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EAST AND WEST THROUGH
FIFTEEN CENTURIES



AUGUSTUS CAESAR.

Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.

Found in the Villa of Prima, near Rome. The head is a portrait-bust, carved from a separate piece of marble, inserted into the body of the statue. The Cupid by the right leg is to signify Augustus' adoption into the Julian family, which traced their legendary descent from Venus.

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EAST AND WEST THROUGH FIFTEEN CENTURIES

Hist. Gen
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BEING
A GENERAL HISTORY FROM B.C. 44
TO A.D. 1453

By
BR-GENL. G. F. YOUNG, C.B
AUTHOR OF "THE MEDICI"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. I

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“Consider History, with the beginnings of it stretching dimly into the remote time; emerging darkly out of the mysterious eternity; the true epic poem, and the universal divine scripture.”

CARLYLE

1
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1/62



PREFACE

THIS history relates the course of events during the fifteen centuries from B.C. 44 to A.D. 1453 in that large part of the world extending from Ireland on the west to Persia on the east.¹ It includes the birth and growth to maturity of the Roman Empire ; the decline and fall of its western half ; the destruction throughout the west of the civilization which that empire had attained ; the gradual growth of the western nations ; the meteor-like spread of the Mahomedan power ; the centuries of transition (called the Middle Ages) ; the rise of new nations, such as the Normans and the Slavs ; the glorious deeds and slow decay of the eastern half of the Roman Empire during a thousand years after the destruction of its western half ; the great struggle in the west carried on by the German emperors for more than two centuries against an ecclesiastical tyranny ; and lastly the beginning of the rebirth of Roman civilization when at length the various nations which had divided the western portion of Rome's empire between them became able to appreciate the principles which had animated it ; the final episode being the passing away of the last remnant of the old Roman Empire.

In relating the history of these fifteen centuries—a subject whose very magnitude in itself lends it grandeur—my aim throughout has been to do so in such a way as to meet the needs of those who have not much time at their disposal. Few in these days have leisure to study the many voluminous tomes which it is necessary to read in order to obtain a knowledge of wide tracts of history. On the other hand there are very many who are fond of the subject, are mindful of the

¹ In the title " East and West " it must be remembered that in these fifteen centuries the word " west " had a different signification from that which it would now bear, Ireland being then the westernmost limit of the known world, America not being discovered until 1492.

great French writer's words, "History is a perpetual recommencement, hence to foresee the future study the past," and are filled with a desire, if only time permitted, to know something about the remarkable men and women who have taken prominent part in the world's events, about the origin of great movements whose effects are still at work, and about momentous episodes which have left a lasting memorial in the mind of Europe.

And although in a comparatively short history general features rather than details must necessarily be chiefly attempted, yet one compensating advantage is gained which is a very real one. For in such a history a general perspective is obtained, which is not possible when the events in the various countries of Western Europe, those in what was once the eastern half of the Roman Empire, and those in England,¹ have all to be studied in different books.

It is difficult to give the history of so long a period in a condensed way without making it dull and uninteresting. I have endeavoured to avoid this result (at the risk of a charge of unevenness) by going from time to time into detail regarding particular episodes; while these occasional glimpses into the circumstances and life of the time enable the reader to picture the same in the case of other episodes which of necessity have been more briefly narrated.

In one main point this history differs from others. It has invariably been the custom to make a division between what is called secular history and what is called Church history, separate books being written on each of these supposedly different kinds of history. In my opinion there could be no greater mistake. It creates an arbitrary division which does not exist in actual life, where the political events and those in the sphere of religion take place concurrently. Moreover religion has been at the root of three-fourths of the most important events recorded in secular history, while similarly the

¹ It is of the utmost importance that England should be included, for otherwise this perspective is entirely lost, as so generally happens. For instance, how seldom is it realized that the great Mahomedan "whirlwind of conquest" was all over before England became one kingdom in the time of Egbert. But it is sufficient if the portion of the history relating to England is only given in outline.

political events of the time have constantly been a large factor in bringing about the results which "Church history" records.¹ The two in fact interpenetrate, and to separate them not only deprives them of much of their living interest, but also, by the tendency it creates to magnify each at the expense of the other, produces a distorted picture. In this book both these subjects are included, the battles, the laws, the administrative measures, and the achievements in architecture, together with the contests of the Church, the Church Councils, and the deeds of prominent Churchmen, all forming parts of one whole, the history of the time. This both helps to produce a more complete picture, and also on various occasions causes light to be thrown upon one or other of the two subjects which is wanting when they are treated in separate books by different writers.

During the first 350 years, however, up to the time when the Christian religion became universally adopted, it is necessary to make a separation between the Pagan, or political, history and the Christian history. To watch this strange power-within-a-power gradually growing in the midst of conditions wholly unfavourable to its growth, and to realize the contrast between the ideals and manner of life of those on the one side and those on the other, it is necessary to see the two side by side. Therefore in the first twelve chapters they are treated separately, in each emperor's reign the political matters being first related and then the matters concerning religion. But from the point where the two subjects blend, owing to Christianity becoming the professed religion of the Roman Empire, this arrangement ceases, and thenceforward events, whether political or religious, are recorded in their ordinary chronological sequence.

Another main point on which this history differs from others has regard to the period which is to be held as the zenith of the Roman Empire. One whose name justly stands above all others as a historian has considered the zenith of

¹ J. R. Green has said:—"The study of what the Monophysites did in Syria, and the Monothelites in Egypt, has taught me—what few historians know—the intimate part religion plays in a nation's history, and how closely it joins itself to a people's life" (Green's *Short History of the English People*, Introduction, p. xii.).

the Roman Empire to be the period of the Antonine emperors (Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius), and that its decline began from the close of that period in A.D. 180; ¹ his dictum has been followed by all subsequent historians, and is that to which long usage has accustomed us. The temerity of differing from such an authority on such a point is great; but this history ventures to place the zenith of that empire in the period from Constantine the Great to Theodosius the Great, and to date the beginning of its decline from the close of that period in A.D. 395. Only when viewed from the standpoint of a strong bias against Christianity, such as Gibbon possessed, a bias sufficiently powerful to make him feel that the mere fact of the empire being Pagan in the time of the Antonine emperors rendered it superior to the same empire become Christian, could the zenith of that empire be held to be in the time of the Antonine emperors and its decline to begin from A.D. 180. So far from this being the case the condition of the Roman Empire during the period covered by the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius (roughly the 2nd century) was far surpassed, and in every respect, by its condition during the period covered by the reigns of Constantine, Constantius, Valentinian, Gratian, and Theodosius (roughly the 4th century). Any unprejudiced examination will show that it was in the 4th century that the empire attained its zenith, and not in the 2nd century. ² Part of the 3rd century was a time of misrule and disaster, but this had been more than retrieved even before the time of the Christian emperors began. They in the period from Constantine to Theodosius carried the empire to a higher point than it had ever before attained, and its decline must be dated from the close of that period in A.D. 395, and not from A.D. 180.

A third point on which this history differs occasionally from others is in regard to military affairs. These appear to me to have been sometimes misunderstood by the writers of our histories; and as military affairs often enter largely into the events of the time any such misunderstanding leads to erroneous conclusions.

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Preface and Chap. III, p. 216 (Edition 1862).

² See Chap. XVI, pp. 573-587.

Other points upon which this history either takes a different view from that usually held, or brings to notice facts seldom recognized, are :—the falsehood of the picture hitherto generally drawn of the emperor Tiberius ; the many points of interest attaching to the ruins of the palace of Caligula in Rome ; the mistake which appears to have occurred as regards the date of the letters of Ignatius ; the estimate to be formed of the emperor Marcus Aurelius ; the phenomenon presented by the general acceptance of Christianity in the time of Constantine ; the genius displayed by Constantine in his battles ; the fact that the effect of the changes made by him in the military organization was exactly the contrary to what Gibbon and other historians have declared it to be ; the superiority of Constantine's character and deeds to the estimate hitherto formed of them ; the error which has styled the retreat of the Roman army from Persia in 363 a great disaster instead of a glorious feat of arms ; the manner in which the character and deeds of the emperor Gratian have been obscured ; the different view from the one usually held as to the reason why the western half of the Roman Empire fell before the northern races, and as to the lesson taught thereby ; the tracing out of the course of Alaric's first campaign in Italy ; the injustice done to Theodoric the Great in the matters which occupied the last three years of his life ; the opinion that Gregory the Great cannot be considered the founder of the Medieval Papacy (as he is generally held to be), but that he deserves honour in quite another direction ; the opinions contrary to those which have usually been held regarding the character and deeds of the emperor Heraclius, regarding the earlier victories of the Mahomedans over the Roman forces, and regarding the character and deeds of the emperor Constans II ; and lastly the new view here put forward against the time-honoured theory that upon the conquest of North Africa by the Mahomedans the Christian population accepted the Mohammedan religion.

Cicero in immortal words has said :—“ Not to know the events which happened before you were born, that is to remain always a child.”¹ Nevertheless History has come to be generally regarded as a dry subject. The reason why it is

¹ “ Nescire autem quid antea quam natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse puer.”

looked upon with so much distaste, especially by the young, is because it is taught them by means of books in which everything has been carefully cut down to the barest facts, and all human interest eradicated as superfluous; thus studiously eliminating the very thing which it is most necessary to retain. For history cannot be learnt with either any pleasure, or any profit, unless a distinct picture of the personality of the men and women spoken of can be formed in the mind, and a human interest in them be felt. It is better to omit even fairly important matters rather than to lose this essential quality in any book which attempts to teach history. I have therefore endeavoured regarding all the principal men and women mentioned to give sufficient details to enable the reader to attach a distinct personality to the individual concerned, and have tried to make those men and women live before the mind's eye, instead of being mere names. For I am convinced that in this way only will what is learnt be retained.

Another point which is also, I think, very essential for giving a clear grasp of History is that the writer should carefully maintain the chronological sequence of events. One is often tempted to treat together in a separate chapter a group of matters all referring to the same general subject,¹ and to disregard the chronological sequence; it gives a more scholarly and orderly appearance to a book. Not only, however, is it most confusing to the reader to be thus carried backwards and forwards in regard to time, but also, what is worse, it prevents his obtaining a view of the events in the manner they occurred. He should be enabled to look at the history of the events more or less as though he were living in the time of which he reads; and this is rendered altogether impossible if in one chapter he reads of a man's death and in the next comes across him as still living, chronology having been ignored in order to group a certain set of matters together. The chronological sequence must therefore be paramount over all other considerations.²

¹ E.g. The Crusades, special branches of civil administration, movements in regard to art, literature, science, or philosophy, social matters, etc.

² At the same time, to counterbalance this, the Index has been so arranged that a particular group of matters can always be studied separately when desired.

Although in relating history it is obviously necessary to divide the subject into certain definite periods of time, yet in reading it the continuity of all history requires to be borne in mind, it being remembered that in no case was there a sudden and violent change, but that the conditions of one period gradually merged into those of that succeeding it, the process often taking a considerable time.

A certain difficulty occurs upon a question of names. In order to understand properly the fifteen centuries of which this book treats it is important to realize that the Roman Empire (the history of which necessarily occupies a large part of it) continued without a break from Augustus Caesar to Constantine Palaeologus, in other words from B.C. 28 to A.D. 1453. Hence it is desirable not to obscure that continuity by changes of name, except where unavoidable. From the year 406 onward for seventy years that empire was continuously losing more and more of its western provinces, until in 476 the last province of the western half of the empire was lost. As, therefore, after the latter date one cannot continue to speak of an eastern half of the empire, and as this change must be marked, some new name becomes necessary. The name which least obscures the fact of the continuity mentioned is that of *Later Roman Empire*; and this name I have therefore used from 476 to 1453.

I have thus not made any change in consequence of the event which occurred in the year 800, when a rival empire arose in the West, which though it was essentially a Teutonic empire claimed to be the lawful successor to the heritage of ancient Rome, and adopted the name Roman. Nor can that claim be entirely ignored. For however much it may appear to us a shadow and a fiction it was not so to the Middle Ages, the German emperors gaining their whole importance in the eyes of the men of those days as being the lawful successors of Augustus. To meet the difficulty thus created Professor Bury, to whom we chiefly owe it that much of the former misconception on the subject of the *Later Roman Empire* has been cleared away, uses that name up to the year 800, and after that date adopts the name *Eastern Roman Empire*, in contradistinction to the Western (Roman) Empire founded by the coronation of Charles the Great in 800. But it seems to me that

this second change of name is fatal to the principle which we have been taught by Professor Bury himself ; one change is bad enough, though that is unavoidable, but when it is followed by a second, this latter inevitably prevents the reader from being able at all times to realize that he is still reading of the same empire as at the first.¹ I have therefore ventured to carry Professor Bury's own principle still further, by adhering to the name *Later Roman Empire* throughout the ten centuries after 476, and calling the empire founded in the West in 800 the *Germanic Roman Empire*,² in order by avoiding the terms eastern and western to retain for the original Roman Empire the same name throughout these ten centuries.

In connection with names another point requires mention. In the 4th century the organization of the Church was completed by grouping the whole of Christendom into five great subdivisions, called patriarchates, and named after the leading see in each, viz. Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople ; the title thereupon given to the holders of each of these five sees being, in Greek "Patriarch," in Latin "Papa," and in English "Pope." Now whereas it is entirely immaterial which form of the title is used, it is highly essential that the same form be used for all ; as unlimited confusion and misconception are created if, e.g., we speak of a "Pope" of Rome and a "Patriarch" of Constantinople, using the English word in one case and the Greek word in the other, and at once obscuring the fact that the office is the same in both cases. The same word must be used in the case of all the five patriarchal sees ; if we elect to speak of a "Patriarch" of Alexandria, then we must speak of a "Patriarch" of Rome ; and if we speak of a "Pope" of Rome, then we must speak of a "Pope" of Antioch. I have thought it best in an English book to use the English form of this title, rather than the Greek or Latin form, and therefore have throughout used the form "Pope" in all cases.³ That this is strictly correct is shown by

¹ In fact after having used through four centuries the word "Later" the only subsequent name which could be used without having the effect noted would be "Latest."

² A name used for it by Bishop Stubbs.

³ Just as the writer of a Greek work would use the word "Patriarch" in all cases.

the letters of Pope Gregory the Great, who uses this form of the title when writing to Eulogius, Pope of Alexandria, and reminding him that all the five Popes are of equal rank.

A difficulty also occurs with regard to the emperor Gratian. A writer whose special desire it is to hold the scales with absolute evenness on all occasions in relating history, and rigidly (it may even at times appear harshly) to refuse to treat Christians and Pagans differently, finds himself placed in the invidious position of having to appear in this case like a Christian apologist, owing to the attitude which has been adopted by Gibbon in regard to the emperor Gratian. The historian Guizot long ago remarked that Gibbon seemed to hate Christianity as though it were a personal enemy ; and nowhere is this feature more apparent than in the way he has dealt with Gratian. But loyalty to History compels equal treatment of all, of Christians no less than of Pagans ; and just as one must be fair to the emperor Julian, unjustly stigmatized as " the Apostate," and in the quarrel between the renowned St. John Chrysostom and the empress Eudoxia must refuse to consider that all the right was on the side of the former, so in the same way one must be fair to the emperor Gratian, unfairly misrepresented by Gibbon in order to damage the cause of Christianity.

The general arrangement of the book is intended to accord with the history. At first for a long period the Roman Empire occupies the whole ground ; then the western nations begin to receive a little of the space, the empire still occupying by far the greater part ; then by degrees the empire slowly fades away, the affairs of the western nations occupying more and more of the space and the empire being scarcely seen ; until at last the affairs of the western nations occupy almost the whole ground.

It may be thought that there is not much that is new to be said regarding the period from Augustus to Domitian (the 1st century), and that this period might have been excluded. But the empire's gradual growth to maturity would not be properly shown if the period of its birth were omitted. And this is still more so as regards the gradual growth of Christianity, for which the 1st century was a period of great importance, and one in which it is specially valuable to have the

contemporary events, secular and religious, simultaneously recorded ; while at no period do the two subjects throw light upon each other to so marked a degree as in the 1st century.¹

I have endeavoured throughout to be sparing of comments. It is better, as a rule, that the reader should be left free to draw his own conclusions. Theories about the events of history, though often interesting, can in nine cases out of ten be met by an opposite theory tenable on no less strong grounds, and it is more advantageous to the reader to think out such theories for himself than have his individuality fettered by the opinion of the writer.

I have as far as possible avoided enlarging to a disproportionate degree upon military events, and have only gone into detail regarding them in cases where they appear to have been generally misunderstood, or where it is material to a proper understanding of subsequent events that such details should be clearly apprehended. I have also avoided long accounts of civil and financial administration, as these appear to be matters rather for the student than for the general reader. Traversing so wide a field I cannot expect to have avoided many errors, but I can safely say that every endeavour has been used to make these as few as possible, and that all mistakes which may be pointed out by reviewers will be corrected should there be any future opportunity of doing so.

Portraits of the Roman emperors and empresses have been inserted, because this assists towards forming that picture of the personality of the men and women referred to which I have mentioned as being so necessary. But after the 4th century no more such portraits are available for more than a thousand years. I have not attempted to make up for this by inserting representations of coins, as art was not capable during this period of producing any likeness of this kind which was other than a caricature of the person's appearance.

The present two volumes cover the history of 800 years up to, in the East the death of the emperor Leo the Iconoclast

¹ Moreover a very large amount of additional information regarding the period in question has come to light during the last twenty years through the researches of Harnack, Zahn, Hort, Lightfoot, Ramsay, De Rossi, Lanciani, Dill and other learned writers.

in 740, and in the West the death of Charles Martel in the same year. It is hoped to complete the history of the remaining 700 years in Vols. III and IV.

I desire in particular to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Hodgkin's *Italy and her Invaders* as regards the history of the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries in the West, and to Professor Bury's *History of the Later Roman Empire* as regards the same period in the East. Also to Mr. Spencer Jerome's learned exposition of the methods of Tacitus in the *Annals* regarding the emperor Tiberius, to Professor Oman's *Byzantine Empire*, and to Professor Haverfield's *Romanization of Britain*. My thanks are also due to Mr. A. J. Cripps for reading many of my manuscript chapters and making valuable criticisms, and to Mr. W. Ashburner for much kind help and for placing at my disposal his library of classical works.

G. F. Y.

FLORENCE,
1st June, 1914

SUBDIVISION OF VOLS. I AND II

	PART.	PERIOD.	DATES.
VOL. I.	Part I (Chaps. I-VII)	Augustus to Marcus Aurelius	{ From B.C. 44 to A.D. 180
	Part II (Chaps. VIII-XII)	Commodus to Constantine .	A.D. 180-314
	Part III (Chaps. XIII-XVI)	Zenith of the Roman Empire	A.D. 314-395
VOL. II.	Part IV (Chaps. XVII-XIX)	{ Destruction of the western half of the Roman Empire }	A.D. 395-476
	Part V (Chaps. XX-XXIII)	{ The age of Theodoric the Great, the Emperor Justinian, Chosroes I, and Gregory the Great, and the affairs of the western nations in the sixth century. }	A.D. 476-604
	Part VI (Chaps. XXIV-XXVI)	{ The overthrow of Persia, the struggle against the Mahomedans, and the affairs of the western nations in the seventh century. }	A.D. 604-740

CONTENTS OF VOL. I

PART I.

AUGUSTUS TO MARCUS AURELIUS.

CHAPTER	DATE	PAGE
I. AUGUSTUS	{ B.C. 44 to } { A.D. 14 }	5
II. TIBERIUS	14- 37	44
III. CALIGULA AND CLAUDIUS	37- 54	86
IV. NERO, GALBA, OTHO, AND VITELLIUS	54- 69	125
V. VESPASIAN, TITUS, DOMITIAN, AND NERVA	69- 98	178
VI. TRAJAN AND HADRIAN	98-138	209
VII. ANTONINUS PIUS AND MARCUS AURELIUS	138-180	238

PART II.

COMMODUS TO CONSTANTINE.

VIII. COMMODUS, PERTINAX, AND SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS	180-211	275
IX. { CARACALLA, MACRINUS, HELIOGABALUS, } { ALEXANDER SEVERUS, MAXIMIN, GORDIAN I, GORDIAN II, GORDIAN III, AND } { PHILIP THE ARABIAN }	} 211-249	} 301
X. { DECIUS, GALLUS, ÆMILIANUS, VALERIAN, } { GALLIENUS, CLAUDIUS II, AURELIAN, } { TACITUS, PROBUS, CARUS, CARINUS, AND } { NUMERIAN. }	} 249-285	} 316

CONTENTS

xix

CHAPTER	DATE A.D.	PAGE																											
XI. DIOCLETIAN	285-305 . . .	345																											
XII. {	<table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: top; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">CONSTANTIUS</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">GALERIUS</td> <td rowspan="2" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-left: 10px;">305-307</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SEVERUS</td> <td>MAXIMIN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">MAXIMIAN</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">GALERIUS</td> <td rowspan="2" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-left: 10px;">307-310</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CONSTANTINE</td> <td>LICINIUS</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">MAXENTIUS</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">MAXIMIN</td> <td rowspan="2" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-left: 10px;">310-312</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CONSTANTINE</td> <td>LICINIUS</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">MAXENTIUS</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">MAXIMIN</td> <td rowspan="2" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-left: 10px;">312-314</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CONSTANTINE AND LICINIUS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	CONSTANTIUS	GALERIUS	}	305-307	SEVERUS	MAXIMIN	MAXIMIAN	GALERIUS	}	307-310	CONSTANTINE	LICINIUS	MAXENTIUS	MAXIMIN	}	310-312	CONSTANTINE	LICINIUS	MAXENTIUS	MAXIMIN	}	312-314	CONSTANTINE AND LICINIUS		<table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: top; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: 4em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">305-314 . . .</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">368</td> </tr> </table>	}	305-314 . . .	368
CONSTANTIUS	GALERIUS	}	305-307																										
SEVERUS	MAXIMIN																												
MAXIMIAN	GALERIUS	}	307-310																										
CONSTANTINE	LICINIUS																												
MAXENTIUS	MAXIMIN	}	310-312																										
CONSTANTINE	LICINIUS																												
MAXENTIUS	MAXIMIN	}	312-314																										
CONSTANTINE AND LICINIUS																													
}	305-314 . . .	368																											

PART III.

ZENITH OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

XIII. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT	314-337 . . .	393				
XIV. {	<table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: top; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">CONSTANTINE II, CONSTANTIUS,</td> <td rowspan="2" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-left: 10px;">337-364 . . .</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CONSTANS, JULIAN, AND JOVIAN</td> </tr> </table>	CONSTANTINE II, CONSTANTIUS,	}	337-364 . . .	CONSTANS, JULIAN, AND JOVIAN	450
CONSTANTINE II, CONSTANTIUS,	}	337-364 . . .				
CONSTANS, JULIAN, AND JOVIAN						
XV. VALENTINIAN I, AND GRATIAN	364-383 . . .	493				
XVI. THEODOSIUS THE GREAT	383-395 . . .	556				

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. I.

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
I. AUGUSTUS CAESAR Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
II. THE PANTHEON	10
III. RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF AUGUSTUS, ROME	16
IV. JULIA, DAUGHTER OF AUGUSTUS Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	22
V. LIVIA, WIFE OF AUGUSTUS Engraved upon a sardonyx in the Hague museum.	28
VI. DRUSUS, YOUNGER SON OF LIVIA Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	34
VII. ANTONIA, WIFE OF DRUSUS Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	34
VIII. LIVIA, WIFE OF AUGUSTUS Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	35
IX. TIBERIUS, ELDER SON OF LIVIA, AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN Portrait-bust in the Lateran museum, Rome.	48
X. POMPONIA VIPSANIA, WIFE OF TIBERIUS ; IN THE DRESS OF A PRIESTESS OF ISIS Statue in the Naples museum.	49
XI. TIBERIUS Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	48
XII. DRUSUS, SON OF TIBERIUS Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	66
XIII. AGRIPPINA THE ELDER, GRAND-DAUGHTER OF AUGUSTUS Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	66
XIV. CALIGULA, SON OF GERMANICUS AND AGRIPPINA Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	90

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS xxi

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
XV. CRYPTOPORTICUS IN THE PALACE OF THE CAESARS .	91
XVI. CLAUDIUS, NEPHEW OF TIBERIUS, AND GRANDSON OF LIVIA	90
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XVII. DOMITIA LEPIDA, GRANDDAUGHTER OF OCTAVIA, THE SISTER OF AUGUSTUS	102
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XVIII. VALERIA MESSALINA, WIFE OF CLAUDIUS, AND GREAT-GRAND-DAUGHTER OF AUGUSTUS' SISTER OCTAVIA .	103
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XIX. AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER, DAUGHTER OF AGRIPPINA THE ELDER, AND MOTHER OF NERO	114
Statue in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XX. BRITANNICUS, SON OF CLAUDIUS AND VALERIA MESSALINA	128
Statue in the Lateran museum, Rome.	
XXI. POPPAEA SABINA, SECOND WIFE OF NERO	129
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XXII. NERO	136
Portrait-bust (in basalt) in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XXIII. PORTION OF THE UPPER PART OF THE NORTH-WESTERN CORNER OF THE PALACE OF CALIGULA	140
XXIV. A SECTION OF THE LOWER PART OF THE PALACE OF CALIGULA	141
XXV. GALBA	172
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XXVI. OTHO	172
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XXVII. VESPASIAN	180
Statue in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XXVIII. TITUS, ELDER SON OF VESPASIAN	180
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XXIX. JULIA, DAUGHTER OF TITUS	186
Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XXX. DOMITIAN, YOUNGER SON OF VESPASIAN	192
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XXXI. DOMITIA LONGINA, WIFE OF DOMITIAN	192
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
XXXII. NERVA	202
Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XXXIII. TRAJAN	210
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XXXIV. PLOTINA, WIFE OF TRAJAN	211
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XXXV. MARCIANA, SISTER OF TRAJAN	211
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XXXVI. HADRIAN	228
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XXXVII. SABINA, WIFE OF HADRIAN	228
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XXXVIII. ANTONINUS PIUS	240
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XXXIX. FAUSTINA THE ELDER, WIFE OF ANTONINUS PIUS	240
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XL. MARCUS AURELIUS.	248
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XLI. FAUSTINA THE YOUNGER, WIFE OF MARCUS AURELIUS	248
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	
XLII. BRONZE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF MARCUS AURELIUS, ROME	256
XLIII. COMMODUS	276
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	
XLIV. CRISPINA, WIFE OF COMMODUS	277
Portrait-bust in the British Museum, London.	
XLV. SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS	276
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XLVI. JULIA DOMNA, WIFE OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS	282
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XLVII. CARACALLA	302
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XLVIII. ALEXANDER SEVERUS	308
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.	
XLIX. JULIA MAMMÆA, MOTHER OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS	308
Portrait-bust in the British Museum, London.	
L. GORDIAN I	312
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS xxiii

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
LI. GORDIAN III Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	312
LII. PHILIP THE ARABIAN Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	302
LIII. DIOCLETIAN Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	346
LIV. ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, ROME	376
LV. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.	394
LVI. JULIAN Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.	478
LVII. RUINS OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE AT TRÈVES	496
LVIII. THE PORTA NIGRA AT TRÈVES	497

AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

VOLS. I AND II.

