhibitions, the securest precautions were used to protect the person of the Roman Hercules from the desperate spring of any savage, who might possibly disregard the dignity of the emperor and the sanctity of the god. 35

33 (return) [The ostrich's neck is three feet long, and composed of seventeen vertebrae. See Buffon, Hist. Naturelle.]

34 (return) [Commodus killed a camelopardalis or Giraffe, (Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1211,) the tallest, the most gentle, and the most useless of the large quadrupeds. This singular animal, a native only of the interior parts of Africa, has not been seen in Europe since the revival of letters; and though M. de Buffon (Hist. Naturelle, tom. xiii.) has endeavored to describe, he has not ventured to delineate, the Giraffe. * Note: The naturalists of our days have been more fortunate. London probably now contains more specimens of this animal than have been seen in Europe since the fall of the Roman empire, unless in the pleasure gardens of the emperor Frederic II., in Sicily, which possessed several. Frederic's collections of wild beasts were exhibited, for the popular amusement, in many parts of Italy. Raumer, Geschichte der Hohenstaufen, v. iii. p. 571. Gibbon, moreover, is mistaken; as a giraffe was presented to Lorenzo de Medici, either by the sultan of Egypt or the king of Tunis. Contemporary authorities are quoted in the old work, Gesner de Quadrupedibum p. 162.—M.]

35 (return) [Herodian, l. i. p. 37. Hist. August. p. 50.]
But the meanest of the populace were affected with shame and indignation when they beheld their sovereign enter the lists as a gladiator, and glory in a profession which the laws and manners of the Romans had branded with the justest note of infamy. 36 He chose the habit and arms of the Secutor, whose combat with the Retiarius formed one of the most lively scenes in the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. The Secutor was armed with a helmet, sword, and buckler; his naked antagonist had only a large net and a trident; with the one he endeavored to entangle, with the other to despatch his enemy. If he missed the first throw, he was obliged to fly from the pursuit of the Secutor, till he had prepared his net for a second cast. 37 The emperor fought in this character seven hundred and thirty-five several times. These glorious achievements were carefully recorded in the public acts of the empire; and that he might omit no circumstance of infamy, he received from the common fund of gladiators a stipend so exorbitant that it became a new and most ignominious tax upon the Roman people. 38 It may be easily supposed, that in these engagements the master of the world was always successful; in the amphitheatre, his victories were not often sanguinary; but when he exercised his skill in the school of gladiators, or his own palace, his wretched antagonists were frequently honored with a mortal wound from the hand of Commodus, and obliged to seal their flattery with their blood. 39 He now disdained the appellation of Hercules. The name of Paulus, a celebrated Secutor, was the only one which delighted his ear. It was inscribed on his colossal statues, and repeated in the redoubled acclamations 40 of the mournful and applauding senate. 41 Claudius Pompeianus, the virtuous husband of Lucilla, was the only senator who asserted the honor of his rank. As a father, he permitted his sons to consult their safety by attending the amphitheatre. As a Roman, he declared, that his own life was in the emperor's hands, but that he would never behold the son of Marcus prostituting his person and dignity. Notwithstanding his manly resolution Pompeianus escaped the resentment of the tyrant, and, with his honor, had the good fortune to preserve his life. 42

36 (return) [The virtuous and even the wise princes forbade the senators and knights to embrace this scandalous profession, under pain of infamy, or, what was more dreaded by those profligate wretches, of exile. The tyrants allured them to dishonor by threats and rewards. Nero once produced in the arena forty senators and sixty knights. See Lipsius, Saturnalia, l. ii. c. 2. He has happily corrected a passage of Suetonius in Nerone, c. 12.]

37 (return) [Lipsius, l. ii. c. 7, 8. Juvenal, in the eighth satire, gives a picturesque description of this combat.]

38 (return) [Hist. August. p. 50. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1220. He received, for each time, decies, about 8000l. sterling.]

39 (return) [Victor tells us, that Commodus only allowed his antagonists a...weapon, dreading most probably the consequences of their despair.]
40 (return) [Footnote 40: They were obliged to repeat, six hundred and twenty-six times, Paolus first of the Secutors, &c.]

41 (return) [Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1221. He speaks of his own baseness and danger.]

42 (return) [He mixed, however, some prudence with his courage, and passed the greatest part of his time in a country retirement; alleging his advanced age, and the weakness of his eyes. "I never saw him in the senate," says Dion, "except during the short reign of Pertinax." All his infirmities had suddenly left him, and they returned as suddenly upon the murder of that excellent prince. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1227.]
Commodus had now attained the summit of vice and infamy. Amidst the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to disguise from himself, that he had deserved the contempt and hatred of every man of sense and virtue in his empire. His ferocious spirit was irritated by the consciousness of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the just apprehension of danger, and by the habit of slaughter, which he contracted in his daily amusements. History has preserved a long list of consular senators sacrificed to his wanton suspicion, which sought out, with peculiar anxiety, those unfortunate persons connected, however remotely, with the family of the Antonines, without sparing even the ministers of his crimes or pleasures. 43 His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with impunity the noblest blood of Rome: he perished as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics. Marcia, his favorite concubine, Eclectus, his chamberlain, and Laetus, his Praetorian praefect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predecessors, resolved to prevent the destruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant, 431 or the sudden indignation of the people. Marcia seized the occasion of presenting a draught of wine to her lover, after he had fatigued himself with hunting some wild beasts. Commodus retired to sleep; but whilst he was laboring with the effects of poison and drunkenness, a robust youth, by profession a wrestler, entered his chamber, and strangled him without resistance. The body was secretly conveyed out of the palace, before the least suspicion was entertained in the city, or even in the court, of the emperor's death. Such was the fate of the son of Marcus, and so easy was it to destroy a hated tyrant, who, by the artificial powers of government, had oppressed, during thirteen years, so many millions of subjects, each of whom was equal to their master in personal strength and personal abilities. 44

43 (return) [The prefects were changed almost hourly or daily; and the caprice of Commodus was often fatal to his most favored chamberlains. Hist. August. p. 46, 51.]

431 (return) [Commodus had already resolved to massacre them the following night they determined o anticipate his design. Herod. i. 17.—W.]

44 (return) [Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1222. Herodian, l. i. p. 43. Hist. August. p. 52.]

The measures of the conspirators were conducted with the deliberate coolness and celerity which the greatness of the occasion required. They resolved instantly to fill the vacant throne with an emperor whose character would justify and maintain the action that had been committed. They fixed on Pertinax, praefect of the city, an ancient senator of consular rank, whose conspicuous merit had broke through the obscurity of his birth, and raised him to the first honors of the state. He had successively governed most of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly distinguished himself by the firmness, the prudence, and the integrity of his conduct. 45 He now remained almost alone of the friends and ministers of Marcus; and when, at a late hour of the night, he was awakened with the news, that the chamberlain and the praefect were at his door, he received them with intrepid resignation, and desired they would execute their master's orders. Instead of death, they offered him the throne of the Roman world. During some moments he distrusted their intentions and assurances. Convinced at length of the death of Commodus, he accepted the purple with a sincere reluctance, the natural effect of his knowledge both of the duties and of the dangers of the supreme rank. 46

45 (return) [Pertinax was a native of Alba Pompeia, in Piedmont, and son of a timber merchant. The order of his employments (it is marked by Capitolinus) well deserves to be set down, as expressive of the form of government and manners of the age. 1. He was a centurion. 2. Praefect of a cohort in Syria, in the Parthian war, and in Britain. 3. He obtained an Ala, or squadron of horse, in Maesia. 4. He was commissary of provisions on the Aemilian way. 5. He commanded the fleet upon the Rhine. 6. He was procurator of Dacia, with a salary of about 1600l. a year. 7. He commanded the veterans of a legion. 8. He obtained the rank of senator. 9. Of praetor. 10. With the command of the first legion in Rhaetia and Noricum. 11. He was consul about the year 175. 12. He attended Marcus into the East. 13. He commanded an army on the Danube. 14. He was consular legate of Maesia. 15. Of Dacia. 16. Of Syria. 17. Of Britain. 18. He had the care of the public provisions at Rome. 19. He was proconsul of Africa. 20. Praefect of the city. Herodian (l. i. p. 48) does justice to his disinterested spirit; but Capitolinus, who collected every popular rumor, charges him with a great fortune acquired by bribery and corruption.]

46 (return) [Julian, in the Caesars, taxes him with being accessory to the death of Commodus.]

Laetus conducted without delay his new emperor to the camp of the Praetorians, diffusing at the same time through the city a seasonable report that Commodus died suddenly of an apoplexy; and that the virtuous Pertinax had already succeeded to the throne. The guards were rather surprised than pleased with the suspicious death of a prince, whose indulgence and liberality they alone had experienced; but the emergency of the occasion, the authority of their praefect, the reputation of Pertinax, and the clamors of the people, obliged them to stifle their secret discontents, to accept the donative promised by the new emperor, to swear allegiance to him, and with joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands to conduct him to the senate house, that the military consent might be ratified by the civil

authority. This important night was now far spent; with the dawn of day, and the commencement of the new year, the senators expected a summons to attend an ignominious ceremony. 461 In spite of all remonstrances, even of those of his creatures who yet preserved any regard for prudence or decency, Commodus had resolved to pass the night in the gladiators' school, and from thence to take possession of the consulship, in the habit and with the attendance of that infamous crew. On a sudden, before the break of day, the senate was called together in the temple of Concord, to meet the guards, and to ratify the election of a new emperor. For a few minutes they sat in silent suspense, doubtful of their unexpected deliverance, and suspicious of the cruel artifices of Commodus: but when at length they were assured that the tyrant was no more, they resigned themselves to all the transports of joy and indignation. Pertinax, who modestly represented the meanness of his extraction, and pointed out several noble senators more deserving than himself of the empire, was constrained by their dutiful violence to ascend the throne, and received all the titles of Imperial power, confirmed by the most sincere vows of fidelity. The memory of Commodus was branded with eternal infamy. The names of tyrant, of gladiator, of public enemy resounded in every corner of the house. They decreed in tumultuous votes, 462 that his honors should be reversed, his titles erased from the public monuments, his statues thrown down, his body dragged with a hook into the stripping room of the gladiators, to satiate the public fury; and they expressed some indignation against those officious servants who had already presumed to screen his remains from the justice of the senate. But Pertinax could not refuse those last rites to the memory of Marcus, and the tears of his first protector Claudius Pompeianus, who lamented the cruel fate of his brother-in-law, and lamented still more that he had deserved it. 47

461 (return) [The senate always assembled at the beginning of the year, on the night of the 1st January, (see Savaron on Sid. Apoll. viii. 6,) and this happened the present year, as usual, without any particular order.—G from W.]

462 (return) [What Gibbon improperly calls, both here and in the note, tumultuous decrees, were no more than the applauses and acclamations which recur so often in the history of the emperors. The custom passed from the theatre to the forum, from the forum to the senate. Applauses on the adoption of the Imperial decrees were first introduced under Trajan. (Plin. jun. Panegyr. 75.) One senator read the form of the decree, and all the rest answered by acclamations, accompanied with a kind of chant or rhythm. These were some of the acclamations addressed to Pertinax, and against the memory of Commodus. Hosti patriae honores detrahantur. Parricidae honores detrahantur. Ut salvi simus, Jupiter, optime, maxime, serva nobis Pertinacem. This custom prevailed not only in the councils of state, but in all the meetings of the senate. However inconsistent it may appear with the solemnity of a religious assembly, the early Christians adopted and introduced it into their synods, notwithstanding the opposition of some of the Fathers, particularly of St. Chrysostom. See the Coll. of Franc. Bern. Ferrarius de veterum acclamatione in Graevii Thesaur. Antiq. Rom. i. 6.—W. This note is rather hypercritical, as regards Gibbon, but appears to be worthy of preservation.—M.]

47 (return) [Capitolinus gives us the particulars of these tumultuary votes, which were moved by one senator, and repeated, or rather chanted by the whole body. Hist. August. p. 52.]
These effusions of impotent rage against a dead emperor, whom the senate had flattered when alive with the most abject servility, betrayed a just but ungenerous spirit of revenge.
The legality of these decrees was, however, supported by the principles of the Imperial constitution. To censure, to depose, or to punish with death, the first magistrate of the republic, who had abused his delegated trust, was the ancient and undoubted prerogative of the Roman senate; 48 but the feeble assembly was obliged to content itself with inflicting on a fallen tyrant that public justice, from which, during his life and reign, he had been shielded by the strong arm of military despotism. 481

48 (return) [The senate condemned Nero to be put to death more majorum. Sueton. c. 49.]

481 (return) [No particular law assigned this right to the senate: it was deduced from the ancient principles of the republic. Gibbon appears to infer, from the passage of Suetonius, that the senate, according to its ancient right, punished Nero with death. The words, however, more majerum refer not to the decree of the senate, but to the kind of death, which was taken from an old law of Romulus. (See Victor. Epit. Ed. Artzen p. 484, n. 7.)—W.]
Pertinax found a nobler way of condemning his predecessor's memory; by the contrast of his own virtues with the vices of Commodus. On the day of his accession, he resigned over to his wife and son his whole private fortune; that they might have no pretence to solicit favors at the expense of the state. He refused to flatter the vanity of the former with the title of Augusta; or to corrupt the inexperienced youth of the latter by the rank of Caesar. Accurately distinguishing between the duties of a parent and those of a sovereign, he educated his son with a severe simplicity, which, while it gave him no assured prospect of the throne, might in time have rendered him worthy of it. In public, the behavior of Pertinax was grave and affable. He lived with the virtuous part of the senate, (and, in a private station, he had been acquainted with the true character of each individual,) without either pride or jealousy; considered them as friends and companions, with whom he had shared the danger of the tyranny, and with whom he wished to enjoy the security of the present time. He very frequently invited them to familiar entertainments, the frugality of which was ridiculed by those who remembered and regretted the luxurious prodigality of Commodus. 49

49 (return) [Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 1223) speaks of these entertainments, as a senator who had supped with the emperor; Capitolinus, (Hist. August. p. 58,) like a slave, who had received his intelligence from one the scullions.]
To heal, as far as it was possible, the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny, was the pleasing, but melancholy, task of Pertinax. The innocent victims, who yet

survived, were recalled from exile, released from prison, and restored to the full possession of their honors and fortunes. The unburied bodies of murdered senators (for the cruelty of Commodus endeavored to extend itself beyond death) were deposited in the sepulchres of their ancestors; their memory was justified and every consolation was bestowed on their ruined and afflicted families. Among these consolations, one of the most grateful was the punishment of the Delators; the common enemies of their master, of virtue, and of their country. Yet even in the inquisition of these legal assassins, Pertinax proceeded with a steady temper, which gave every thing to justice, and nothing to popular prejudice and resentment. The finances of the state demanded the most vigilant care of the emperor. Though every measure of injustice and extortion had been adopted, which could collect the property of the subject into the coffers of the prince, the rapaciousness of Commodus had been so very inadequate to his extravagance, that, upon his death, no more than eight thousand pounds were found in the exhausted treasury, 50 to defray the current expenses of government, and to discharge the pressing demand of a liberal donative, which the new emperor had been obliged to promise to the Praetorian guards. Yet under these distressed circumstances, Pertinax had the generous firmness to remit all the oppressive taxes invented by Commodus, and to cancel all the unjust claims of the treasury; declaring, in a decree of the senate, "that he was better satisfied to administer a poor republic with innocence, than to acquire riches by the ways of tyranny and dishonor. Economy and industry he considered as the pure and genuine sources of wealth; and from them he soon derived a copious supply for the public necessities. The expense of the household was immediately reduced to one half. All the instruments of luxury Pertinax exposed to public auction, 51 gold and silver plate, chariots of a singular construction, a superfluous wardrobe of silk and embroidery, and a great number of beautiful slaves of both sexes; excepting only, with attentive humanity, those who were born in a state of freedom, and had been ravished from the arms of their weeping parents. At the same time that he obliged the worthless favorites of the tyrant to resign a part of their ill-gotten wealth, he satisfied the just creditors of the state, and unexpectedly discharged the long arrears of honest services. He removed the oppressive restrictions which had been laid upon commerce, and granted all the uncultivated lands in Italy and the provinces to those who would improve them; with an exemption from tribute during the term of ten years. 52

50 (return) [Decies. The blameless economy of Pius left his successors a treasure of vicies septies millies, above two and twenty millions sterling. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1231.]

51 (return) [Besides the design of converting these useless ornaments into money, Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 1229) assigns two secret motives of Pertinax. He wished to expose the vices of Commodus, and to discover by the purchasers those who most resembled him.]

52 (return) [Though Capitolinus has picked up many idle tales of the private life of Pertinax, he joins with Dion and Herodian in admiring his public conduct.]

Such a uniform conduct had already secured to Pertinax the noblest reward of a sovereign, the love and esteem of his people.
Those who remembered the virtues of Marcus were happy to contemplate in their new emperor the features of that bright original; and flattered themselves, that they should long enjoy the benign influence of his administration. A hasty zeal to reform the corrupted state, accompanied with less prudence than might have been expected from the years and experience of Pertinax, proved fatal to himself and to his country. His honest indiscretion united against him the servile crowd, who found their private benefit in the public disorders, and who preferred the favor of a tyrant to the inexorable equality of the laws. 53

53 (return) [Leges, rem surdam, inexorabilem esse. T. Liv. ii. 3.]
Amidst the general joy, the sullen and angry countenance of the Praetorian guards betrayed their inward dissatisfaction. They had reluctantly submitted to Pertinax; they dreaded the strictness of the ancient discipline, which he was preparing to restore; and they regretted the license of the former reign. Their discontents were secretly fomented by Laetus, their praefect, who found, when it was too late, that his new emperor would reward a servant, but would not be ruled by a favorite. On the third day of his reign, the soldiers seized on a noble senator, with a design to carry him to the camp, and to invest him with the Imperial purple. Instead of being dazzled by the dangerous honor, the affrighted victim escaped from their violence, and took refuge at the feet of Pertinax. A short time afterwards, Sosius Falco, one of the consuls of the year, a rash youth, 54 but of an ancient and opulent family, listened to the voice of ambition; and a conspiracy was formed during a short absence of Pertinax, which was crushed by his sudden return to Rome, and his resolute behavior. Falco was on the point of being justly condemned to death as a public enemy had he not been saved by the earnest and sincere entreaties of the injured emperor, who conjured the senate, that the purity of his reign might not be stained by the blood even of a guilty senator.

54 (return) [If we credit Capitolinus, (which is rather difficult,) Falco behaved with the most petulant indecency to Pertinax, on the day of his accession. The wise emperor only admonished him of his youth and in experience. Hist. August. p. 55.]
These disappointments served only to irritate the rage of the Praetorian guards. On the twenty-eighth of March, eighty-six days only after the death of Commodus, a general sedition broke out in the camp, which the officers wanted either power or inclination to suppress. Two or three hundred of the most desperate soldiers marched at noonday, with arms in their hands and fury in their looks, towards the Imperial palace. The gates were thrown open by their companions upon guard, and by the domestics of the old court, who had already formed a secret conspiracy against the life of the too virtuous emperor. On the news of their approach, Pertinax, disdaining either flight or concealment, advanced to meet his assassins; and recalled to their minds his own innocence, and the sanctity of their recent oath. For a few moments they stood in silent suspense, ashamed of their atrocious design, and awed by the venerable aspect and majestic firmness of their sovereign, till at length, the despair of pardon reviving their fury, a barbarian of the country of Tongress 55

levelled the first blow against Pertinax, who was instantly despatched with a multitude of wounds. His head, separated from his body, and placed on a lance, was carried in triumph to the Praetorian camp, in the sight of a mournful and indignant people, who lamented the unworthy fate of that excellent prince, and the transient blessings of a reign, the memory of which could serve only to aggravate their approaching misfortunes. 56

55 (return) [The modern bishopric of Liege. This soldier probably belonged to the Batavian horse-guards, who were mostly raised in the duchy of Gueldres and the neighborhood, and were distinguished by their valor, and by the boldness with which they swam their horses across the broadest and most rapid rivers. Tacit. Hist. iv. 12 Dion, l. lv p. 797 Lipsius de magnitudine Romana, l. i. c. 4.]

56 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1232. Herodian, l. ii. p. 60. Hist. August. p. 58. Victor in Epitom. et in Caesarib. Eutropius, viii. 16.]

Chapter V: Sale Of The Empire To Didius Julianus.—Part I.

Public Sale Of The Empire To Didius Julianus By The Praetorian Guards—Clodius Albinus In Britain, Pescennius Niger In Syria, And Septimius Severus In Pannonia, Declare Against The Murderers Of Pertinax—Civil Wars And Victory Of Severus Over His Three Rivals—Relaxation Of Discipline—New Maxims Of Government.

The power of the sword is more sensibly felt in an extensive monarchy, than in a small community. It has been calculated by the ablest politicians, that no state, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness. But although this relative proportion may be uniform, the influence of the army over the rest of the society will vary according to the degree of its positive strength. The advantages of military science and discipline cannot be exerted, unless a proper number of soldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one soul. With a handful of men, such a union would be ineffectual; with an unwieldy host, it would be impracticable; and the powers of the machine would be alike destroyed by the extreme minuteness or the excessive weight of its springs. To illustrate this observation, we need only reflect, that there is no superiority of natural strength, artificial weapons, or acquired skill, which could enable one man to keep in constant subjection one hundred of his fellow-creatures: the tyrant of a single town, or a small district, would soon discover that a hundred armed followers were a weak defence against ten thousand peasants or citizens; but a hundred thousand well-disciplined soldiers will command, with despotic sway, ten millions of subjects; and a body of ten or fifteen thousand guards will strike terror into the most numerous populace that ever crowded the streets of an immense capital. The Praetorian bands, whose licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman empire, scarcely amounted to the last-mentioned number 1 They derived their institution from Augustus. That crafty tyrant, sensible that laws

might color, but that arms alone could maintain, his usurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards, in constant readiness to protect his person, to awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush the first motions of rebellion. He distinguished these favored troops by a double pay and superior privileges; but, as their formidable aspect would at once have alarmed and irritated the Roman people, three cohorts only were stationed in the capital, whilst the remainder was dispersed in the adjacent towns of Italy. 2 But after fifty years of peace and servitude, Tiberius ventured on a decisive measure, which forever rivetted the fetters of his country. Under the fair pretences of relieving Italy from the heavy burden of military quarters, and of introducing a stricter discipline among the guards, he assembled them at Rome, in a permanent camp, 3 which was fortified with skilful care, 4 and placed on a commanding situation. 5

1 (return) [They were originally nine or ten thousand men, (for Tacitus and son are not agreed upon the subject,) divided into as many cohorts. Vitellius increased them to sixteen thousand, and as far as we can learn from inscriptions, they never afterwards sunk much below that number. See Lipsius de magnitudine Romana, i. 4.]

2 (return) [Sueton. in August. c. 49.]

3 (return) [Tacit. Annal. iv. 2. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 37. Dion Cassius, l. lvii. p. 867.]

4 (return) [In the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, the Praetorian camp was attacked and defended with all the machines used in the siege of the best fortified cities. Tacit. Hist. iii. 84.]

5 (return) [Close to the walls of the city, on the broad summit of the Quirinal and Viminal hills. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 174. Donatus de Roma Antiqua, p. 46. * Note: Not on both these hills: neither Donatus nor Nardini justify this position. (Whitaker's Review. p. 13.) At the northern extremity of this hill (the Viminal) are some considerable remains of a walled enclosure which bears all the appearance of a Roman camp, and therefore is generally thought to correspond with the Castra Praetoria. Cramer's Italy 390.—M.]
Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fatal to the throne of despotism. By thus introducing the Praetorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe, which distance only, and mystery, can preserve towards an imaginary power. In the luxurious idleness of an opulent city, their pride was nourished by the sense of their irresistible weight; nor was it possible to conceal from them, that the person of the sovereign, the authority of the senate, the public treasure, and the seat of empire, were all in their hands. To divert the Praetorian bands from these dangerous reflections, the firmest and best established princes were obliged to mix blandishments with commands, rewards with punishments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleasures, connive at their

irregularities, and to purchase their precarious faith by a liberal donative; which, since the elevation of Claudius, was enacted as a legal claim, on the accession of every new emperor. 6

6 (return) [Claudius, raised by the soldiers to the empire, was the first who gave a donative. He gave quina dena, 120l. (Sueton. in Claud. c. 10:) when Marcus, with his colleague Lucius Versus, took quiet possession of the throne, he gave vicena, 160l. to each of the guards. Hist. August. p. 25, (Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1231.) We may form some idea of the amount of these sums, by Hadrian's complaint that the promotion of a Caesar had cost him ter millies, two millions and a half sterling.]

The advocate of the guards endeavored to justify by arguments the power which they asserted by arms; and to maintain that, according to the purest principles of the constitution, their consent was essentially necessary in the appointment of an emperor. The election of consuls, of generals, and of magistrates, however it had been recently usurped by the senate, was the ancient and undoubted right of the Roman people. 7 But where was the Roman people to be found? Not surely amongst the mixed multitude of slaves and strangers that filled the streets of Rome; a servile populace, as devoid of spirit as destitute of property. The defenders of the state, selected from the flower of the Italian youth, 8 and trained in the exercise of arms and virtue, were the genuine representatives of the people, and the best entitled to elect the military chief of the republic. These assertions, however defective in reason, became unanswerable when the fierce Praetorians increased their weight, by throwing, like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their swords into the scale. 9

7 (return) [Cicero de Legibus, iii. 3. The first book of Livy, and the second of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, show the authority of the people, even in the election of the kings.]

8 (return) [They were originally recruited in Latium, Etruria, and the old colonies, (Tacit. Annal. iv. 5.) The emperor Otho compliments their vanity with the flattering titles of Italiae, Alumni, Romana were juventus. Tacit. Hist. i. 84.]

9 (return) [In the siege of Rome by the Gauls. See Livy, v. 48. Plutarch. in Camill. p. 143.]

The Praetorians had violated the sanctity of the throne by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonored the majesty of it by their subsequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, for even the praefect Laetus, who had excited the tempest, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidst the wild disorder, Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor of the city, who had been sent to the camp on the first alarm of mutiny, was endeavoring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was silenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax. Though history has accustomed us to observe every principle and every passion yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition, it is scarcely credible that, in these moments of horror, Sulpicianus should have aspired to ascend a throne polluted with the recent blood of so near a relation and so excellent a prince. He had already begun to use the only effectual argument, and to treat for the

Imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the Praetorians, apprehensive that, in this private contract, they should not obtain a just price for so valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts; and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be disposed of to the best bidder by public auction. 10

10 (return) [Dion, L. lxxiii. p. 1234. Herodian, l. ii. p. 63. Hist. August p. 60. Though the three historians agree that it was in fact an auction, Herodian alone affirms that it was proclaimed as such by the soldiers.]

This infamous offer, the most insolent excess of military license, diffused a universal grief, shame, and indignation throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, who, regardless of the public calamities, was indulging himself in the luxury of the table. 11 His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his parasites, easily convinced him that he deserved the throne, and earnestly conjured him to embrace so fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man hastened to the Praetorian camp, where Sulpicianus was still in treaty with the guards, and began to bid against him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negotiation was transacted by faithful emissaries, who passed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promised a donative of five thousand drachms (above one hundred and sixty pounds) to each soldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, rose at once to the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds sterling. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the purchaser; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the soldiers, who retained humanity enough to stipulate that he should pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus. 111

11 (return) [Spartianus softens the most odious parts of the character and elevation of Julian.]

111 (return) [One of the principal causes of the preference of Julianus by the soldiers, was the dexterty dexterity with which he reminded them that Sulpicianus would not fail to revenge on them the death of his son-in-law. (See Dion, p. 1234, 1234. c. 11. Herod. ii. 6.)—W.]

It was now incumbent on the Praetorians to fulfil the conditions of the sale. They placed their new sovereign, whom they served and despised, in the centre of their ranks, surrounded him on every side with their shields, and conducted him in close order of battle through the deserted streets of the city. The senate was commanded to assemble; and those who had been the distinguished friends of Pertinax, or the personal enemies of Julian, found it necessary to affect a more than common share of satisfaction at this happy revolution. 12 After Julian had filled the senate house with armed soldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full assurance of the affections of the senate. The obsequious assembly congratulated their own and the public felicity; engaged their allegiance, and conferred on him all the several branches of the Imperial power. 13 From the senate Julian was conducted, by the same military procession, to take possession of the palace. The first objects that struck his eyes, were the abandoned trunk of

Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment prepared for his supper. The one he viewed with indifference, the other with contempt. A magnificent feast was prepared by his order, and he amused himself, till a very late hour, with dice, and the performances of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was observed, that after the crowd of flatterers dispersed, and left him to darkness, solitude, and terrible reflection, he passed a sleepless night; revolving most probably in his mind his own rash folly, the fate of his virtuous predecessor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of an empire which had not been acquired by merit, but purchased by money. 14

12 (return) [Dion Cassius, at that time praetor, had been a personal enemy to Julian, i. lxxiii. p. 1235.]

13 (return) [Hist. August. p. 61. We learn from thence one curious circumstance, that the new emperor, whatever had been his birth, was immediately aggregated to the number of patrician families. Note: A new fragment of Dion shows some shrewdness in the character of Julian. When the senate voted him a golden statue, he preferred one of brass, as more lasting. He "had always observed," he said, "that the statues of former emperors were soon destroyed. Those of brass alone remained." The indignant historian adds that he was wrong. The virtue of sovereigns alone preserves their images: the brazen statue of Julian was broken to pieces at his death. Mai. Fragm. Vatican. p. 226.—M.]

14 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235. Hist. August. p. 61. I have endeavored to blend into one consistent story the seeming contradictions of the two writers. * Note: The contradiction as M. Guizot observed, is irreconcilable. He quotes both passages: in one Julianus is represented as a miser, in the other as a voluptuary. In the one he refuses to eat till the body of Pertinax has been buried; in the other he gluts himself with every luxury almost in the sight of his headless remains.—M.]
He had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himself without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themselves were ashamed of the prince whom their avarice had persuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not consider his elevation with horror, as the last insult on the Roman name. The nobility, whose conspicuous station, and ample possessions, exacted the strictest caution, dissembled their sentiments, and met the affected civility of the emperor with smiles of complacency and professions of duty. But the people, secure in their numbers and obscurity, gave a free vent to their passions. The streets and public places of Rome resounded with clamors and imprecations. The enraged multitude affronted the person of Julian, rejected his liberality, and, conscious of the impotence of their own resentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to assert the violated majesty of the Roman empire. The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire. The armies of Britain, of Syria, and of Illyricum, lamented the death of Pertinax, in whose company, or under whose command, they had so often fought and conquered. They received with surprise, with indignation, and perhaps with envy, the extraordinary intelligence, that the Praetorians had disposed of the empire by public auction; and they sternly refused to ratify the ignominious bargain. Their immediate and unanimous revolt

was fatal to Julian, but it was fatal at the same time to the public peace, as the generals of the respective armies, Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger, and Septimius Severus, were still more anxious to succeed than to revenge the murdered Pertinax. Their forces were exactly balanced. Each of them was at the head of three legions, 15 with a numerous train of auxiliaries; and however different in their characters, they were all soldiers of experience and capacity.

15 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235.]
Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, surpassed both his competitors in the nobility of his extraction, which he derived from some of the most illustrious names of the old republic. 16 But the branch from which he claimed his descent was sunk into mean circumstances, and transplanted into a remote province. It is difficult to form a just idea of his true character. Under the philosophic cloak of austerity, he stands accused of concealing most of the vices which degrade human nature. 17 But his accusers are those venal writers who adored the fortune of Severus, and trampled on the ashes of an unsuccessful rival. Virtue, or the appearances of virtue, recommended Albinus to the confidence and good opinion of Marcus; and his preserving with the son the same interest which he had acquired with the father, is a proof at least that he was possessed of a very flexible disposition. The favor of a tyrant does not always suppose a want of merit in the object of it; he may, without intending it, reward a man of worth and ability, or he may find such a man useful to his own service. It does not appear that Albinus served the son of Marcus, either as the minister of his cruelties, or even as the associate of his pleasures. He was employed in a distant honorable command, when he received a confidential letter from the emperor, acquainting him of the treasonable designs of some discontented generals, and authorizing him to declare himself the guardian and successor of the throne, by assuming the title and ensigns of Caesar. 18 The governor of Britain wisely declined the dangerous honor, which would have marked him for the jealousy, or involved him in the approaching ruin, of Commodus. He courted power by nobler, or, at least, by more specious arts. On a premature report of the death of the emperor, he assembled his troops; and, in an eloquent discourse, deplored the inevitable mischiefs of despotism, described the happiness and glory which their ancestors had enjoyed under the consular government, and declared his firm resolution to reinstate the senate and people in their legal authority. This popular harangue was answered by the loud acclamations of the British legions, and received at Rome with a secret murmur of applause. Safe in the possession of his little world, and in the command of an army less distinguished indeed for discipline than for numbers and valor, 19 Albinus braved the menaces of Commodus, maintained towards Pertinax a stately ambiguous reserve, and instantly declared against the usurpation of Julian. The convulsions of the capital added new weight to his sentiments, or rather to his professions of patriotism. A regard to decency induced him to decline the lofty titles of Augustus and Emperor; and he imitated perhaps the example of Galba, who, on a similar occasion, had styled himself the Lieutenant of the senate and people. 20

16 (return) [The Posthumian and the Ce'onian; the former of whom was raised to the consulship in the fifth year after its institution.]

17 (return) [Spartianus, in his undigested collections, mixes up all the virtues and all the vices that enter into the human composition, and bestows them on the same object. Such, indeed are many of the characters in the Augustan History.]

18 (return) [Hist. August. p. 80, 84.]

19 (return) [Pertinax, who governed Britain a few years before, had been left for dead, in a mutiny of the soldiers. Hist. August. p 54. Yet they loved and regretted him; admirantibus eam virtutem cui irascebantur.]

20 (return) [Sueton. in Galb. c. 10.]
Personal merit alone had raised Pescennius Niger, from an obscure birth and station, to the government of Syria; a lucrative and important command, which in times of civil confusion gave him a near prospect of the throne. Yet his parts seem to have been better suited to the second than to the first rank; he was an unequal rival, though he might have approved himself an excellent lieutenant, to Severus, who afterwards displayed the greatness of his mind by adopting several useful institutions from a vanquished enemy. 21 In his government Niger acquired the esteem of the soldiers and the love of the provincials. His rigid discipline fortified the valor and confirmed the obedience of the former, whilst the voluptuous Syrians were less delighted with the mild firmness of his administration, than with the affability of his manners, and the apparent pleasure with which he attended their frequent and pompous festivals. 22 As soon as the intelligence of the atrocious murder of Pertinax had reached Antioch, the wishes of Asia invited Niger to assume the Imperial purple and revenge his death. The legions of the eastern frontier embraced his cause; the opulent but unarmed provinces, from the frontiers of Aethiopia 23 to the Hadriatic, cheerfully submitted to his power; and the kings beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates congratulated his election, and offered him their homage and services. The mind of Niger was not capable of receiving this sudden tide of fortune: he flattered himself that his accession would be undisturbed by competition and unstained by civil blood; and whilst he enjoyed the vain pomp of triumph, he neglected to secure the means of victory. Instead of entering into an effectual negotiation with the powerful armies of the West, whose resolution might decide, or at least must balance, the mighty contest; instead of advancing without delay towards Rome and Italy, where his presence was impatiently expected, 24 Niger trifled away in the luxury of Antioch those irretrievable moments which were diligently improved by the decisive activity of Severus. 25

21 (return) [Hist. August. p. 76.]

22 (return) [Herod. l. ii. p. 68. The Chronicle of John Malala, of Antioch, shows the zealous attachment of his countrymen to these festivals, which at once gratified their superstition, and their love of pleasure.]

23 (return) [A king of Thebes, in Egypt, is mentioned, in the Augustan History, as an ally, and, indeed, as a personal friend of Niger. If Spartianus is not, as I strongly suspect, mistaken, he has brought to light a dynasty of tributary princes totally unknown to history.]

24 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1238. Herod. l. ii. p. 67. A verse in every one's mouth at that time, seems to express the general opinion of the three rivals; Optimus est Niger, [Fuscus, which preserves the quantity.—M.] bonus After, pessimus Albus. Hist. August. p. 75.]