- AMMIANUS . . . *Res Gestae*, by Ammianus Marcellinus.
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APPENDICES—VOL. I

- I. GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE CAESARS.
- II. NOTE ON THE HERODS.
- III. THE METHOD ADOPTED BY TACITUS IN HIS *Annals* IN REGARD TO THE EMPEROR TIBERIUS ; AS UNMASKED BY MR. T. SPENCER JEROME.
- IV. LIST OF INCURSIONS OF BARBARIAN TRIBES DURING THE 250 YEARS FROM DOMITIAN TO CONSTANTINE.
- V. FOREIGN WARS CONDUCTED BY THE ROMANS DURING THE 240 YEARS FROM TRAJAN TO CONSTANTINE.
- VI. DECISIONS OF THE FIRST GENERAL COUNCIL.
- VII. PLAN OF CONSTANTINOPLE.
- VIII. GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE FAMILY OF CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS.
- IX. DISTANCES BY THE MAIN ROAD FROM THE WEST TO THE EAST (FROM TRÈVES IN GAUL TO CIRCESIUM IN MESOPOTAMIA).
- X. COUNTRIES TO WHICH THE MOST IMPORTANT EMPERORS FROM TRAJAN TO THEODOSIUS BELONGED.

PART I

Augustus to Marcus Aurelius

(B.C. 44 to A.D. 180)

INTRODUCTION

HOW to traverse the long story of fifteen centuries ! The subject seems so vast, the episodes so innumerable, the great moving drama so much too big for any stage. But though all this is true, yet if we have the patience to do so, and just enough imagination to be able to picture to ourselves the scene, the characters, and the thoughts which must have been in the minds of those who performed the actions so baldly related by history, we shall find that the story is more interesting than any novel, just because it is the account of what real live men and women did, and thought, and suffered.

As a beginning, then, of this long drama of human action it will be well to look first at the great theatre in which it was performed. And this we can best do by taking a general view of the Roman Empire in the middle of the reign of Augustus.

The dominions hitherto ruled by the Roman Republic had at the time of the accession of Augustus as emperor practically absorbed the whole known world, the last three conquests being that of Syria on the east by Pompey in B.C. 62, that of Gaul on the west by Julius Caesar in B.C. 58-50, and that of Egypt on the south by Augustus himself in B.C. 30, two years before he became the first emperor. Rome as the result of seven centuries of conquest, in which she had begun by subduing neighbouring villages and ended by absorbing entire kingdoms, had made herself the mistress of at least a hundred different races, including nations of the highest civilization, such as those of Greece¹ and Egypt, and tribes the most barbarous, such as those inhabiting Gaul and Spain.

The frontiers of this empire were :—West, the Atlantic Ocean and the British Channel (Britain being afterwards added to the empire) ; South, the African desert ; East, the Euphrates (Mesopotamia and Arabia being afterwards added) ; and North, the Rhine and the Danube, Dacia, beyond the Danube, being afterwards included.

¹ Conquered in B.C. 146.

Throughout this wide area there had been for many generations almost incessant war. It is recorded that the Temple of Janus in Rome (the doors of which stood open when Rome was at war and closed when she was at peace) was closed on the accession of Augustus, and that this was only the third time it had been so in 500 years. To secure the repose which a distracted world required after being torn by perpetual warfare, four things were chiefly required :—viz., strong frontiers firmly held by a powerful army, a well-organized system of administration, efficient lines of communication, and an equitable method of taxation ; and these four things Augustus gave the empire.

Fifteen legions guarded the northern frontier, and six legions the eastern frontier, together with three legions in Spain, and one in North Africa. Great paved roads, whose remains are a wonder even to our age, led from Rome to all the chief towns and to the principal points on the frontier. Proconsuls, or legates, responsible to the emperor, ruled the various provinces. Everywhere arose splendid public buildings ; trade flourished ; Latin literature reached its highest excellence ; the Roman law attained that perfection which has made it the basis of the legal codes of all modern countries ; and an era of prosperity and civilization dawned upon the world such as it had never before known.

CHAPTER I

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

B.C. 44 to A.D. 14

Reigned as emperor, B.C. 28 to A.D. 14 (Roman date—A.U.C. 726–768)¹

(a) Matters other than Religion

WHEN, in B.C. 44, Julius Caesar, the foremost man in the Roman Republic, was murdered, his grand-nephew Octavius,² or Octavianus (afterwards Augustus), was a youth of nineteen, exceedingly handsome and of good abilities, whom his grand-uncle Julius Caesar had sent to complete his education and learn discipline at the camp at Apollonia in Illyricum. On hearing of the assassination of his grand-uncle Octavius at once started for Italy, taking with him only his friend Marcus Agrippa, and on landing at Brindisi and proceeding to join his mother Atia at Naples learnt that Julius Caesar had adopted him and made him his heir. The dangers of claiming this inheritance in the disturbed state of affairs being very great, his mother and others around him at Naples endeavoured to persuade him not to accept it; but Octavius, confident in himself, declined to listen to them. Proceeding to Rome, he overcame many difficulties, and at length succeeded, first in making good his claim to Julius Caesar's property, and then, through his popularity with the troops, in defeating Marc Antony in the civil war which ensued. Octavius then joined Marc Antony in a triumvirate (appointed for five years, afterwards extended to ten years) formed to establish a stable government, and consisting of Marc Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. They marched with an army to

¹ Anno Urbis Conditae ("In the year of the founding of the city").

² His mother Atia was the daughter of Julius Caesar's sister Julia.

Rome, held an inquiry, and put to death 300 senators and 2000 knights on account of the murder of Julius Caesar. The triumvirate then at the battle of Philippi (B.C. 42) defeated and slew Brutus and Cassius, the two chief murderers. At this battle Octavius vowed that if victorious he would erect a temple in Rome to Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger), a vow which he afterwards fulfilled. War then broke out between the members of the triumvirate, but in B.C. 40 peace was made by an arrangement allotting to Marc Antony the rule of the east, to Octavius that of the west, and to Lepidus that of Africa, a peace cemented by the marriage of Marc Antony to Octavius' sister, Octavia. In the same year Octavius married Scribonia, the sister of Lucius Scribonius, a purely political marriage which did not even have the political effects hoped for from it. Scribonia had been married twice before, and was at least ten years older than Octavius. Within the year Octavius, alleging incompatibility of temper, divorced her, but in an unusually heartless manner since she had only a few days before borne him a daughter.¹

Octavius was now twenty-four, and the admired of all the Roman world, not only for his exceedingly handsome appearance and agreeable disposition, but also for his abilities. And soon afterwards he made a marriage which affected all the rest of his life. He had fallen deeply in love with the daughter of his enemy Livius Drusus Claudianus, Livia Drusilla,² who was also equally enamoured of him; she persuaded her husband Tiberius Claudius, who was much older than herself, to yield to the demands of Octavius and divorce her in order that she might marry the latter; and in B.C. 38 Octavius and Livia were married, Tiberius Claudius at the ceremony taking the place of Livia's dead father and himself giving away the bride. Octavius was at this time twenty-five and Livia twenty. Their married life lasted fifty-two years, during the whole of which time Livia made a thoroughly good wife to Octavius. Nevertheless the wrath of the divorced and insulted Scribonia gradually created a faction which by its enmity to Livia and her descendants caused many troubles in after years.

¹ Julia, the only child of Augustus.

² See p. 28.

Octavius had at this time no thought of the advancement which subsequently came to him, and looked forward to nothing better than, when his term of office as triumvir should be concluded, obtaining the rule of a province. The party which had been headed by Brutus and Cassius were, however, not yet suppressed, and in B.C. 36 Sextus Pompeius, the remaining leader of that party, having defeated Lepidus and made himself master of Sicily and of the seas, began cutting off Rome's supplies of corn, and Octavius was forced to attack him. With a fleet commanded by Marcus Agrippa, Octavius succeeded in completely defeating Sextus Pompeius; a victory which left Octavius without an opponent in the west. During the next two years (B.C. 35-33) Octavius was engaged in a difficult campaign in Illyricum and Dalmatia, during which he was twice wounded, but finally subdued the rebellious tribes of those countries, and returned to Rome in B.C. 33.

Meanwhile Marc Antony was offending Roman feeling in every way, especially by indulging in dreams of turning his command of the east into a separate empire. At length in B.C. 32 he openly entered on this course by proceeding to found, together with Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, an independent eastern empire with its capital at Alexandria. This menaced Rome's very existence. For such an empire would not only deprive her of the whole of her eastern dominions, but also, since Egypt was the granary of Italy, would be able at any moment to threaten Italy with starvation. The Senate at once issued a decree depriving Antony of his command, and declared war against the Queen of Egypt. Antony retorted by divorcing Octavia in favour of Cleopatra and assembling his troops. The Roman forces, under Octavius' own command,¹ were sent against Antony and Cleopatra, who on the 2nd September B.C. 31 were totally defeated at the battle of Actium. Returning to Rome for the winter, Octavius in the spring of B.C. 30 set out for Alexandria, where, after a feeble resistance by Antony's troops, Cleopatra and Antony were defeated, and both of them committed suicide. Octavius thereupon annexed Egypt and made it a Roman pro-

¹ Octavius' fleet was commanded by Marcus Agrippa and performed the greater part of the service.

vince, and in B.C. 28 returned to Rome absolute master at the age of thirty-five of the whole civilized world.¹ He then proposed to resign the special powers which had been given him as triumvir, the period of that appointment having expired and all the enemies of Rome having been subdued. But both the Senate and the people were appalled at such a prospect. They felt that the miseries of civil war from which they had suffered so much would certainly return when the strong hand of Octavius was removed, and with one voice they entreated him to retain permanently the power which had been conferred for a limited term. To this Octavius acceded, and thereupon assumed the rule of the Roman Empire, and was given the title of Augustus,² becoming the first emperor whom the world had ever known.

Augustus had thus, by a remarkable succession of events during sixteen years, been gradually led on to a more exalted position than had ever before been occupied by any man in history. Nor had this been due to any plan on his part, as often supposed. He gradually grew both in aims and intellectual power. At first he aimed only at gaining the property of Julius Caesar, at establishing his claim by adoption to be admitted into the Julian family, and at obtaining a fairly secure position. Subsequently, after being forced into a conflict for self-preservation, he aspired to the government of a province. Later on he was content with having been allotted for a time the rule over a third part of the Roman dominions. Finally he did not desire to quarrel with Antony, but was forced into opposing him by Antony's own action. Hence he was led on gradually, and more through the action of others than through any plan on his part of making himself sole master of the Roman world, until at length when the work for which special powers had been given him was accomplished

¹ The daughter of Cleopatra and Antony, also named Cleopatra, was brought up by Octavius' sister, the noble-minded Octavia, and was subsequently given in marriage by Octavius (then Augustus) to Juba, son of the last king of Numidia and given by Augustus the kingdom of Mauretania. Their son, Ptolemy, was the last king of Mauretania.

² In honour of him the name of the month Sextilis was changed to Augustus, the month which we know as August; in the same way as the month July had been given that name in honour of Julius Caesar.

he found himself pressed by the entire nation to retain permanently the position which had thus devolved upon him.

Thus was born Imperial Rome, which, mightier and more widely ruling than Republican Rome, was destined to give the world the greatest example ever seen of organized government and far-reaching power on the whole beneficently exercised during many centuries.

Augustus¹ reigned for forty-two years (B.C. 28–A.D. 14), the longest reign of any emperor, and in that time gradually consolidated the Roman dominions into a firm and enduring empire. Some of the chief measures that he took to effect this have already been mentioned.² By his administrative capacity and tact, by his unostentatious life, by carefully conforming to all those forms of the State which were endeared to the Romans (even though at the same time concentrating all offices in himself), and by his moderation, good sense, and conciliatory methods, he gradually soothed all the angry passions which years of civil war had aroused, and reconciled all classes to his rule.

The title “Imperator” (emperor) has however a tendency to mislead in the case of the first two emperors, Augustus and Tiberius.³ Technically the emperor was not an autocrat, but the chief officer of a commonwealth. And by Augustus

¹ Plate I (Frontispiece). This is the best statue of Augustus extant. It was found in the Villa of Livia (p. 37). From the reliefs on the armour, which allude to various victories of Augustus, it is considered that this fine statue was executed soon after his triumphant return from Egypt in B.C. 28. The head of the statue is a portrait-head; it is carved from a separate piece of marble and let into the statue. The figures on the armour were originally covered with enamel of various hues, as is proved by various traces of colour on them. The sceptre in the left hand is a restoration, and is evidently a mistake, as other similar representations of Augustus show that it should be a spear. The Cupid on a dolphin beside the right leg of the statue is an allusion to the legendary descent of the Julian family from Venus, and is intended to recall the fact that Augustus had been adopted into the Julian family. The statue was found in 1863.

² Introduction, p. 4.

³ Regarding how gradually the imperial dignity grew out of the Republic, and the general attitude of the Roman aristocracy in connection with this great change in the administration, see Chap. II, pp. 51–52. As to the alteration in the character of the imperial dignity inaugurated by the third emperor, Caligula, see Chap. III, p. 89.

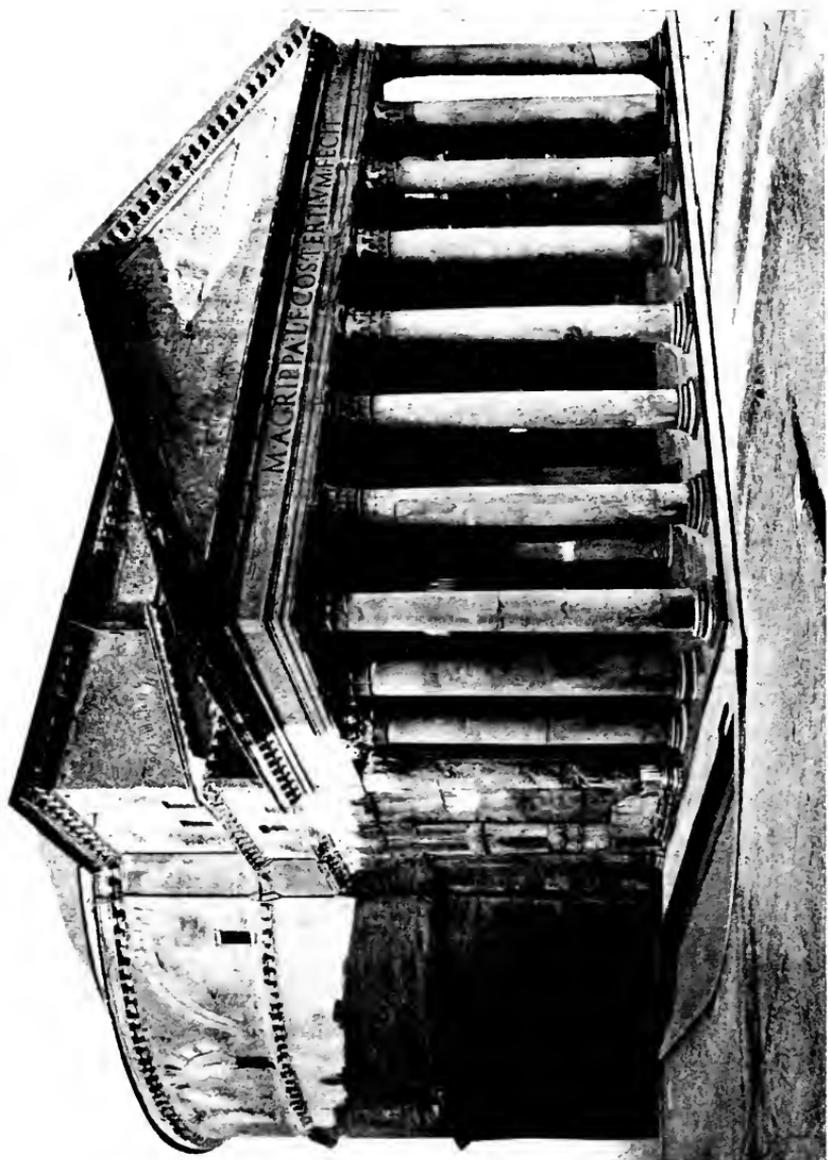
and Tiberius this theoretical position was outwardly scrupulously maintained. The emperor sat in the Senate as the equal of all other senators. As the commander of Rome's military and naval forces he was the most important officer of the State, did as he thought fit with the army and navy, was the representative of the State in all provinces containing a garrison, and possessed the power of declaring war or making peace; but in home affairs he would have had no power had he not been invested by the Senate with the "powers of the Tribune," which gave him the long-established authority of the "Tribune of the people" to veto any measure which he might declare to be opposed to their interests. This practically enabled him to control the entire administration.

One of the first acts of Augustus as emperor had long lasting effects to the empire in subsequent ages. Carthage, the great rival of Rome in the time of the Republic, had been destroyed by Scipio Africanus in B.C. 146. In the first year of his reign Augustus re-founded this great city, and from its unique position on the coast of North Africa and its many commercial advantages it soon became the greatest Mediterranean seaport next to Alexandria.

During the first sixteen years of Augustus' reign his chief minister and adviser was Marcus Agrippa, who had commanded his fleet at the battle of Actium, and who in B.C. 27 was married to Marcella, Augustus' niece. Agrippa, the same age as Augustus, had been the latter's constant companion from his earliest years, and to his genius in war and his wise counsels much of the success of Augustus was due. At the time of making this marriage Agrippa, in this second year of the reign of Augustus, began the construction of his splendid set of Baths, part of which he afterwards dedicated as a temple, the "Pantheon" (all-divine); this still survives, and better represents the solidity, simplicity, daring, and splendour of Roman architecture than any buildings which succeeded it.¹ The walls are 20 feet thick, and it is the only building of ancient Rome which still remains in possession of its roof.² Agrippa also carried out various other useful works, including a drainage

¹ Plate II, The Pantheon.

² It was largely restored by the emperor Hadrian about 150 years later, having suffered from the fire in Nero's reign.



[Brook.

THE PANTHEON.

system for the city, the drawing up of a map of the whole empire, and the construction of no less than three immense aqueducts for supplying water to Rome, while he also built the huge Roman aqueduct near Nismes, in Gaul, 180 feet high, with three tiers of arches, which still survives.

In B.C. 27 Augustus visited Gaul, which he divided into four sub-provinces, Narbonensis, Aquitania, Lugdunensis, and Belgica. Thence he proceeded to Spain where arduous and hard fought campaigns were being conducted against the tribes of Cantabria and Asturia, but falling seriously ill at Tarraco he was obliged to leave the conduct of the operations to Agrippa, who as usual accompanied him. Augustus returned to Rome in B.C. 24, but the war was not ended until B.C. 19, when the Cantabrians and Asturians were finally subdued. In B.C. 22 Augustus visited Sicily, Asia Minor, and the eastern frontier, returning to Rome in B.C. 19. He paid a second visit to Gaul in B.C. 16, remaining there for three years. He again visited Gaul in B.C. 10, and a fourth time in B.C. 8, but after that date, during the remaining twenty-one years of his reign, seldom moved from Rome.

Livia was highly jealous of the influence over Augustus possessed by Agrippa, and possibly owing to this cause the latter at length removed from Rome; but he was ere long recalled by Augustus, made to divorce Marcella, and in B.C. 23 was married to Augustus' only child Julia,¹ then seventeen, whose first husband, her young cousin Marcellus (to whom she had been married at fourteen), had lately died. Julia and Agrippa were married for eleven years and had five children, three sons and two daughters.

In B.C. 12 Marcus Agrippa died, whereupon Augustus endeavoured by a marriage to put a stop to the feud which he saw beginning to arise between the two branches of the imperial family.² Augustus by his former marriage with Scribonia had this one daughter Julia, now left a widow by Agrippa's death. His wife Livia by her former marriage with Tiberius Claudius had two sons, Tiberius and Drusus. Accordingly Augustus forced his step-son Tiberius, then thirty, to his bitter grief, to divorce his young wife Pomponia Vipsania, who had

¹ His daughter by Scribonia, see p. 6.

² See Genealogical table of the Caesars, Appendix I.

just borne him a son, and to marry Livia's step-daughter Julia, then twenty-eight, Augustus hoping that this marriage would heal the growing animosity between the descendants of Scribonia and the descendants of Livia.

Notwithstanding Augustus' desire to refrain from further conquests, various other wars besides those already mentioned were waged during his reign. In B.C. 16 the plundering tribes of Noricum brought about a campaign which ended in that province (corresponding roughly to what is now Austria) being annexed to the empire. In B.C. 15 a difficult campaign in the mountains of Switzerland was necessary before the tribes of Vindelicia and Rætia (the modern Switzerland and Bavaria) were subdued. And this was followed by a four years' campaign in Pannonia to bring the rebellious tribes there into subjection. Meanwhile the Roman armies, crossing the Rhine, had traversed all Germany up to the Elbe, and Drusus, Livia's second son, had in a series of brilliant campaigns extended the Roman power to the latter river, and had become the first soldier of the empire. In all these campaigns Livia's two sons, Tiberius and Drusus, were Rome's leading commanders, Tiberius being chiefly employed on the Danube frontier and Drusus on the Rhine frontier.

In B.C. 9, while Augustus and Livia were in Gaul, Drusus, while still campaigning in Germany, died as the result of an accident, after thirty days of suffering, at the age of twenty-nine. Tiberius, four years older, who was then at Pavia, was devotedly attached to his brother, and on the arrival of news that Drusus had had a fall from his horse in Germany and was dying, he started at once from Italy, crossed the Alps and the Rhine, travelling four hundred miles without stopping to rest, and reached his destination just in time for his brother to die in his arms. Tiberius escorted his body back to Rome, travelling the whole way on foot in token of his sorrow, and was met at Ticinum (Pavia) by Augustus and Livia. From thence to Rome, says Seneca, the procession was a "mournful triumph," the people everywhere coming forth to express their sorrow for the death of one who was universally beloved, while in Rome this national manifestation of grief was even greater, the admiration of the people for Drusus being still further increased by his having died while engaged in a

campaign against Rome's enemies. After this death of his brother, Tiberius remained alone in the position of the leading general of Augustus' armies, a position which he had hitherto shared with Drusus.

The kingdom of Judæa had been bestowed by Julius Caesar upon Antipater of Idumea, who was succeeded by his son Herod (known as Herod the Great), whose kingdom Augustus considerably enlarged as a reward for the assistance given by him in the war with Antony and Cleopatra. In B.C. 4, in which year Augustus held a census of the whole empire, Herod died, dividing his kingdom among three of his many sons. But the Jews, hating the house of the Herods, petitioned the emperor to abolish the Jewish kingdom, and at length Augustus acceded to their wishes, and Judæa was made a Roman province, Herod's sons being left with a merely nominal authority. The Roman government of Judæa, however, was conducted under a special system, everything being done to deal tenderly with the prejudices of the Jews; coins in Judæa did not bear the emperor's head, and the Roman troops in Jerusalem were ordered to leave their standards behind them in Cæsarea.

In A.D. 5, when Augustus was sixty-eight, a powerful combination of the northern tribes, having its centre in Bohemia, threatened to invade the Danube provinces, and had to be attacked by Tiberius and dispersed. This was followed by a rebellion of the tribes in Pannonia, with a simultaneous rising of those in Dalmatia. It took four long and arduous campaigns, during the years A.D. 5-9, before Tiberius succeeded in subduing both these formidable rebellions. Then followed the one great disaster of Augustus' reign. In A.D. 9, when Augustus was seventy-two, and while Tiberius was still occupied in the final campaign in Dalmatia, three entire legions in Germany (representing a force of 36,000 men) under Varus, were surprised in the *Saltus Teuto-burgiensis* (now the Teuto-burger Wald)¹ by the Cherusci and the Chatti, under the capable young leader Hermann (belonging to the Cherusci),

¹ A forest-clad hilly tract between the Ems and the Weser, about 120 miles north-east of Cologne. The site of this important battle is believed by some recent authorities to have been about 6 miles west of Detmold, but Mommsen places it about 30 miles more to the north-west, in the neighbourhood of Osnabrück, which seems more likely.

whom the Romans called Arminius, then twenty-three years old, and were totally destroyed, their eagles being captured and the entire force being slain.¹ The grief in Rome when this dreadful news became known was immense ; while it terribly affected the aged Augustus, who in his long career had ever seen the Roman arms victorious. He wandered about his palace, refusing to speak to any one, and ejaculating at intervals " O Varus, give me back my slaughtered legions."

Tiberius, by this time fifty-two, hastened back from Dalmatia to retrieve this great disaster. Taking with him his nephew Germanicus and a large army, he crossed the Rhine in A.D. 10, and advanced into the centre of Germany. In a two years' campaign, during the years A.D. 10-12, Tiberius traversed the whole of Germany up to the Elbe, repeatedly defeating the Chatti and the Cherusci until he thoroughly subdued them, earning the greatest distinction as a commander, and on his return being awarded by the Senate the honour of a triumph for having thus satisfactorily wiped out the effect of the disaster. The Romans, however, never again attempted to make the Elbe their frontier, but withdrew to the Rhine as their boundary.

One important part of the organization of the empire by Augustus was the very complete system which he established for the transmission of orders and reports between Rome and the most distant provinces. A specially selected band of centurions, called *frumen arii*, temporarily detached from the legions to which they belonged, were employed on this service, and went to and fro between Rome and the armies in different parts of the empire. They all belonged to legions stationed in the provinces, and while in Rome resided in a camp on the Coelian Hill called *Castra Peregrinorum*.² Horses were kept ready at regular stages on all the main lines of communication for use by such messengers. The speed with which news was transmitted by these means is illustrated by the fact that the news of the death of Nero in A.D. 68 at Rome was conveyed

¹ Three centuries later the Chatti were to become widely known under the celebrated name of the Franks. The name is derived from the Chattan word "frank," signifying free ; as in the modern German phrase "frank und frei."

² Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, pp. 315 and 347.

to Galba, the general commanding in Spain, in seven days, a great part of the journey being performed at an average of ten miles an hour.¹

Although the speech made of Augustus regarding the city of Rome, that he "found it of brick and left it of marble," correctly represents a fact, it is a mistake to suppose that Roman luxury began with the empire. Even in the time of the Republic the house of the head of the Claudian family had cost £131,000, while that of Scaurus was valued at the enormous sum of £885,000.² The passion for profusion had begun at least two generations before the time of Augustus, and we hear of a myrrhine vase purchased for £3000, of a table of citrus-wood for £4000, and of as much as £40,000 being spent on a rich carpet from Babylon.³ Augustus, however, by the many splendid buildings which he either constructed himself or induced others to construct, completely transformed the appearance of Rome. Amongst these buildings were the Temple of Mars Ultor, erected in fulfilment of his vow at the battle of Philippi, and the Forum of Augustus, built round it, constructed by him on finding that the Forum Julium (begun by Julius Caesar and completed by Augustus) was insufficient for the increased business of the capital of so wide an empire. The aqueducts constructed during his reign provided Rome with a more plentiful supply of pure water than most modern cities even yet enjoy. And it serves to show what Augustus' energy in adorning Rome must have been that notwithstanding all the devastation which Rome has since suffered there still exist in that city more remains of his buildings than of any of the emperors who succeeded him.

The chief of these buildings are :—Part of his Forum, the remains of his Palace on the Palatine Hill, the remains of the Temple of Mars Ultor, the remains of the Temple of the Divine Augustus,⁴ built at the foot of the north-western corner of the Palatine Hill in the valley of the Velabrum, the Arch of

¹ Plutarch, *Galba*, 7.

² Lanciani, *Ancient Rome*.

³ Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte*, iii, 80–81.

⁴ Plate III. The first temple dedicated to an emperor as divine. Behind it are visible the ruins of the north-western corner of the Palace of Caligula, built 25 years later.

Drusus,¹ the Mausoleum of Augustus (in which he and all succeeding emperors down to Nerva, except Caligula and Nero, were interred),² the Theatre of Marcellus (built by Augustus, and named after his nephew, the son of his sister Octavia), the Portico of Octavia (built by Augustus, and dedicated to his sister), and the Pantheon, built by Marcus Agrippa. Though buried amongst and encroached upon by modern structures (or perhaps owing to that very reason), these buildings of Augustus force upon us the contrast they bring before our eyes, since even in their decay, after having stood the wear and tear of nineteen centuries, they make the best works of modern architecture look insignificant by comparison.³

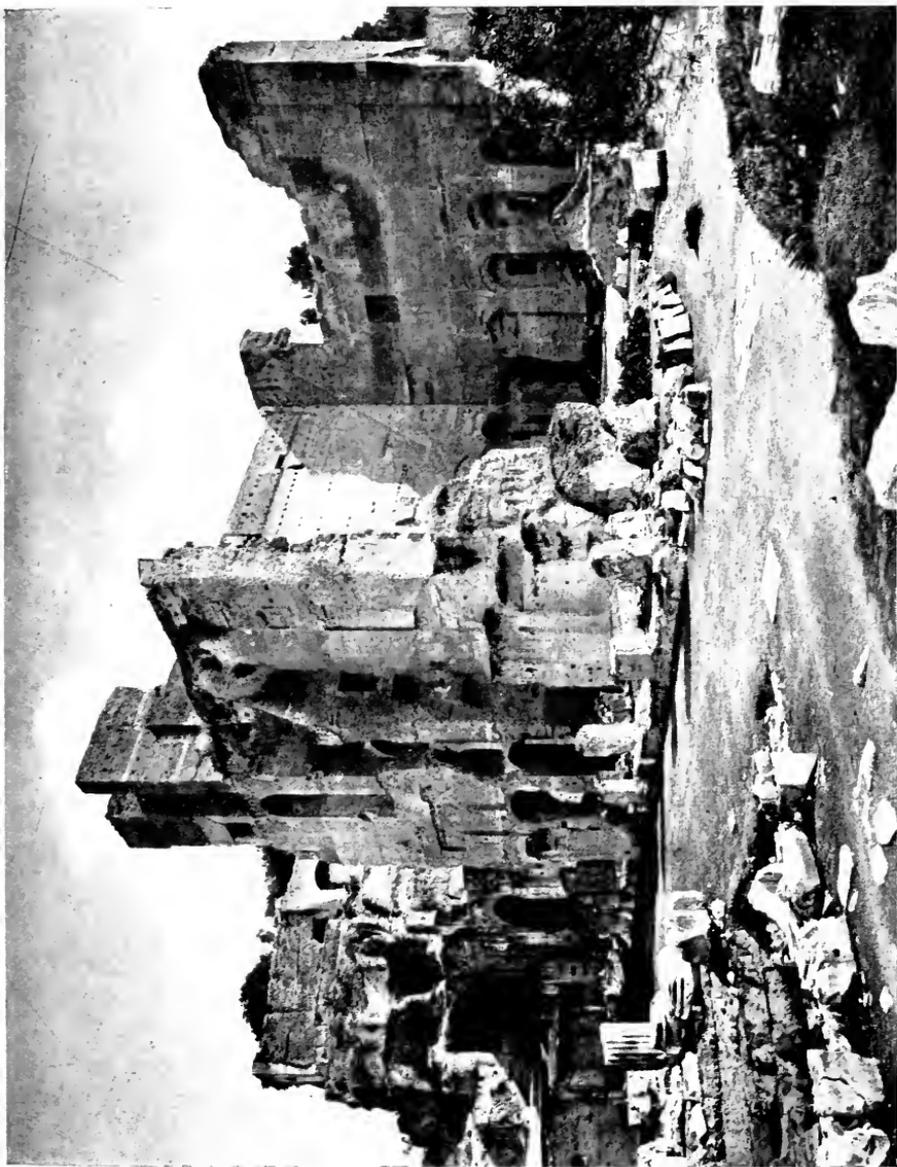
But the work of Augustus in adorning the capital of the empire was a small matter compared with his achievements in a wider field. Augustus was a born administrator, and by his great talents in this respect he by degrees evolved a system of administration for the Roman Empire which, being gradually improved by his successors, grew into one more nearly perfect than any which has since been seen. This system of administration continued almost unaltered for nearly three hundred years after his death, and in its main features retained the impress given to it by him for as long as that empire endured. In all administrative matters the "maxims of Augustus," laying down the general system of organization for the rule of the empire, and the general principles to be observed by those charged with the government of various portions of it, became looked upon by after generations with almost sacred reverence, and were considered as a matter of course the guiding principles to be followed. The results thoroughly justified the view thus entertained.⁴ It is in fact not so

¹ This arch has all the stern simplicity and dignity of the age of Augustus. It was decreed by the Senate in memory of Drusus when he was killed on the Rhine frontier in B.C. 9. The arch was crowned by an equestrian statue of Drusus, and a seated female figure representing Germany.

² Tacitus says that on the top was a mound of earth planted with trees and flowers. The Mausoleum is now a circus.

³ Rome was not surrounded by hills producing marble, and all the marble for these buildings was imported from Africa, Greece, or Asia Minor.

⁴ See reigns of Trajan and Hadrian (Chap. VI).



[18004.

RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF AUGUSTUS, ROME.

At the foot of the north-west corner of the Palatine hill, with behind it part of the north-western end of the Palace of Caligula. The ruins show the massive style of construction. The numerous holes were bored in the Middle Ages to extract the iron clamps which held the stones together; yet even without the clamps the walls still stand.

much in the reign of Augustus himself that his ability as an administrator is to be seen, nor even a hundred years or more later when his system came to be administered by such capable emperors as Trajan and Hadrian ; it is when we look back upon the Roman Empire fifteen hundred years afterwards, after it had passed away, it is when we note the ordered system of government for which it was pre-eminent throughout its whole course, it is when we observe how greatly its system surpassed that of all other nations even in its decline, and even when its territories had dwindled to only a small portion of its original dominions, that we are best able to appreciate the ability of the man who founded it and inaugurated the main principles of this system of government. Nay more, it is when we look back upon the Roman Empire from the standpoint of our own age, and realize how its general principles of government have permeated our modern methods in that respect, that we are able to appreciate to the fullest extent the ability of Augustus as an administrator.

As regards literature the reign of Augustus has ever been memorable. In his reign the poets Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, and the historian Livy all flourished, and their works and those of their contemporaries have shed a lustre upon the reign of Augustus which will last for all time. It has been called "the golden age of Latin composition." Augustus was a strong patron of literature, and personally befriended both Virgil and Horace. Virgil came to Rome about B.C. 40, having lost his estate in the preceding civil war. It was subsequently restored to him by Augustus. He began to write the *Æneid* about the year that Augustus became emperor (B.C. 28), and died at Brindisi on his way back from Athens in B.C. 19, at the age of fifty-one. Horace fought as a young man against Augustus at the battle of Philippi in B.C. 42, but was pardoned by him and taken into favour, and thenceforth lived in an honoured ease at Rome or on his much loved Sabine farm, acknowledged as the greatest poet of his day next to Virgil. He died in B.C. 8, at the age of fifty-seven. Livy, born at Padua, came to Rome early in Augustus' reign, and settled there. He was much favoured by Augustus, and treated as a person of importance at the court. His great *History of Rome* began from the landing of *Æneas* in Italy and

was continued down to B.C. 9. It consisted of 142 books, but of these only 35 remain, carrying the history down to B.C. 167. Livy died in A.D. 11, at the age of seventy. Ovid, born in B.C. 43, was by birth entitled to be a senator. He resided in Rome, writing many poems, and enjoying the friendship of many distinguished men, until he was fifty, but in A.D. 9, in consequence of his intrigue with Julia the younger¹ coming to the knowledge of Augustus, he was banished to Tomi on the Black Sea. After the death of Augustus he entreated to be allowed to return, but though his appeals were backed up by powerful friends Tiberius refused to cancel the order of Augustus, and Ovid died at Tomi in A.D. 18, at the age of sixty-one.

But while Rome had been raised to this high level of culture and magnificence the Romans of the time of Augustus had as yet not learnt the true imperial spirit which would justify their rule over so vast an empire. There still clung round them much of the spirit which had animated them from the days when Rome was a little city conquering its neighbours. They looked upon the city of Rome with intense pride, and regarded all the rest of the empire as more or less colonial, and to be governed and taxed mainly for the benefit of Rome and its inhabitants. We see this spirit reflected in many of the writings of the literary men of the time of Augustus. It was the work of a later age to teach the Romans a wider outlook; though even to the last the typical Roman of Rome retained much of this narrow spirit, notwithstanding the example set from time to time by the great men who as emperors took a wider view, and governed, not merely for the benefit of Rome, but of the empire. No emperor was ever praised by the Roman writers who made the empire his first thought, and the city of Rome a secondary consideration.

Augustus, knowing that all this prosperity depended absolutely upon the power of the Roman army to defend the empire against the northern barbarians, brought the Roman military system to a high pitch. The legion, hitherto 4500 men, was increased to 6000 men, divided into 1500 "Velites" (skirmishers), 1500 "Hastati" (lightly armed front rank), 1500 "Principes" (heavily armed second rank), and 1000 "Triarii" (heavily armed reserve), with 500 cavalry. Each

¹ See p. 22.

class was divided into ten "maniples," with a centurion, a second centurion, and two "ensigns" to each maniple. Four maniples (one of each class), with a "troop" of fifty cavalry, formed a "cohort" (600 men), the legion having ten cohorts, or forty maniples.¹ Each legion had its standard, consisting of a silver eagle mounted on the head of a staff. The men were armed with the celebrated Roman *pilum* (spear) over 6 feet long, a short sword less than 3 feet long, and a dagger; for defence they were furnished with a shield made of wicker work covered with leather and embossed with metal, and wore over the breast and shoulders a corslet of leather covered with layers of bronze, and on the head an iron helmet. Their pay was about three shillings a week. They served for twenty years, after which they obtained a pension, or a grant of land. The commander of a legion was generally a man of senatorial rank; the cohorts (600 men) were commanded by "knights," or "chief captains"; and the maniples (150 men) by centurions. Enlistment was voluntary.

These legions were composed of men having the rights of Roman citizens, recruited from any part of the empire. Great care was taken in the selection of the men, only those of good character being accepted, while the splendid discipline of these legions has become proverbial; and to these two causes, and especially to the latter of them, the Roman armies owed their long and remarkable success in battles in which they were nearly always outnumbered. No Roman anxious to enter on a public career was permitted to hold any office in the State until he had first served for ten years in one of these legions.²

But the legions only constituted one half of the Roman army. In addition to them there were corps styled "auxiliaries," who in every Roman force equalled in numbers the men forming the legions. These "auxiliaries" were corps composed of men who had not yet obtained the rights of Roman citizens, the men in these corps chiefly belonging to the

¹ Thus 150 *velites*, 150 *hastati*, 150 *principes*, 100 *triarii* and 50 cavalry formed a cohort (600), and ten such cohorts a legion.

² This rule, which shows so prominently the far-sighted wisdom of Rome, was not introduced by Augustus, but existed under the Republic long before his time. (See also Vol. II, p. 133, footnote).

more recently conquered provinces of the empire. In training and efficiency they were practically equal to the legions; they were, however, not formed into legions, but into regiments of about 1000 men.¹ The command of such a regiment was one of the regular steps to the command of a legion. The men served for twenty-five years, and on completion of their service obtained the rights of Roman citizens. Each general's command consisted of an equal number of these two classes of troops; so that a legion with the auxiliary corps attached to it amounted to 12,000 men.²

There were thus³ along the northern frontier of the empire $12,000 \times 15 = 180,000$ men, and along the eastern frontier $12,000 \times 6 = 72,000$ men, together with three legions in Spain (36,000 men), one in Africa (12,000 men), and the twelve regiments of Praetorian Guards, each of 1000 men (12,000). These twenty-five legions maintained by Augustus were in the time of the emperor Hadrian increased to thirty legions, thus bringing up the total of Rome's military forces to $12,000 \times 30 + 12,000 = 372,000$ men. After Britain had been added to the empire in A.D. 43 three of these thirty legions were stationed in that country, eighteen legions along the Rhine and Danube frontier, six legions on the eastern frontier, one in Egypt, one in Africa, and one in Spain. Augustus also created an imperial fleet, divided into two portions, one stationed at Ravenna and the other at Misenum. The warships were of two kinds, *triremes*, with three banks of oars, and *biremes*, with two banks of oars, the latter kind being more usually employed.

At the latter end of his life Augustus became depressed

¹ A very large number of these "auxiliary" corps consisted entirely of cavalry.

² It will be seen that this organization has been almost exactly copied in our British army in India, where each brigade consists of two British regiments and two Native regiments, the latter exactly corresponding to the Roman "auxiliary" corps. To make the parallel complete, however, it would be necessary to mass together the six British regiments of three brigades, and separately the six Native regiments of the same three brigades, when the whole would correspond to a Roman legion accompanied by its "auxiliary" corps when these were composed of infantry. Thus a Roman legion with its auxiliary corps was about equal to a British division (3 brigades).

³ See Introduction, p. 4.

in mind by various presentiments ¹ of some impending change, destined to bring about the destruction of all which he had created; while to the depression thus caused was added that due to various family calamities. His only child Julia,² of whom he was very fond, and who at the age of twenty-eight had been married to his step-son Tiberius, distinguished as she was for her wit and abilities, became equally notorious for her licentiousness. At length in A.D. 1, when she was thirty-nine, the scandals thus created came to the ears of Augustus; thereupon he ordered a public enquiry, but the scandalous facts revealed by this were so terrible that the enquiry was stopped, Augustus expressing the wish that he had died childless,³ and Julia was banished to the desolate island of Pandataria.⁴ Julia's two elder sons had some twelve years before been adopted by Augustus as his heirs, being given the names Caius Caesar and Lucius Caesar; their sister Julia, generally called Julia the younger, had been married to Æmilius Paulus, belonging to one of the greatest of the Roman families, and in A.D. 2 their second sister Agrippina, Augustus' grand-daughter, was married to Livia's grand-son Germanicus, the eldest son of Drusus. But in this same year (A.D. 2) the younger of these sons of Julia, Lucius Caesar, died at the age of twenty, his death being followed eighteen months later by that of his brother, Caius Caesar, at the age of twenty-three.⁵

The depression caused by these family misfortunes was still further increased by the great military disaster suffered in A.D. 9. Moreover in the latter year two further family troubles came upon Augustus. His last hope was Julia's third son, Agrippa Postumus, by this time twenty-one. But the latter, a young man stated to have looked and behaved more like a

¹ See p. 43.

² Plate IV. Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

³ In consequence of these revelations Phoebe, Julia's chief serving-woman and confidante, hung herself; whereupon Augustus is reported to have said, "Would that I were Phoebe's father."

⁴ In A.D. 6 Augustus changed Julia's place of banishment from Pandataria to Rhegium; but he never saw her again.

⁵ At Nismes, in Gaul, a temple was erected about A.D. 4 to the memory of Caius and Lucius Caesar which still exists, and is one of the finest and best preserved Roman temples extant.

common gladiator than one of the Julian race, showed himself altogether impossible as a successor to Augustus. Velleius Paterculus says, "He plunged into profligacy with such extraordinary depravity of mind and feeling that he entirely alienated the affection of his grandfather (Augustus)." And Suetonius says, "His folly increased from day to day." He refused to accept any office in the State, broke out into the coarsest abuse of Augustus, and became such a discredit to the whole family that at last Augustus was forced to banish him to the island of Planasia, where a centurion was placed in charge of him. At the same time his sister Julia the younger, following the example of her mother Julia, created so much scandal in Rome that Augustus was obliged to banish her to the island of Trimerus, where she lived for many years, experiencing kindness only from Livia. Shortly afterwards Augustus discovered a plot on the part of the faction which had been created by Scribonia to liberate Julia the elder and her son Agrippa Postumus from their respective prisons, and to set up Agrippa Postumus in opposition to his grandfather.

All this preyed greatly on Augustus' mind, the more so since he had so strongly desired to make a descendant of his own his successor, but was at last obliged in A.D. 13, owing to the character of his remaining grandson, to abandon the idea as hopeless, and to adopt his step-son Tiberius (who had in the previous year returned victorious from Germany after retrieving the disaster of Varus), and to nominate him as his successor, no other course being possible. Nor, except for Augustus' personal disappointment in the matter, was this in any way to be regretted so far as the empire was concerned. For Tiberius, now fifty-six, had in a career of about forty years distinguished himself in every way and become unquestionably the best man in the empire to succeed Augustus, and the latter by this time fully appreciated his sterling qualities.

In the summer of A.D. 14 Augustus being considerably out of health left Rome with Livia for his family residence at Nola, on the coast of Dalmatia, a villa which he inherited from his father, Caius Octavius. And there he died on the 23rd August

¹ See Appendix I. One of her lovers was the poet Ovid, who was banished at the same time.

PLATE IV.



[ANDERSON.]

JULIA, DAUGHTER OF AUGUSTUS.
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

in the Roman year A.U.C. 768 (or our year A.D. 14), at the age of seventy-seven.¹ He might justly take pride in his work; he had consolidated and reorganized Rome's empire, had created peace and prosperity over many lands, had transformed the appearance of Rome, and had revived the ancient religion and covered the city with temples. His wife Livia was with him when he died, and his last words were spoken to her, saying just before he died, "Livia, let the memory of our happy union remain always with you; I have loved you very dearly; and now farewell." The strong love felt throughout life for Livia by Augustus, who had married her when he was twenty-five and she was twenty, is specially shown in the fact that in that age of easy divorce,² and notwithstanding his intense desire for a son, he never divorced Livia in order to marry a wife who might give him a son to be his successor as ruler over the wide empire which he had founded.³

Immediately upon Augustus' death Julia's incapable son, Agrippa Postumus, was executed in his prison by the centurion in charge of him. On an enquiry being held, it appeared that this was done in accordance with an order from Augustus himself. The latter while at Nola had again discovered a plot to proclaim this worthless youth emperor as soon as he, Augustus, should be dead; he therefore gave the order that immediately he died Agrippa was to be put to death, this being the only way of saving the empire from those miseries of civil war from which he had rescued it, and a recurrence of which would undo the whole of his work of fifty years.

Augustus' daughter Julia died at Rhegium a few months after her father, at the age of fifty-three, in much sadness at the banishment of her daughter Julia and this death of her

¹ The adherents of Scribonia and Julia of course spread a report that he had been poisoned by Livia.

² Among the Roman upper classes divorce was so easy and frequent that it was scarcely a matter of remark. No application to any court was necessary, and no reason had to be assigned. The husband had merely to sign a formally witnessed notice declaring the marriage dissolved and to give back to the woman her property. The wife (or her father on her behalf) had similar power to dissolve the marriage at any time.

³ Augustus' will left two thirds of his fortune to Tiberius and the remaining third to Livia.

last surviving son. Tacitus declares that she died in great poverty, and that Tiberius "caused her to pine away gradually from want," but this is quite out of accord with the rest of Tiberius' conduct towards her.¹

Augustus was of a genial and sociable disposition. Though he had plenty of dignity when necessary, and was stern as regards any tendency towards ostentation or extravagance, he disliked all formality, and being naturally good-humoured was fond of indulging in witty remarks with people of all classes. He hated salutations and flattery; to a man who nervously presented a petition to him while walking in Rome, he said, "My good friend, one would imagine you were offering a penny to an elephant." He enjoyed games, and liked gambling for small sums; after a banquet at the palace he writes to his daughter Julia, "I have sent you 250 denarii, the sum I gave to each of my guests to play at dice with during supper." He had a great-grandchild Caius,² a very bright and attractive boy of whom he was exceedingly fond; and there must have been much that was human in the man who when Caius died at the age of eight, and when Livia had a bust of the boy made and placed it in Augustus' bedroom, used every day of his life to kiss it in memory of the dead boy.

Various portraits of Augustus, his descendants, and his successors, still exist in the portrait-busts preserved in the Vatican and Capitol Museums at Rome, the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, the Naples Museum, and the Louvre, and as they are to be relied upon for fidelity we are left in no uncertainty as to the appearance of the men and women of the imperial family. In the portrait-busts of the emperors and their wives we possess in fact the most reliable set of portraits in the world, even the works of the portrait painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries being unable to compete with these Roman portrait-busts in point of reliability. The Romans attached the very highest importance to such portraits and to their absolute fidelity. Only illustrious families had the *jus*

¹ See Chap. II, p. 49.

² A son of Germanicus and Agrippina; they gave the same name to a later son born to them, afterwards the emperor Caligula.

imaginum, or right to a gallery of family portraits, and as far as the male members of the family were concerned, only the portraits of those who had held office in the State were permitted. These portrait-busts were in fact the heraldic emblems of the house, and a Roman family was as proud of them as in these days a family is of its coat-of-arms. As fidelity was considered of the greatest importance these portrait-busts were usually made from casts taken from the actual face, and no embellishment was either permitted or desired.

Augustus built the first imperial palace on the Palatine hill, which eventually formed the nucleus of that "Palace of the Caesars" which in the course of two centuries gradually grew until it covered the whole hill. We know more about this palace of Augustus than about most of those built after it, owing to the time of Augustus being the "golden age of literature" and to so many of the literary men of that time having given descriptions of a palace which was then the chief ornament of the city.¹ It occupied a large portion of the central part of the hill on the southern side, overlooking the Circus Maximus. It was entirely built of white marble, and was crowded with works of the best Greek art, in gold, silver, ivory, and bronze, including works by the celebrated Greek sculptors Polycletus, Myron, Phidias, Praxiteles, Scopas, and Lysippus.² The renowned statues executed by Phidias and Praxiteles were generally in gold or ivory, while Polycletus and Lysippus usually employed bronze, this costly material being preferred by the earlier sculptors to marble.

¹ The common idea that the palace of Augustus was a very modest dwelling is a mistake. It is refuted by the writings of Propertius and others, while their statements are found to be corroborated by the excavation of this palace now being carried out. Ovid called it "worthy of a god."