25 (return) [Herodian, l. ii. p. 71.]
The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the space between the Danube and the Hadriatic, was one of the last and most difficult conquests of the Romans. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thousand of these barbarians had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Augustus, and exercised the vigilant prudence of Tiberius at the head of the collected force of the empire. 26 The Pannonians yielded at length to the arms and institutions of Rome. Their recent subjection, however, the neighborhood, and even the mixture, of the unconquered tribes, and perhaps the climate, adapted, as it has been observed, to the production of great bodies and slow minds, 27 all contributed to preserve some remains of their original ferocity, and under the tame and uniform countenance of Roman provincials, the hardy features of the natives were still to be discerned. Their warlike youth afforded an inexhaustible supply of recruits to the legions stationed on the banks of the Danube, and which, from a perpetual warfare against the Germans and Sarmazans, were deservedly esteemed the best troops in the service.

26 (return) [See an account of that memorable war in Velleius Paterculus, is 110, &c., who served in the army of Tiberius.]

27 (return) [Such is the reflection of Herodian, l. ii. p. 74. Will the modern Austrians allow the influence?]
The Pannonian army was at this time commanded by Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, who, in the gradual ascent of private honors, had concealed his daring ambition, which was never diverted from its steady course by the allurements of pleasure, the apprehension of danger, or the feelings of humanity. 28 On the first news of the murder of Pertinax, he assembled his troops, painted in the most lively colors the crime, the insolence, and the weakness of the Praetorian guards, and animated the legions to arms and to revenge. He concluded (and the peroration was thought extremely eloquent) with promising every soldier about four hundred pounds; an honorable donative, double in value to the infamous bribe with which Julian had purchased the empire. 29 The acclamations of the army immediately saluted Severus with the names of Augustus, Pertinax, and Emperor; and he thus attained the lofty station to which he was invited, by conscious merit and a long

train of dreams and omens, the fruitful offsprings either of his superstition or policy. 30

28 (return) [In the letter to Albinus, already mentioned, Commodus accuses Severus, as one of the ambitious generals who censured his conduct, and wished to occupy his place. Hist. August. p. 80.]

29 (return) [Pannonia was too poor to supply such a sum. It was probably promised in the camp, and paid at Rome, after the victory. In fixing the sum, I have adopted the conjecture of Casaubon. See Hist. August. p. 66. Comment. p. 115.]

30 (return) [Herodian, l. ii. p. 78. Severus was declared emperor on the banks of the Danube, either at Carnuntum, according to Spartianus, (Hist. August. p. 65,) or else at Sabaria, according to Victor. Mr. Hume, in supposing that the birth and dignity of Severus were too much inferior to the Imperial crown, and that he marched into Italy as general only, has not considered this transaction with his usual accuracy, (Essay on the original contract.) * Note: Carnuntum, opposite to the mouth of the Morava: its position is doubtful, either Petronel or Haimburg. A little intermediate village seems to indicate by its name (Altenburg) the site of an old town. D'Anville Geogr. Anc. Sabaria, now Sarvar.—G. Compare note 37.—M.]
The new candidate for empire saw and improved the peculiar advantage of his situation. His province extended to the Julian Alps, which gave an easy access into Italy; and he remembered the saying of Augustus, That a Pannonian army might in ten days appear in sight of Rome. 31 By a celerity proportioned to the greatness of the occasion, he might reasonably hope to revenge Pertinax, punish Julian, and receive the homage of the senate and people, as their lawful emperor, before his competitors, separated from Italy by an immense tract of sea and land, were apprised of his success, or even of his election. During the whole expedition, he scarcely allowed himself any moments for sleep or food; marching on foot, and in complete armor, at the head of his columns, he insinuated himself into the confidence and affection of his troops, pressed their diligence, revived their spirits, animated their hopes, and was well satisfied to share the hardships of the meanest soldier, whilst he kept in view the infinite superiority of his reward.

31 (return) [Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 3. We must reckon the march from the nearest verge of Pannonia, and extend the sight of the city as far as two hundred miles.]
The wretched Julian had expected, and thought himself prepared, to dispute the empire with the governor of Syria; but in the invincible and rapid approach of the Pannonian legions, he saw his inevitable ruin. The hasty arrival of every messenger increased his just apprehensions. He was successively informed, that Severus had passed the Alps; that the Italian cities, unwilling or unable to oppose his progress, had received him with the warmest professions of joy and duty; that the important place of Ravenna had surrendered without resistance, and that the Hadriatic fleet was in the hands of the conqueror. The enemy was now within two hundred and

fifty miles of Rome; and every moment diminished the narrow span of life and empire allotted to Julian.
He attempted, however, to prevent, or at least to protract, his ruin. He implored the venal faith of the Praetorians, filled the city with unavailing preparations for war, drew lines round the suburbs, and even strengthened the fortifications of the palace; as if those last intrenchments could be defended, without hope of relief, against a victorious invader. Fear and shame prevented the guards from deserting his standard; but they trembled at the name of the Pannonian legions, commanded by an experienced general, and accustomed to vanquish the barbarians on the frozen Danube. 32 They quitted, with a sigh, the pleasures of the baths and theatres, to put on arms, whose use they had almost forgotten, and beneath the weight of which they were oppressed. The unpractised elephants, whose uncouth appearance, it was hoped, would strike terror into the army of the north, threw their unskilful riders; and the awkward evolutions of the marines, drawn from the fleet of Misenum, were an object of ridicule to the populace; whilst the senate enjoyed, with secret pleasure, the distress and weakness of the usurper. 33

32 (return) [This is not a puerile figure of rhetoric, but an allusion to a real fact recorded by Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1181. It probably happened more than once.]

33 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1233. Herodian, l. ii. p. 81. There is no surer proof of the military skill of the Romans, than their first surmounting the idle terror, and afterwards disdaining the dangerous use, of elephants in war. Note: These elephants were kept for processions, perhaps for the games. Se Herod. in loc.—M.]
Every motion of Julian betrayed his trembling perplexity. He insisted that Severus should be declared a public enemy by the senate. He entreated that the Pannonian general might be associated to the empire. He sent public ambassadors of consular rank to negotiate with his rival; he despatched private assassins to take away his life. He designed that the Vestal virgins, and all the colleges of priests, in their sacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the sacred pledges of the Roman religion, should advance in solemn procession to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the same time, he vainly tried to interrogate, or to appease, the fates, by magic ceremonies and unlawful sacrifices. 34

34 (return) [Hist. August. p. 62, 63. * Note: Quae ad speculum dicunt fieri in quo pueri praeligatis oculis, incantate..., respicere dicuntur. * * * Tuncque puer vidisse dicitur et adventun Severi et Juliani decessionem. This seems to have been a practice somewhat similar to that of which our recent Egyptian travellers relate such extraordinary circumstances. See also Apulius, Orat. de Magia.—M.]

Chapter V: Sale Of The Empire To Didius Julianus.—Part II.

Severus, who dreaded neither his arms nor his enchantments, guarded himself from the only danger of secret conspiracy, by the faithful attendance of six hundred chosen men, who never quitted his person or their cuirasses, either by night or by day, during the whole march. Advancing with a steady and rapid course, he passed, without difficulty, the defiles of the Apennine, received into his party the troops and ambassadors sent to retard his progress, and made a short halt at Interamnia, about seventy miles from Rome. His victory was already secure, but the despair of the Praetorians might have rendered it bloody; and Severus had the laudable ambition of ascending the throne without drawing the sword. 35 His emissaries, dispersed in the capital, assured the guards, that provided they would abandon their worthless prince, and the perpetrators of the murder of Pertinax, to the justice of the conqueror, he would no longer consider that melancholy event as the act of the whole body. The faithless Praetorians, whose resistance was supported only by sullen obstinacy, gladly complied with the easy conditions, seized the greatest part of the assassins, and signified to the senate, that they no longer defended the cause of Julian. That assembly, convoked by the consul, unanimously acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor, decreed divine honors to Pertinax, and pronounced a sentence of deposition and death against his unfortunate successor. Julian was conducted into a private apartment of the baths of the palace, and beheaded as a common criminal, after having purchased, with an immense treasure, an anxious and precarious reign of only sixty-six days. 36 The almost incredible expedition of Severus, who, in so short a space of time, conducted a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tyber, proves at once the plenty of provisions produced by agriculture and commerce, the goodness of the roads, the discipline of the legions, and the indolent, subdued temper of the provinces. 37

35 (return) [Victor and Eutropius, viii. 17, mention a combat near the Milvian bridge, the Ponte Molle, unknown to the better and more ancient writers.]

36 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1240. Herodian, l. ii. p. 83. Hist. August. p. 63.]

37 (return) [From these sixty-six days, we must first deduct sixteen, as Pertinax was murdered on the 28th of March, and Severus most probably elected on the 13th of April, (see Hist. August. p. 65, and Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 393, note 7.) We cannot allow less than ten days after his election, to put a numerous army in motion. Forty days remain for this rapid march; and as we may compute about eight hundred miles from Rome to the neighborhood of Vienna, the army of Severus marched twenty miles every day, without halt or intermission.]

The first cares of Severus were bestowed on two measures the one dictated by policy, the other by decency; the revenge, and the honors, due to the memory of Pertinax. Before the new emperor entered Rome, he issued his commands to the Praetorian guards, directing them to wait his arrival on a large plain near the city, without arms, but in the habits of ceremony, in which they were accustomed to attend their sovereign. He was obeyed by those haughty troops, whose contrition was the effect of their just terrors. A chosen part of the Illyrian army encompassed them with levelled spears. Incapable of flight or resistance, they expected their fate

in silent consternation. Severus mounted the tribunal, sternly reproached them with perfidy and cowardice, dismissed them with ignominy from the trust which they had betrayed, despoiled them of their splendid ornaments, and banished them, on pain of death, to the distance of a hundred miles from the capital. During the transaction, another detachment had been sent to seize their arms, occupy their camp, and prevent the hasty consequences of their despair. 38

38 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1241. Herodian, l. ii. p. 84.] The funeral and consecration of Pertinax was next solemnized with every circumstance of sad magnificence. 39 The senate, with a melancholy pleasure, performed the last rites to that excellent prince, whom they had loved, and still regretted. The concern of his successor was probably less sincere; he esteemed the virtues of Pertinax, but those virtues would forever have confined his ambition to a private station. Severus pronounced his funeral oration with studied eloquence, inward satisfaction, and well-acted sorrow; and by this pious regard to his memory, convinced the credulous multitude, that he alone was worthy to supply his place. Sensible, however, that arms, not ceremonies, must assert his claim to the empire, he left Rome at the end of thirty days, and without suffering himself to be elated by this easy victory, prepared to encounter his more formidable rivals.

39 (return) [Dion, (l. lxxiv. p. 1244,) who assisted at the ceremony as a senator, gives a most pompous description of it.]
The uncommon abilities and fortune of Severus have induced an elegant historian to compare him with the first and greatest of the Caesars. 40 The parallel is, at least, imperfect. Where shall we find, in the character of Severus, the commanding superiority of soul, the generous clemency, and the various genius, which could reconcile and unite the love of pleasure, the thirst of knowledge, and the fire of ambition? 41 In one instance only, they may be compared, with some degree of propriety, in the celerity of their motions, and their civil victories. In less than four years, 42 Severus subdued the riches of the East, and the valor of the West. He vanquished two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies, provided with weapons and discipline equal to his own. In that age, the art of fortification, and the principles of tactics, were well understood by all the Roman generals; and the constant superiority of Severus was that of an artist, who uses the same instruments with more skill and industry than his rivals. I shall not, however, enter into a minute narrative of these military operations; but as the two civil wars against Niger and against Albinus were almost the same in their conduct, event, and consequences, I shall collect into one point of view the most striking circumstances, tending to develop the character of the conqueror and the state of the empire.

40 (return) [Herodian, l. iii. p. 112]

41 (return) [Though it is not, most assuredly, the intention of Lucan to exalt the character of Caesar, yet the idea he gives of that hero, in the tenth book of the Pharsalia, where he describes him, at the same time, making love to Cleopatra, sustaining a siege against the power of Egypt, and conversing with the sages of the

country, is, in reality, the noblest panegyric. * Note: Lord Byron wrote, no doubt, from a reminiscence of that passage—"It is possible to be a very great man, and to be still very inferior to Julius Caesar, the most complete character, so Lord Bacon thought, of all antiquity. Nature seems incapable of such extraordinary combinations as composed his versatile capacity, which was the wonder even of the Romans themselves. The first general; the only triumphant politician; inferior to none in point of eloquence; comparable to any in the attainments of wisdom, in an age made up of the greatest commanders, statesmen, orators, and philosophers, that ever appeared in the world; an author who composed a perfect specimen of military annals in his travelling carriage; at one time in a controversy with Cato, at another writing a treatise on punuing, and collecting a set of good sayings; fighting and making love at the same moment, and willing to abandon both his empire and his mistress for a sight of the fountains of the Nile. Such did Julius Caesar appear to his contemporaries, and to those of the subsequent ages who were the most inclined to deplore and execrate his fatal genius." Note 47 to Canto iv. of Childe Harold.—M.]

42 (return) [Reckoning from his election, April 13, 193, to the death of Albinus, February 19, 197. See Tillemont's Chronology.]
Falsehood and insincerity, unsuitable as they seem to the dignity of public transactions, offend us with a less degrading idea of meanness, than when they are found in the intercourse of private life. In the latter, they discover a want of courage; in the other, only a defect of power: and, as it is impossible for the most able statesmen to subdue millions of followers and enemies by their own personal strength, the world, under the name of policy, seems to have granted them a very liberal indulgence of craft and dissimulation. Yet the arts of Severus cannot be justified by the most ample privileges of state reason. He promised only to betray, he flattered only to ruin; and however he might occasionally bind himself by oaths and treaties, his conscience, obsequious to his interest, always released him from the inconvenient obligation. 43

43 (return) [Herodian, l. ii. p. 85.]
If his two competitors, reconciled by their common danger, had advanced upon him without delay, perhaps Severus would have sunk under their united effort. Had they even attacked him, at the same time, with separate views and separate armies, the contest might have been long and doubtful. But they fell, singly and successively, an easy prey to the arts as well as arms of their subtle enemy, lulled into security by the moderation of his professions, and overwhelmed by the rapidity of his action. He first marched against Niger, whose reputation and power he the most dreaded: but he declined any hostile declarations, suppressed the name of his antagonist, and only signified to the senate and people his intention of regulating the eastern provinces. In private, he spoke of Niger, his old friend and intended successor, 44 with the most affectionate regard, and highly applauded his generous design of revenging the murder of Pertinax. To punish the vile usurper of the throne, was the duty of every Roman general. To persevere in arms, and to resist a lawful emperor, acknowledged by the senate, would alone render him criminal. 45 The sons of Niger had fallen into his hands among the children of the provincial governors, detained at

Rome as pledges for the loyalty of their parents. 46 As long as the power of Niger inspired terror, or even respect, they were educated with the most tender care, with the children of Severus himself; but they were soon involved in their father's ruin, and removed first by exile, and afterwards by death, from the eye of public compassion. 47

44 (return) [Whilst Severus was very dangerously ill, it was industriously given out, that he intended to appoint Niger and Albinus his successors. As he could not be sincere with respect to both, he might not be so with regard to either. Yet Severus carried his hypocrisy so far, as to profess that intention in the memoirs of his own life.]

45 (return) [Hist. August. p. 65.]

46 (return) [This practice, invented by Commodus, proved very useful to Severus. He found at Rome the children of many of the principal adherents of his rivals; and he employed them more than once to intimidate, or seduce, the parents.]

47 (return) [Herodian, l. iii. p. 95. Hist. August. p. 67, 68.]
Whilst Severus was engaged in his eastern war, he had reason to apprehend that the governor of Britain might pass the sea and the Alps, occupy the vacant seat of empire, and oppose his return with the authority of the senate and the forces of the West. The ambiguous conduct of Albinus, in not assuming the Imperial title, left room for negotiation. Forgetting, at once, his professions of patriotism, and the jealousy of sovereign power, he accepted the precarious rank of Caesar, as a reward for his fatal neutrality. Till the first contest was decided, Severus treated the man, whom he had doomed to destruction, with every mark of esteem and regard. Even in the letter, in which he announced his victory over Niger, he styles Albinus the brother of his soul and empire, sends him the affectionate salutations of his wife Julia, and his young family, and entreats him to preserve the armies and the republic faithful to their common interest. The messengers charged with this letter were instructed to accost the Caesar with respect, to desire a private audience, and to plunge their daggers into his heart. 48 The conspiracy was discovered, and the too credulous Albinus, at length, passed over to the continent, and prepared for an unequal contest with his rival, who rushed upon him at the head of a veteran and victorious army.

48 (return) [Hist. August. p. 84. Spartianus has inserted this curious letter at full length.]
The military labors of Severus seem inadequate to the importance of his conquests. Two engagements, 481 the one near the Hellespont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, decided the fate of his Syrian competitor; and the troops of Europe asserted their usual ascendant over the effeminate natives of Asia. 49 The battle of Lyons, where one hundred and fifty thousand Romans 50 were engaged, was equally fatal to Albinus. The valor of the British army maintained, indeed, a sharp and doubtful contest, with the hardy discipline of the Illyrian legions. The fame and

person of Severus appeared, during a few moments, irrecoverably lost, till that warlike prince rallied his fainting troops, and led them on to a decisive victory. 51 The war was finished by that memorable day. 511

481 (return) [There were three actions; one near Cyzicus, on the Hellespont, one near Nice, in Bithynia, the third near the Issus, in Cilicia, where Alexander conquered Darius. (Dion, lxiv. c. 6. Herodian, iii. 2, 4.)—W Herodian represents the second battle as of less importance than Dion—M.]

49 (return) [Consult the third book of Herodian, and the seventy-fourth book of Dion Cassius.]

50 (return) [Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1260.]

51 (return) [Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1261. Herodian, l. iii. p. 110. Hist. August. p. 68. The battle was fought in the plain of Trevoux, three or four leagues from Lyons. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 406, note 18.]