² One of these was the renowned group of statues representing Niobe and her seven sons and seven daughters being slain by Apollo and Diana, copied by later Greek sculptors from the original group by Scopas. It illustrates the scattering of ancient works of art in Rome which took place in subsequent ages, for when found in the sixteenth century it was unearthed, not on the Palatine hill, but outside the Porta San Paolo. On being found it was at once bought by Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici, and with many other works of sculpture collected by him in Rome is now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

A glowing account of the splendour of the architecture of this palace and of the many works of Greek art with which it was adorned is given by Propertius. On its northern side it had a very extensive peristyle (or open court surrounded by a colonnade) with fluted columns of yellow Numidian marble, and in the centre of this peristyle Augustus built a magnificent temple to Apollo. He began this as early as B.C. 36, two years after his marriage to Livia, and finished it on his return to Rome in B.C. 28. In this temple, which was entirely of white Luna marble, was a group of three statues, representing Apollo standing between Diana and Latona, the three statues being the work respectively of Scopas, Timotheus, and Praxiteles; round the walls were statues of the nine Muses; while on the apex of the temple was Apollo in a four-horsed chariot, in gilded bronze. In front of the steps of the temple stood an altar surrounded by four oxen, the work of the celebrated Myron. The doors of the temple were covered with reliefs depicting the death of Niobe and her children and the defeat of the Gauls at Delphi. Round the peristyle, between its columns, were statues of the fifty Danaids and opposite to them their fifty bridegrooms, on horseback, many fragments of which statues have been found. On one side of this peristyle was a large hall, in which the Senate sometimes met, in the centre of which stood a colossal statue of Augustus in bronze, fifty feet in height.¹ A large part of this palace of Augustus was excavated in 1775, and drawings of it were published, but a great part has since been destroyed; the rest of the palace has hitherto been hidden under the convent occupying the Villa Mills. It is now being excavated, and in some places the actual walls of the palace of Augustus have been found built into the walls of the convent.

Augustus on returning from his conquest of Egypt in B.C. 28 brought from thence the first Egyptian obelisk erected in Rome,² which he set up on the *spina*³ of the Circus Maximus.

¹ Propertius, Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, Ovid, and Livy all give descriptions of this palace and its temple.

² That now in the centre of the Piazza del Popolo. Its height is 78 feet.

³ A wall about 5 feet high running down the centre of every such circus, adorned with statues and obelisks. At each end of it were the goals (*metae*).

Subsequently he brought over from Egypt a second, and set it up in the Campus Martius.¹ Pliny says:—"But the most difficult enterprise of all was the transport of these obelisks by sea to Rome, in vessels which excited the greatest admiration. In fact the late emperor Augustus consecrated the one which brought over the first obelisk, as a lasting memorial of this marvellous undertaking, in the harbour of Puteoli."²

The second of these obelisks, that placed in the Campus Martius, Augustus set up so as to act as a sundial, which according to Pliny was a mode of measuring time not before seen, and was the invention of the mathematician Facundus Novus. For this purpose Augustus laid a smooth stone pavement, with lines of brass inserted into the stone, a gilt ball being placed on the top of the obelisk. But what puzzled Pliny was that when he wrote, about 140 years afterwards, this sundial no longer told the time correctly; and in searching for the cause of this he suggests that it may have been due to there having been "some derangement of the heavenly system, or that the earth has been displaced from its centre," or perhaps to an earthquake, or owing to inundations of the Tiber having caused the foundations of the obelisk to sink.³ The actual cause was that the Julian calendar was in error by about eleven minutes, the cumulative effect of which was already, as this shows, beginning to make itself felt; though the calendar was not rectified until 1582, when this error had accumulated to as much as twelve days.

LIVIA

Livia Drusilla,⁴ born in B.C. 58, daughter of Livius Drusus Claudianus, and wife of Augustus, was a remarkable woman. She belonged to the great Claudian house, the proudest

¹ It is now in the Piazza Monte Citorio. Its height is 72 feet.

² Pliny, xxxvi, 16.

³ Pliny, xxxvi, 15.

⁴ Plate V. Portrait on a sardonyx, now in the Hague Museum. Livia was the first Roman lady to have her portrait engraved on a medallion.

family in Rome, noted for their handsome features,¹ and a much more aristocratic family than the Julian family. The glory of the great Claudian house is extolled by Suetonius, who enumerates their twenty-eight consulships, five dictatorships, seven censorships, and other triumphs. When she was fifteen Livia, fair-haired and unusually beautiful, was married to Tiberius Claudius, a man about forty. Her father, Livius Drusus Claudianus, joined Brutus and Cassius, and was killed at the battle of Philippi in B.C. 42. Livia's elder son Tiberius was born a few months afterwards, when she was sixteen, in a house on the Palatine hill, the remains of which still exist.² Her husband, Tiberius Claudius, was, like her father, also on the Republican side, and took a leading part in the civil war against Antony and Octavius, having several times to fly for his life; and in all his dangers and hardships Livia accompanied him, often carrying her child in her arms as they rapidly fled to escape capture, and once having her clothes singed in escaping at night through a burning forest.

After the civil war was over Tiberius Claudius was pardoned by Octavius and returned to Rome, where when Livia was eighteen she and Octavius fell in love with each other, the latter being then twenty-three, having lately returned full of honours from the civil war, and being admired by all Rome. Thereupon Livia added her persuasions to the demands of Octavius, and succeeded in inducing Tiberius Claudius to divorce her in order that she might marry the successful young soldier Octavius. This was carried out by an amicable arrangement between the latter and Tiberius Claudius; and in B.C. 38, at the age of twenty (and only three months before the birth of her second son Drusus), Livia was married to Octavius, who was then twenty-five. Little did Livia realize all the troubles

¹ The portraits of Livia, her sons Tiberius and Drusus, her grandsons Drusus and Claudius, and her great-grandson Britannicus (Plates V, VI, VIII, IX, XI, XII, XVI, and XX), as compared with those of Julia, her daughter Agrippina the elder, her grandson Caligula and grand-daughter Agrippina the younger, and her great-grandson Nero (Plates IV, XIII, XIV, XIX, and XXII) show that all the good looks were on the side of the Claudian branch of the family, the Julian branch having a more or less vulgar type of features, this being specially noticeable in Julia and her daughter Agrippina the elder.

² See p. 36.



[STEINMETZ.]

LIVIA, WIFE OF AUGUSTUS.

Engraved upon a sardonyx in The Hague museum.

The most authentic portrait of Livia. The first portrait of a lady ever engraved on a medallion.

which her action was to bring about. She was passionately in love with Octavius, and he with her, and the future was left to take care of itself. Livia, in addition to her beauty and her unusual abilities, was specially noted as eclipsing all other women of her day in her charming manners, and this combination of attractions completely fascinated Octavius. Tiberius Claudius died soon afterwards and his two little sons, Tiberius and Drusus, remained with Livia and were brought up by her in the palace which Octavius erected on the Palatine hill.

But there were also other reasons for this marriage besides mutual infatuation. Livia represented the quintessence of the ancient aristocracy of Rome, in which city the old nobility formed a strictly fenced order, intensely proud of its ancestry, and greatly venerated by the Roman people. Octavius, on the other hand, could only boast a middle-class descent, and even the Julian family into which he had been adopted, wealthy though they were, could not compete as regards the claims of long descent with the exalted Claudian family. It was therefore highly important for Octavius at this stage in his career to seize the opportunity which presented itself of allying himself to the noblest family in Rome. It is more difficult to understand the motives of the Claudian family in agreeing to this marriage; but that family were probably actuated by foreseeing that Octavius was the coming man, and by a desire to retrieve, through the tact and intellectual acuteness of a woman, the political influence which they had lost by the defeat of their party in the civil war.

And well did Livia throughout her life justify the confidence thus reposed in her both by her own family and by Octavius. In the exalted position to which ten years later she attained by Octavius becoming emperor she gave a notable example of tact, good sense, moderation, and fitting conduct in a high position, and the gradual and highly successful pacification of the angry passions resulting from years of civil war was to a very large extent, and perhaps chiefly, due to her. The traditions of the ancient Roman aristocracy taught her, even as an empress, to direct personally the affairs of her household, so that we read of her superintending the weaving-rooms, giving out the wool to the slaves and seeing that they did not waste it,

and even sometimes taking part in this work with her own hands.¹ In the eyes of the ancient aristocracy of Rome for a lady not to know how to do such work would have been as contemptible as for a general not to know how to use the weapons with which his soldiers were armed; though a newer nobility were beginning to arise who as *nouveaux riches* had other ideas. But while the traditions of her ancient house taught Livia to act thus, those traditions also taught her to share in the work of her husband. Thus Livia, unobtrusively, took no small part in the politics of the time, and through her influence with Octavius, combined with the fact that she belonged to a family which had taken a leading part on the Republican side, was able to help much by her moderate counsels towards allaying the hostile feelings called forth by the civil war. Octavius freely sought her advice, and we are told would not take any important decision without consulting her.

The admiration with which Octavius regarded Livia's character and abilities was shown when, about twenty years after their marriage, he introduced several laws regarding marriage and the restraint of the growing extravagance of the wealthy families; on which occasion he made in the Senate a long speech in which he detailed Livia's method of managing her household, her mode of life, her amusements, her dress, and her expenditure, and held up the conduct of this lady of the most exalted descent as a model for the ladies of Rome. Nor did any one consider his speech unfitting, the admiration for Livia among her contemporaries being universal, personifying as she did that which long tradition had made in the eyes of the Romans the perfect type of a great lady. Speaking of her, Signor Ferrero says:—"She was assuredly one of the most perfect models of that lady of high society whom the Romans in all the years of their long and tempestuous history never ceased to admire."²

About two years after Livia's marriage to Octavius the latter had to leave Rome to carry on the war against Sextus

¹ We are told that Octavius, after he became the emperor Augustus, would never wear any other togas than those which had been woven by Livia.

² Ferrero, *The Women of the Caesars*, pp. 57-58.

Pompeius, followed by his two years' campaign in Illyricum, in which he was twice wounded ; he had again to leave Livia in B.C. 32 for his campaign against Marc Antony, and again in B.C. 31 for his expedition to Alexandria, followed by the annexation of Egypt. But in B.C. 28, when Livia was twenty-nine, he returned in triumph from Egypt as the master of the whole civilized world, and Livia became an empress, the first of all empresses.¹ Thereupon she and Octavius proceeded to occupy the palace which he had some time before begun to build on the Palatine hill, and which was now enlarged in design and its adornment in various ways (including the collection therein of many works of Greek art) begun. And it is certain that in the arrangements for this adornment of the first imperial palace Livia, with her strong artistic tastes,² took a very prominent part.

By this time Livia's two boys were respectively fourteen and ten years old. Livia brought them up with all the traditional style of education customary in the Claudian family, seeking to make them worthy representatives of their great ancestors who had for many generations been famed for all those virtues which the Romans most cherished. And the two boys as they grew up promised to be fine examples of the Claudian race ; the elder of them, Tiberius, quiet and reserved, and even at that age beginning to have ideals as to what it behoved him to be like as a descendant of the time-honoured Claudian family ; the younger of them, Drusus, a boy of a most engaging disposition, and a general favourite with all in the palace.

But there was one bitter drop in Livia's cup of happiness. During the ten years which had passed since their marriage no child had been born to her and Octavius (now Augustus), a grief all the greater to Livia since it involved the mortification of knowing that if she and Augustus had no children the line of the Caesars would be continued by Julia, the daughter of her implacable enemy the divorced Scribonia, instead of by any children of her own. Moreover the party surrounding

¹ The title "Imperator," which we convert into "Emperor," being a military one, had no feminine equivalent ; and the title which Livia, and all empresses after her, bore was that of "Augusta."

² See pp. 36-37.

Scribonia heaped unceasingly upon Livia's head virulent abuse and calumny, which, though hidden, was none the less hard to endure, even though she was secure in the affections of Augustus and in the exalted position she had attained.

Then followed five years, during which Livia, jealous of the influence of Marcus Agrippa over her husband, was chiefly occupied in endeavours to counteract it, and to drive Agrippa from Rome. In this she at length succeeded, but only temporarily. A year later, in B.C. 23, when Livia was thirty-five, Augustus recalled Agrippa, and gave his and Scribonia's daughter Julia to him in marriage. During the next ten years Livia's chief aim became the advancement of her two sons, Tiberius and Drusus, both of whom were given high commands in the army at a very early age.

Livia's two sons grew up fine young men. They were both of them thorough representatives of the Claudian family, handsome, brave, and full of ability, and ere long became the most prominent men among the Romans. The younger of them, Drusus, with a genial, open nature, was a universal favourite, and immensely popular with the people. The elder of the two brothers, Tiberius, inheriting in a strong degree the old Roman type of character which his ancestors had so often displayed, and forming in his mind as he grew up a high ideal of the principles of conduct which ought to govern a Roman placed in a high position, upright, austere, and just, but proud and reserved, was little understood by any one except his mother, and gained none of the popularity which was showered upon his brother. This however affected Tiberius little, since, true to the sentiments which he had inherited, he despised popularity. Drusus when he was twenty-two was married in B.C. 16 to Antonia, then nineteen, the attractive daughter of Marc Antony and Augustus' sister Octavia. Antonia, sensible, modest, and virtuous, was admired by all Rome for her charming character, and this marriage was felt to be an ideal one, Drusus and Antonia being to the Romans the model of a devoted pair of lovers, and their affection becoming proverbial. In B.C. 14 Tiberius, then twenty-eight, was married to Pomponia Vipsania, the daughter of Marcus Agrippa by his first wife, and this marriage also was an intensely happy one,

until it was forcibly and cruelly brought to an end for political reasons.

In B.C. 12, when Livia was forty-six (her son Tiberius being then thirty, and her son Drusus twenty-six), Marcus Agrippa, her perpetual rival in Augustus' regard, died. But Livia had at the same time to endure the mortification which she had all along dreaded. Augustus, being by this time obliged to abandon any hope of a son to succeed him, was forced to adopt the sons of his daughter Julia by Agrippa, and the two elder of them, Caius Agrippa and Lucius Agrippa (then respectively seven and six years old), were formally adopted by Augustus as his heirs, and given the names of Caius Caesar and Lucius Caesar. This meant a triumph for the party of Scribonia, which they did not fail to make Livia feel at every turn. At the same time Augustus, to allay this discord, very cruelly forced her son Tiberius to divorce his much loved wife Pomponia Vipsania and marry Julia, Agrippa's widow.¹ Whether Augustus took this action against Livia's wishes, or at her suggestion, is not apparent, but that it could have been at her suggestion seems very improbable under the circumstances. Three years later, in B.C. 9, Livia had to mourn the death, at the age of twenty-nine, of her beloved younger son, Drusus,² who had covered himself with glory in his successful campaigns in Germany, and whose death was a national sorrow. To his young wife Antonia³ the blow was so great that she continued during the whole of the remaining forty-four years of her life unmarried, refusing to obey the law which required her to re-marry. She was left with three children, at this time respectively six years, three years, and one year old.

In A.D. 1, when Livia was fifty-eight, the scandals which had long been created by Julia at last came to the knowledge of Augustus, whereupon ensued much family trouble, ending with the banishment of Julia to the island of Pandataria.⁴ It speaks well for Livia that though Scribonia and her

¹ Page 11.

² Plate VI. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

³ Plate VII. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

⁴ The island of Pandataria, to which so many members of the family of the Caesars were at different times banished, often as a preliminary to their murder, lies in the narrow part of the Mediterranean, between the coast of Tunis and the southern coast of Sicily.

daughter Julia headed a faction ever showing animosity towards her, she never, during all these twelve years, sought to inform Augustus of Julia's misdemeanours. In the following year (A.D. 2) Julia's son Lucius Caesar died at Marseilles, his death being followed eighteen months later by that of his elder brother Caius Caesar, who died in Lycia from a wound received in battle against the Parthians, and it then became evident that Livia's son Tiberius must succeed Augustus. Five years later occurred the disaster of the destruction of Varus's legions, and Livia's chief anxiety became the depressed condition of mind which gradually came over her husband at these various private and public misfortunes. At length in A.D. 14, when Livia was seventy-two, Augustus died while he and she were at Nola, and her son Tiberius became emperor.

The remaining fifteen years of Livia's life were not happy. Having so long been accustomed to exercise much valuable and beneficent influence over Augustus she endeavoured to do the same in the case of her son Tiberius, often protecting persons who had incurred his condemnation, or whom he with his stern sense of justice considered ought not to receive the protection of the emperor, and disagreements between herself and her son were consequently frequent. At length owing to these disagreements Livia in A.D. 23, when she was eighty-one, removed from the palace, and returned to live in her own small house near it, where more than sixty years before she had lived with Tiberius Claudius, and from which she had departed to marry Octavius, in days when there was no idea of his becoming the sole ruler over the Roman world. Four years later Tiberius removed from Rome to Capreae, and at his desire Livia, then eighty-five, returned to live in the new palace which he had built. She never saw him again. After living in the palace of Tiberius for two years, Livia, who in her long life had seen such momentous changes occur as regards Rome's dominions, died in A.D. 29 at the age of eighty-seven, her ashes being placed beside those of Augustus in his mausoleum.¹

Great as is the contrast which Augustus offers to most of his

¹ Regarding the temple erected to the memory of Augustus and Livia at Vienne, in Gaul, see Chap. III, p. 97 (footnote).



[ALINARI.]

ANTONIA, WIFE OF DRUSUS.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



[ALINARI.]

DRUSUS, YOUNGER SON OF LIVIA.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



LIVIA, WIFE OF AUGUSTUS.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence

ALINARI

successors, Livia presents no less a contrast to most of the subsequent empresses. In the highly corrupt society of that age she lived for the whole of her long married life with Augustus without any scandal being ever attached to her name, though her various attractions must have subjected her to many temptations. Her example was a standing protest against the lax morality of her time. And it is a strong proof of her high character that in an age when divorce was so frequent and so lightly carried out she remained for fifty-two years the wife of Augustus. When once asked how she contrived so long to retain his affection she is said to have replied, "My secret is very simple; I have made it the study of my life to please him, and I have never shown any indiscreet curiosity with regard to his public or private affairs." She exercised an influence of the best kind over him, and her wise and temperate counsels had no small part in maintaining the peace and prosperity of Augustus' reign.

But though all this has never been denied, and though this character of Livia was that recognized by her contemporaries, the bitter enmity nourished by the divorced Scribonia against the woman for whose sake she had been cast aside eventually caused a false picture to be painted of Livia long after her death. An undying animosity was felt against Livia and her sons by Scribonia and her descendants, and one of the latter, Agrippina the younger, wrote long afterwards a series of memoirs which blackened the character of Livia and her son Tiberius in every way, and declared that Livia had caused Julia's sons to be murdered ¹ in order to gain the throne for Tiberius. And these memoirs became, ninety years later, the source of statements regarding Livia which, though now shown to be false, obtained credit for many centuries.²

One prominent characteristic in Livia ³ was her generosity and humane disposition. She was noted for her liberality in regard to money, and at her own cost she brought up many orphan children, gave dowries to girls belonging to respectable families who were badly provided for and who without such

¹ Though one had died at Marseilles and the other in battle against the Parthians.

² See Chap. II, p. 47.

³ Plate VIII. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

dowries had no chance of an honourable marriage, and performed many other charitable works. We constantly find her exercising her great influence with Augustus to plead on behalf of this or that person, inducing him to overlook offences, and urging him to moderate courses of action. Again, the causes of her disagreements with her son Tiberius after he became emperor were all of them in connection with her protection of various persons from punishment. And it is noteworthy that with her death the quality of clemency seems to disappear from the occupants of the imperial throne for nearly 300 years. Every evidence in fact shows Livia to have been wise, chaste, humane, and charitable. She was in regard to the next three centuries not only the first, but the best, of all the empresses.

Three buildings specially connected with Livia still remain at Rome, which is not the case with any other empress. The first of these is her house¹ on the Palatine hill, in which she lived with her first husband, Tiberius Claudius. It is the simple house of an ordinary patrician and is the only house of that class in the midst of the palaces of the Caesars. It stands closely penned in between the palace afterwards built by Tiberius and the still later palace built by the Flavian emperors, the latter adjoining the palace built by Augustus in which Livia passed the whole of the forty-two years during which she was empress. The preservation of the house under these circumstances can apparently only have been due to Livia's personal wish that it should not be destroyed. The house has a small vestibule, with the remains of a mosaic floor. This vestibule leads into a small atrium, into which open the three principal rooms; the walls of these rooms are decorated with beautiful paintings by the best Greek artists, including a group of Mercury, Io, and Argus, another of Galatea and Polyhymnia, a view of a Roman house, a lady at her toilet, wreaths of flowers and fruit, and similar subjects. From the other side of the court opens the triclinium (or dining-room), also decorated in the same way. Behind is a peristyle, into which open the kitchen, bath and other rooms. The back

¹ The whole of the buildings on the Palatine hill became in the course of centuries buried in the mass of débris created by the destruction of all the palaces of the Caesars, and this house of Livia has only in recent times been excavated.

part of the house was three stories high, and divided into a number of small bedrooms. The inscriptions on the leaden waterpipes of the house enabled it to be recognized as that of Tiberius Claudius, Livia's first husband. Here Livia's first son was born ; here she planned to persuade Tiberius Claudius to give her up to Octavius ; and to this house she returned for a time sixty-one years afterwards when she removed from the imperial palace owing to disagreements with her son.

The second building specially connected with Livia is her country villa on the Flaminian Way, situated on a small hill at a distance of about six miles from Rome. It is much ruined, but the small atrium remains, and this is particularly charming in character. The walls are painted so as to give the illusion that the hall is an open space in the midst of a garden, with flowers of various kinds in the foreground, and, behind these, rosebushes, pomegranates, and fir trees, and at the back a forest glade with olive trees and poplars, while birds are flying among the trees, picking at the fruit, and chasing each other. All shows a highly artistic taste and strong admiration for nature. From this villa and her house on the Palatine hill it is evident that wherever Livia took up her abode she had her rooms artistically decorated by the best Greek artists, and from the remains in these two houses we may form some idea of what appearance her apartments in the palace of Augustus must have presented. It was in this country villa of Livia's that the finest statue which exists of Augustus¹ was found, kept there by her to remind her of him during his absence on his campaigns, and specially interesting as being the representation which was thought most like him by Livia.

The third building connected with Livia is the tomb of her principal servants. Livia after becoming empress maintained considerable state, as this "Tomb of the Freedmen of Livia" testifies. It is situated on the Appian Way, near the bridge over the *Almo*, and contains in six chambers the remains of no less than 6000 of her servants, of whom as many as 600 were her personal attendants. These included (as can be seen by the inscriptions), the keeper of her armchair, the keeper of her lap-dog, the caretaker of her pictures, and others charged with

¹ That shown in Plate I.

similar duties. Reading these inscriptions it is difficult to realize that it was all 1900 years ago.

(b) Matters concerning religion

At the time that Augustus began to reign the state of things in regard to religion throughout the civilized world was peculiar, and unlike any that had preceded it. Rome, in conquering Greece, had been conquered by her captive in all matters relating to the intellect. In military affairs, in organization, in the judicious administration of a wide dominion, in law, and in the construction of great public works, the Roman excelled the Greek, but in purely intellectual matters the latter took the lead; and Greek art, Greek culture, and Greek ideas in philosophy and religion had been everywhere adopted by the educated portion of mankind. This supremacy of Greek ideas had produced the result that, omitting the Jews, all the educated classes of the Roman empire had adopted, in place of religion, certain systems of Greek philosophy, the three chiefly in vogue being the Epicurean, the Stoic, and the Platonic philosophies.¹

Thus at the beginning of the reign of Augustus what is ordinarily called religion had become almost non-existent.

¹ *The Epicurean.* This system held that the highest good was happiness, and that the wise man should pursue happiness in a well-regulated enjoyment of all the pleasures the world affords. Its only rule was to seek the highest pleasure, and not to indulge therein to such excess as to blunt the keen edge of enjoyment.

The Stoic. This system was based on Pantheism. It held that all existence has emanated from a universal spirit, and is absorbed into it again, like waves of the sea. It held that evil and good are both necessary forms of this universal life; that the wise man holds himself superior to all the accidents of life; that he has the same divine life as the gods; that it is manifested in him for a little while, and then re-absorbed into the whole, and given forth again in fresh individuals.

The Platonic. This, the profoundest of the three systems, taught the existence of one Supreme Spirit, the maker and ruler of the universe. It held that man was not a passing phantom, but a permanent individual; that there was a spark of divinity in him which was purifying him and drawing him up to a higher mode of existence. It taught a belief in virtue and vice; virtue pleasing to God, and preparing man for a happy future; vice displeasing to God, and earning for man a miserable future.

The ancient religions of the various races included in the Roman empire were still followed by the uneducated, but being only adhered to by this class had begun to fall into considerable disrepute, while the men of business, arms, literature, and the arts either troubled their heads not at all on such matters, or contented themselves with endless speculations, evolving theories of their own, or adopting one or other of the systems of philosophy in vogue.

Augustus, with a purely political object, on becoming emperor adopted a policy which made a material change in the position of the ancient religion of Rome, strengthening it greatly, and leaving it at the close of his reign in the most flourishing condition it ever attained. The low esteem into which the ancient religion had lapsed had caused a considerable decline. Many temples had fallen into decay for want of support from the wealthy, the services of the temples were maintained in a meagre fashion, and all the large class of persons who ministered in various ways in the carrying on of those services were becoming poverty-stricken. When this was the case in regard to a religion closely bound up with the long and glorious career of the Romans, it was palpable that such a falling off in the estimation in which that religion was held could not but have a political effect upon a race accustomed for seven hundred years to regard all their successes as the direct work of the gods of Rome, and into whose social customs that religion entered at every step.

Augustus set himself vigorously to reverse all this. As a part of his efforts for the consolidation of the Roman dominions into a firm and enduring empire, it became one of his chief objects to restore the reverence for the ancient religion, and to place the worship of the gods of Rome on a firm political basis. As one item in this process he built or rebuilt temples in all directions, endowing them with funds for their support. The famous "Testament of Augustus," the original of which was engraved outside his mausoleum, containing a list of all the great works done by him for the benefit of the empire (a copy of which, carved in stone,¹ was found at Ancyra, in

¹ Copies were sent to every province, but all except that at Ancyra have perished. A full-sized reproduction of it has lately been placed in the National Museum at Rome.