511 (return) [According to Herodian, it was his lieutenant Laetus who led back the troops to the battle, and gained the day, which Severus had almost lost. Dion also attributes to Laetus a great share in the victory. Severus afterwards put him to death, either from fear or jealousy.—W. and G. Wenck and M. Guizot have not given the real statement of Herodian or of Dion. According to the former, Laetus appeared with his own army entire, which he was suspected of having designedly kept disengaged when the battle was still doudtful, or rather after the rout of severus. Dion says that he did not move till Severus had won the victory.—M.]
The civil wars of modern Europe have been distinguished, not only by the fierce animosity, but likewise by the obstinate perseverance, of the contending factions. They have generally been justified by some principle, or, at least, colored by some pretext, of religion, freedom, or loyalty. The leaders were nobles of independent property and hereditary influence. The troops fought like men interested in the decision of the quarrel; and as military spirit and party zeal were strongly diffused throughout the whole community, a vanquished chief was immediately supplied with new adherents, eager to shed their blood in the same cause. But the Romans, after the fall of the republic, combated only for the choice of masters. Under the standard of a popular candidate for empire, a few enlisted from affection, some from fear, many from interest, none from principle. The legions, uninflamed by party zeal, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives, and still more liberal promises. A defeat, by disabling the chief from the performance of his engagements, dissolved the mercenary allegiance of his followers, and left them to consult their own safety by a timely desertion of an unsuccessful cause. It was of little moment to the provinces, under whose name they were oppressed or governed; they were driven by the impulsion of the present power, and as soon as that power yielded to a superior force, they hastened to implore the clemency of the conqueror, who, as he had an immense debt to discharge, was obliged to sacrifice the most guilty countries to the avarice of his soldiers. In the vast extent of the Roman empire, there were few

fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army; nor was there any person, or family, or order of men, whose natural interest, unsupported by the powers of government, was capable of restoring the cause of a sinking party. 52

52 (return) [Montesquieu, Considerations sur la Grandeur et la Decadence des Romains, c. xiii.]

Yet, in the contest between Niger and Severus, a single city deserves an honorable exception. As Byzantium was one of the greatest passages from Europe into Asia, it had been provided with a strong garrison, and a fleet of five hundred vessels was anchored in the harbor. 53 The impetuosity of Severus disappointed this prudent scheme of defence; he left to his generals the siege of Byzantium, forced the less guarded passage of the Hellespont, and, impatient of a meaner enemy, pressed forward to encounter his rival. Byzantium, attacked by a numerous and increasing army, and afterwards by the whole naval power of the empire, sustained a siege of three years, and remained faithful to the name and memory of Niger. The citizens and soldiers (we know not from what cause) were animated with equal fury; several of the principal officers of Niger, who despaired of, or who disdained, a pardon, had thrown themselves into this last refuge: the fortifications were esteemed impregnable, and, in the defence of the place, a celebrated engineer displayed all the mechanic powers known to the ancients. 54 Byzantium, at length, surrendered to famine. The magistrates and soldiers were put to the sword, the walls demolished, the privileges suppressed, and the destined capital of the East subsisted only as an open village, subject to the insulting jurisdiction of Perinthus. The historian Dion, who had admired the flourishing, and lamented the desolate, state of Byzantium, accused the revenge of Severus, for depriving the Roman people of the strongest bulwark against the barbarians of Pontus and Asia 55 The truth of this observation was but too well justified in the succeeding age, when the Gothic fleets covered the Euxine, and passed through the undefined Bosphorus into the centre of the Mediterranean.

53 (return) [Most of these, as may be supposed, were small open vessels; some, however, were galleys of two, and a few of three ranks of oars.]

54 (return) [The engineer's name was Priscus. His skill saved his life, and he was taken into the service of the conqueror. For the particular facts of the siege, consult Dion Cassius (l. lxxv. p. 1251) and Herodian, (l. iii. p. 95;) for the theory of it, the fanciful chevalier de Folard may be looked into. See Polybe, tom. i. p. 76.]

55 (return) [Notwithstanding the authority of Spartianus, and some modern Greeks, we may be assured, from Dion and Herodian, that Byzantium, many years after the death of Severus, lay in ruins. There is no contradiction between the relation of Dion and that of Spartianus and the modern Greeks. Dion does not say that Severus destroyed Byzantium, but that he deprived it of its franchises and privileges, stripped the inhabitants of their property, razed the fortifications, and subjected the city to the jurisdiction of Perinthus. Therefore, when Spartian, Suidas, Cedrenus, say that Severus and his son Antoninus restored to Byzantium its rights and franchises, ordered temples to be built, &c., this is easily reconciled with the

relation of Dion. Perhaps the latter mentioned it in some of the fragments of his history which have been lost. As to Herodian, his expressions are evidently exaggerated, and he has been guilty of so many inaccuracies in the history of Severus, that we have a right to suppose one in this passage.—G. from W Wenck and M. Guizot have omitted to cite Zosimus, who mentions a particular portico built by Severus, and called, apparently, by his name. Zosim. Hist. ii. c. xxx. p. 151, 153, edit Heyne.—M.]

Both Niger and Albinus were discovered and put to death in their flight from the field of battle. Their fate excited neither surprise nor compassion. They had staked their lives against the chance of empire, and suffered what they would have inflicted; nor did Severus claim the arrogant superiority of suffering his rivals to live in a private station. But his unforgiving temper, stimulated by avarice, indulged a spirit of revenge, where there was no room for apprehension. The most considerable of the provincials, who, without any dislike to the fortunate candidate, had obeyed the governor under whose authority they were accidentally placed, were punished by death, exile, and especially by the confiscation of their estates. Many cities of the East were stripped of their ancient honors, and obliged to pay, into the treasury of Severus, four times the amount of the sums contributed by them for the service of Niger. 56

56 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1250.]

Till the final decision of the war, the cruelty of Severus was, in some measure, restrained by the uncertainty of the event, and his pretended reverence for the senate. The head of Albinus, accompanied with a menacing letter, announced to the Romans that he was resolved to spare none of the adherents of his unfortunate competitors. He was irritated by the just auspicion that he had never possessed the affections of the senate, and he concealed his old malevolence under the recent discovery of some treasonable correspondences. Thirty-five senators, however, accused of having favored the party of Albinus, he freely pardoned, and, by his subsequent behavior, endeavored to convince them, that he had forgotten, as well as forgiven, their supposed offences. But, at the same time, he condemned forty-one 57 other senators, whose names history has recorded; their wives, children, and clients attended them in death, 571 and the noblest provincials of Spain and Gaul were involved in the same ruin. 572 Such rigid justice—for so he termed it—was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of insuring peace to the people or stability to the prince; and he condescended slightly to lament, that to be mild, it was necessary that he should first be cruel. 58

57 (return) [Dion, (l. lxxv. p. 1264;) only twenty-nine senators are mentioned by him, but forty-one are named in the Augustan History, p. 69, among whom were six of the name of Pescennius. Herodian (l. iii. p. 115) speaks in general of the cruelties of Severus.]

571 (return) [Wenck denies that there is any authority for this massacre of the wives of the senators. He adds, that only the children and relatives of Niger and Albinus were put to death. This is true of the family of Albinus, whose bodies were

thrown into the Rhone; those of Niger, according to Lampridius, were sent into exile, but afterwards put to death. Among the partisans of Albinus who were put to death were many women of rank, multae foeminae illustres. Lamprid. in Sever.—M.]

572 (return) [A new fragment of Dion describes the state of Rome during this contest. All pretended to be on the side of Severus; but their secret sentiments were often betrayed by a change of countenance on the arrival of some sudden report. Some were detected by overacting their loyalty, Mai. Fragm. Vatican. p. 227 Severus told the senate he would rather have their hearts than their votes.—Ibid.—M.]

58 (return) [Aurelius Victor.]
The true interest of an absolute monarch generally coincides with that of his people. Their numbers, their wealth, their order, and their security, are the best and only foundations of his real greatness; and were he totally devoid of virtue, prudence might supply its place, and would dictate the same rule of conduct. Severus considered the Roman empire as his property, and had no sooner secured the possession, than he bestowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of so valuable an acquisition. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmness, soon corrected most of the abuses with which, since the death of Marcus, every part of the government had been infected. In the administration of justice, the judgments of the emperor were characterized by attention, discernment, and impartiality; and whenever he deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favor of the poor and oppressed; not so much indeed from any sense of humanity, as from the natural propensity of a despot to humble the pride of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the same common level of absolute dependence. His expensive taste for building, magnificent shows, and above all a constant and liberal distribution of corn and provisions, were the surest means of captivating the affection of the Roman people. 59 The misfortunes of civil discord were obliterated. The calm of peace and prosperity was once more experienced in the provinces; and many cities, restored by the munificence of Severus, assumed the title of his colonies, and attested by public monuments their gratitude and felicity. 60 The fame of the Roman arms was revived by that warlike and successful emperor, 61 and he boasted, with a just pride, that, having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal, and honorable peace. 62

59 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1272. Hist. August. p. 67. Severus celebrated the secular games with extraordinary magnificence, and he left in the public granaries a provision of corn for seven years, at the rate of 75,000 modii, or about 2500 quarters per day. I am persuaded that the granaries of Severus were supplied for a long term, but I am not less persuaded, that policy on one hand, and admiration on the other, magnified the hoard far beyond its true contents.]

60 (return) [See Spanheim's treatise of ancient medals, the inscriptions, and our learned travellers Spon and Wheeler, Shaw, Pocock, &c, who, in Africa, Greece, and Asia, have found more monuments of Severus than of any other Roman emperor whatsoever.]

61 (return) [He carried his victorious arms to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the capitals of the Parthian monarchy. I shall have occasion to mention this war in its proper place.]

62 (return) [Etiam in Britannis, was his own just and emphatic expression Hist. August. 73.]
Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely healed, its mortal poison still lurked in the vitals of the constitution.
Severus possessed a considerable share of vigor and ability; but the daring soul of the first Caesar, or the deep policy of Augustus, were scarcely equal to the task of curbing the insolence of the victorious legions. By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was reduced to relax the nerves of discipline. 63 The vanity of his soldiers was flattered with the honor of wearing gold rings their ease was indulged in the permission of living with their wives in the idleness of quarters. He increased their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and soon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occasion of danger or festivity. Elated by success, enervated by luxury, and raised above the level of subjects by their dangerous privileges, 64 they soon became incapable of military fatigue, oppressive to the country, and impatient of a just subordination. Their officers asserted the superiority of rank by a more profuse and elegant luxury. There is still extant a letter of Severus, lamenting the licentious stage of the army, 641 and exhorting one of his generals to begin the necessary reformation from the tribunes themselves; since, as he justly observes, the officer who has forfeited the esteem, will never command the obedience, of his soldiers. 65 Had the emperor pursued the train of reflection, he would have discovered, that the primary cause of this general corruption might be ascribed, not indeed to the example, but to the pernicious indulgence, however, of the commander-in-chief.

63 (return) [Herodian, l. iii. p. 115. Hist. August. p. 68.]

64 (return) [Upon the insolence and privileges of the soldier, the 16th satire, falsely ascribed to Juvenal, may be consulted; the style and circumstances of it would induce me to believe, that it was composed under the reign of Severus, or that of his son.]

641 (return) [Not of the army, but of the troops in Gaul. The contents of this letter seem to prove that Severus was really anxious to restore discipline Herodian is the only historian who accuses him of being the first cause of its relaxation.—G. from W Spartian mentions his increase of the pays.—M.]

65 (return) [Hist. August. p. 73.]
The Praetorians, who murdered their emperor and sold the empire, had received the just punishment of their treason; but the necessary, though dangerous, institution of guards was soon restored on a new model by Severus, and increased to four times the ancient number. 66 Formerly these troops had been recruited in

Italy; and as the adjacent provinces gradually imbibed the softer manners of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain. In the room of these elegant troops, better adapted to the pomp of courts than to the uses of war, it was established by Severus, that from all the legions of the frontiers, the soldiers most distinguished for strength, valor, and fidelity, should be occasionally draughted; and promoted, as an honor and reward, into the more eligible service of the guards. 67 By this new institution, the Italian youth were diverted from the exercise of arms, and the capital was terrified by the strange aspect and manners of a multitude of barbarians. But Severus flattered himself, that the legions would consider these chosen Praetorians as the representatives of the whole military order; and that the present aid of fifty thousand men, superior in arms and appointments to any force that could be brought into the field against them, would forever crush the hopes of rebellion, and secure the empire to himself and his posterity.

66 (return) [Herodian, l. iii. p. 131.]

67 (return) [Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1243.]
The command of these favored and formidable troops soon became the first office of the empire. As the government degenerated into military despotism, the Praetorian Praefect, who in his origin had been a simple captain of the guards, 671 was placed not only at the head of the army, but of the finances, and even of the law. In every department of administration, he represented the person, and exercised the authority, of the emperor. The first praefect who enjoyed and abused this immense power was Plautianus, the favorite minister of Severus. His reign lasted above ten years, till the marriage of his daughter with the eldest son of the emperor, which seemed to assure his fortune, proved the occasion of his ruin. 68 The animosities of the palace, by irritating the ambition and alarming the fears of Plautianus, 681 threatened to produce a revolution, and obliged the emperor, who still loved him, to consent with reluctance to his death. 69 After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer, the celebrated Papinian, was appointed to execute the motley office of Praetorian Praefect.

671 (return) [The Praetorian Praefect had never been a simple captain of the guards; from the first creation of this office, under Augustus, it possessed great power. That emperor, therefore, decreed that there should be always two Praetorian Praefects, who could only be taken from the equestrian order Tiberius first departed from the former clause of this edict; Alexander Severus violated the second by naming senators praefects. It appears that it was under Commodus that the Praetorian Praefects obtained the province of civil jurisdiction. It extended only to Italy, with the exception of Rome and its district, which was governed by the Praefectus urbi. As to the control of the finances, and the levying of taxes, it was not intrusted to them till after the great change that Constantine I. made in the organization of the empire at least, I know no passage which assigns it to them before that time; and Drakenborch, who has treated this question in his Dissertation de official praefectorum praetorio, vi., does not quote one.—W.]

68 (return) [One of his most daring and wanton acts of power, was the castration of a hundred free Romans, some of them married men, and even fathers of families; merely that his daughter, on her marriage with the young emperor, might be attended by a train of eunuchs worthy of an eastern queen. Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1271.]

681 (return) [Plautianus was compatriot, relative, and the old friend, of Severus; he had so completely shut up all access to the emperor, that the latter was ignorant how far he abused his powers: at length, being informed of it, he began to limit his authority. The marriage of Plautilla with Caracalla was unfortunate; and the prince who had been forced to consent to it, menaced the father and the daughter with death when he should come to the throne. It was feared, after that, that Plautianus would avail himself of the power which he still possessed, against the Imperial family; and Severus caused him to be assassinated in his presence, upon the pretext of a conspiracy, which Dion considers fictitious.—W. This note is not, perhaps, very necessary and does not contain the whole facts. Dion considers the conspiracy the invention of Caracalla, by whose command, almost by whose hand, Plautianus was slain in the presence of Severus.—M.]

69 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1274. Herodian, l. iii. p. 122, 129. The grammarian of Alexander seems, as is not unusual, much better acquainted with this mysterious transaction, and more assured of the guilt of Plautianus than the Roman senator ventures to be.]

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue and even the good sense of the emperors had been distinguished by their zeal or affected reverence for the senate, and by a tender regard to the nice frame of civil policy instituted by Augustus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years spent in the despotism of military command. His haughty and inflexible spirit could not discover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preserving an intermediate power, however imaginary, between the emperor and the army. He disdained to profess himself the servant of an assembly that detested his person and trembled at his frown; he issued his commands, where his requests would have proved as effectual; assumed the conduct and style of a sovereign and a conqueror, and exercised, without disguise, the whole legislative, as well as the executive power.

The victory over the senate was easy and inglorious. Every eye and every passion were directed to the supreme magistrate, who possessed the arms and treasure of the state; whilst the senate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by military force, nor animated by public spirit, rested its declining authority on the frail and crumbling basis of ancient opinion. The fine theory of a republic insensibly vanished, and made way for the more natural and substantial feelings of monarchy. As the freedom and honors of Rome were successively communicated to the provinces, in which the old government had been either unknown, or was remembered with abhorrence, the tradition of republican maxims was gradually obliterated. The Greek historians of the age of the Antonines 70 observe, with a malicious pleasure, that although the sovereign of Rome, in compliance with an obsolete prejudice, abstained from the name of king, he possessed the full measure

of regal power. In the reign of Severus, the senate was filled with polished and eloquent slaves from the eastern provinces, who justified personal flattery by speculative principles of servitude. These new advocates of prerogative were heard with pleasure by the court, and with patience by the people, when they inculcated the duty of passive obedience, and descanted on the inevitable mischiefs of freedom. The lawyers and historians concurred in teaching, that the Imperial authority was held, not by the delegated commission, but by the irrevocable resignation of the senate; that the emperor was freed from the restraint of civil laws, could command by his arbitrary will the lives and fortunes of his subjects, and might dispose of the empire as of his private patrimony. 71 The most eminent of the civil lawyers, and particularly Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, flourished under the house of Severus; and the Roman jurisprudence, having closely united itself with the system of monarchy, was supposed to have attained its full majority and perfection.

70 (return) [Appian in Prooem.]

71 (return) [Dion Cassius seems to have written with no other view than to form these opinions into an historical system. The Pandea's will how how assiduously the lawyers, on their side, laboree in the cause of prerogative.]
The contemporaries of Severus in the enjoyment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave the cruelties by which it had been introduced. Posterity, who experienced the fatal effects of his maxims and example, justly considered him as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire.

Chapter VI: Death Of Severus, Tyranny Of Caracalla, Usurpation Of Marcinus.—Part I.

The Death Of Severus.—Tyranny Of Caracalla.—Usurpation Of Macrinus.—Follies Of Elagabalus.—Virtues Of Alexander Severus.—Licentiousness Of The Army.—General State Of The Roman Finances.

The ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercise of its own powers: but the possession of a throne could never yet afford a lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble station, elevated him to the first place among mankind. "He had been all things," as he said himself, "and all was of little value." 1 Distracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preserving an empire, oppressed with age and infirmities, careless of fame, 2 and satiated with power, all his prospects of life were closed. The desire of perpetuating the greatness of his family was the only remaining wish of his ambition and paternal tenderness.

1 (return) [Hist. August. p. 71. "Omnia fui, et nihil expedit."]

2 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxxvi. p. 1284.]

Like most of the Africans, Severus was passionately addicted to the vain studies of magic and divination, deeply versed in the interpretation of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the science of judicial astrology; which, in almost every age except the present, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He had lost his first wife, while he was governor of the Lionnese Gaul. 3 In the choice of a second, he sought only to connect himself with some favorite of fortune; and as soon as he had discovered that the young lady of Emesa in Syria had a royal nativity, he solicited and obtained her hand. 4 Julia Domna (for that was her name) deserved all that the stars could promise her.

She possessed, even in advanced age, the attractions of beauty, 5 and united to a lively imagination a firmness of mind, and strength of judgment, seldom bestowed on her sex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impression on the dark and jealous temper of her husband; but in her son's reign, she administered the principal affairs of the empire, with a prudence that supported his authority, and with a moderation that sometimes corrected his wild extravagancies. 6 Julia applied herself to letters and philosophy, with some success, and with the most splendid reputation. She was the patroness of every art, and the friend of every man of genius. 7 The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtues; but, if we may credit the scandal of ancient history, chastity was very far from being the most conspicuous virtue of the empress Julia. 8

3 (return) [About the year 186. M. de Tillemont is miserably embarrassed with a passage of Dion, in which the empress Faustina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia, (l. lxxiv. p. 1243.) The learned compiler forgot that Dion is relating not a real fact, but a dream of Severus; and dreams are circumscribed to no limits of time or space. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were consummated in the temple of Venus at Rome? Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 389. Note 6.]

4 (return) [Hist. August. p. 65.]

5 (return) [Hist. August. p. 5.]

6 (return) [Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii. p. 1304, 1314.]

7 (return) [See a dissertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius, de Foeminis Philosophis.]

8 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1285. Aurelius Victor.]

Two sons, Caracalla 9 and Geta, were the fruit of this marriage, and the destined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father, and of the Roman world, were soon disappointed by these vain youths, who displayed the indolent security of hereditary princes; and a presumption that fortune would supply the place of merit and application. Without any emulation of virtue or talents, they discovered, almost from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other.

9 (return) [Bassianus was his first name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign, he assumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient historians. After his death, the public indignation loaded him with the nicknames of Tarantus and Caracalla. The first was borrowed from a celebrated Gladiator, the second from a long Gallic gown which he distributed to the people of Rome.]

Their aversion, confirmed by years, and fomented by the arts of their interested favorites, broke out in childish, and gradually in more serious competitions; and, at length, divided the theatre, the circus, and the court, into two factions, actuated by the hopes and fears of their respective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavored, by every expedient of advice and authority, to allay this growing animosity. The unhappy discord of his sons clouded all his prospects, and threatened to overturn a throne raised with so much labor, cemented with so much blood, and guarded with every defence of arms and treasure. With an impartial hand he maintained between them an exact balance of favor, conferred on both the rank of Augustus, with the revered name of Antoninus; and for the first time the Roman world beheld three emperors. 10 Yet even this equal conduct served only to inflame the contest, whilst the fierce Caracalla asserted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the soldiers. In the anguish of a disappointed father, Severus foretold that the weaker of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger; who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices. 11

10 (return) [The elevation of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillemont to the year 198; the association of Geta to the year 208.]

11 (return) [Herodian, l. iii. p. 130. The lives of Caracalla and Geta, in the Augustan History.]

In these circumstances the intelligence of a war in Britain, and of an invasion of the province by the barbarians of the North, was received with pleasure by Severus. Though the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been sufficient to repel the distant enemy, he resolved to embrace the honorable pretext of withdrawing his sons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds and irritated their passions; and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithstanding his advanced age, (for he was above threescore,) and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a litter, he transported himself in person into that remote island, attended by his two sons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately passed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country, with a design of completing the long attempted conquest of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the island, without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuscades of the Caledonians, who hung unseen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldness of the climate and the severity of a winter march across the hills and morasses of Scotland, are reported to have cost the Romans above fifty thousand men. The Caledonians at length yielded to the powerful and obstinate attack, sued for peace, and surrendered a part of their arms, and a large tract of territory. But their apparent submission lasted no longer than the present terror. As soon as the Roman legions had retired, they resumed their hostile

independence. Their restless spirit provoked Severus to send a new army into Caledonia, with the most bloody orders, not to subdue, but to extirpate the natives. They were saved by the death of their haughty enemy. 12

12 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1280, &c. Herodian, l. iii. p. 132, &c.]
This Caledonian war, neither marked by decisive events, nor attended with any important consequences, would ill deserve our attention; but it is supposed, not without a considerable degree of probability, that the invasion of Severus is connected with the most shining period of the British history or fable. Fingal, whose fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is said to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a signal victory on the banks of the Carun, in which the son of the King of the World, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride. 13 Something of a doubtful mist still hangs over these Highland traditions; nor can it be entirely dispelled by the most ingenious researches of modern criticism; 14 but if we could, with safety, indulge the pleasing supposition, that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and manners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Caracalla with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs, who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the imperial standard, with the free-born warriors who started to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery.

13 (return) [Ossian's Poems, vol. i. p. 175.]

14 (return) [That the Caracul of Ossian is the Caracalla of the Roman History, is, perhaps, the only point of British antiquity in which Mr. Macpherson and Mr. Whitaker are of the same opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war, the son of Severus was known only by the appellation of Antoninus, and it may seem strange that the Highland bard should describe him by a nickname, invented four years afterwards, scarcely used by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and seldom employed by the most ancient historians. See Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1317. Hist. August. p. 89 Aurel. Victor. Euseb. in Chron. ad ann. 214.
Note: The historical authority of Macpherson's Ossian has not increased since Gibbon wrote. We may, indeed, consider it exploded. Mr. Whitaker, in a letter to Gibbon (Misc. Works, vol. ii. p. 100,) attempts, not very successfully, to weaken this objection of the historian.—M.]
The declining health and last illness of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black passions of Caracalla's soul. Impatient of any delay or division of empire, he attempted, more than once, to shorten the small remainder of his father's days, and endeavored, but without success, to excite a mutiny among the troops. 15 The old emperor had often censured the misguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a single act of

justice, might have saved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthless son. Placed in the same situation, he experienced how easily the rigor of a judge dissolves a way in the tenderness of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not punish; and this last and only instance of mercy was more fatal to the empire than a long series of cruelty. 16 The disorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wished impatiently for death, and hastened the instant of it by his impatience. He expired at York in the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and successful reign. In his last moments he recommended concord to his sons, and his sons to the army. The salutary advice never reached the heart, or even the understanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance, and of the authority of their deceased master, resisted the solicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes soon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honors, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful sovereigns, by the senate, the people, and the provinces. Some preeminence of rank seems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both administered the empire with equal and independent power. 17

15 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1282. Hist. August. p. 71. Aurel. Victor.]
16 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1283. Hist. August. p. 89]
17 (return) [Footnote 17: Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Herodian, l. iii. p. 135.]
Such a divided form of government would have proved a source of discord between the most affectionate brothers. It was impossible that it could long subsist between two implacable enemies, who neither desired nor could trust a reconciliation. It was visible that one only could reign, and that the other must fall; and each of them, judging of his rival's designs by his own, guarded his life with the most jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poison or the sword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy, during which they never ate at the same table, or slept in the same house, displayed to the provinces the odious spectacle of fraternal discord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vast extent of the imperial palace. 18 No communication was allowed between their apartments; the doors and passages were diligently fortified, and guards posted and relieved with the same strictness as in a besieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the presence of their afflicted mother; and each surrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on these occasions of ceremony, the dissimulation of courts could ill disguise the rancor of their hearts. 19

18 (return) [Mr. Hume is justly surprised at a passage of Herodian, (l. iv. p. 139,) who, on this occasion, represents the Imperial palace as equal in extent to the rest of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine Mount, on which it was built, occupied, at most, a circumference of eleven or twelve thousand feet, (see the Notitia and Victor, in Nardini's Roma Antica.) But we should recollect that the opulent senators had almost surrounded the city with their extensive gardens and suburb palaces, the greatest part of which had been gradually confiscated by the emperors. If Geta resided in the gardens that bore his name on the Janiculum, and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Maecenas on the Esquiline, the rival brothers were

separated from each other by the distance of several miles; and yet the intermediate space was filled by the Imperial gardens of Sallust, of Lucullus, of Agrippa, of Domitian, of Caius, &c., all skirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the streets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deserves, a particular dissertation, illustrated by a map of ancient Rome. (Hume, Essay on Populousness of Ancient Nations.—M.)]

19 (return) [Herodian, l. iv. p. 139]
This latent civil war already distracted the whole government, when a scheme was suggested that seemed of mutual benefit to the hostile brothers. It was proposed, that since it was impossible to reconcile their minds, they should separate their interest, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with some accuracy. It was agreed that Caracalla, as the elder brother should remain in possession of Europe and the western Africa; and that he should relinquish the sovereignty of Asia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his residence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itself in wealth and greatness; that numerous armies should be constantly encamped on either side of the Thracian Bosphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the senators of European extraction should acknowledge the sovereign of Rome, whilst the natives of Asia followed the emperor of the East. The tears of the empress Julia interrupted the negotiation, the first idea of which had filled every Roman breast with surprise and indignation. The mighty mass of conquest was so intimately united by the hand of time and policy, that it required the most forcible violence to rend it asunder. The Romans had reason to dread, that the disjointed members would soon be reduced by a civil war under the dominion of one master; but if the separation was permanent, the division of the provinces must terminate in the dissolution of an empire whose unity had hitherto remained inviolate. 20

20 (return) [Herodian, l. iv. p. 144.]
Had the treaty been carried into execution, the sovereign of Europe might soon have been the conqueror of Asia; but Caracalla obtained an easier, though a more guilty, victory. He artfully listened to his mother's entreaties, and consented to meet his brother in her apartment, on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midst of their conversation, some centurions, who had contrived to conceal themselves, rushed with drawn swords upon the unfortunate Geta. His distracted mother strove to protect him in her arms; but, in the unavailing struggle, she was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger son, while she saw the elder animating and assisting 21 the fury of the assassins. As soon as the deed was perpetrated, Caracalla, with hasty steps, and horror in his countenance, ran towards the Praetorian camp, as his only refuge, and threw himself on the ground before the statues of the tutelar deities. 22 The soldiers attempted to raise and comfort him. In broken and disordered words he informed them of his imminent danger, and fortunate escape; insinuating that he had prevented the designs of his enemy, and declared his resolution to live and die with his faithful troops. Geta had been the favorite of the soldiers; but complaint was useless, revenge was dangerous, and they

still reverenced the son of Severus. Their discontent died away in idle murmurs, and Caracalla soon convinced them of the justice of his cause, by distributing in one lavish donative the accumulated treasures of his father's reign. 23 The real sentiments of the soldiers alone were of importance to his power or safety. Their declaration in his favor commanded the dutiful professions of the senate. The obsequious assembly was always prepared to ratify the decision of fortune; 231 but as Caracalla wished to assuage the first emotions of public indignation, the name of Geta was mentioned with decency, and he received the funeral honors of a Roman emperor. 24 Posterity, in pity to his misfortune, has cast a veil over his vices. We consider that young prince as the innocent victim of his brother's ambition, without recollecting that he himself wanted power, rather than inclination, to consummate the same attempts of revenge and murder. 241

21 (return) [Caracalla consecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the sword with which, as he boasted, he had slain his brother Geta. Dion, l. lxxvii p. 1307.]

22 (return) [Herodian, l. iv. p. 147. In every Roman camp there was a small chapel near the head-quarters, in which the statues of the tutelar deities were preserved and adored; and we may remark that the eagles, and other military ensigns, were in the first rank of these deities; an excellent institution, which confirmed discipline by the sanction of religion. See Lipsius de Militia Romana, iv. 5, v. 2.]

23 (return) [Herodian, l. iv. p. 148. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1289.]

231 (return) [The account of this transaction, in a new passage of Dion, varies in some degree from this statement. It adds that the next morning, in the senate, Antoninus requested their indulgence, not because he had killed his brother, but because he was hoarse, and could not address them. Mai. Fragm. p. 228.—M.]

24 (return) [Geta was placed among the gods. Sit divus, dum non sit vivus said his brother. Hist. August. p. 91. Some marks of Geta's consecration are still found upon medals.]

241 (return) [The favorable judgment which history has given of Geta is not founded solely on a feeling of pity; it is supported by the testimony of contemporary historians: he was too fond of the pleasures of the table, and showed great mistrust of his brother; but he was humane, well instructed; he often endeavored to mitigate the rigorous decrees of Severus and Caracalla. Herod iv. 3. Spartian in Geta.—W.] The crime went not unpunished. Neither business, nor pleasure, nor flattery, could defend Caracalla from the stings of a guilty conscience; and he confessed, in the anguish of a tortured mind, that his disordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother rising into life, to threaten and upbraid him. 25 The consciousness of his crime should have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal necessity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recall the memory of his murdered

brother. On his return from the senate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of several noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger son. The jealous emperor threatened them with instant death; the sentence was executed against Fadilla, the last remaining daughter of the emperor Marcus; 251 and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to silence her lamentations, to suppress her sighs, and to receive the assassin with smiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death. His guards and freedmen, the ministers of his serious business, and the companions of his looser hours, those who by his interest had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long connected chain of their dependants, were included in the proscription; which endeavored to reach every one who had maintained the smallest correspondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name. 26 Helvius Pertinax, son to the prince of that name, lost his life by an unseasonable witticism. 27 It was a sufficient crime of Thrasea Priscus to be descended from a family in which the love of liberty seemed an hereditary quality. 28 The particular causes of calumny and suspicion were at length exhausted; and when a senator was accused of being a secret enemy to the government, the emperor was satisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the most bloody inferences. 281

25 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307]

251 (return) [The most valuable paragraph of dion, which the industry of M. Manas recovered, relates to this daughter of Marcus, executed by Caracalla. Her name, as appears from Fronto, as well as from Dion, was Cornificia. When commanded to choose the kind of death she was to suffer, she burst into womanish tears; but remembering her father Marcus, she thus spoke:—"O my hapless soul, (... animula,) now imprisoned in the body, burst forth! be free! show them, however reluctant to believe it, that thou art the daughter of Marcus." She then laid aside all her ornaments, and preparing herself for death, ordered her veins to be opened. Mai. Fragm. Vatican ii p. 220.—M.]

26 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1290. Herodian, l. iv. p. 150. Dion (p. 2298) says, that the comic poets no longer durst employ the name of Geta in their plays, and that the estates of those who mentioned it in their testaments were confiscated.]

27 (return) [Caracalla had assumed the names of several conquered nations; Pertinax observed, that the name of Geticus (he had obtained some advantage over the Goths, or Getae) would be a proper addition to Parthieus, Alemannicus, &c. Hist. August. p. 89.]

28 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1291. He was probably descended from Helvidius Priscus, and Thrasea Paetus, those patriots, whose firm, but useless and unseasonable, virtue has been immortalized by Tacitus. Note: M. Guizot is indignant

at this "cold" observation of Gibbon on the noble character of Thrasea; but he admits that his virtue was useless to the public, and unseasonable amidst the vices of his age.—M.]

281 (return) [Caracalla reproached all those who demanded no favors of him. "It is clear that if you make me no requests, you do not trust me; if you do not trust me, you suspect me; if you suspect me, you fear me; if you fear me, you hate me." And forthwith he condemned them as conspirators, a good specimen of the sorites in a tyrant's logic. See Fragm. Vatican p.—M.]

Chapter VI: Death Of Severus, Tyranny Of Caracalla, Usurpation Of Marcinus.—Part II.

The execution of so many innocent citizens was bewailed by the secret tears of their friends and families. The death of Papinian, the Praetorian Praefect, was lamented as a public calamity. 282 During the last seven years of Severus, he had exercised the most important offices of the state, and, by his salutary influence, guided the emperor's steps in the paths of justice and moderation. In full assurance of his virtue and abilities, Severus, on his death-bed, had conjured him to watch over the prosperity and union of the Imperial family. 29 The honest labors of Papinian served only to inflame the hatred which Caracalla had already conceived against his father's minister. After the murder of Geta, the Praefect was commanded to exert the powers of his skill and eloquence in a studied apology for that atrocious deed. The philosophic Seneca had condescended to compose a similar epistle to the senate, in the name of the son and assassin of Agrippina. 30 "That it was easier to commit than to justify a parricide," was the glorious reply of Papinian; 31 who did not hesitate between the loss of life and that of honor. Such intrepid virtue, which had escaped pure and unsullied from the intrigues courts, the habits of business, and the arts of his profession, reflects more lustre on the memory of Papinian, than all his great employments, his numerous writings, and the superior reputation as a lawyer, which he has preserved through every age of the Roman jurisprudence. 32

282 (return) [Papinian was no longer Praetorian Praefect. Caracalla had deprived him of that office immediately after the death of Severus. Such is the statement of Dion; and the testimony of Spartian, who gives Papinian the Praetorian praefecture till his death, is of little weight opposed to that of a senator then living at Rome.—W.]

29 (return) [It is said that Papinian was himself a relation of the empress Julia.]

30 (return) [Tacit. Annal. xiv. 2.]

31 (return) [Hist. August. p. 88.]

32 (return) [With regard to Papinian, see Heineccius's Historia Juris Roma ni, l. 330, &c.]
It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worst of times the consolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus visited their extensive dominions in person, and their progress was marked by acts of wisdom and beneficence. The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian, who resided almost constantly at Rome, or in the adjacent was confined to the senatorial and equestrian orders. 33 But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left capital (and he never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the empire, particularly those of the East, and province was by turns the scene of his rapine and cruelty. The senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions,were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immense expense, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect, in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either disdained to visit, or ordered immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes. 34 In the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands, at Alexandria, in Egypt for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing the number or the crime of the sufferers; since as he coolly informed the senate, all the Alexandrians, those who perished, and those who had escaped, were alike guilty. 35

33 (return) [Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neighborhood of Rome. Nero made a short journey into Greece. "Et laudatorum Principum usus ex aequo, quamvis procul agentibus. Saevi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hist. iv. 74.]

34 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1294.]