Asia Minor), states that Augustus built or rebuilt as many as eighty-two temples in Rome ; while Virgil declares that 300 temples were built in Rome during his reign. The most magnificent of those built by Augustus himself was that erected by him in the court of his own palace (p. 26) ; while the Pantheon, built in the second year of his reign by his friend and minister Agrippa, still remains to give evidence of the spirit with which he inspired others in this matter.

But Augustus did not confine himself merely to building and endowing temples ; he placed himself at the head of the entire system of national religion. The religious system connected with the worship of the gods of Rome included a vast organization. The *pontifices* had the superintendence of the sacred rites, and of the due performance of the religious ceremonies in general. The *flamines* acted as the sacrificial priests of particular temples, the chief of them being the Flamen Dialis, or Priest of the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, the temple which was considered " the head of all the world," and where were guarded the three sacred books of the Sibyl. The *augurs* foretold the will of the gods from the flight of birds, lightnings, plagues, and other indications. The *salii* were employed as priestly dancers and singers. The *Vestal Virgins* (of whom there were six) guarded the sacred Palladium,¹ and were charged with the care of the ever-burning fire in the temple of Vesta.² At the summit of the whole system was the *Pontifex Maximus*, the centre of all power in religious matters, and the head of the great colleges of priests formed originally by King Numa Pompilius (B.C. 714-672). The Pontifex Maximus held his office for life, and besides his more strictly religious duties was vested with the interpretation of the laws of religion

¹ A figure of Pallas, supposed to have been brought from Troy by Aeneas, and allowed to be seen by none but the Vestal Virgins and the Pontifex Maximus.

² The Vestal Virgins stood higher in rank than any one else in the State except the emperor (as Pontifex Maximus). They had numerous and important privileges, had great influence in obtaining appointments to many offices, lived in a style of much splendour, were allowed to drive through the streets of Rome in carriages, were preceded by a *lictor*, and if they met a criminal on his way to execution had the power of pardon. The honour of being a Vestal Virgin was eagerly sought. Vows were for thirty years. If unfaithful to their vow of chastity the punishment was burial alive. Such cases were very rare.

(involving almost every point connected with marriages, wills, and similar family concerns), had charge of the calendar with its complicated system of feast days, and supplied the Senate with guidance in all those various matters where magisterial duties and religious duties interpenetrated. Augustus, when he had been reigning for sixteen years, himself assumed this important office in which the whole religious system centred, and from his time onwards it was always held by the emperors up to the time of Gratian (375–383), who refused to adopt it even as a title, considering it unsuitable for a Christian emperor.

Augustus' own personal feeling regarding religion was different from that of the majority of Romans of his day. Though he built so many temples, and raised the worship of the gods of Rome to the highest level to which it ever attained, he does not appear to have been a believer in the ancient religion. But whereas most thinking men of his time adopted some form of philosophy, this was not the case with Augustus; he was not an adherent of any of the philosophies of the time. Still less had he any tendency towards the thoughtless kind of Epicureanism which was fashionable among the lighter elements of Roman society when he began to reign; so that he stood very much alone in this matter of religion. The most marked feature on this side of his character is his strong opposition to the lax morality of the day; he was a stern foe to all departure from the strait-laced discipline in morals which had obtained among the ancient Romans of the earlier republican times.

With Augustus began the custom of giving divine honours to the emperor even during his life. Whether or not this custom had its origin in any expression by him of a desire for such honours, the name he had chosen certainly was calculated to prompt this idea of divinity. The word "Augustus" had never before been borne as a name or title, but hitherto had been an epithet applied only to the most sacred things. The temples were *august*; the rites of the gods were *august*; and the word itself had its derivation from the sacred *auguries*. So that when during Augustus' reign the poets began to suggest that he represented the majesty of the Roman Empire, a majestic result of the favour of the gods who were themselves

honoured when honour was paid to their handiwork, and when those poets suggested that on this account temples and altars should be raised to the emperor, men saw nothing incongruous in such an idea, and the custom soon took root as a mode of paying honour to the majesty of Rome. As a consequence there was built one of the finest temples in the city, "the Temple of the Divine Augustus," a large part of the ruins of which still remain to attest its grandeur (Plate III).

In the year of the Roman era A.U.C. 750,¹ the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Augustus, an event occurred in the Roman province of Judæa destined to revolutionize the world in religious matters. This was the birth of Christ at the small town of Bethlehem.² In that year a general census of the whole empire (called in the New Testament "the taxing") was ordered by Augustus; and it was due to this census that Christ was born at Bethlehem in Judæa instead of at Nazareth in Galilee. Herod the Great, as already noted, died in this same year (see Appendix II).

Three things in the circumstances of the time appeared to prepare the world for this birth of Christ, for the promulgation of the fact, and for the spread later on of the Christian religion:—

- (i) The whole civilized world having been brought under one government, this causing a cessation of international wars.
- (ii) The excellent system of communications created by the great Roman roads.
- (iii) The Greek language having become universal; that language being also a more perfect vehicle for the expression of the truths of religion than any other.

These three things were all in existence only at this epoch;

¹ This year corresponds to B.C. 4, owing to a mistake of the early chronologists which could not afterwards be rectified.

² "O little town of Bethlehem

How still we see thee lie.

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep

The silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth

The everlasting Light."

and as far as one can see the knowledge of Christianity could never have been spread as it was, over so many different races, had matters been otherwise.

Towards the latter end of his life Augustus became a prey to serious depression, owing, we are told, to presentiments of some great change impending destined to destroy all that he had done, and that these had their origin in some communication that he received from the oracle at Delphi. History does not tell us more about this mysterious depression, but in connection with it we have a curious legend, and also a curious fact still existing among the buildings of Rome. The legend is that when the Senate proposed to elevate him to the rank of a god, Augustus, being in the Temple of Jupiter on the hill of the Capitol, saw a vision of a virgin standing upon an altar, holding in her arms a man-child; that he thereupon consulted the Cumæan Sibyl, who replied in verse that a king should come from heaven and be born of a virgin. And the curious fact referred to is that in the church called the Aracæli, which stands on the site of the Temple of Jupiter, there is an altar which encloses an ancient altar, declared to have been erected in the Temple of Jupiter by Augustus, which bears the inscription "Ara Primogeniti Dei" (the altar of the first-born God); from the existence of which altar this church has the name which it has always borne of "Aracæli," the Altar of Heaven.

CHAPTER II

TIBERIUS

A.D. 14—37

(a) Matters other than religion

THERE now follow four reigns, those of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero (covering the years A.D. 14–68), during which, while the empire remained practically at rest, it was the very reverse in regard to the imperial family, in which during almost the whole of this period a violent family feud continued, creating one tragic incident after another; so that the history of the time becomes chiefly that of the family of the Caesars. And in reading that history it must throughout be borne in mind that these were for the most part secret family affairs, which were not at the time known to the outside public (though perhaps guessed at, and forming the ground of innumerable rumours), and which only became public property long afterwards.

In the present day the view held of the emperor Tiberius has undergone a complete change from that formerly accepted. This depicted the stainless, upright, and austere Tiberius as a monster of iniquity who concealed his true character for fifty-six years, and was based chiefly upon the writings of the historian Tacitus,¹ who wrote about eighty years after Tiberius' death. But the whole subject has in the present day been studied much more deeply than was the case in former generations, and the critical examination to which the methods of

¹ See Note B (p. 271).

Tacitus in the case of the emperor Tiberius have in recent years been subjected has resulted in the Tacitæan Tiberius being shown to be an entirely fancy picture, one absolutely false to the real Tiberius.

Tacitus is a historian who has been highly honoured by mankind, and justly so;¹ but in regard to Tiberius his accuracy has been gravely impugned. In this case he had a special theory to enunciate, and his favourite science of Rhetoric and the principles imbibed from Cicero and Quintilian had taught him to be without scruples when that was the case. As has recently been pointed out by Mr. Spencer Jerome,² Tacitus is not in this case in reality writing history at all, as we understand the word, but with a particular object in view is following the "historiographic method" of Rhetoric as laid down by such masters in that science as Cicero and Quintilian.³ Writing as he did in the reign of Trajan, Tacitus seems to have felt,⁴ like his friend Pliny, that the most forcible way of showing appreciation of Trajan was to denounce all his predecessors as tyrants. Caligula, Claudius, and Nero sufficiently proclaimed the fact by their actions; it was otherwise in the case of the stainless and upright Tiberius. Tacitus therefore employed all his art to show that Tiberius also was a tyrant; and regardless of many evidences recorded by himself which militate against his theory,⁵ and following all the rules as laid down

¹ See pp. 73-74.

² See Appendix III.

³ Roman education from the later times of the Republic was devoted almost exclusively to the study of Rhetoric. To use beautiful language effectively, regardless of the nature, value, or truth of the ideas conveyed by it, became a passion which dominated men throughout their lives. The object of this training given by the Roman education was frankly avowed to be the production, not of truth, but of the imitation of truth—of verisimilitude. The result naturally was seriously to impair among the Romans the feeling for veracity and sincerity; as Merivale justly says, "the pernicious effects of this solemn trifling seem to have perverted the moral sense of the Romans more speedily than even their literary style." ⁴ See p. 218.

⁵ This also was in accordance with the rules of the science. It laid down that it was dangerous to hide or slur over such evidences, that they should be fully stated, and then their effect nullified by a sneer, or an innuendo, or a statement that the person did not mean what he said. All of which methods Tacitus faithfully adopts in his picture of Tiberius.

for such cases by Quintilian ¹ regarding the use of Lying as a Fine Art, and the instructions of Cicero as to the production, not of truth, but of the imitation of truth, he produces the Tacitæan Tiberius.

Tacitus does this mainly by a series of skilfully contrived generalizations which are glaringly out of accord with the facts which he relates.² He follows this course unaffected by the fact that the picture he was drawing of Tiberius was contradicted by the statements of writers of every description during the eighty years which had elapsed since the death of that emperor. He has no hatred against Tiberius whatever; nor is he apparently misled by false information; he is simply (in his desire to evolve an elaborate compliment to Trajan) following the rules of that which was the chief science of his time, and of which he was an ardent devotee; and that science recommended this "historiographic method" of treatment in cases where the rhetorician desired to blacken the character of some man against whom he could find nothing worthy of blame.³

Nor was Tacitus without ample materials for drawing such a

¹ Nevertheless Quintilian was a great moral teacher according to the standard of his time, giving a high example of seriousness, honour, and a pure life to the young men whom he taught. He was the greatest and best of all the Roman teachers, believing strongly in education, moral influence, and a good environment in youth; and it is probable that his teaching had a large share in forming the moral ideas of the Antonine age. Pliny the younger was among his pupils, and is loud in his praises.

² See Appendix III, in which the artful methods (so subtle that they have deceived mankind for eighteen centuries) followed by Tacitus in order to produce a picture of Tiberius such as would accord with the theory that he was a cruel and profligate tyrant have been detailed.

³ By this exposition of the methods of Tacitus by Mr. Spencer Jerome the comment of the emperor Napoleon in regard to Tacitus is shown to be much more correct than has hitherto been supposed. Speaking to Cacault, the French ambassador at Rome, regarding Tacitus, Napoleon said: "Has there ever been a more unjust detractor of humanity! To the simplest actions he attributes the most criminal motives. He makes all the emperors seem the most profound scoundrels, without showing in the least the wonderful genius they possessed. His *Annals* are not a history of the empire, but an account of the scandals of Rome. And he, who talks ceaselessly of informers, is the most shameless informer of them all."

picture of Tiberius if he desired to do so. In the secret records of the imperial family, to which Trajan evidently gave Tacitus access, was a monograph—the Memoirs of Agrippina the younger—containing all that the most venomous malice of four women, belonging to four successive generations, could invent against the Claudian branch of the family, as represented by Livia and her son Tiberius. All the animosity of the divorced Scribonia against Augustus and Livia, all the malicious dislike and dread felt by Scribonia's daughter Julia against Tiberius, the husband of strict life who knew all her shameful misdemeanours and scorned her in consequence, all the fierce hatred nourished by Julia's daughter Agrippina the elder against her step-father Tiberius, who she persisted in believing had poisoned her husband Germanicus,¹ and all the hatred felt by her daughter Agrippina the younger² against that rival branch of the family which stood in the way of her ambitious desires were piled up in these Memoirs of Agrippina the younger, furnishing a mine from which Tacitus could draw to any extent that he might desire.

Tacitus does not appear to have been misled by this mass of vituperation. The Roman rhetorical school, taught to use the most shameless scurrility, invective, and vilification with absolute freedom, and instructed by Cicero that the use of such language was, if well done, "facetious" and "urbane," naturally attached no credit to such assertions when made by others; and Tacitus would appear to have taken this mass of violent condemnation for what it was worth, looking upon it as the venomous raging of a band of fiercely incensed women. But nevertheless it supplied him with an inexhaustible quarry from which he could draw materials whenever he wished to throw out a suspicious hint, a veiled allusion, or an innuendo against Augustus, Livia, or Tiberius. And the *Annals* show what frequent use he made in this way of the Memoirs of Agrippina. The skilful manner in which Tacitus, by a series of forcible and gloomy generalizations, for which he produces no facts in support, and by an artful use of sneers and innuendoes, has contrived to produce in the mind the general effect that in regard to the reign of Tiberius one is reading the record of a bloody tyranny when one is really reading nothing of the

¹ Pages 64–65.

² Chap. III, pp. 104–106.

kind, is a masterpiece as an example of that science of Lying as a Fine Art which had been taught by Cicero and Quintilian under the name of Rhetoric.

Tiberius,¹ born in B.C. 42, the elder son of Augustus' wife Livia by her first husband Tiberius Claudius, was brought up in the palace of Augustus, and from his earliest years was noted for his unassuming character and reticent disposition. Throughout his boyhood and youth he had to endure many slights, owing to Augustus' preference for his more gay and light-hearted younger brother, Drusus, and, after the latter's death, for the sons of Julia; and Tiberius, proud and diffident, slighted by the court, and befriended only by his mother, became more and more reserved as he grew up. From the time that he was twenty until he was thirty-five he was engaged in constant campaigns in every quarter of the empire, and earned great distinction. When he was twenty-eight he married Pomponia Vipsania,² to whom he was deeply attached, and who in the following year bore him a son, to whom out of his love for his brother he gave the name Drusus; but after being married to her for two years he was, in B.C. 12, forcibly divorced from her to his intense grief; and, while she was given to another husband, Tiberius was forced by Augustus to marry the latter's widowed daughter Julia, whom he had strong reason for disliking, knowing her character as he did. In B.C. 7, when he was thirty-five, two years after the death of his brother Drusus, Tiberius returned to Rome from his command on the Danube frontier, but finding himself slighted at the court, and being disgusted at the conduct of his wife Julia, whom he did not dare either to divorce or denounce, he insisted, notwithstanding the expostulations of Augustus and Livia, on retiring to Rhodes to lead a life of literary leisure; and there he remained for eight years, until he was forty-three.

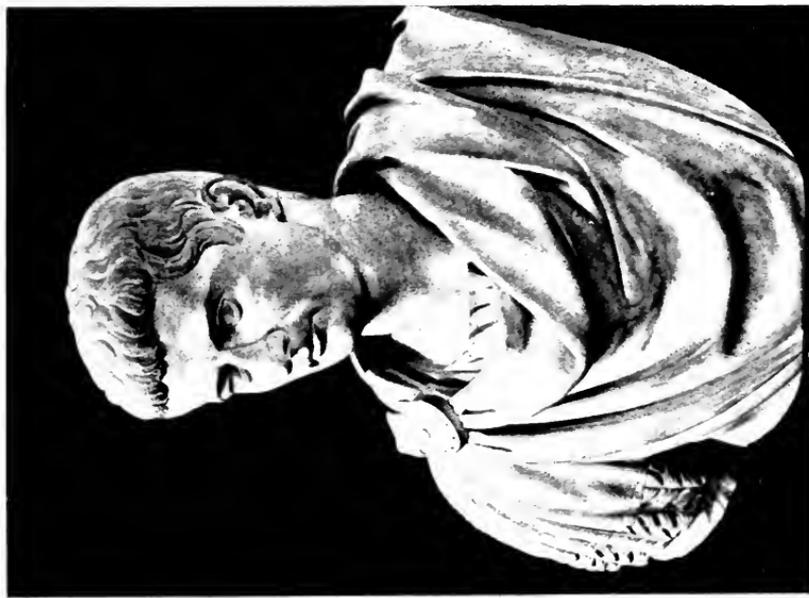
When he had been six years at Rhodes he requested permission to return to Rome, but it was refused, presumably owing to Julia's desire to keep him away from the court and

¹ Plate IX. Tiberius at the age of eighteen. Portrait-bust in the Lateran Museum, Rome.

² Plate X. Pomponia Vipsania, in the dress of a priestess of Isis. Statue in the Naples Museum.



[BROCC.]
TIBERIUS, ELDER SON OF LIVIA, AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN.
Portrait-bust in the Lateran museum, Rome.



[ALINARI.]
TIBERIUS.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



[BROGI.

POMPONIA VIESANIA, WIFE OF TIBERIUS; IN THE DRESS OF A PRIESTESS OF ISIS.
Statue in the Naples museum.
Found at Pompeii.

to its being suggested to Augustus by her that he aimed at supplanting her sons. When in A.D. 1 Julia's licentious conduct at last brought upon her Augustus' condemnation and her banishment, Tiberius, though divorced from her by the emperor's order, interceded for her, obtained some amelioration of the conditions of her imprisonment, and insisted on giving her the same allowance which he had been accustomed to give her hitherto. But he never got over being torn from his young wife Pomponia Vipsania when he was thirty, and after he was divorced from Julia when he was forty-three remained unmarried for the ensuing thirty-six years of his life. In A.D. 2 he was permitted to return from Rhodes, but the influence of the Julian party caused it to be laid down as a condition that he abstained from taking part in any public functions. Two years later, both of Julia's two elder sons being dead, Tiberius was adopted by Augustus, who now began to lean considerably upon his advice and assistance, and he was shortly afterwards despatched to command the Roman armies on the Danube frontier where trouble was brewing.

For the next eight years Tiberius was occupied in hard-fought campaigns in Pannonia, Dalmatia, and Germany, gaining still further distinction, especially for the way in which, in A.D. 10-12, he retrieved in two successful campaigns the honour of Rome after the disaster to Varus' legions; and in A.D. 12, when he was fifty-four, he returned to Rome, where he was awarded by the Senate the honour of a triumph. It is recorded that on this occasion Tiberius for the first time departed from the cruel custom that when the conqueror's triumphal car reached the hill of the Capitol the principal captive who had graced his triumph should be led away to the prison of the Tullianum below the Capitol, and be there strangled as the final act of the triumph. Tiberius rejected this custom, refusing to allow Bato, the Pannonian chief, who, chained to the conqueror's chariot, had followed it to this point, to be thus treated, and instead sent him to live at Ravenna, bestowing various presents upon him.¹ By this time

¹ Yet even Julius Caesar, during his triumph for the conquest of Gaul, caused his gallant enemy Vercingetorix to be thus put to death. And fifty-eight years after Tiberius' triumph, Vespasian, in his triumph for the conquest of the Jews, similarly put to death Simon Bar Gioras, the brave defender of Jerusalem.

Augustus had learnt Tiberius' value, and recognizing that he was the only man in the family capable of succeeding him, formally nominated him as his successor. He called him in his letters "the only strength and stay of the empire," and developed a considerable affection for him notwithstanding the difference in their characters, Augustus, with his easy familiarity and good humour, not understanding the proud reserved nature of Tiberius. Two years later Augustus died at Nola, and Tiberius became emperor at the age of fifty-six.

In view of the false picture which has been drawn of Tiberius, depicting him as a monster of wickedness who concealed the fact from all the world for fifty-six years until he became emperor, it is desirable to go into some detail regarding his character and the influences which assisted in the production of the fictitious picture of him which has been presented to us.¹

Tiberius was undoubtedly the best choice that any one could have made as the man to rule the empire. In every department in which he served before becoming emperor, and in every act of his public life after that event, and notwithstanding all the heavy disadvantages under which he laboured owing to the strong ill-favour persistently maintained against him by the adherents of the Julian party, he showed himself fitted above all others to hold that office. And in the many speeches of his in the Senate which even Tacitus records nothing is more noticeable than the uniform dignity, fairness, good sense, and ability which Tiberius displayed on all occasions, and frequently in circumstances of the greatest difficulty. From his youth, as already noted, he had set before himself a high ideal of what a Roman in an exalted position ought to be like, based upon the best types of the time of the Roman Republic. To this ideal he rigidly adhered throughout his life, all his actions displaying a firm desire to follow the aims which had actuated the most honoured Romans of an earlier age. Absolutely stainless in his private life, upright and scrupulously just in all concerns of public life, and sternly opposed to all extravagance, as well as to the servility towards the emperor which was growing up, he set the Romans an example, bor-

¹ The two authorities for it are, Tacitus, who wrote about eighty years afterwards, and Suetonius, who followed Tacitus and wrote about twenty years after him.

rowed from the past, which only a few of them were ready to adopt. And though this brought upon him unpopularity he could afford to disregard it in view of his recognized ability both as a commander in the field and as an administrator, ability which on all occasions demonstrated him to be the foremost Roman of his time.

Signor Ferrero, the well-known Italian historian, speaking of him, says :—“ Tiberius, the son of Livia, was a true Claudian, the worthy heir of two ancient lines, an uncompromising traditionalist, therefore a rigid and disdainful aristocrat, and a soldier severe with others as with himself. He wished the aristocracy to set the people an example of all the virtues which had made Rome so great in peace and war—religious piety, simplicity of customs, frugality, family purity, and rigid observance of all the laws. The luxury and prodigality which were becoming more and more prevalent among the young nobility had no fiercer enemy. He held that a man of high lineage who spent his substance on jewels, on dress, and on revels was a traitor to his country, and no one demanded with stronger insistence that the important laws of the year B.C. 18, the sumptuary law, and the laws on marriage and adultery, should be enforced with the greatest rigour.”¹

But there were four main forces arrayed against Tiberius which made his task one of almost insuperable difficulty. In the first place he was only the second of the emperors, and the Romans had not yet come to regard that office in the light which afterwards became customary. Tiberius, the second emperor, had in fact to meet the difficulties which under ordinary circumstances would have fallen upon the first of the emperors. No one will understand the first century of the empire who fails to realize how gradually the imperial dignity grew out of the Republic, or who imagines that what Augustus had done was to put an end to the Republic and set up in its place an autocratic sovereignty similar to that held in the 4th century by Constantine the Great. The position of the emperor was at first in many respects that of a president of the Republic. At the same time, instead of the Senate showing, as might have been expected, a disposition to watch jealously

¹ Ferrero, *The Women of the Caesars*, p. 86.

this growing importance of one of their number, the tendency of the Senate, and still more of the people, was to be ever exalting that position more and more into one of an autocracy, significant of the majesty of Rome, and to use terms of adulation in addressing the holder of the office. But while this was the attitude of the Senate as a body, this did not prevent the leading families of Rome from being intensely jealous of the particular family which had gained this exalted position. Rome had been for many centuries an aristocratic Republic, in which all the families of that aristocracy considered themselves equals. These families were therefore the natural enemies of one of their number which had exalted itself into the dominant position now held by the family of the Caesars. They revenged themselves by calumniating the members of that family at every opportunity, and by subjecting to the most extreme penalties any of its members who could be shown to have contravened any of the severe Roman laws, any case of the kind being tried by the Senate, which was principally composed of members of these aristocratic families. This feeling had lain more or less dormant during the time of Augustus. The immense boon which the latter had conferred upon the nation in putting an end to the miseries of civil war, the extraordinary good fortune which had attended him, and the many services which in the course of his long reign he had rendered to the empire, caused Augustus during the latter half of his reign to be an object of almost religious veneration.¹ But Tiberius had to maintain the imperial dignity without this exceptional assistance, and to meet opposition which except for this special reason would have fallen upon his predecessor; and throughout his reign the animosity of the aristocratic families for the one of their number which had become thus exalted over all others was a strong force arrayed against him

¹ Though even Augustus had to bow to this prevailing animosity of the aristocratic families on occasion. As, for instance, when his daughter Julia and her daughter of the same name were tried and banished; on both of which occasions a much more severe punishment was meted out by the Senate to these members of the imperial family than in the case of other ladies of the aristocracy guilty of the same offence. Had Augustus attempted to oppose these sentences it would at once have been said that he made laws for others from which he held himself and his family exempt.

at all times, and ready on every opportunity to create difficulties in his path. Obviously under such circumstances attempts upon his part to make the aristocracy set an example of virtues which they were far from possessing were likely to meet with strenuous opposition and to arouse fierce hatred against him.

Secondly, Tiberius, with his high aims gathered from the best traditions of Rome, was a stern foe to all oppression of the people, and a rigid punisher of all who in any official position offended in this respect. On the other hand many of the privileges of the aristocracy tended to induce such oppression. This frequently brought him into collision with them, enhanced the animosity felt for him both as a reformer and as the head of a family which had become unduly exalted, and led the aristocracy to regard him as a tyrant whenever on behalf of the people of this or that district he became an opponent of cherished aristocratic privileges.

Thirdly, he belonged to the Claudian branch of the imperial family, and not to the Julian branch. The Claudians and Julians had been so closely connected since the marriage of Augustus and Livia that they were regarded as one family. But notwithstanding the far more exalted claims to distinction which the Claudian family could boast as compared with those possessed by the Julian family,¹ a sort of myth was by degrees created round the descendants of Augustus through his daughter Julia, and Tiberius not belonging to this heaven-born race had the appearance, even though adopted as his son and successor by Augustus (who himself was only an adopted son of Julius Caesar), of being an intruder who had no right to the throne. This feeling was fanned on all occasions by the Julian branch, who also inculcated an idea that they were the upholders of the aristocracy, and that Tiberius on the other hand was an opponent of the aristocratic principle and favoured democratic tendencies.