35 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307. Herodian, l. iv. p. 158. The former represents it as a cruel massacre, the latter as a perfidious one too. It seems probable that the Alexandrians has irritated the tyrant by their railleries, and perhaps by their tumults. * Note: After these massacres, Caracalla also deprived the Alexandrians of their spectacles and public feasts; he divided the city into two parts by a wall with towers at intervals, to prevent the peaceful communications of the citizens. Thus was treated the unhappy Alexandria, says Dion, by the savage beast of Ausonia. This, in fact, was the epithet which the oracle had applied to him; it is said, indeed, that he was much pleased with the name and often boasted of it. Dion, lxxvii. p. 1307.—G.]
The wise instructions of Severus never made any lasting impression on the mind of his son, who, although not destitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity. 36 One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abused by Caracalla. "To secure the affections of the army, and to esteem the rest of his subjects as of little moment." 37 But the liberality of the father had been restrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was

tempered by firmness and authority. The careless profusion of the son was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigor of the soldiers, instead of being confirmed by the severe discipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The excessive increase of their pay and donatives 38 exhausted the state to enrich the military order, whose modesty in peace, and service in war, is best secured by an honorable poverty. The demeanor of Caracalla was haughty and full of pride; but with the troops he forgot even the proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their insolent familiarity, and, neglecting the essential duties of a general, affected to imitate the dress and manners of a common soldier.

36 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1296.]

37 (return) [Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Mr. Wotton (Hist. of Rome, p. 330) suspects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himself, and attributed to his father.]

38 (return) [Dion (l. lxxviii. p. 1343) informs us that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to seventy millions of drachmae (about two millions three hundred and fifty thousand pounds.) There is another passage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely curious, were it not obscure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The best sense seems to be, that the Praetorian guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmae, (forty pounds a year,) (Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.) Under the reign of Augustus, they were paid at the rate of two drachmae, or denarii, per day, 720 a year, (Tacit. Annal. i. 17.) Domitian, who increased the soldiers' pay one fourth, must have raised the Praetorians to 960 drachmae, (Gronoviue de Pecunia Veteri, l. iii. c. 2.) These successive augmentations ruined the empire; for, with the soldiers' pay, their numbers too were increased. We have seen the Praetorians alone increased from 10,000 to 50,000 men. Note: Valois and Reimar have explained in a very simple and probable manner this passage of Dion, which Gibbon seems to me not to have understood. He ordered that the soldiers should receive, as the reward of their services the Praetorians 1250 drachms, the other 5000 drachms. Valois thinks that the numbers have been transposed, and that Caracalla added 5000 drachms to the donations made to the Praetorians, 1250 to those of the legionaries. The Praetorians, in fact, always received more than the others. The error of Gibbon arose from his considering that this referred to the annual pay of the soldiers, while it relates to the sum they received as a reward for their services on their discharge: donatives means recompense for service. Augustus had settled that the Praetorians, after sixteen campaigns, should receive 5000 drachms: the legionaries received only 3000 after twenty years. Caracalla added 5000 drachms to the donative of the Praetorians, 1250 to that of the legionaries. Gibbon appears to have been mistaken both in confounding this donative on discharge with the annual pay, and in not paying attention to the remark of Valois on the transposition of the numbers in the text.—G]

It was impossible that such a character, and such conduct as that of Caracalla, could inspire either love or esteem; but as long as his vices were beneficial to the armies, he was secure from the danger of rebellion. A secret conspiracy, provoked by his

own jealousy, was fatal to the tyrant. The Praetorian praefecture was divided between two ministers. The military department was intrusted to Adventus, an experienced rather than able soldier; and the civil affairs were transacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in business, had raised himself, with a fair character, to that high office. But his favor varied with the caprice of the emperor, and his life might depend on the slightest suspicion, or the most casual circumstance. Malice or fanaticism had suggested to an African, deeply skilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his son were destined to reign over the empire. The report was soon diffused through the province; and when the man was sent in chains to Rome, he still asserted, in the presence of the praefect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magistrate, who had received the most pressing instructions to inform himself of the successors of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the Imperial court, which at that time resided in Syria. But, notwithstanding the diligence of the public messengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprise him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot race, he delivered them unopened to the Praetorian Praefect, directing him to despatch the ordinary affairs, and to report the more important business that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate, and resolved to prevent it. He inflamed the discontents of some inferior officers, and employed the hand of Martialis, a desperate soldier, who had been refused the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edessa to the celebrated temple of the Moon at Carrhae. 381 He was attended by a body of cavalry: but having stopped on the road for some necessary occasion, his guards preserved a respectful distance, and Martialis, approaching his person under a presence of duty, stabbed him with a dagger. The bold assassin was instantly killed by a Scythian archer of the Imperial guard. Such was the end of a monster whose life disgraced human nature, and whose reign accused the patience of the Romans. 39 The grateful soldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the senate to prostitute their own dignity and that of religion, by granting him a place among the gods. Whilst he was upon earth, Alexander the Great was the only hero whom this god deemed worthy his admiration. He assumed the name and ensigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards, persecuted the disciples of Aristotle, and displayed, with a puerile enthusiasm, the only sentiment by which he discovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can easily conceive, that after the battle of Narva, and the conquest of Poland, Charles XII. (though he still wanted the more elegant accomplishments of the son of Philip) might boast of having rivalled his valor and magnanimity; but in no one action of his life did Caracalla express the faintest resemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and of his father's friends. 40

381 (return) [Carrhae, now Harran, between Edessan and Nisibis, famous for the defeat of Crassus—the Haran from whence Abraham set out for the land of Canaan. This city has always been remarkable for its attachment to Sabaism—G]

39 (return) [Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1312. Herodian, l. iv. p. 168.]

40 (return) [The fondness of Caracalla for the name and ensigns of Alexander is still preserved on the medals of that emperor. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum, Dissertat. xii. Herodian (l. iv. p. 154) had seen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn with one side of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla.]

After the extinction of the house of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a master. The choice of the army (for the authority of a distant and feeble senate was little regarded) hung in anxious suspense, as no candidate presented himself whose distinguished birth and merit could engage their attachment and unite their suffrages. The decisive weight of the Praetorian guards elevated the hopes of their praefects, and these powerful ministers began to assert their legal claim to fill the vacancy of the Imperial throne. Adventus, however, the senior praefect, conscious of his age and infirmities, of his small reputation, and his smaller abilities, resigned the dangerous honor to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whose well-dissembled grief removed all suspicion of his being accessary to his master's death. 41 The troops neither loved nor esteemed his character. They cast their eyes around in search of a competitor, and at last yielded with reluctance to his promises of unbounded liberality and indulgence. A short time after his accession, he conferred on his son Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the Imperial title, and the popular name of Antoninus. The beautiful figure of the youth, assisted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furnished a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favor of the army, and secure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

41 (return) [Herodian, l. iv. p. 169. Hist. August. p. 94.]

The authority of the new sovereign had been ratified by the cheerful submission of the senate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpected deliverance from a hated tyrant, and it seemed of little consequence to examine into the virtues of the successor of Caracalla. But as soon as the first transports of joy and surprise had subsided, they began to scrutinize the merits of Macrinus with a critical severity, and to arraign the nasty choice of the army. It had hitherto been considered as a fundamental maxim of the constitution, that the emperor must be always chosen in the senate, and the sovereign power, no longer exercised by the whole body, was always delegated to one of its members. But Macrinus was not a senator. 42 The sudden elevation of the Praetorian praefects betrayed the meanness of their origin; and the equestrian order was still in possession of that great office, which commanded with arbitrary sway the lives and fortunes of the senate. A murmur of indignation was heard, that a man, whose obscure 43 extraction had never been illustrated by any signal service, should dare to invest himself with the purple, instead of bestowing it on some distinguished senator, equal in birth and dignity to the splendor of the Imperial station. As soon as the character of Macrinus was surveyed by the sharp eye of discontent, some vices, and many defects, were easily discovered. The choice of his ministers was in many instances justly censured, and the dissastified dissatisfied people, with their usual candor, accused at once his indolent tameness and his excessive severity. 44

42 (return) [Dion, l. lxxxviii. p. 1350. Elagabalus reproached his predecessor with daring to seat himself on the throne; though, as Praetorian praefect, he could not have been admitted into the senate after the voice of the crier had cleared the house. The personal favor of Plautianus and Sejanus had broke through the established rule. They rose, indeed, from the equestrian order; but they preserved the praefecture, with the rank of senator and even with the annulship.]

43 (return) [He was a native of Caesarea, in Numidia, and began his fortune by serving in the household of Plautian, from whose ruin he narrowly escaped. His enemies asserted that he was born a slave, and had exercised, among other infamous professions, that of Gladiator. The fashion of aspersing the birth and condition of an adversary seems to have lasted from the time of the Greek orators to the learned grammarians of the last age.]

44 (return) [Both Dion and Herodian speak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus with candor and impartiality; but the author of his life, in the Augustan History, seems to have implicitly copied some of the venal writers, employed by Elagabalus, to blacken the memory of his predecessor.]

His rash ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to stand with firmness, and impossible to fall without instant destruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil business, he trembled in the presence of the fierce and undisciplined multitude, over whom he had assumed the command; his military talents were despised, and his personal courage suspected; a whisper that circulated in the camp, disclosed the fatal secret of the conspiracy against the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baseness of hypocrisy, and heightened contempt by detestation. To alienate the soldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting; and such was the peculiar hardship of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exercise that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and disorder; and if that worthless tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the sure consequences of his own conduct, he would perhaps have enjoyed the dark prospect of the distress and calamities which he bequeathed to his successors.

In the management of this necessary reformation, Macrinus proceeded with a cautious prudence, which would have restored health and vigor to the Roman army in an easy and almost imperceptible manner. To the soldiers already engaged in the service, he was constrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate though liberal establishment of Severus, and gradually formed to modesty and obedience. 45 One fatal error destroyed the salutary effects of this judicious plan. The numerous army, assembled in the East by the late emperor, instead of being immediately dispersed by Macrinus through the several provinces, was suffered to remain united in Syria, during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleness of their quarters, the troops viewed their strength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, instead of being flattered by the advantageous

distinction, were alarmed by the first steps of the emperor, which they considered as the presage of his future intentions. The recruits, with sullen reluctance, entered on a service, whose labors were increased while its rewards were diminished by a covetous and unwarlike sovereign. The murmurs of the army swelled with impunity into seditious clamors; and the partial mutinies betrayed a spirit of discontent and disaffection that waited only for the slightest occasion to break out on every side into a general rebellion. To minds thus disposed, the occasion soon presented itself.

45 (return) [Dion, l. lxxxiii. p. 1336. The sense of the author is as the intention of the emperor; but Mr. Wotton has mistaken both, by understanding the distinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. History of Rome, p. 347.] The empress Julia had experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune. From an humble station she had been raised to greatness, only to taste the superior bitterness of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her sons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good sense must have long taught' er to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empress. Notwithstanding the respectful civility expressed by the usurper towards the widow of Severus, she descended with a painful struggle into the condition of a subject, and soon withdrew herself, by a voluntary death, from the anxious and humiliating dependence. 46 461 Julia Maesa, her sister, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emesa with an immense fortune, the fruit of twenty years' favor accompanied by her two daughters, Soaemias and Mamae, each of whom was a widow, and each had an only son. Bassianus, 462 for that was the name of the son of Soaemias, was consecrated to the honorable ministry of high priest of the Sun; and this holy vocation, embraced either from prudence or superstition, contributed to raise the Syrian youth to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of troops was stationed at Emesa; and as the severe discipline of Macrinus had constrained them to pass the winter encamped, they were eager to revenge the cruelty of such unaccustomed hardships. The soldiers, who resorted in crowds to the temple of the Sun, beheld with veneration and delight the elegant dress and figure of the young pontiff; they recognized, or they thought that they recognized, the features of Caracalla, whose memory they now adored. The artful Maesa saw and cherished their rising partiality, and readily sacrificing her daughter's reputation to the fortune of her grandson, she insinuated that Bassianus was the natural son of their murdered sovereign. The sums distributed by her emissaries with a lavish hand silenced every objection, and the profusion sufficiently proved the affinity, or at least the resemblance, of Bassianus with the great original. The young Antoninus (for he had assumed and polluted that respectable name) was declared emperor by the troops of Emesa, asserted his hereditary right, and called aloud on the armies to follow the standard of a young and liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge his father's death and the oppression of the military order. 47

46 (return) [Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1330. The abridgment of Xiphilin, though less particular, is in this place clearer than the original.]

461 (return) [As soon as this princess heard of the death of Caracalla, she wished to starve herself to death: the respect shown to her by Macrinus, in making no change in her attendants or her court, induced her to prolong her life. But it appears, as far as the mutilated text of Dion and the imperfect epitome of Xiphilin permit us to judge, that she conceived projects of ambition, and endeavored to raise herself to the empire. She wished to tread in the steps of Semiramis and Nitocris, whose country bordered on her own. Macrinus sent her an order immediately to leave Antioch, and to retire wherever she chose. She returned to her former purpose, and starved herself to death.—G.]

462 (return) [He inherited this name from his great-grandfather of the mother's side, Bassianus, father of Julia Maesa, his grandmother, and of Julia Domna, wife of Severus. Victor (in his epitome) is perhaps the only historian who has given the key to this genealogy, when speaking of Caracalla. His Bassianus ex avi materni nomine dictus. Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Alexander Seyerus, bore successively this name.—G.]

47 (return) [According to Lampridius, (Hist. August. p. 135,) Alexander Severus lived twenty-nine years three months and seven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205 and was consequently about this time thirteen years old, as his elder cousin might be about seventeen. This computation suits much better the history of the young princes than that of Herodian, (l. v. p. 181,) who represents them as three years younger; whilst, by an opposite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conspiracy, see Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1339. Herodian, l. v. p. 184.]

Whilst a conspiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigor, Macrinus, who, by a decisive motion, might have crushed his infant enemy, floated between the opposite extremes of terror and security, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A spirit of rebellion diffused itself through all the camps and garrisons of Syria, successive detachments murdered their officers, 48 and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy restitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakness of Macrinus. At length he marched out of Antioch, to meet the increasing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops seemed to take the field with faintness and reluctance; but, in the heat of the battle, 49 the Praetorian guards, almost by an involuntary impulse, asserted the superiority of their valor and discipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who, according to their eastern custom, had attended the army, threw themselves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compassion of the soldiers, endeavored to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himself, who, in the rest of his life, never acted like a man, in this important crisis of his fate, approved himself a hero, mounted his horse, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged sword in hand among the thickest of the enemy; whilst the eunuch Gannys, 491 whose occupations had been confined to female cares and the soft luxury of Asia, displayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle still raged with doubtful violence, and

Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cause by a shameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice served only to protract his life a few days, and to stamp deserved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is scarcely necessary to add, that his son Diadumenianus was involved in the same fate.
As soon as the stubborn Praetorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had basely deserted them, they surrendered to the conqueror: the contending parties of the Roman army, mingling tears of joy and tenderness, united under the banners of the imagined son of Caracalla, and the East acknowledged with pleasure the first emperor of Asiatic extraction.

48 (return) [By a most dangerous proclamation of the pretended Antoninus, every soldier who brought in his officer's head became entitled to his private estate, as well as to his military commission.]

49 (return) [Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1345. Herodian, l. v. p. 186. The battle was fought near the village of Immae, about two-and-twenty miles from Antioch.]

491 (return) [Gannys was not a eunuch. Dion, p. 1355.—W]
The letters of Macrinus had condescended to inform the senate of the slight disturbance occasioned by an impostor in Syria, and a decree immediately passed, declaring the rebel and his family public enemies; with a promise of pardon, however, to such of his deluded adherents as should merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapsed from the declaration of the victory of Antoninus, (for in so short an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided,) the capital and the provinces, more especially those of the East, were distracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and stained with a useless effusion of civil blood, since whosoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria must reign over the empire. The specious letters in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient senate were filled with professions of virtue and moderation; the shining examples of Marcus and Augustus, he should ever consider as the great rule of his administration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the striking resemblance of his own age and fortunes with those of Augustus, who in the earliest youth had revenged, by a successful war, the murder of his father. By adopting the style of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, son of Antoninus and grandson of Severus, he tacitly asserted his hereditary claim to the empire; but, by assuming the tribunitian and proconsular powers before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the senate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the constitution was probably dictated either by the ignorance of his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce disdain of his military followers. 50

50 (return) [Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1353.]
As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the most trifling amusements, he wasted many months in his luxurious progress from Syria to Italy, passed at Nicomedia his first winter after his victory, and deferred till the ensuing summer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of Victory in the

senate house, conveyed to the Romans the just but unworthy resemblance of his person and manners. He was drawn in his sacerdotal robes of silk and gold, after the loose flowing fashion of the Medes and Phoenicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an inestimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white. 51 The grave senators confessed with a sigh, that, after having long experienced the stern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of Oriental despotism.

51 (return) [Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363. Herodian, l. v. p. 189.]
The Sun was worshipped at Emesa, under the name of Elagabalus, 52 and under the form of a black conical stone, which, as it was universally believed, had fallen from heaven on that sacred place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not without some reason, ascribed his elevation to the throne. The display of superstitious gratitude was the only serious business of his reign. The triumph of the god of Emesa over all the religions of the earth, was the great object of his zeal and vanity; and the appellation of Elagabalus (for he presumed as pontiff and favorite to adopt that sacred name) was dearer to him than all the titles of Imperial greatness. In a solemn procession through the streets of Rome, the way was strewed with gold dust; the black stone, set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The pious emperor held the reins, and, supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine Mount, the sacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumstance of cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics, were profusely consumed on his altar. Around the altar, a chorus of Syrian damsels performed their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music, whilst the gravest personages of the state and army, clothed in long Phoenician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions, with affected zeal and secret indignation. 53

52 (return) [This name is derived by the learned from two Syrian words, Ela a God, and Gabal, to form, the forming or plastic god, a proper, and even happy epithet for the sun. Wotton's History of Rome, p. 378 Note: The name of Elagabalus has been disfigured in various ways. Herodian calls him; Lampridius, and the more modern writers, make him Heliogabalus. Dion calls him Elegabalus; but Elegabalus was the true name, as it appears on the medals. (Eckhel. de Doct. num. vet. t. vii. p. 250.) As to its etymology, that which Gibbon adduces is given by Bochart, Chan. ii. 5; but Salmasius, on better grounds. (not. in Lamprid. in Elagab.,) derives the name of Elagabalus from the idol of that god, represented by Herodian and the medals in the form of a mountain, (gibel in Hebrew,) or great stone cut to a point, with marks which represent the sun. As it was not permitted, at Hierapolis, in Syria, to make statues of the sun and moon, because, it was said, they are themselves sufficiently visible, the sun was represented at Emesa in the form of a great stone, which, as it appeared, had fallen from heaven. Spanheim, Caesar. notes, p. 46.—G. The name of

Elagabalus, in "nummis rarius legetur." Rasche, Lex. Univ. Ref. Numm. Rasche quotes two.—M]

53 (return) [Herodian, l. v. p. 190.]