Fourthly, it was his unavoidable misfortune to have as a bitter enemy the vindictive Agrippina the elder,² who, looking upon herself as the representative of the Julian branch of the

¹ See Chap. I, pp. 28 and 29.

² Tiberius' step-daughter, the daughter of his wife Julia by her former husband, Marcus Agrippa.

family, and filled with malignant jealousy of him as belonging to the Claudian branch, throughout his reign traduced his character, misrepresented his every action, stirred up enemies against him on every side, and handed on a legacy of falsehood to her daughter Agrippina the younger, whose writings in the next generation formed a mine from which in subsequent ages those who desired to traduce Tiberius drew materials for that purpose.

These four sources of antagonism made the task of Tiberius, as the second of the Roman emperors, one of far greater difficulty than had been experienced by Augustus, or than was experienced by any of Tiberius' successors. With the result that he who had known and loved Virgil, Horace, and Livy, he who had grown up in a time when the dream of a great restoration of the aristocracy (as the effect of the marriage of Augustus and Livia, and of their unostentatious style of life) was the favourite idea in Roman society and imbibed by him from his earliest years, he who had formed the hope of bringing about in his reign an actual realization of the vision pictured by Livy of a great Senate, a glorious army, and a venerated State, and who by his study of the best models of the past, by his adoption of their principles, and by the abilities he had displayed during forty years of varied service in every part of the empire, was eminently capable of effecting such a realization, was driven by these adverse conditions to abandon this hope, and to be occupied throughout his long reign of twenty-three years in a ceaseless and ignoble conflict the degradation of which to one with such ideals was incalculable, and was (as he showed) deeply felt by him.

Nevertheless Tiberius effected much. Though the writers of the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, upon whom we have chiefly to depend, concerned themselves almost wholly with the scandals in Rome during his reign, being apparently unable to look beyond the city of Rome, they have not been able to obscure the great work which Tiberius did for the empire. Before coming to the throne he had proved his capacity in every department of the State during a long course of years; as a general in many campaigns he was never defeated, thus giving his soldiers the fullest confidence in him; and his name was respected in all the provinces where he had been employed.

As emperor he increased this reputation. By a temperate frontier policy he kept the empire at peace, and his reign being thus free from wars he was able to give his whole attention to the welfare of the people. He reduced taxation, rendering the lives of the inhabitants of the empire contented and prosperous, and there is ample evidence that his reign was a period of unusual happiness. Widely known to be severely strict with any governors who oppressed the people, he thereby preserved the latter from cruelty and injustice. His financial administration was so successful that while reducing the burdens of the people he was always able to give liberally in cases of special distress.¹ He stedfastly maintained the administration of the empire at the high level to which it had been brought by Augustus. Finally, his scrupulous justice, protection of them from oppression, opposition to all extravagance and ostentation,² and reliable character made him honoured by the people of the empire at large, and though he might be hated at Rome, he was loved in the provinces. It was also Tiberius, proud as he was of his descent from that Claudian family which was, with just right, the proudest family in Rome, who yet said that a distinguished man was his own ancestor.³

His one defect was an impenetrable reserve. Owing partly to the slights he had to endure as a boy, partly to the cruel wrong he had been made to suffer when his young wife Pomponia Vipsania was torn from him and given to another husband while he was made to marry such a person as Julia, and partly to his disdain for the ignoble sycophancy, falsehoods, detraction, and calumny which prevailed around him, the reserve to which he was by nature inclined increased with his years, causing him to become more and more a contrast to his predecessor Augustus, and earning for him much unpopularity. Moreover after the scandals created by his second wife Julia he kept aloof as much as possible from society, especially

¹ He gave a sum equal to £800,000 when certain cities in Asia were ruined by an earthquake, and again gave the same sum in A.D. 36 (the last year of his reign) for the relief of the sufferers by a fire in Rome.

² He would not allow temples or statues to be erected to himself.

³ Tacitus, *Annals*, xi, 21.



feminine society, often failing to take part in social functions at which by custom his appearance was expected.

There was however one notable exception to this conduct on Tiberius' part. Antonia, his sister-in-law,¹ the widow of his brother Drusus, who after the latter's death, refusing to re-marry, had retired to live in the palace of Augustus, occupying herself with bringing up her three children Germanicus, Claudius, and Livia (or Livilla), was the one bright spot in Tiberius' reign, the one refreshing example (after the death of his mother Livia) of a personality differing widely from all the ignoble individuals among whom his lot was cast. And if anything further were required in order conclusively to refute the description of this emperor given by Tacitus it is supplied by the fact that Antonia, who has been universally acknowledged by all ages as the noblest woman of her time, was throughout life the close friend of Tiberius. She shared all his aspirations, was the one person with whom he threw off his habitual reserve, and was for over thirty years his firm friend and counsellor.

With this exception however Tiberius, especially after the death of his son Drusus, lived a more or less lonely life, his natural reserve increasing until an unfathomable impenetrability, which made all his thoughts a sealed book to those around him, became his chief characteristic, one which brought upon him both dislike and suspicion. Respected and supremely feared, he was never in the least understood; and this strongly assisted the manœuvres of those who desired to misrepresent as much as possible his actions and motives.

Nevertheless the literary works of various kinds of writers during sixty years after his death fail to agree with the picture of him drawn in the reign of Trajan by Tacitus, and show that Tiberius was uniformly respected, both by his contemporaries and by those who lived in the next generation. In fact, how could it be otherwise in the case of one who had such a record, and when the emperors with whom such writers had necessarily to compare him included Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vitellius, and Domitian? Of all the emperors who succeeded him up to the time of Trajan Vespasian was the only one who could be compared in any way with Tiberius, and the latter

¹ See Chap. I, p. 33.

both reigned more than twice as long and also could show a much better record as regards justice and humanity than Vespasian.¹

Tiberius, with his stern following of ancient Roman models, was immensely strict in regard to all offences against the State ; and this was the part of his policy which made him most disliked in Rome. He greatly extended the scope of the law of *majestas* (crimes against the State), including within its scope everything tending to bring the State, or himself as its representative, into contempt. The Romans had grown exceedingly lax in such matters, and to such a society this extreme severity was all the more terrible. This was aggravated by the encouragement he gave to *delators*, or informers of offences against the laws. Augustus had encouraged delators by rewarding those who gave information against violators of his marriage laws, and Tiberius when he came to the throne merely extended the practice to breaches of the law of *majestas*. But this exceeding severity earned for Tiberius lasting dislike in Rome. Nevertheless, however severe he might be, Tiberius was on all occasions scrupulously just ; and this was the reason he was so highly esteemed both by the army and by the people in the provinces. Moreover, being honestly determined to administer justice purely, when he found how much the practice of delation was being abused, he set himself to check it, as tending to create injustice. And it was only afterwards, at the end of his reign, when he had removed from Rome and to a large extent given up control over its affairs, that the practices of the delators brought so much odium upon his name.

Following scrupulously as he did all the principles of Augustus, Tiberius demonstrated in many of his actions how careful he was to maintain in practice the position which he occupied in theory,² and to avoid any tendency towards that obliteration of the Senate which afterwards took place. He was for ever refusing to interfere with the Senate, or to act as if set over it, and condemning the persistent endeavour of

¹ This the execution of Simon Bar Gioras at Vespasian's triumph and the construction of the great Flavian amphitheatre for gladiatorial combats alone suffice to demonstrate (p. 58).

² Chap. I, pp. 9-10.

both Senate and people to exalt him into the position of sole ruler of the empire and to address him in terms of adulation. He always entered the Senate-house unattended; and he took his place among the other senators merely as one of their number. He had a vast contempt for the littleness and insincerity of public life, and above all things hated the common habit of over-weening flattery. Tacitus says that so corrupt were the times in this respect that senators strove to surpass one another in the fulsome extravagance of their language, and that Tiberius on leaving the Senate-house after listening to such language would exclaim, "O men, fitted for slavery." He refused to be called *Dominus* (lord), or *Imperator*, saying, "I am lord only over slaves, and *imperator* only over soldiers; I am but first among my fellow-citizens." This attitude was strictly in accord with the position to which he had succeeded, but it assisted the endeavours of the Julian party to represent that Tiberius was a foe to the aristocratic principle.

Tiberius¹ reigned twenty-three years (A.D. 14–37). His reign, so far as the empire at large was concerned (except for the deeds of Germanicus on the Rhine during the first three years) was one of absolute quietude and good government. Tiberius maintained with almost superstitious reverence every measure inaugurated by Augustus. The one change which he made was to bring the Praetorian Guards to Rome and encamp them outside the walls. He gave unremitting attention to the provinces, with the results already detailed. He hated the cruel sports of the amphitheatre, restrained them as much as he could, and would not attend them, and to so great an extent did this have effect that the gladiators complained that their livelihood was almost gone.

But while the history of the empire during the reign of Tiberius was thus uneventful, that of the imperial family was one of perpetual turmoil. Augustus' daughter had been married to Livia's son, and Augustus' granddaughter to Livia's grandson, but these marriages had not succeeded in killing the seeds of that long tragedy of the Caesars which,

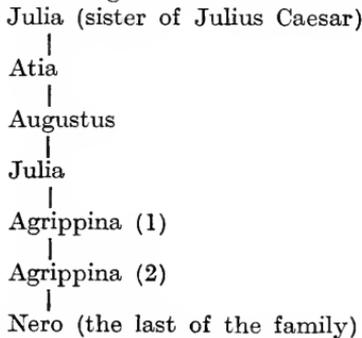
¹ Plate XI (p. 48). Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

beginning in the reign of Augustus in connection with Julia and her sons, lasted for over fifty years (through the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero), and was in reality a vindictive and ignoble *vendetta* carried on from generation to generation by the descendants of Augustus (the Julian branch) against the descendants of Livia (the Claudian branch),¹ who moreover did not retaliate in like manner. It so chanced that the chief representatives of the Julian branch were nearly always of the female sex² while those of the Claudian branch were of the male sex, but even constant inter-marriages between the two branches were powerless to bring this terrible feud to an end so long as any of the Claudian branch remained alive.³

The family troubles of Tiberius' reign chiefly centered round four persons. These were :—Tiberius' nephew Germanicus, son of his brother Drusus ; Tiberius' son Drusus ; the latter's wife Livilla, sister to Germanicus ; and Germanicus' wife, Agrippina the elder, one of the two daughters of Julia and Marcus Agrippa. Tiberius having been so much attached to his brother Drusus⁴ had a great regard for the latter's son Germanicus, who returned the feeling. But Germanicus had been married to Julia's daugh-

¹ See Appendix I.

² Except in the case of Augustus, the succession of the Julian line was in each generation through one of the female sex, thus :—



³ See Chap. IV, p. 147.

⁴ No event of Tiberius' life was suffered by Agrippina to pass without misrepresentation, and consequently we find from Tacitus that she had informed her daughter Agrippina the younger that even the death of Drusus in B.C. 9 (which took place when Agrippina the elder was only five years old) was a murder carried out by Tiberius because he was jealous of his brother. Anything more fantastically opposed to the facts of Drusus' death (see p. 12) could scarcely be conceived.

ter Agrippina the elder, a woman of powerful character, an imperious and vindictive nature, an indomitable will, and a most ungovernable temper, who was imbued with an undying animosity to Tiberius, and was also determined that one of her sons, and not Tiberius' son Drusus, should succeed him.

In the first year of Tiberius' reign a mutiny broke out among the troops on the Danube frontier. Tiberius sent his son Drusus,¹ then twenty-six, to put it down, and the latter upon his arrival at the frontier showed so much firmness, tact, and capacity that he was completely successful. This was followed by a similar mutiny on the Rhine frontier which was treated by his cousin Germanicus in a very different manner.

Germanicus, now twenty-nine, owing to his being the son of Tiberius' brother Drusus had inherited among the Roman people much of his father's popularity. He had been placed by Augustus in command of the Rhine frontier, whither his wife Agrippina accompanied him, his head-quarters being at Cologne. The mutiny which now broke out among the four legions on the Lower Rhine was dealt with by Germanicus in such an altogether ill-advised manner that it grew into formidable proportions, threatened to spread to the four legions on the Upper Rhine, and ended in a cruel slaughter by these troops of a large number of their comrades.

To divert attention from these proceedings Germanicus entered on three successive campaigns during the years A.D. 14-16 against the Cherusci and the Chatti, in which through utterly bad generalship he suffered the most serious disasters. In his first campaign (A.D. 14) he effected little or nothing, but laid waste about fifty miles of country, sparing neither age nor sex, and retreated again to the Rhine without suffering any defeat, while his deeds were magnified at Rome into great achievements.² He was also fortunate enough, after the campaign was over, to reap by chance, through the troubles of the Cherusci, a political advantage which counter-balanced the want of military results.

¹ Drusus had been married about six years before to his cousin Livilla, the sister of Germanicus.

² Tacitus, as a part of his plan regarding Tiberius, magnifies all these deeds of Germanicus to an extravagant degree, and relates these campaigns almost after the manner of an Epic poem.

Hermann (called by the Romans Arminius), the young and capable leader, though not chief, of the Cherusci, had, after his great victory ¹ over the legions of Varus in A.D. 9 when he was twenty-three, become the hero of a romance among the Cherusci. Thusnelda, the only daughter of Segestes the chief of the Cherusci, had fallen in love with him, and married him against her father's wishes; and the Cherusci were divided into two parties in consequence. During the absence of Hermann, Segestes by treachery gained possession of Thusnelda, several of the principal adherents of Hermann, and two of the three Roman eagles captured by Hermann in the battle at the Teutoburger Wald, and delivered them over to Germanicus as a bribe for his assistance against his son-in-law Hermann.² The return to Rome of these eagles produced among the people the utmost enthusiasm, and Germanicus became the idol of the Roman populace.

The second campaign of Germanicus (A.D. 15), to which Tiberius consented with great reluctance (his principle being to maintain an unaggressive frontier policy), was on a larger scale. The treacherous action of Segestes had roused the whole of the northern tribes, and they gathered in great force under the command of the enraged Hermann, whose wife Thusnelda was held captive by the Romans. Germanicus unwisely divided his army into two portions, one under himself and the other under Aulus Caecina, and both portions were in this campaign almost annihilated. The rivers being in that age the principal lines of communication (often leading through miles upon miles of impenetrable forests), Germanicus embarked his force, coasted round the shores of the North Sea to the mouth of the Ems, and after laying waste part of what is now East Friesland without meeting with any determined resistance sailed up the Ems for about 100 miles, where he appears to have met the other half of his army which had marched by land. He then disembarked and, rather foolishly, led his troops over the ground where the terrible slaughter of Varus' legions had occurred six years before, which locality

¹ Chap. I, p. 13.

² There is now in the Bavarian National Gallery at Munich a fine picture of Thusnelda, with the other captives, defiling before Germanicus after being thus treacherously surrendered to him. The little boy by her side is however an anachronism, as her son was not born until some months after she was taken captive.

Tiberius in his campaign of A.D. 10-12 had wisely avoided, knowing the bad effect upon soldiers of witnessing the scene of such a defeat. Tacitus draws a moving picture of how when Germanicus' army reached the Teutoburger Wald the whole force was deeply affected at seeing the scattered débris of the battle and the remains of the slaughtered troops of Varus, describing how the Roman soldiers wandered about the battlefield amidst the bleaching bones of their comrades, torn with rage and grief.¹ Soon however they had to defend themselves against a like fate. Hermann first enticed into an ambuscade the portion of the army commanded by Germanicus himself, and severely defeated it, continuing to attack the defeated force from the surrounding forests as in its retreat it sailed down the Ems, and this defeat being made still more disastrous by the fact that in retreating along the coast of what is now West Friesland, nearly half what remained of the force was swept away by the sea in a storm. Meanwhile Hermann, turning away from the pursuit, marched to engage the other half of the army, caught it on the great Roman causeway² over the Bourtangier Morass (extending for some forty miles along the western bank of the Ems, with a breadth of about five miles), and in a four days' fight from thence to the Rhine inflicted immense losses upon that portion of the army also; while the news of its defeat created a panic among the troops holding the bridge over the Rhine at *Castra Vetera* (now Wesel) who were with difficulty prevented from destroying the bridge,³ which would have caused the annihilation of the whole force. Every effort was made by Germanicus to disguise these defeats and represent them at Rome as victories, but the legions in Gaul, Spain, and Italy had all to be greatly depleted in order to furnish large drafts to fill up the attenuated legions on the Rhine. The recovery, however, of the two lost Roman eagles made the Roman people ready to exalt the name of Germanicus to any extent, and all else was put out of sight.

Hermann, the brave leader of the Cherusci, had thus worthily earned the renown which has ever since been attached to his

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, c. 61-62.

² This causeway still remains, four feet below the present surface.

³ See p. 80.

name. In the course of six years, through his remarkable talents as a general, he had first defeated Varus and completely destroyed three entire Roman legions, and had then gained two crushing victories in succession over the armies of Germanicus.¹

In Germanicus' third campaign (A.D. 16), to which Tiberius was forced to consent by the declaration of the people of Rome that his reluctance to do so was due to jealousy of the glorious achievements of Germanicus, the latter again suffered several defeats, and though he succeeded in slaughtering a large number of the Cherusci he eventually had to retreat, and embarking his whole force to sail down the Ems, on reaching the mouth of that river was met by a storm in which nearly his whole fleet and army were destroyed. Subsequently, however, he managed to recover from the Chatti the third of the lost eagles of Varus ; which enabled him to give the whole affair the appearance of a victory in the eyes of the Roman people, who adored Germanicus, and did not know, as Tiberius did, how petty had been his successes, and how great the defeats which he had suffered, and which had been glossed over in his reports.

Germanicus then requested the emperor's permission to make a fourth attempt to conquer the Cherusci the next season. But Tiberius, notwithstanding all his regard for him as the son of Drusus, had had enough of the incapacity of Germanicus. He therefore recalled him, and Germanicus, in May A.D. 17, was given by the Senate the honour of a triumph, at which Thusnelda with her little son (born soon after she was made over to the Romans) was displayed as the principal captive. Thusnelda received cruel treatment, for she was never restored to Hermann but was kept in honourable captivity for the rest of her life at Ravenna.² Tiberius then sent his own son Drusus, who had shown so much ability on the Danube, to command on the Rhine frontier and maintain

¹ A monument in honour of Hermann now stands upon the supposed site of his great victory in the Teutoburger Wald over the legions of Varus.

² Hermann died five years afterwards, in A.D. 21, at the age of thirty-five. His name was honoured ever after by the northern tribes, he being justly considered as the deliverer of Germany.

a more temperate policy, and sent Germanicus to the eastern command where he could do less harm, while Cneius Piso, the governor of Syria, who had a distinguished record of more than forty years, and was thirty years older than Germanicus, was told privately by Tiberius to endeavour to keep him from making any mistakes.

This arrangement did not work well. There ensued constant friction between Germanicus and his subordinate Piso, the governor of Syria; and when rumours thereof penetrated to Rome the populace, taking the part of their idol Germanicus, declared that the fault lay with Piso, and clamoured for his dismissal. Tiberius however was far too just a man to remove in deference to such clamours a long-trying and blameless public servant whom he knew to be in the right, and since he refused to listen to this outcry against Piso he earned the people's wrath. Soon afterwards Germanicus became seriously ill; upon its being rumoured in Rome that his life was in danger the people became plunged in grief, but passed to the extremity of joy upon news being received that Germanicus was better. Their joy however was of short duration; for early in A.D. 19 Germanicus died at Antioch at the age of thirty-four. Thereupon heavy gloom fell upon all Rome, the people passing to a depth of silent sorrow greater even than had been felt when Germanicus' father Drusus died.

Upon this death of Germanicus, Agrippina, who had been in a condition of smouldering wrath and resentment ever since Germanicus had been transferred from the Rhine to the eastern command, declared that he had been poisoned by Piso and his wife Plancina, and more than hinted that it had been done by the orders of Tiberius. This was a monstrous insinuation, seeing that Tiberius in every act connected with Germanicus had shown his regard for him, but it was one which had serious results to Tiberius, the Roman people being furious at the death of their favourite, Germanicus, and ready, as ever, to believe the worst of the silent and reserved Tiberius. Agrippina, burning with wrath, and quite convinced that Germanicus had been poisoned, brought his ashes to Rome and furiously demanded vengeance upon Piso and Plancina. Tiberius summoned Piso to Rome, and ordered

a trial by the Senate. The Roman people, stirred to frenzy by the denunciations of Agrippina, were in the maddest state of excitement, demanding the death of Piso and Plancina, and declaring that if they were acquitted they would themselves tear them in pieces. Tiberius maintained an absolute neutrality, making a dignified speech¹ at the opening of the trial in which he begged the Senate to remember the long and honourable services of Piso for forty-three years, but declining to interfere in any way with the Senate in their decision. The trial was expected to last six days, but after the second day, although the charge of poison had completely broken down,² Piso, seeing that all the Senate were determined on his condemnation and death, committed suicide. Thereupon it was declared that Tiberius had caused this for fear of disclosures implicating himself. Tiberius' mother Livia, against his judgment, gave her protection to Plancina; and this was a fresh cause of offence to those who clamoured for her death. The court sentenced Piso's son Marcus to banishment and confiscation of all his property, but Tiberius in view of the fact that no evidence whatever had been forthcoming against him, declared the sentence to be monstrous and refused to allow it to be carried out.³ Thus ended the first of the two celebrated trials of Tiberius' reign. Agrippina continued to nurse her wrath, and scarcely took any pains to conceal the bitter resentment which she nourished against her step-father.

On the death of Germanicus Tiberius took steps to obtain honours for the latter's sons. He obtained the advancement of the eldest son, Nero, then seventeen, to the quaestor-ship, five years earlier than the age required by the law, and be-

¹ Recorded even by Tacitus himself, notwithstanding the animus which he shows throughout this affair against Tiberius.

² The accusers of Piso declared that the poison had been administered by him at a banquet to which he had been invited by Germanicus, Piso being supposed to have poured the poison intended for his host into the dishes in the presence of all the other guests without any one having seen it done. Tacitus himself says that every man thought it an absurd fable.

³ Signor Ferrero says that the whole account given by Tacitus regarding this affair of the death of Germanicus and the trial of Piso "is coloured by an undiscerning antipathy."

trothed him to Julia (then a child of ten), the daughter of his own son Drusus. And three years later he obtained similar honours for Germanicus' second son, Drusus the younger. But nothing appeased the wrath of Agrippina, who still thirsted for vengeance for what she persisted in believing to have been the murder of Germanicus.

While these troubles were occurring at Rome Tiberius steadily continued his unceasing labours for the maintenance of the peace and prosperity of the empire, undeterred by the turmoils in the political atmosphere of the capital. He also added another province to the empire, subduing in A.D. 17 the mountainous country of Cappadocia, to the east of Asia Minor. In A.D. 21, he successfully defeated a serious rebellion of the Aedui, Treveri, and other tribes in Gaul, of which victory a notable monument still exists.¹ And in A.D. 23 he subdued the rebellious tribes in Mauretania and Numidia, who under their leader Tacfarinas had carried on a desultory war with Rome for seven years.

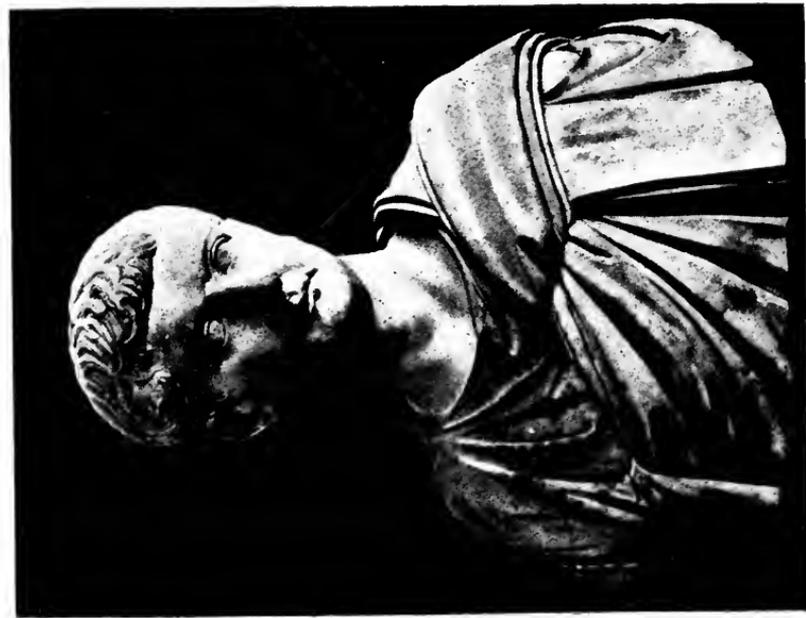
In A.D. 23, a great calamity came upon Tiberius. His fine manly son Drusus,² married to his first cousin Livilla, Tiberius' niece,³ had shown himself in every way full of capacity. He had been tested in various commands during ten years, and had shown his ability, tact, and common-sense on every occasion, and Tiberius, who was now sixty-five, considered that the time had arrived to associate him with himself in the government. Scarcely had he done so when Drusus suddenly died, at the age of thirty-five. It was a terrible blow to Tiberius, who began to feel his own powers of mind and body unequal to the burden of the empire, and who by this death of his son⁴ was left with no one in the imperial family fitted either in age or ability to be any assistance to him. He mourned for his handsome and capable son with the deepest grief, shutting himself up, Seneca says, in the inner part of his palace, and refusing to see any one. Little, however, did

¹ See p. 78.

² Plate XII. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

³ See Appendix I.

⁴ Drusus left two children by Livilla, a daughter, Julia, and a son, Tiberius Gemellus. The latter was Tiberius' heir, but was passed over by him in favour of Caligula.



[ALINARI.]

DRUSUS, SON OF TIBERIUS.

Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



[BROCCI.]

AGRIPPINA THE ELDER, GRANDDAUGHTER OF AUGUSTUS.

Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

Tiberius suspect how his son's death had been caused. Eight years afterwards it suddenly came to light that Drusus had been poisoned by his wife Livilla and her lover Sejanus, the very man whom Tiberius now took as his chief minister.

Sejanus was one of the most despicable men of the time. Exalted by Tiberius, who was quite unaware of his true character, into the position of his chief adviser, and given the command of the Praetorian Guards, he by various artifices gradually gained immense power. Sejanus deceived all parties; he deceived Agrippina, leading her to suppose he was entirely on her side; he deceived her sons Nero and Drusus, playing off one against the other, and insidiously instilling into both of them ideas of forcibly gaining the throne; he deceived Tiberius, urging the charms of retirement and the danger of assassination in Rome, hoping that this would cause the emperor to quit Rome, which would put greater power into Sejanus' hands; and he laid plans for marrying his guilty accomplice Livilla, and becoming himself emperor when all who stood in the way had one after another been removed.

These machinations were not long in bearing fruit. In A.D. 27 Tiberius, now sixty-nine years old, disgusted with he intrigues around him, weary of public life in which he was surrounded only by baseness and treachery, sorrowing over the loss of his only son, filled with bitterness at seeing the ruin of his hopes of making his reign fulfil some of the high aims he had formed, and sighing for a learned leisure such as he had enjoyed thirty-three years before at Rhodes, removed from Rome to Capreae (now Capri), where he resided during the remaining eleven years of his life. As before when he went to Rhodes, he took with him a few of those literary men in whose society he knew he should find mental relaxation, and also took with him his daughter-in-law Livilla and her daughter Julia, the latter being then eighteen, and having been married about two years before to Agrippina's eldest son Nero.

This retirement of Tiberius from Rome gave Sejanus the opportunity for which he had schemed. He accompanied the emperor to Capreae, and soon became possessed of immense power. As the chief minister with the emperor all

correspondence passed through his hands, no access to the emperor was possible except through him, and every one desiring favours had to come to him. His crimes were numerous and abominable, while all who displeased him disappeared, Tiberius of course receiving the odium. By this time there had developed a war to the knife between Sejanus and Agrippina, and the former in this contest contrived to remove one after another of the adherents of Agrippina, while each side employed intrigues, calumnies, accusations, and trials for contravening the law called the *Lex de Majestate*,¹ with a ferocity the fierceness of which has been vividly painted by Tacitus. From this scene of evil passions let loose the aged Tiberius turned in disgust. Instead of the dream of his early manhood of ruling a dignified State governed by the loftiest principles of ancient Rome, he found himself expected to take part in a degrading strife in which the combatants were interested only in personal animosities, while, ignoring all that he had done and was still doing for the safety and prosperity of the empire, they directed against himself every kind of insidious calumny. The effect was to make Tiberius in his old age turn more and more from public affairs, except such as concerned the empire at large.

In A.D. 29 Tiberius' mother Livia died at Rome. Tiberius prepared to proceed thither for the funeral, but eventually gave it up, unable again to face the fulsome language, veiled animosity, and domestic turmoils which a return to Rome would bring upon him. Tacitus says that Livia's death removed the only barrier which hitherto had protected Agrippina and her sons from Sejanus. However this may be, soon afterwards Sejanus began his arrangements for sweeping Agrippina and her sons from his path. First he brought to Tiberius a report of a conspiracy in favour of Agrippina and her son Nero; to this, however, Tiberius declined to pay any attention. This was followed, in A.D. 30, by a more serious

¹ This law was originally made to defend the prestige of the State (*majestas*), either in regard to offences against the magistrates, or offences of any kind held to be treason against the State, the punishment for which was death. But it became frequently invoked by senators anxious to vent their personal hatreds, and gave rise to numerous false accusations and unjust condemnations by the Senate.

report of the same nature which could not be thus ignored. Nero and Drusus were lured to their destruction by Sejanus ; Agrippina required no such incentive. "Tiberius," says Velleius, "was struck with shame at the conduct of his daughter-in-law (Agrippina) and his grandson (Nero)." Worked on by Sejanus, Tiberius consented to order a trial by the Senate of Agrippina and her two sons. The trial took place ; with the result that Agrippina was banished by the Senate to the island of Pandataria, Nero to the island of Ponza, where he starved himself to death, and Drusus (who is believed to have been insane) was confined in the range of rooms forming the lower part of the palace of Tiberius on the Palatine hill in Rome.¹

At length however, in A.D. 31, Sejanus suffered the punishment he had for eight years deserved for his numerous crimes. For some reason unknown he proceeded to Rome, where the most abject flattery was lavished on him by both Senate and people, every one being anxious to obtain the favour of the all-powerful minister. But Sejanus, by removing himself from the side of Tiberius, opened the avenue to the latter which had so long been closed, and advantage of this was taken by Tiberius' sister-in-law, Antonia, the noblest woman of her time. Antonia still continued to live in the palace of Augustus on the Palatine hill, where she had brought up her three children. She was now sixty-seven, and in her charge had been placed her grandson, Agrippina's fourth son Caius (or Caligula), for whom Tiberius now sent in order that he might be with him in his solitude, Caligula being at this time eighteen. Antonia seized the opportunity given by the absence of Sejanus to open Tiberius' eyes to the character of the man whom he was allowing to ruin the whole family, and with Caligula sent by the hand of a trustworthy servant a letter to the emperor. This letter disclosed to Tiberius how Sejanus had ruined both Livilla (Tiberius' niece), and also Livilla's daughter Julia (Tiberius' granddaughter), and had murdered Tiberius' son Drusus ; how he had brought Agrippina and her sons to destruction ; and how he had even now gone to Rome, to plan a *coup d'état*, by which he intended

¹ See p. 78.

to dethrone Tiberius and himself take the throne. Ample proofs were given of the statements made, and the emperor's eyes were at last opened.

Tiberius took action at once. He invested Sertorius Macro, an officer of his guard, with the command of the Pretorian Guards in place of Sejanus, and sent him with a letter to the Senate ordering the immediate arrest and trial of Sejanus. This was promptly carried out; the proofs of Sejanus' guilt were overwhelming, he was condemned to death by the Senate, dragged to the Tullianum, the people crying out with one voice against him, and there strangled, and his body, after being dragged about the city by the people, was cast into the Tiber. The servile and cowardly Senate, who had only a few hours earlier cringed before the most powerful minister that Rome ever knew, anxious to clear themselves, embarked upon a furious destruction of all his family and dependants, who were slaughtered indiscriminately, and Tacitus tells a pitiful story of a little girl, one of the children of Sejanus, who asked what harm she had done and what was wanted with her as she was hurried to the Tullianum to be strangled. Finally Apiciata, the divorced wife of Sejanus, wild at the loss of her children, revealed to Tiberius the whole of the incidents connected with the poisoning of his son Drusus by Livilla and Sejanus, and the names of those whom they had employed; all of whom were put to death except Livilla, who was allowed to take refuge with her mother Antonia. There Livilla, unable to bear the shame of her crime and the condemnation of all around her, starved herself to death.

The revelation which had thus come to Tiberius at the age of seventy-three increased still further the dark cloud of affliction which had enveloped him ever since the death of his son, and caused the last six years of his life to be filled with the deepest sorrow. Without either wife, child, or near relative to soothe his mental suffering, plunged in grief and horror at the knowledge that had come to him of how his beloved son had been done to death, and at the crime of his niece Livilla, who till then had been living with him at Capreae, disgusted at the vilification and conspiracies carried on against him by his nearest relatives, and in despair at the ruin of all his family, he withdrew as much as possible from public

affairs except such as affected the provinces, and lost all concern as to what might be done at Rome.

Meanwhile the continued absence of the emperor greatly displeased the Roman people, conditions which were made use of by the Julian party to vilify Tiberius still further. Notwithstanding that he was by this time seventy-four years of age, the Julian party ascribed his remaining at Capreae to the foulest motives, declaring that it was due to a desire to lead a life of the deepest profligacy. "He slunk, it was asserted, from the sight of the good and pure, to the obscurity of his detestable orgies; he was the patron of panders, the sport of minions; he was drunk with wine and drunk with blood; the details which were freely circulated of his cruelty and licentiousness, were coloured from the most loathsome scenes of the stews and the slave-market."¹ These assertions of the Julian party (repeated in the memoirs of Agrippina the younger) were eighty years afterwards elaborated by Tacitus into statements that Tiberius while at Capreae (that is from the age of sixty-nine to seventy-nine) abandoned himself to a life of atrocious and revolting depravity; and it is only in recent times that the entire falsehood of this Capreae legend has been unmasked.²

But the fall of Sejanus and the destruction of himself and his family did not end the tragedies of the reign of Tiberius. In A.D. 33, when Tiberius had been six years at Capreae, both Agrippina and her son Drusus starved themselves to death in their respective prisons,³ Drusus because he was insane, and Agrippina in her fierce wrath because she was not liberated after the fall of Sejanus. Meanwhile a reign of terror had set in at Rome. Sejanus in his struggle with Agrippina had created two factions among the aristocracy, the party of

¹ Merivale.

² As regards the way in which the Capreae legend was invented, allusions to public events being inserted in it to give an appearance of truth, and the manner in which the anachronisms created by these allusions has led to the unmasking of the entire falsehood, see Appendix III, pp. 598-599.

³ Some have declared that Tiberius caused Drusus to be starved to death, but there is no evidence for the assertion, while it seems very improbable, and Tiberius' subsequent conduct towards Drusus' brother Caligula makes it still more so.

Agrippina and that of their opponents; fierce animosity prevailed between them, and every artifice permitted by the harsh Roman laws was put in force to bring about the destruction of those of the opposite party. Calumnies, denunciations, trials, and scandalous condemnations by the Senate filled the atmosphere. The hateful race of "informers" swarmed, and plied their trade unremittingly; and constant "delations," and disappearances of well-known faces were ever taking place.

These numerous deaths were not ordered by Tiberius (though they subsequently afforded to Tacitus opportunities to make generalizations insinuating that they were so), but were due to a peculiarity of the Roman laws, and the removal of the controlling influence of the emperor. It was one of the most cherished principles of the Roman law that it was open to any one at any time to lodge an accusation, however grave, against even the highest official, and young men were encouraged in the practice of making such accusations as the most advantageous means of gaining notoriety. If the accuser proved his case he gained half the confiscated property of the accused; if he failed he suffered punishment, either by fine, imprisonment, or even, it might be, death. Emperors such as Augustus and Tiberius did not dream of interfering with laws which had existed for generations, but they exercised a strong controlling influence, and as long as they did so such accusations were kept in check. But by the withdrawal of Tiberius from public affairs at Rome after the revelations consequent on the fall of Sejanus this controlling influence was removed, and the judicial disorganization in Rome allowed one person after another to suffer in this manner. Some years afterwards the emperor Caligula took it into his head to read out to the Senate the names of all who had suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, and to point out to the Senate that it was they themselves who were guilty of these deaths by allowing false accusers and false witnesses to flourish unchecked, and ended by telling them that they were mad at the time.

This speech of Caligula's to the Senate combines with many other evidences to show that the Romans of Tiberius' own time, notwithstanding his unpopularity, did not misjudge

him in the way that subsequent ages have been led to do through the false picture drawn eighty years later by Tacitus. In the writings of moralists, philosophers, publicists, and satirists for eighty years after Tiberius' death we find no such statements as would have been inevitable had that picture been a true one; and when finally we find a satirist like Juvenal knowing nothing of any orgy of vice at Capreae carried on by a man between seventy and eighty years old, and having nothing more severe to say of Tiberius than a remark as to his tranquil old age, these writings of men of Tiberius' own time are sufficient proof that the picture afterwards drawn of him by Tacitus with a special object, as a man who up to the age of fifty-six had an altogether blameless record, but who then suddenly became a monster of iniquity, and after the age of seventy plunged into the deepest profligacy, is a preposterous fiction.¹

But much as we may deplore that Tacitus in his desire to compliment the emperor in whose reign he was writing should have deliberately lent his great art to the drawing of a false picture of Tiberius, in all other respects he compels our admiration. He is ever penetrated with a strong and sincere esteem for the old Roman ideals as to courage, fortitude, independence of character, nobleness of conduct, and heroic self-sacrifice for the good of the commonwealth, the very same esteem which animated Tiberius throughout life, causing Tacitus, even though anxious to draw another picture of that emperor, again and again to relate deeds and words of Tiberius which appeal so strongly to his own sentiments in this respect that he cannot refrain from recording them even though they contradict the picture of Tiberius which he desires to draw.²

¹ Signor Guglielmo Ferrero, the greatest living Italian historian, in a recent letter speaks of the Capri legend in the history of Tiberius as being "an infamous and absurd tale, invented by party hatred in order to vilify the last notable upholder of the great aristocratic tradition of Rome," and says that though Tacitus "committed the injustice of employing the vivid colours of his palette on this gross story, he has not succeeded in confusing the false and the true so completely that we are unable to render to Tiberius the justice so long due to him."

² These are the portions of Tacitus' narrative in regard to Tiberius which have always until recently formed an insoluble problem to scholars (see Appendix III, p. 596).

Animated by such sentiments, Tacitus values to the highest degree the soldierly virtues, and repeatedly extols the soldier's proud submission to lawful authority, his calm, stern, endurance of cruel hardships, his brave steadfastness in the face of enormous odds, and his readiness to sacrifice even life when called upon by the State ; and he is never tired of contrasting the conduct of the men who stood guarding the Rhine, the Danube, and the Solway with that of their brethren in the Senate at Rome who at the same time were purchasing safety and ease by all kinds of ignoble practices. And when later on he comes to deal with the age of Nero his burning contempt for the cowardice, base servility, and abject self-abasement which seized upon all classes at Rome bursts forth in scathing words which seem to blast with fire the despicable senators and knights who thus degraded their race and abandoned the old Roman ideals for which Tacitus had so strong a reverence.

Especially also does Tacitus win our admiration for the masterly manner in which he makes the episodes which he relates live before our eyes. He does not merely record the events with which he deals, but with all the powerful art of a great historian makes us almost spectators of them. The mad fury of the mutinous legions of Germanicus, their mingled grief and rage as they saw the bleaching bones of their comrades on the battlefield at the Teutoburger Wald, the wild excitement of the Roman populace at the trial of Piso, the passionate wrath of Agrippina, the furious slaughter of Sejanus and his family, and many other episodes are all related by Tacitus in such a way that the events seem to pass before our eyes as vividly as if acted upon the stage of a theatre. And this, joined to his lofty ideals and detestation of all that is ignoble and base, will ever make Tacitus highly estimated by mankind.

In A.D. 34, when Tiberius was seventy-six, he gave evidence of how vigorous was still his mental ability and his careful watch over the welfare of the empire. The Parthian king, Artabanus, relying upon the emperor's great age, stirred up strife on the eastern frontier, and seized Armenia. But Tiberius promptly gathered an army and sent Lucius Vitellius to the Euphrates to oppose him ; and eventually Artabanus

was forced to sue for peace, and to give his son Darius as a hostage.

The last act of Tiberius' life is one which goes far to vindicate his character and to disprove the calumnies of Agrippina against him. Early in A.D. 37, being then seventy-nine, he felt his end approaching, and had still to announce his choice of a successor to the throne. Those open to him to select from were :—his nephew Claudius, then forty-nine (brother of Germanicus), Tiberius' grandson Tiberius Gemellus, son of Drusus the younger and Livilla, a youth then eighteen years old and of a very agreeable disposition, and lastly Caius (or Caligula) then twenty-five, the fourth son of Germanicus and Agrippina. Had Tiberius been all that Agrippina had for years asserted, and been anxious to advance his own line, the descendants of Livia, and to oust the descendants of Augustus' daughter Julia, he would have chosen either his grandson Tiberius Gemellus, or his nephew Claudius, the son of his beloved brother Drusus, even though Claudius was rather a poor creature ; for Tiberius knew that Caligula was still more unfit than Claudius for such a position. But Tiberius had always felt that the descendants of Julia had the prior claim, and seems to have been determined to show once for all to the Romans and to posterity how grossly he had been calumniated by Agrippina in this matter. At the time when he had proposed to leave the throne to his son Drusus the younger matters had been different ; then the sons of Agrippina were too young, while his own son Drusus was, in every way, the man most fit for the position. But now there was a son of Agrippina who was at all events of sufficient age. Therefore, notwithstanding all that he had suffered from Agrippina, he refused to give the preference either to his own nephew or even to his own grandson, but gave it to one who, as her son, was of the blood of Augustus.

Accordingly on the 16th March, becoming very ill while at Misenum, Tiberius sent for Caligula and announced to him that he commended the empire to his hands, earnestly adjuring him to behave well to his unprotected relative Tiberius Gemellus. He then fainted, and all thought he was dead, whereupon Caligula was saluted as emperor. Suddenly a report was received that Tiberius had revived, which caused general

consternation. Seneca says that Tiberius then sent for Caligula, and while talking with him fell back dead. Tacitus and Suetonius say that Caligula threw a pillow over his face and, with the assistance of Macro, strangled him.

More than thirty portraits exist of Tiberius in the museums of Rome. They are all alike in showing a refined, sensitive face, with a strain of sadness, and are all of them, without a single exception, totally at variance with the description of his character as related by Tacitus and Suetonius. On the other hand they accord with that character which he undoubtedly possessed as a stainless and upright ruler of the empire who throughout his life acted up to the high ideal which he had learnt from a study of the lives of the noblest Romans in the days of the Republic, an ideal to which he steadfastly adhered notwithstanding that he was encompassed throughout a long life by great difficulties and the severest family misfortunes.

Speaking of Tiberius, Adolf Stahr says :—“ History shows us no sovereign who was so unhappy in his domestic relations as was Tiberius. Even as a boy he was placed in a difficult position, by the separation of his parents, and by his adoption into the imperial family, where he was regarded as an unwelcome intruder, and was surrounded by the dislike and exposed to the disrespect of the privileged members. His first happy marriage was violently broken, that a woman might be forced on him who brought shame and dishonour on his head. After this marriage was at an end he remained from his thirty-fifth year to the end of his days unmarried and alone. His only brother, whom he tenderly loved, the handsome and heroic Drusus, was taken from him by death. So also was his only son ; and he had to learn that the wife of this son had been his murderess, and further that the daughter of this son likewise betrayed her husband to Sejanus. His kinsfolk of the Julian branch, Agrippina and her sons, paid him with black ingratitude for all the care he took for them, and the unhappy old man when considering them had good cause for his speech, ‘ Happy Priam, who survived all his children.’ The treachery of Sejanus finally filled up the picture of measureless misfortune and sorrow which is revealed to us when we consider this life, one which at moments drew

from the restrained heart of the great sufferer a cry of despair, of doubt in gods and men. If the gloomy earnestness of his temper was intensified finally into contempt for mankind, the only wonder is that this took place so late. And yet one hope remained to him in the midst of the general misapprehension with which he was regarded, and that was—that futurity would judge him aright. ‘He cared far less,’ says Tacitus, ‘to please the generation in which he lived, than to stand well with posterity.’ Indeed he spoke his hope himself: ‘I would have posterity remember my acts. Posterity will do justice to my memory.’ His hope remained unfulfilled for eighteen centuries.”¹

Notwithstanding that we are told so little about those portions of the life of Tiberius which would best serve to fulfil his desire that posterity should remember his acts and do his memory justice, yet we are not left entirely without information in that respect. Although Tacitus in his desire to draw a particular picture of Tiberius omits to relate the latter’s long years of arduous public service, and his brilliant military and civil career (portions of his life which would not assist Tacitus’ picture), yet even so we can see many things indicating the carrying out by Tiberius of the high aims which from his earliest years he had adopted. Among these are, the uniform character given him for justice, the high estimate held of him by the people of the provinces, his treatment of the Pannonian chief Bato,² his hatred of ostentation and of the servile attitude of the senators,³ his whole conduct during the difficult episode of the trial of Piso,⁴ his long forbearance exercised towards Agrippina,⁵ the fact that, from the age of twenty to that of sixty-nine, against him, almost alone of all men in Rome, no word of scandal was ever breathed, and his passing over both his own nephew and his own grandson as his successor, in favour of one who as Agrippina’s son he considered had the best right to the throne, together with many other incidents of his career. And however different may be the picture which was subsequently drawn of him, there stands opposed to it the indisputable fact that the evidence of a variety of writers shows that

¹ *Tiberius*, by Adolph Stahr.

³ Page 58.

⁴ Page 65.

² Page 49.

⁵ Pages 80–81.

both in his own time and for eighty years after his death the character of Tiberius was one which was honoured and respected among the Romans.

The finest monument of the reign of Tiberius which remains is the splendid triumphal Arch erected by him in Gaul at Arausio (now Orange, near the left bank of the Rhone, about twenty miles north of Avignon) to commemorate the defeat in A.D. 21, of the Ædui. It is in the same style as the Arch of Severus in Rome erected 182 years later. It is the oldest Roman triumphal Arch in existence except the Arch of Drusus in Rome, and is much superior to the latter, and in perfect preservation.¹ A Roman bridge built by Tiberius in North Africa is also still to be seen. It is constructed over the river Beja, about seventy miles west of Carthage. It is 300 feet long and 24 feet wide, and is one of the oldest Roman structures in North Africa.

Tiberius built the second palace of the Caesars on the Palatine hill in Rome, situated on the north-western side of the hill, and overlooking the valley of the Velabrum. This palace covered the whole of that portion of the Palatine, and had an arched passage (cryptoporticus) joining it to the palace of Augustus. Here Tiberius resided during the first thirteen years of his reign; here Agrippina on many occasions poured forth the vials of her wrath for the death of Germanicus, insulting the emperor even before his guests; here Tiberius mourned for the death of his only son Drusus, shutting himself up in the inner part of this palace, away from the sight of all men; and here, after he had removed to Capreae, died his aged mother Livia. This palace of Tiberius still awaits excavation, being at present covered by the Farnese gardens. The only portions of it visible are the subterranean cells and halls (on the slope towards the valley of the Velabrum) which formed the prison in which Agrippina's son Drusus was confined, with a gallery in front of it commanding a fine view.

AGRIPPINA THE ELDER.

Three women played the leading parts in the long tragedy of the Caesars, Augustus' daughter Julia, her daughter Agrip-

¹ There is also a fine Arch to the memory of Tiberius at Saintes, near Bordeaux.

pina, and the latter's daughter Agrippina the younger ; and of these three Agrippina the elder took the most important part, both by her own actions and the legacy of hatred against Tiberius and his mother which she transmitted to her daughter.

Agrippina the elder,¹ the *bête noir* of the reign of Tiberius, the second of the two daughters of Julia and Marcus Agrippa, was a woman of most powerful character. Together with an indomitable will she possessed great ability, resolution and courage, but with these qualities were combined so much pride, such a vindictive spirit, and above all such an absolutely uncontrollable temper, that these latter characteristics neutralized all her ability. Again and again we find her mind blinded by passion, and find her defeating her own objects by inability to restrain her fierce and vindictive anger.

Married when she was sixteen to Tiberius' nephew Germanicus,² the year after her mother Julia was banished, Agrippina was from her earliest years deeply imbued with antagonism to the Claudian line, represented by Tiberius, and proud of her own descent as the granddaughter of Augustus. She and Germanicus had in all nine children, and Agrippina, left by the death of her three brothers and the banishment of her sister Julia the sole representative of the Julian line, was determined that at the first opportunity one of her sons, and not the son of Tiberius, should succeed to the throne.

On the death of Augustus in A.D. 14 when she was twenty-eight (her eldest son Nero being then eleven years old), Agrippina joined her husband at his head-quarters on the Rhine, called after her Agrippina Colonia (now Cologne). There for three happy years she ruled supreme, gathering around her a sort of military court, and almost taking command of the legions ; which caused Tiberius to gently hint to Germanicus the unsuitability of her " paying visits of inspection to the troops, attending the standards, distributing donations, and carrying her child about the camp dressed in a soldier's accou-

¹ Plate XIII (p. 66). Portrait-bust in the Vatican Museum, Rome. Various other portraits of Agrippina exist.

² Germanicus was only a year older than herself.

trements.”¹ Agrippina’s imperious temper did not spare even Germanicus; when the mutiny on the Rhine assumed a serious aspect Germanicus endeavoured to send her away, but she refused to go, telling him that she was of the Julian line and was not, like him, afraid of danger. In the following year (not long before the birth of her daughter Agrippina) her resolution and courage were forcibly displayed. When during the absence of Germanicus the remnants of one half of his army, retreating in confusion before Hermann, created so great a panic that the troops placed to guard the bridge over the Rhine at *Castra Vetera* were proceeding to demolish it, Agrippina stationed herself at the head of the bridge, furiously denounced any one who should attempt to destroy it, encouraged the retreating troops, tended the wounded, revived the spirits of all, and by her action saved the remnant of the army from destruction.

She accompanied Germanicus in A.D. 17 to the eastern command,² feeling not a little incensed at his transfer; and when two years later he died at Antioch, Agrippina, blinded by the wrath due to a long-nursed enmity against Tiberius, became at once firmly convinced that the latter had caused him to be poisoned. Nothing could eradicate this idea from her mind; the manner in which Tiberius out of love for his brother Drusus had befriended Germanicus on all occasions and screened his incapacity, the entire absence of any evidence (as was shown at the trial of Piso) that Germanicus had been poisoned by any one, the kindness of Tiberius to herself and her sons, all were powerless to have any effect upon Agrippina’s view of the matter. Blind with hate, and thirsting for revenge, she entered on a course in which she eventually worked the ruin of her whole house. She became a perpetually burning fire, which breathed out flames of wrath, hatred, and slander, ever seeking by constant vilification and malignant

¹ The child referred to was her fourth son, Caius, then three years old, whom the soldiers made their playmate, and to whom, in consequence of these “accoutrements,” they gave the name of Caligula (“Little Boots”).