Chapter VI: Death Of Severus, Tyranny Of Caracalla, Usurpation Of Marcinus.—Part III.

To this temple, as to the common centre of religious worship, the Imperial fanatic attempted to remove the Ancilia, the Palladium, 54 and all the sacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A crowd of inferior deities attended in various stations the majesty of the god of Emesa; but his court was still imperfect, till a female of distinguished rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas had been first chosen for his consort; but as it was dreaded lest her warlike terrors might affright the soft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the Moon, adorned by the Africans under the name of Astarte, was deemed a more suitable companion for the Sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her temple as a marriage portion, was transported with solemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and the day of these mystic nuptials was a general festival in the capital and throughout the empire. 55

54 (return) [He broke into the sanctuary of Vesta, and carried away a statue, which he supposed to be the palladium; but the vestals boasted that, by a pious fraud, they had imposed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. Hist. August., p. 103.]

55 (return) [Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1360. Herodian, l. v. p. 193. The subjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal presents to the new married couple; and whatever they had promised during the life of Elagabalus was carefully exacted under the administration of Mamaea.]

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable respect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of sense by social intercourse, endearing connections, and the soft coloring of taste and the imagination. But Elagabalus, (I speak of the emperor of that name,) corrupted by his youth, his country, and his fortune, abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures with ungoverned fury, and soon found disgust and satiety in the midst of his enjoyments. The inflammatory powers of art were summoned to his aid: the confused multitude of women, of wines, and of dishes, and the studied variety of attitude and sauces, served to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in these sciences, the only ones cultivated and patronized by the monarch, 56 signalized his reign, and transmitted his infamy to succeeding times. A capricious prodigality supplied the want of taste and elegance; and whilst Elagabalus lavished away the treasures of his people in the wildest extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers applauded a spirit of magnificence unknown to the tameness of his predecessors. To confound the order of seasons and climates, 57 to sport with the passions and

prejudices of his subjects, and to subvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his most delicious amusements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid succession of wives, among whom was a vestal virgin, ravished by force from her sacred asylum, 58 were insufficient to satisfy the impotence of his passions. The master of the Roman world affected to copy the dress and manners of the female sex, preferred the distaff to the sceptre, and dishonored the principal dignities of the empire by distributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly invested with the title and authority of the emperor's, or, as he more properly styled himself, of the empress's husband. 59

56 (return) [The invention of a new sauce was liberally rewarded; but if it was not relished, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing else till he had discoveredanother more agreeable to the Imperial palate Hist. August. p. 111.]

57 (return) [He never would eat sea-fish except at a great distance from the sea; he then would distribute vast quantities of the rarest sorts, brought at an immense expense, to the peasants of the inland country. Hist. August. p. 109.]

58 (return) [Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1358. Herodian, l. v. p. 192.]

59 (return) [Hierocles enjoyed that honor; but he would have been supplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived, by a potion, to enervate the powers of his rival, who, being found on trial unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363, 1364. A dancer was made praefect of the city, a charioteer praefect of the watch, a barber praefect of the provisions. These three ministers, with many inferior officers, were all recommended enormitate membrorum. Hist. August. p. 105.]

It may seem probable, the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy, and blackened by prejudice. 60 Yet, confining ourselves to the public scenes displayed before the Roman people, and attested by grave and contemporary historians, their inexpressible infamy surpasses that of any other age or country. The license of an eastern monarch is secluded from the eye of curiosity by the inaccessible walls of his seraglio. The sentiments of honor and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleasure, a regard for decency, and a respect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe; 601 but the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careless of censure, they lived without restraint in the patient and humble society of their slaves and parasites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his subjects with the same contemptuous indifference, asserted without control his sovereign privilege of lust and luxury.

60 (return) [Even the credulous compiler of his life, in the Augustan History (p. 111) is inclined to suspect that his vices may have been exaggerated.]

601 (return) [Wenck has justly observed that Gibbon should have reckoned the influence of Christianity in this great change. In the most savage times, and the most

corrupt courts, since the introduction of Christianity there have been no Neros or Domitians, no Commodus or Elagabalus.—M.]

The most worthless of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the same disorders which they allow in themselves; and can readily discover some nice difference of age, character, or station, to justify the partial distinction. The licentious soldiers, who had raised to the throne the dissolute son of Caracalla, blushed at their ignominious choice, and turned with disgust from that monster, to contemplate with pleasure the opening virtues of his cousin Alexander, the son of Mamaea. The crafty Maesa, sensible that her grandson Elagabalus must inevitably destroy himself by his own vices, had provided another and surer support of her family. Embracing a favorable moment of fondness and devotion, she had persuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander, and to invest him with the title of Caesar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer interrupted by the care of the earth. In the second rank that amiable prince soon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's jealousy, who resolved to terminate the dangerous competition, either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival. His arts proved unsuccessful; his vain designs were constantly discovered by his own loquacious folly, and disappointed by those virtuous and faithful servants whom the prudence of Mamaea had placed about the person of her son. In a hasty sally of passion, Elagabalus resolved to execute by force what he had been unable to compass by fraud, and by a despotic sentence degraded his cousin from the rank and honors of Caesar. The message was received in the senate with silence, and in the camp with fury. The Praetorian guards swore to protect Alexander, and to revenge the dishonored majesty of the throne. The tears and promises of the trembling Elagabalus, who only begged them to spare his life, and to leave him in the possession of his beloved Hierocles, diverted their just indignation; and they contented themselves with empowering their praefects to watch over the safety of Alexander, and the conduct of the emperor. 61

61 (return) [Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1365. Herodian, l. v. p. 195—201. Hist. August. p. 105. The last of the three historians seems to have followed the best authors in his account of the revolution.]

It was impossible that such a reconciliation should last, or that even the mean soul of Elagabalus could hold an empire on such humiliating terms of dependence. He soon attempted, by a dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the soldiers. The report of the death of Alexander, and the natural suspicion that he had been murdered, inflamed their passions into fury, and the tempest of the camp could only be appeased by the presence and authority of the popular youth. Provoked at this new instance of their affection for his cousin, and their contempt for his person, the emperor ventured to punish some of the leaders of the mutiny. His unseasonable severity proved instantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himself. Elagabalus was massacred by the indignant Praetorians, his mutilated corpse dragged through the streets of the city, and thrown into the Tiber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the senate; the justice of whose decree has been ratified by posterity. 62

[See Island In The Tiber: Elagabalus was thrown into the Tiber]

62 (return) [The aera of the death of Elagabalus, and of the accession of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillemont, Valsecchi, Vignoli, and Torre, bishop of Adria. The question is most assuredly intricate; but I still adhere to the authority of Dion, the truth of whose calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whose text is justified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zonaras, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years nine months and four days, from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 222. But what shall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunitian power? We shall reply, with the learned Valsecchi, that the usurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the son of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death? After resolving this great difficulty, the smaller knots of this question may be easily untied, or cut asunder. Note: This opinion of Valsecchi has been triumphantly contested by Eckhel, who has shown the impossibility of reconciling it with the medals of Elagabalus, and has given the most satisfactory explanation of the five tribunates of that emperor. He ascended the throne and received the tribunitian power the 16th of May, in the year of Rome 971; and on the 1st January of the next year, 972, he began a new tribunate, according to the custom established by preceding emperors. During the years 972, 973, 974, he enjoyed the tribunate, and commenced his fifth in the year 975, during which he was killed on the 10th March. Eckhel de Doct. Num. viii. 430 &c.—G.]

In the room of Elagabalus, his cousin Alexander was raised to the throne by the Praetorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whose name he assumed, was the same as that of his predecessor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the senate conferred upon him, in one day, the various titles and powers of the Imperial dignity. 63 But as Alexander was a modest and dutiful youth, of only seventeen years of age, the reins of government were in the hands of two women, of his mother, Mamaea, and of Maesa, his grandmother. After the death of the latter, who survived but a short time the elevation of Alexander, Mamaea remained the sole regent of her son and of the empire.

63 (return) [Hist. August. p. 114. By this unusual precipitation, the senate meant to confound the hopes of pretenders, and prevent the factions of the armies.]

In every age and country, the wiser, or at least the stronger, of the two sexes, has usurped the powers of the state, and confined the other to the cares and pleasures of domestic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and especially in those of modern Europe, the gallant spirit of chivalry, and the law of succession, have accustomed us to allow a singular exception; and a woman is often acknowledged the absolute sovereign of a great kingdom, in which she would be deemed incapable of exercising the smallest employment, civil or military. But as the Roman emperors were still considered as the generals and magistrates of the republic, their wives and mothers, although distinguished by the name of Augusta were never associated to their personal honors; and a female reign would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of those primitive Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and respect. 64 The haughty Agripina aspired, indeed, to share the honors

of the empire which she had conferred on her son; but her mad ambition, detested by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was disappointed by the artful firmness of Seneca and Burrhus. 65 The good sense, or the indifference, of succeeding princes, restrained them from offending the prejudices of their subjects; and it was reserved for the profligate Elagabalus to discharge the acts of the senate with the name of his mother Soaemias, who was placed by the side of the consuls, and subscribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legislative assembly. Her more prudent sister, Mamaea, declined the useless and odious prerogative, and a solemn law was enacted, excluding women forever from the senate, and devoting to the infernal gods the head of the wretch by whom this sanction should be violated. 66 The substance, not the pageantry, of power. was the object of Mamaea's manly ambition. She maintained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander, with her consent, married the daughter of a patrician; but his respect for his father-in-law, and love for the empress, were inconsistent with the tenderness of interest of Mamaea. The patrician was executed on the ready accusation of treason, and the wife of Alexander driven with ignominy from the palace, and banished into Africa. 67

64 (return) [Metellus Numidicus, the censor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that had kind nature allowed us to exist without the help of women, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and he could recommend matrimony only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty. Aulus Gellius, i. 6.]

65 (return) [Tacit. Annal. xiii. 5.]

66 (return) [Hist. August. p. 102, 107.]

67 (return) [Dion, l. lxxx. p. 1369. Herodian, l. vi. p. 206. Hist. August. p. 131. Herodian represents the patrician as innocent. The Augustian History, on the authority of Dexippus, condemns him, as guilty of a conspiracy against the life of Alexander. It is impossible to pronounce between them; but Dion is an irreproachable witness of the jealousy and cruelty of Mamaea towards the young empress, whose hard fate Alexander lamented, but durst not oppose.] Notwithstanding this act of jealous cruelty, as well as some instances of avarice, with which Mamaea is charged, the general tenor of her administration was equally for the benefit of her son and of the empire. With the approbation of the senate, she chose sixteen of the wisest and most virtuous senators as a perpetual council of state, before whom every public business of moment was debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally distinguished by his knowledge of, and his respect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmness of this aristocracy restored order and authority to the government. As soon as they had purged the city from foreign superstition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied themselves to remove his worthless creatures from every department of the public administration, and to supply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of justice, became the only

recommendations for civil offices; valor, and the love of discipline, the only qualifications for military employments. 68

68 (return) [Herodian, l. vi. p. 203. Hist. August. p. 119. The latter insinuates, that when any law was to be passed, the council was assisted by a number of able lawyers and experienced senators, whose opinions were separately given, and taken down in writing.]

But the most important care of Mamaea and her wise counsellors, was to form the character of the young emperor, on whose personal qualities the happiness or misery of the Roman world must ultimately depend. The fortunate soil assisted, and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent understanding soon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleasure of knowledge, and the necessity of labor. A natural mildness and moderation of temper preserved him from the assaults of passion, and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his esteem for the wise Ulpian, guarded his unexperienced youth from the poison of flattery. 581

581 (return) [Alexander received into his chapel all the religions which prevailed in the empire; he admitted Jesus Christ, Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius of Tyana, &c. It was almost certain that his mother Mamaea had instructed him in the morality of Christianity. Historians in general agree in calling her a Christian; there is reason to believe that she had begun to have a taste for the principles of Christianity. (See Tillemont, Alexander Severus) Gibbon has not noticed this circumstance; he appears to have wished to lower the character of this empress; he has throughout followed the narrative of Herodian, who, by the acknowledgment of Capitolinus himself, detested Alexander. Without believing the exaggerated praises of Lampridius, he ought not to have followed the unjust severity of Herodian, and, above all, not to have forgotten to say that the virtuous Alexander Severus had insured to the Jews the preservation of their privileges, and permitted the exercise of Christianity. Hist. Aug. p. 121. The Christians had established their worship in a public place, of which the victuallers (cauponarii) claimed, not the property, but possession by custom. Alexander answered, that it was better that the place should be used for the service of God, in any form, than for victuallers.—G. I have scrupled to omit this note, as it contains some points worthy of notice; but it is very unjust to Gibbon, who mentions almost all the circumstances, which he is accused of omitting, in another, and, according to his plan, a better place, and, perhaps, in stronger terms than M. Guizot. See Chap. xvi.— M.]

The simple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleasing picture of an accomplished emperor, 69 and, with some allowance for the difference of manners, might well deserve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander rose early: the first moments of the day were consecrated to private devotion, and his domestic chapel was filled with the images of those heroes, who, by improving or reforming human life, had deserved the grateful reverence of posterity. But as he deemed the service of mankind the most acceptable worship of the gods, the greatest part of his morning hours was employed in his council, where he discussed public affairs, and determined private causes, with a patience and discretion above his years. The

dryness of business was relieved by the charms of literature; and a portion of time was always set apart for his favorite studies of poetry, history, and philosophy. The works of Virgil and Horace, the republics of Plato and Cicero, formed his taste, enlarged his understanding, and gave him the noblest ideas of man and government. The exercises of the body succeeded to those of the mind; and Alexander, who was tall, active, and robust, surpassed most of his equals in the gymnastic arts. Refreshed by the use of the bath and a slight dinner, he resumed, with new vigor, the business of the day; and, till the hour of supper, the principal meal of the Romans, he was attended by his secretaries, with whom he read and answered the multitude of letters, memorials, and petitions, that must have been addressed to the master of the greatest part of the world. His table was served with the most frugal simplicity, and whenever he was at liberty to consult his own inclination, the company consisted of a few select friends, men of learning and virtue, amongst whom Ulpian was constantly invited. Their conversation was familiar and instructive; and the pauses were occasionally enlivened by the recital of some pleasing composition, which supplied the place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators, so frequently summoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans. 70 The dress of Alexander was plain and modest, his demeanor courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his subjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleusinian mysteries, pronouncing the same salutary admonition: "Let none enter these holy walls, unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind." 71

69 (return) [See his life in the Augustan History. The undistinguishing compiler has buried these interesting anecdotes under a load of trivial unmeaning circumstances.]

70 (return) [See the 13th Satire of Juvenal.]

71 (return) [Hist. August. p. 119.]
Such a uniform tenor of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wisdom and justice of Alexander's government, than all the trifling details preserved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the accession of Commodus, the Roman world had experienced, during the term of forty years, the successive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus, it enjoyed an auspicious calm of thirteen years. 711 The provinces, relieved from the oppressive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended son, flourished in peace and prosperity, under the administration of magistrates, who were convinced by experience that to deserve the love of the subjects, was their best and only method of obtaining the favor of their sovereign. While some gentle restraints were imposed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of provisions and the interest of money, were reduced by the paternal care of Alexander, whose prudent liberality, without distressing the industrious, supplied the wants and amusements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority of the senate was restored; and every virtuous senator might approach the person of the emperor without a fear and without a blush.

711 (return) [Wenck observes that Gibbon, enchanted with the virtue of Alexander has heightened, particularly in this sentence, its effect on the state of the world. His own account, which follows, of the insurrections and foreign wars, is not in harmony with this beautiful picture.—M.]

The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the dissolute Verus, and by descent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honorable appellation of the sons of Severus, was bestowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length prostituted to the infamy of the high priest of Emesa. Alexander, though pressed by the studied, and, perhaps, sincere importunity of the senate, nobly refused the borrowed lustre of a name; whilst in his whole conduct he labored to restore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines. 72

72 (return) [See, in the Hist. August. p. 116, 117, the whole contest between Alexander and the senate, extracted from the journals of that assembly. It happened on the sixth of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almost a twelvemonth, the blessings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honor, the senate waited to see whether Alexander would not assume it as a family name.]

In the civil administration of Alexander, wisdom was enforced by power, and the people, sensible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with their love and gratitude. There still remained a greater, a more necessary, but a more difficult enterprise; the reformation of the military order, whose interest and temper, confirmed by long impunity, rendered them impatient of the restraints of discipline, and careless of the blessings of public tranquillity. In the execution of his design, the emperor affected to display his love, and to conceal his fear of the army. The most rigid economy in every other branch of the administration supplied a fund of gold and silver for the ordinary pay and the extraordinary rewards of the troops. In their marches he relaxed the severe obligation of carrying seventeen days' provision on their shoulders. Ample magazines were formed along the public roads, and as soon as they entered the enemy's country, a numerous train of mules and camels waited on their haughty laziness. As Alexander despaired of correcting the luxury of his soldiers, he attempted, at least, to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament, fine horses, splendid armor, and shields enriched with silver and gold. He shared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impose, visited, in person, the sick and wounded, preserved an exact register of their services and his own gratitude, and expressed on every occasion, the warmest regard for a body of men, whose welfare, as he affected to declare, was so closely connected with that of the state. 73 By the most gentle arts he labored to inspire the fierce multitude with a sense of duty, and to restore at least a faint image of that discipline to which the Romans owed their empire over so many other nations, as warlike and more powerful than themselves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation served only to inflame the ills it was meant to cure.

73 (return) [It was a favorite saying of the emperor's Se milites magis servare, quam seipsum, quod salus publica in his esset. Hist. Aug. p. 130.]
The Praetorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil, whom they had saved from a tyrant's fury, and placed on the Imperial throne. That amiable prince was sensible of the obligation; but as his gratitude was restrained within the limits of reason and justice, they soon were more dissatisfied with the virtues of Alexander, than they had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their praefect, the wise Ulpian, was the friend of the laws and of the people; he was considered as the enemy of the soldiers, and to his pernicious counsels every scheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their discontent into a furious mutiny; and the civil war raged, during three days, in Rome, whilst the life of that excellent minister was defended by the grateful people. Terrified, at length, by the sight of some houses in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a sigh, and left the virtuous but unfortunate Ulpian to his fate. He was pursued into the Imperial palace, and massacred at the feet of his master, who vainly strove to cover him with the purple, and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable soldiers. 731 Such was the deplorable weakness of government, that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered friend and his insulted dignity, without stooping to the arts of patience and dissimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome, by the honorable employment of praefect of Egypt: from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when at length, his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and absence, Alexander ventured to inflict the tardy but deserved punishment of his crimes. 74 Under the reign of a just and virtuous prince, the tyranny of the army threatened with instant death his most faithful ministers, who were suspected of an intention to correct their intolerable disorders. The historian Dion Cassius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the spirit of ancient discipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cause of military license, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, instead of yielding to their seditious clamors, showed a just sense of his merit and services, by appointing him his colleague in the consulship, and defraying from his own treasury the expense of that vain dignity: but as was justly apprehended, that if the soldiers beheld him with the ensigns of his office, they would revenge the insult in his blood, the nominal first magistrate of the state retired, by the emperor's advice, from the city, and spent the greatest part of his consulship at his villas in Campania. 75 751

731 (return) [Gibbon has confounded two events altogether different— the quarrel of the people with the Praetorians, which lasted three days, and the assassination of Ulpian by the latter. Dion relates first the death of Ulpian, afterwards, reverting back according to a manner which is usual with him, he says that during the life of Ulpian, there had been a war of three days between the Praetorians and the people. But Ulpian was not the cause. Dion says, on the contrary, that it was occasioned by some unimportant circumstance; whilst he assigns a weighty reason for the murder of Ulpian, the judgment by which that Praetorian praefect had condemned his predecessors, Chrestus and Flavian, to death, whom the soldiers wished to revenge. Zosimus (l. 1, c. xi.) attributes this sentence to Mamaera;

but, even then, the troops might have imputed it to Ulpian, who had reaped all the advantage and was otherwise odious to them.—W.]

74 (return) [Though the author of the life of Alexander (Hist. August. p. 182) mentions the sedition raised against Ulpian by the soldiers, he conceals the catastrophe, as it might discover a weakness in the administration of his hero. From this designed omission, we may judge of the weight and candor of that author.]

75 (return) [For an account of Ulpian's fate and his own danger, see the mutilated conclusion of Dion's History, l. lxxx. p. 1371.]

751 (return) [Dion possessed no estates in Campania, and was not rich. He only says that the emperor advised him to reside, during his consulate, in some place out of Rome; that he returned to Rome after the end of his consulate, and had an interview with the emperor in Campania. He asked and obtained leave to pass the rest of his life in his native city, (Nice, in Bithynia:) it was there that he finished his history, which closes with his second consulship.—W.]

Chapter VI: Death Of Severus, Tyranny Of Caracalla, Usurpation Of Marcinus.—Part IV.

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the insolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the guards, and defended their prerogative of licentiousness with the same furious obstinacy. The administration of Alexander was an unavailing struggle against the corruption of his age. In llyricum, in Mauritania, in Armenia, in Mesopotamia, in Germany, fresh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was insulted, and his life at last sacrificed to the fierce discontents of the army. 76 One particular fact well deserves to be recorded, as it illustrates the manners of the troops, and exhibits a singular instance of their return to a sense of duty and obedience. Whilst the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Persian expedition, the particulars of which we shall hereafter relate, the punishment of some soldiers, who had been discovered in the baths of women, excited a sedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander ascended his tribunal, and with a modest firmness represented to the armed multitude the absolute necessity, as well as his inflexible resolution, of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predecessor, and of maintaining the discipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamors interrupted his mild expostulation. "Reserve your shout," said the undaunted emperor, "till you take the field against the Persians, the Germans, and the Sarmatians. Be silent in the presence of your sovereign and benefactor, who bestows upon you the corn, the clothing, and the money of the provinces. Be silent, or I shall no longer style you solders, but citizens, 77 if those indeed who disclaim the laws of Rome deserve to be ranked among the meanest of the people." His menaces inflamed the fury of the

legion, and their brandished arms already threatened his person. "Your courage," resumed the intrepid Alexander, "would be more nobly displayed in the field of battle; me you may destroy, you cannot intimidate; and the severe justice of the republic would punish your crime and revenge my death." The legion still persisted in clamorous sedition, when the emperor pronounced, with a cud voice, the decisive sentence, "Citizens! lay down your arms, and depart in peace to your respective habitations." The tempest was instantly appeased: the soldiers, filled with grief and shame, silently confessed the justice of their punishment, and the power of discipline, yielded up their arms and military ensigns, and retired in confusion, not to their camp, but to the several inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying spectacle of their repentance; nor did he restore them to their former rank in the army, till he had punished with death those tribunes whose connivance had occasioned the mutiny. The grateful legion served the emperor whilst living, and revenged him when dead. 78

76 (return) [Annot. Reimar. ad Dion Cassius, l. lxxx. p. 1369.]

77 (return) [Julius Caesar had appeased a sedition with the same word, Quirites; which, thus opposed to soldiers, was used in a sense of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the less honorable condition of mere citizens. Tacit. Annal. i. 43.]

78 (return) [Hist. August. p. 132.]
The resolutions of the multitude generally depend on a moment; and the caprice of passion might equally determine the seditious legion to lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to plunge them into his breast. Perhaps, if this singular transaction had been investigated by the penetration of a philosopher, we should discover the secret causes which on that occasion authorized the boldness of the prince, and commanded the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if it had been related by a judicious historian, we should find this action, worthy of Caesar himself, reduced nearer to the level of probability and the common standard of the character of Alexander Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince seem to have been inadequate to the difficulties of his situation, the firmness of his conduct inferior to the purity of his intentions. His virtues, as well as the vices of Elagabalus, contracted a tincture of weakness and effeminacy from the soft climate of Syria, of which he was a native; though he blushed at his foreign origin, and listened with a vain complacency to the flattering genealogists, who derived his race from the ancient stock of Roman nobility. 79 The pride and avarice of his mother cast a shade on the glories of his reign; an by exacting from his riper years the same dutiful obedience which she had justly claimed from his unexperienced youth, Mamaea exposed to public ridicule both her son's character and her own. 80 The fatigues of the Persian war irritated the military discontent; the unsuccessful event 801 degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and even as a soldier. Every cause prepared, and every circumstance hastened, a revolution, which distracted the Roman empire with a long series of intestine calamities.

79 (return) [From the Metelli. Hist. August. p. 119. The choice was judicious. In one short period of twelve years, the Metelli could reckon seven consulships and five triumphs. See Velleius Paterculus, ii. 11, and the Fasti.]

80 (return) [The life of Alexander, in the Augustan History, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropaedia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is rational and moderate, consistent with the general history of the age; and, in some of the most invidious particulars, confirmed by the decisive fragments of Dion. Yet from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuse Herodian, and copy the Augustan History. See Mess de Tillemont and Wotton. From the opposite prejudice, the emperor Julian (in Caesarib. p. 315) dwells with a visible satisfaction on the effeminate weakness of the Syrian, and the ridiculous avarice of his mother.]

801 (return) [Historians are divided as to the success of the campaign against the Persians; Herodian alone speaks of defeat. Lampridius, Eutropius, Victor, and others, say that it was very glorious to Alexander; that he beat Artaxerxes in a great battle, and repelled him from the frontiers of the empire. This much is certain, that Alexander, on his return to Rome, (Lamp. Hist. Aug. c. 56, 133, 134,) received the honors of a triumph, and that he said, in his oration to the people. Quirites, vicimus Persas, milites divites reduximus, vobis congiarium pollicemur, cras ludos circenses Persicos donabimus. Alexander, says Eckhel, had too much modesty and wisdom to permit himself to receive honors which ought only to be the reward of victory, if he had not deserved them; he would have contented himself with dissembling his losses. Eckhel, Doct. Num. vet. vii. 276. The medals represent him as in triumph; one, among others, displays him crowned by Victory between two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris. P. M. TR. P. xii. Cos. iii. PP. Imperator paludatus D. hastam. S. parazonium, stat inter duos fluvios humi jacentes, et ab accedente retro Victoria coronatur. Ae. max. mod. (Mus. Reg. Gall.) Although Gibbon treats this question more in detail when he speaks of the Persian monarchy, I have thought fit to place here what contradicts his opinion.—G]

The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the new maxims of policy introduced by the house of Severus, had all contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was still impressed on the minds of the Romans. The internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavored to explain with some degree of order and perspicuity. The personal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, follies, and fortunes, can interest us no farther than as they are connected with the general history of the Decline and Fall of the monarchy. Our constant attention to that great object will not suffer us to overlook a most important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind; it was the sordid result of avarice, and will naturally be illustrated by some observations on the finances of that state, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus. The siege of Veii in Tuscany, the first considerable enterprise

of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year, much less by the strength of the place than by the unskillfulness of the besiegers. The unaccustomed hardships of so many winter campaigns, at the distance of near twenty miles from home, 81 required more than common encouragements; and the senate wisely prevented the clamors of the people, by the institution of a regular pay for the soldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, assessed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens. 82 During more than two hundred years after the conquest of Veii, the victories of the republic added less to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The states of Italy paid their tribute in military service only, and the vast force, both by sea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expense of the Romans themselves. That high-spirited people (such is often the generous enthusiasm of freedom) cheerfully submitted to the most excessive but voluntary burdens, in the just confidence that they should speedily enjoy the rich harvest of their labors. Their expectations were not disappointed. In the course of a few years, the riches of Syracuse, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Asia, were brought in triumph to Rome. The treasures of Perseus alone amounted to near two millions sterling, and the Roman people, the sovereign of so many nations, was forever delivered from the weight of taxes. 83 The increasing revenue of the provinces was found sufficient to defray the ordinary establishment of war and government, and the superfluous mass of gold and silver was deposited in the temple of Saturn, and reserved for any unforeseen emergency of the state. 84

81 (return) [According to the more accurate Dionysius, the city itself was only a hundred stadia, or twelve miles and a half, from Rome, though some out-posts might be advanced farther on the side of Etruria. Nardini, in a professed treatise, has combated the popular opinion and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Civita Castellana, to a little spot called Isola, in the midway between Rome and the Lake Bracianno. * Note: See the interesting account of the site and ruins of Veii in Sir W Gell's topography of Rome and its Vicinity. v. ii. p. 303.—M.]

82 (return) [See the 4th and 5th books of Livy. In the Roman census, property, power, and taxation were commensurate with each other.]

83 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. Cicero de Offic. ii. 22. Plutarch, P. Aemil. p. 275.]

84 (return) [See a fine description of this accumulated wealth of ages in Phars. l. iii. v. 155, &c.]
History has never, perhaps, suffered a greater or more irreparable injury than in the loss of the curious register 841 bequeathed by Augustus to the senate, in which that experienced prince so accurately balanced the revenues and expenses of the Roman empire. 85 Deprived of this clear and comprehensive estimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from such of the ancients as have accidentally turned aside from the splendid to the more useful parts of history. We are informed that, by the conquests of Pompey, the tributes of Asia were raised from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms; or about four millions and a half sterling. 86 861

Under the last and most indolent of the Ptolemies, the revenue of Egypt is said to have amounted to twelve thousand five hundred talents; a sum equivalent to more than two millions and a half of our money, but which was afterwards considerably improved by the more exact economy of the Romans, and the increase of the trade of Aethiopia and India. 87 Gaul was enriched by rapine, as Egypt was by commerce, and the tributes of those two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to each other in value. 88 The ten thousand Euboic or Phoenician talents, about four millions sterling, 89 which vanquished Carthage was condemned to pay within the term of fifty years, were a slight acknowledgment of the superiority of Rome, 90 and cannot bear the least proportion with the taxes afterwards raised both on the lands and on the persons of the inhabitants, when the fertile coast of Africa was reduced into a province. 91

841 (return) [See Rationarium imperii. Compare besides Tacitus, Suet. Aug. c. ult. Dion, p. 832. Other emperors kept and published similar registers. See a dissertation of Dr. Wolle, de Rationario imperii Rom. Leipsig, 1773. The last book of Appian also contained the statistics of the Roman empire, but it is lost.—W.]

85 (return) [Tacit. in Annal. i. ll. It seems to have existed in the time of Appian.]

86 (return) [Plutarch, in Pompeio, p. 642.]

861 (return) [Wenck contests the accuracy of Gibbon's version of Plutarch, and supposes that Pompey only raised the revenue from 50,000,000 to 85,000,000 of drachms; but the text of Plutarch seems clearly to mean that his conquests added 85,000,000 to the ordinary revenue. Wenck adds, "Plutarch says in another part, that Antony made Asia pay, at one time, 200,000 talents, that is to say, 38,875,000 L. sterling." But Appian explains this by saying that it was the revenue of ten years, which brings the annual revenue, at the time of Antony, to 3,875,000 L. sterling.—M.]

87 (return) [Strabo, l. xvii. p. 798.]

88 (return) [Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 39. He seems to give the preference to the revenue of Gaul.]

89 (return) [The Euboic, the Phoenician, and the Alexandrian talents were double in weight to the Attic. See Hooper on ancient weights and measures, p. iv. c. 5. It is very probable that the same talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage.]

90 (return) [Polyb. l. xv. c. 2.]

91 (return) [Appian in Punicis, p. 84.]
Spain, by a very singular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The discovery of the rich western continent by the Phoenicians, and the oppression of the simple natives, who were compelled to labor in their own mines for the benefit

of strangers, form an exact type of the more recent history of Spanish America. 92 The Phoenicians were acquainted only with the sea-coast of Spain; avarice, as well as ambition, carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almost every part of the soil was found pregnant with copper, silver, and gold. 921 Mention is made of a mine near Carthagena which yielded every day twenty-five thousand drachmns of silver, or about three hundred thousand pounds a year. 93 Twenty thousand pound weight of gold was annually received from the provinces of Asturia, Gallicia, and Lusitania. 94

92 (return) [Diodorus Siculus, l. 5. Oadiz was built by the Phoenicians a little more than a thousand years before Christ. See Vell. Pa ter. i.2.]

921 (return) [Compare Heeren's Researches vol. i. part ii. p.]

93 (return) [Strabo, l. iii. p. 148.]

94 (return) [Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. He mentions likewise a silver mine in Dalmatia, that yielded every day fifty pounds to the state.] We want both leisure and materials to pursue this curious inquiry through the many potent states that were annihilated in the Roman empire. Some notion, however, may be formed of the revenue of the provinces where considerable wealth had been deposited by nature, or collected by man, if we observe the severe attention that was directed to the abodes of solitude and sterility. Augustus once received a petition from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one third of their excessive impositions. Their whole tax amounted indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty drachms, or about five pounds: but Gyarus was a little island, or rather a rock, of the Aegean Sea, destitute of fresh water and every necessary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fishermen. 95

95 (return) [Strabo, l. x. p. 485. Tacit. Annal. iu. 69, and iv. 30. See Tournefort (Voyages au Levant, Lettre viii.) a very lively picture of the actual misery of Gyarus.] From the faint glimmerings of such doubtful and scattered lights, we should be inclined to believe, 1st, That (with every fair allowance for the differences of times and circumstances) the general income of the Roman provinces could seldom amount to less than fifteen or twenty millions of our money; 96 and, 2dly, That so ample a revenue must have been fully adequate to all the expenses of the moderate government instituted by Augustus, whose court was the modest family of a private senator, and whose military establishment was calculated for the defence of the frontiers, without any aspiring views of conquest, or any serious apprehension of a foreign invasion.

96 (return) [Lipsius de magnitudine Romana (l. ii. c. 3) computes the revenue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated imagination. Note: If Justus Lipsius has exaggerated the revenue of the Roman empire Gibbon, on the other hand, has underrated it. He fixes it at fifteen or twenty millions of our money. But if we take

only, on a moderate calculation, the taxes in the provinces which he has already cited, they will amount, considering the augmentations made by Augustus, to nearly that sum. There remain also the provinces of Italy, of Rhaetia, of Noricum, Pannonia, and Greece, &c., &c. Let us pay attention, besides, to the prodigious expenditure of some emperors, (Suet. Vesp. 16;) we shall see that such a revenue could not be sufficient. The authors of the Universal History, part xii., assign forty millions sterling as the sum to about which the public revenue might amount.—G. from W.] Notwithstanding the seeming probability of both these conclusions, the latter of them at least is positively disowned by the language and conduct of Augustus. It is not easy to determine whether, on this occasion, he acted as the common father of the Roman world, or as the oppressor of liberty; whether he wished to relieve the provinces, or to impoverish the senate and the equestrian order. But no sooner had he assumed the reins of government, than he frequently intimated the insufficiency of the tributes, and the necessity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burden upon Rome and Italy. 961 In the prosecution of this unpopular design, he advanced, however, by cautious and well-weighed steps. The introduction of customs was followed by the establishment of an excise, and the scheme of taxation was completed by an artful assessment on the real and personal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half.

961 (return) [It is not astonishing that Augustus held this language. The senate declared also under Nero, that the state could not exist without the imposts as well augmented as founded by Augustus. Tac. Ann. xiii. 50. After the abolition of the different tributes paid by Italy, an abolition which took place A. U. 646, 694, and 695, the state derived no revenues from that great country, but the twentieth part of the manumissions, (vicesima manumissionum,) and Ciero laments this in many places, particularly in his epistles to ii. 15.—G. from W.]

I. In a great empire like that of Rome, a natural balance of money must have gradually established itself. It has been already observed, that as the wealth of the provinces was attracted to the capital by the strong hand of conquest and power, so a considerable part of it was restored to the industrious provinces by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Augustus and his successors, duties were imposed on every kind of merchandise, which through a thousand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatsoever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax. 97 The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to suppose that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy; that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on those of necessity, and that the productions raised or manufactured by the labor of the subjects of the empire were treated with more indulgence than was shown to the pernicious, or at least the unpopular commerce of Arabia and India.