² She gave birth to her second daughter, Drusilla, shortly afterwards. Her third daughter, Julia Livilla, the last of her nine children, was born in the following year.

misrepresentation of every act of the emperor, and regardless of the consequences, to make the Roman people see Tiberius in the same light that she did. Dean Merivale¹ calls her "this she-wolf," but that is surely hard measure. She honestly believed the assertions she made, and her blind thirst for revenge was in proportion to the faithful love she had borne for Germanicus during all the fourteen years of their married life.

It is plain that Tiberius pitied her, and that this was the reason why for so long as eleven years he bore all her virulent animosity without showing any resentment against her, notwithstanding that her methods caused her to become so great a political danger to him. She made no secret of her attitude; in fact for Agrippina to hide wrath was impossible. Even if he had not had the evidence furnished by the violent manner in which she ever strove to stir up the Roman people against him, her demeanour whenever he addressed her—her knitted brows, her eyes glaring with rage, and her voice quivering with anger—told the emperor on all occasions what she felt. Even as a guest at his table her attitude was the same. On one occasion at a banquet in the palace of Tiberius, while the emperor reclined with his mother and his step-daughter on either side of him, Agrippina, sullen and glowering, refused to touch anything. At last Tiberius pressed upon her a specially fine apple; she took it, and ostentatiously handing it over her shoulder to a slave told him to throw it away. Tiberius turned to his mother and said, "What can I do with one who so deliberately accuses me before all my guests of being a poisoner?" Next day a rumour was circulated through Rome that the emperor had tried to poison Agrippina at the banquet.

Nor is it possible to believe that she confined herself only to words. Four years after the death of Germanicus, when Agrippina was thirty-seven, occurred the death by poisoning of Tiberius' only son Drusus, immediately after the emperor had associated him with himself in the government. All that was allowed to reach the ears of Tiberius when the plot was discovered was that the poison had been prepared by a physician, Eudemus, and administered by a slave, Lygduus,

¹ Merivale, *History of the Romans*.

under the orders of Livilla and Sejanus. And as Tacitus naturally found no word in the memoirs of Agrippina the younger implicating her mother, we are not told whether Agrippina the elder had any part in this murder of Drusus. But seeing that Agrippina still thirsted for revenge for the death of Germanicus, and was determined that Drusus should not succeed to the throne, it is almost impossible to believe that she who was the leading spirit in every other untoward event in the imperial family at this time was not the prompter of that murder.

After the death of Drusus Agrippina might seem to have had no further cause for her attitude. Her eldest son, a weak youth who would have been entirely ruled by her, was recognized by Tiberius as the heir to the throne; she had nothing to do but wait quietly for him to succeed Tiberius in due course. That Tiberius harboured no intention of setting aside her sons was subsequently shown by his passing over his own grandson to leave the throne to her fourth son, Caligula, his three elder brothers being then dead. But Agrippina, blinded by her animosity, continued in the same course, and still breathing out wrath and defiance against Tiberius left the way open to Sejanus. And for the next seven years she became, to the ruin of her two elder sons, the centre round which gathered continual plots to assassinate Tiberius and place her eldest son upon the throne.

It speaks well for Tiberius that for eleven years he endured Agrippina's vilification and machinations against him without taking any steps to silence her. Even reports of plots against his life on her part were for long ignored by him. But at last he could stand it no longer. In A.D. 30, when Agrippina had reached the age of forty-four, a more serious conspiracy on her part than had hitherto been formed came to light; whereupon she and her two elder sons were tried by the Senate for contravention of the law called *Lex de Majestate*, and, in view of the ample evidence of their guilt, were banished to separate prisons, Agrippina being sent first to the imperial villa at Herculaneum, where she was visited by Tiberius and poured forth upon him all the torrents of her wrath, after which she was sent to the place fixed upon by the Senate for her banishment, the island of Pandataria. There three years later,

because she was not liberated after the fall of Sejanus, Agrippina, true to her character to the last, though she knew that her son Caligula would soon succeed the aged and fast failing Tiberius as emperor, persisted in starving herself to death. The report of her refusal to take any food being sent to Tiberius he ordered that she should be made to eat. But though food was forced into her mouth she refused to swallow it, and at length died of starvation in A.D. 33 at the age of forty-seven. Uncontrolled passion and insensate hate steadily yielded to for fourteen years had made her practically mad. But unfortunately she transmitted her terrible nature to her son Caligula and her daughter Agrippina, and also to the latter's son Nero; and these three persons worked almost the whole of the tragedy of the Caesars, ruthlessly murdering one after another the members of the Claudian branch.

Five years after her death her ashes were brought to Rome by her son Caligula and deposited in the Mausoleum of Augustus. The marble chest which contained them is still to be seen in the museum of the Capitol at Rome, engraved with her name, the inscription stating that she was the daughter of Marcus Agrippa, the granddaughter of Augustus, the wife of Germanicus, and the mother of the emperor Caius Caesar (Caligula).

(b) Matters concerning religion

During the latter half of the reign of Tiberius, while the tragic episodes which have been related were taking place in Italy, events were occurring in the Roman province of Judæa the results of which were destined violently to agitate the Roman world two or three generations later.

In A.D. 26, while Tiberius was still at Rome mourning over the death of his son Drusus, Jesus Christ began His ministry through the towns and villages of Galilee. And in the same year Tiberius made Pontius Pilatus procurator of Judæa.

In the spring of A.D. 29, while Tiberius was at Capreae and Sejanus at the height of his power, Jesus Christ was put to death at Jerusalem¹ by the procurator Pontius Pilatus on a fictitious charge of treason against the emperor in proposing to restore the kingdom of the Jews, but actually through fear on

¹ The report to the emperor of this execution is still extant.

the part of Pontius Pilatus lest the Jews should carry out their threat of reporting him to Tiberius as "not Caesar's friend." It will have been seen what a powerful threat this was in the case of an emperor like Tiberius, always so specially severe with governors who appeared in any way to be oppressing the people of a province.

A few weeks afterwards a large body of Jews, gathered from all parts of the Roman empire for the Jewish feast of the Passover, heard the Apostles preaching the Gospel message in various languages. The Jews were spread all over the civilized world, almost every principal city having a colony of them. Those mentioned on this occasion came from all parts of the Roman empire, from Rome to the Euphrates, and from the Black Sea to the Nile.¹ As these scattered Jews spoke the language of the country in which they had settled, this explains their saying that they heard the message "every man in our own tongue wherein we were born," very few Jews at this time knowing Hebrew; for which reason even their books of the Old Testament had about 200 years before been translated into Greek, the *Septuagint*. As the result of this first preaching by the Apostles we are told that some 3000 of these Jews were baptized, thus beginning the Christian Church, though its members were not called "Christians" for the next ten years. These converts carried the message to all the various countries to which after this event they returned.

In A.D. 33 (about the time that Agrippina starved herself to death at Pandataria) there took place the martyrdom at Jerusalem of the deacon Stephen, the first martyr, who was stoned to death by the Jews.² Saul, a young Pharisee from Tarsus, took part in this, and was active in dragging men and women of this new religion to prison and death,³ many others being hunted out of Jerusalem, and, we are told, "scattered abroad."

In A.D. 35 Saul, the leading persecutor of the followers of the new religion, was converted at Damascus,⁴ becoming the

¹ See Chap. III, p. 121.

² For Chronology of events in the Christian Church during the 1st century, see Note A (p. 203).

³ Acts of the Apostles, viii. 3.

⁴ Ibid, ix. 20-22.

Apostle St. Paul, and remaining for nearly two years at Damascus preaching the new religion, instead of persecuting its adherents.

In A.D. 36 Pontius Pilatus was recalled by Tiberius from his procuratorship of Judæa, owing to some complaints of oppression made against him by the Jews, and knowing the fate likely to meet him at Rome as the consequence of these complaints committed suicide on the way thither. At the same time Caiaphas, the High Priest of the Jews, was removed from his office by Lucius Vitellius, the proconsul of Syria. In the same year, the last year of Tiberius' reign, Aretas, king of Arabia, made war upon Herod Antipas, thoroughly defeated him, and took Damascus. Herod appealed to the emperor Tiberius, who ordered Vitellius to march against Aretas. But the death of Tiberius soon afterwards caused the war to be abandoned, and Caligula on coming to the throne deprived Herod of his kingdom and exiled him to Lyons in Gaul. Thus within eight years after the death of Christ, Pontius Pilatus, Caiaphas, and Herod all suffered in various ways.

CHAPTER III

REIGNS OF CALIGULA AND CLAUDIUS

CALIGULA

A.D. 37—41

(a) Matters other than religion

CALIGULA,¹ whose proper name was Caius, the youngest son of Germanicus and Agrippina, was twenty-five when he succeeded Tiberius. Four years earlier he had been married to Junia Claudilla, daughter of the proconsul Junius Silanus, but happily for her she died before Caligula gained the throne.

The Romans had at last got as emperor one of that Julian branch for which a large party among them had so long clamoured and schemed.² They were now to experience what such an one was like. He was that "Little Boots" whom the soldiers in the camp at Cologne had made their pet in the days when his mother Agrippina had ruled there like a queen, while the people welcomed him with joy as the son of their idol Germanicus.

Rome was now to pass through a long series of terrible experiences. With Caligula's four years' reign began a period of thirty years which afterwards received the name of "the Terror." It is often said that Caligula was mad. But though many of his follies looked almost like madness, Caligula was in reality perfectly sane (and in some of his deeds exceedingly shrewd), and this made his conduct more atrocious. In him the evil tendencies of two generations of his line were com-

¹ Plate XIV. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

² Of the four emperors of the family of the Caesars who succeeded Augustus, Caligula and Nero belonged to the Julian branch of the family, Tiberius and Claudius to the Claudian branch.

bined, the scandalous immorality of his grandmother Julia and the fierce disposition of his mother Agrippina being in him united and magnified, nor had even the fact of his being brought up from a child by such a person as Antonia been able to eradicate these strong inherited tendencies, which had shown themselves even before the death of Tiberius.

The Palace of the Caesars had long been without any mistress, and the Romans had hoped now to see installed there as empress one who would be a second Livia, an embodiment of all the virtues and belonging to one of the great Roman families ; though the difficulty of finding such a wife for Caligula was great, since through the strife raised by Agrippina these families had become divided by implacable animosities, and from whichever of them the emperor took a wife he would bring upon himself the enmity of all the rest. Caligula, however, paid no attention to these views of the Romans, and soon after becoming emperor horrified all Roman society by insisting upon marrying his sister Drusilla, took her away from her husband Lepidus, to whom she had not long before been married, and associated her with himself on the throne ; but the unfortunate girl after a few weeks died, or committed suicide.

Caligula then plunged into a general career of crime. He put to death his young cousin Tiberius Gemellus (whom he had sworn to protect), since the latter belonged to the Claudian branch and it was desirable to get rid of him. He likewise put to death Sertorius Macro, who had often befriended him with Tiberius, and also his wife and his children ; also the venerable Silanus, who had been one of Caligula's best advisers. Being present at the marriage of Caius Piso with Livia Orestilla, Caligula took a fancy to the bride, and carried her off ; but getting tired of her after a few days divorced her, and then banished her. Hearing that Lollia, the wife of Memmius Regulus, the proconsul of Macedonia, was very beautiful, he ordered her to Rome, took her for his wife, soon tired of her, and then divorced her. He next took for his wife Caesonia, sister of the general Domitius Corbulo, a handsome and somewhat masculine type of woman, with several children, who retained her influence over him for the rest of his short reign, and bore him a daughter, Drusilla. Perhaps one of his crimes which was most terrible in Roman eyes was his carrying off

one of the sacred Vestal Virgins. His murders were incessant, and often committed wholesale, which he called "clearing his accounts." He had large numbers of the senators whipped, tortured for his pleasure in various ways, or decapitated by torch-light while he looked on. Delighting in the most horrible cruelties, he turned the combats in the arena into hideous spectacles of monstrous barbarities for his amusement. He fed the wild beasts with the bodies of senators and knights. He forced senators to witness the tortures and death of their own children. There was in fact no limit to his detestable crimes, and the wonder is that, even protected as he was by his guards, the Romans should have borne such things as long as they did. Seneca says :—"He was the first to submit senators to torture. But it was a small matter for Caius to put senators to death like slaves,—he who daily exercised himself in cruelties, who only lived and thought to shed blood, who indeed once formed a plan to massacre the whole Senate, and who expressed the wish that the Roman people had but one neck that he might cut it through at one blow."

Whether in his wholesale slaughter of the senators Caligula found a malicious amusement in carrying out a sort of retribution upon the aristocracy for their antagonism towards Tiberius, or whether he was actuated by a deliberate purpose of reducing into absolute subjection that aristocratic body which from the accession of Augustus until now had formed a barrier to autocratic power on the part of the emperor, it is impossible to say. It seems however probable that Caligula, while he felt no regard for Tiberius, considered that all the troubles of the latter had been caused by his far too lofty ideals (especially with regard to maintaining the dignity of the Senate), felt a contempt for these views as being altogether high-flown,¹ and was determined that he for his part would make the Senate feel that he was their master, and would sweep away all ideas of the emperor being merely the chief officer of a commonwealth and all barriers to his wielding an absolutely autocratic power. In any case that aristocracy which had made the life of Tiberius

¹ Since Caligula was brought up to the age of eighteen by Antonia, it is certain that he was thoroughly acquainted with the ideals of Tiberius, which she shared ; while his character was just of the kind certain to feel contempt for such principles of action.

during all the latter half of his reign one long tribulation now suffered a thorough retribution. Caligula simply trod them under his heel. And from this time forth the Senate never again recovered that position which they had held under the first two emperors. Caligula was in fact the first of the Roman emperors to exercise that untrammelled and despotic power which we associate with that title.

Caligula's follies were as innumerable as his cruelties.¹ He constantly posed as a god, paraded the streets of Rome dressed as Jupiter, Mercury, or Apollo, pretended to be talking with Jupiter, and declared the moon to be his wife. He built a bridge from his palace across the roofs of temples and other buildings to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol so that he might more easily visit his "cousin" Jupiter. He made his horse the priest of a temple, and intended to make him consul. To the great damage of commerce he collected all the ships employed round the coast and constructed with them an immense bridge two miles long across the gulf of Baiæ, and rode across it dressed as Alexander the Great, attended by a large body of troops. And by many other similar follies he disgusted the Romans perhaps even more than he horrified them by his atrocious cruelties. His extravagance was on a par with his other follies. Draughts of melted pearls, galleys with their sterns ornamented with jewels and with gardens upon their decks, baths of the most rare and precious scents, the entire refurnishing of the palace of Tiberius in the most costly style, and the construction of a new and much larger palace which necessitated the extension of a hill, were some of the modes in which Caligula began that tradition of fabulous extravagance which was afterwards to be carried to still further lengths by Nero. Suetonius says that Caligula in a single year expended in reckless waste a sum equal to twenty millions sterling.² And since this did not include such items as the immense cost of constructing his new palace, it is not surprising that Caligula was obliged largely to increase taxation to meet his inordinate expenditure.³

¹ See, however, pp. 102-103.

² Suetonius, *Caligula*, 37.

³ Caligula also brought another obelisk from Egypt to Rome, making the third obelisk brought from Egypt. Its height was 82 feet. He set it up in his Vatican gardens (see Chap. IV, p. 163).

Caligula's sister Agrippina the younger had been married at seventeen to Domitius Ahenobarbus, and was twenty-two when Caligula became emperor. She little dreamt when in that same year she bore a son ¹ that the child to which she gave birth would twenty-two years later deprive her of life ; though at his birth the child's own father made, we are told, a sinister prophecy as to what was likely to be the future of a son of himself and Agrippina.² Caligula's third sister, Julia Livilla, then nineteen, had been married to Marcus Vinicius. In A.D. 39 Caligula discovered an intrigue between Agrippina (whose husband Ahenobarbus had just died) and her brother-in-law Lepidus (the former husband of Drusilla), together with a plot, in which both his sisters were involved, to assassinate himself. Saying nothing of his discovery he promptly carried off his two sisters and Lepidus into Gaul, where he put Lepidus to death, and then forced his sister Agrippina to carry the urn containing the ashes of Lepidus in her arms the whole way to Rome, making her embrace it unceasingly day and night throughout the whole journey. He then banished both his sisters to the Ponza islands, confiscated all their property, and having it transported all the way to Lyons sold it there at an auction which he conducted himself. And having refurnished the palace of Tiberius he sent for all the old furniture of that palace also to Gaul, and sold it there by auction in the same way. He then set out for an expedition to Britain ; but got no further than Boulogne. Returning in A.D. 40 to Rome he proceeded to execute the senators one after another on various pretexts, solely for his amusement, by different modes of torture, delighting to make a father dine with him at the hour that his son was being tortured to death so that he might watch his face, with other similar cruelties.

At last, however, an end was put to this ruthless tyrant in the only way possible. Cassius Chaerea, the old tribune of his guard, had spoken to others regarding the insult that they, as Roman soldiers, suffered in being employed to carry out such detestable atrocities. Immediately afterwards he was required brutally to torture in the presence of the emperor a beautiful

¹ Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, afterwards named Nero.

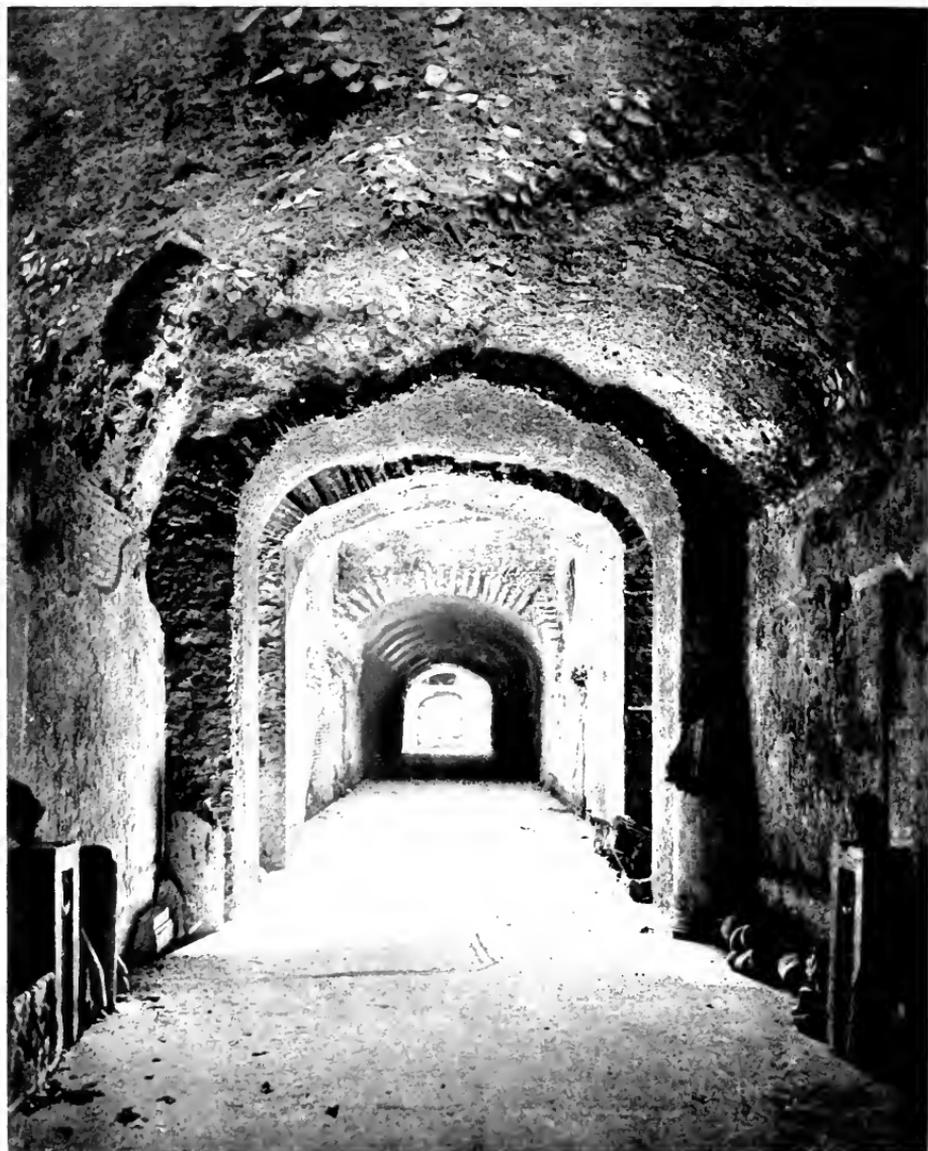
² Suetonius, *Nero*, 6.



BRONZ.
CALIGULA, SON OF AGRIPPINA THE ELDER.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



ALBAREL.
CLAUDIUS, NEPHEW OF TIBERIUS, AND GRANDSON OF
LIVIA.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



BROGI.

CRYPTOPORTICUS IN THE PALACE OF THE CAESARS.
The covered passage in which Caligula was murdered.

actress, Quintilia, who knew of Chaerea's speech, and who would, he feared, be forced to betray him under the torture. The brave girl trod on his foot, and by a look conveyed to him that she would not betray him. She was placed on the rack and endured great agony, her joints being dislocated, but revealed nothing, and was liberated. Then Chaerea laid his plans ; and a few days afterwards, on the 24th January A.D. 41, as Caligula in returning from the games traversed the *crypto-porticus* running along the side of his palace and the palace of Tiberius¹ he was struck down by Cassius Chaerea and killed by Cornelius Sabinus and others who had joined in the plot. The only feeling throughout Rome was one of unmitigated satisfaction. Some hours afterwards when night had fallen Caesonia was found lying on the pavement of the *crypto-porticus* clasping her husband's dead body, covered with his blood, and in her grief reproaching him for not having listened to her advice and desisted from his cruelties ; her baby daughter lay by her side. Of Caesonia no crimes are recorded, but as the soldiers carrying their torches approached her she knew that she must die, as belonging to one so justly execrated ; raising herself from the blood-stained corpse of the late emperor she extended her throat, and was at once killed, and also her child. Caligula was twenty-nine years old when he thus met the end he had long deserved. His body was burnt and his ashes buried in a garden on the Esquiline hill.

Caligula built the third palace of the Caesars on the Palatine hill, that which formed the chief residence of all the succeeding emperors up to Hadrian.² It was of immense size, and was peculiarly constructed, not only covering all the north-eastern brow of the Palatine hill from its northern corner for a considerable distance eastwards, but also being built out far beyond the brow of the hill, so that it extended over the slope of the

¹ Plate XV. The *crypto-porticus*, or covered passage, where Caligula was killed.

² Excepting during the two years A.D. 66-68 when Nero occupied his new palace of the "Golden House," and three months of the year A.D. 69 when Otho likewise occupied the "Golden House." Even when the Flavian palace was built by Domitian the palace of Caligula continued to form the emperor's private apartments (see Chap. V, p. 193).

hill, and the road called the *Clivus Victoriae* (the hill of Victory). It was practically an extension northwards of the palace of Tiberius, and part of it was built on the northern end of the hill adjoining the latter, but as this did not give nearly enough space for all that Caligula desired, more than half of the new palace was built out (over the *Clivus Victoriae*, and as far as the line of the *Via Nova*, near the base of the hill) on huge substructures rising up from the bottom of the valley to the level of the top of the hill. No one but a man of the most abnormally extravagant temperament would have formed the idea of actually extending a hill for such a purpose. The palace must, however, have commanded a magnificent view over the whole of the valley of the Forum and up to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. The lofty substructures required to carry out this project are most solidly constructed (see Plate XXIV), as was necessary, since they had to bear the whole weight of the palace above, this solidity of construction being also shown by their having lasted for many centuries after the whole of the palace built upon them has long ago been destroyed. The great size of this palace is commented on by Pliny. It must have taken away all privacy from the House of the Vestal Virgins, as the windows of all the rooms near the northern corner of the palace must have looked right down into the *atrium* of the House of the Vestal Virgins. A lofty arched passage was made for the road called the *Clivus Victoriae* to pass under the whole length of the palace. The total height from the valley below up to the level of the top of the hill (where the principal apartments were) being very great, there were in this lower portion of the palace many smaller rooms, for servants and other attendants, placed in tiers one above another.

This palace was that occupied by Claudius, Nero, Galba, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan. Part of it still remains, viz, its southern portion at the top of the hill (now buried under the Farnese gardens), and the huge substructures built to support its northern portion, with the numerous tiers of small rooms situated in the lower part of the palace. Various flights of marble stairs, some starting from the *Clivus Victoriae* and some from the *Via Nova*, lead upwards past these small rooms towards the upper part of

the palace. These rooms and many of the smaller staircases can only have been intended for the slaves. The upper rooms were richly decorated with mosaics and linings of marble, but of these decorations only a very small part remains. The southern portion of the palace, occupying the flat space on the top of the hill, like the palace of Tiberius which it adjoins, still awaits excavation. Along the side of this portion and of the palace of Tiberius runs the long *crypto-porticus* (common to both palaces), and from it stairs lead up into the palace of Caligula and into the palace of Tiberius. As we look at this finely built covered passage it can never fail to recall that scene on the night of the 24th January, A.D. 41, when under the light of the torches lay there grouped together the dead bodies of the cruel tyrant, of the wife who had wept over even Caligula, and of the little child.

This palace of Caligula, with the immensely heavy work involved in constructing the enormous substructures rising up from the valley to the level of the crest of the hill, must have taken a long time to complete; nor could the principal rooms be begun until these solidly built substructures were entirely finished. And as Caligula only reigned three years and ten months the whole palace could not have been finished at the time of his death. The portion completed first was almost certainly that situated on the hill itself, adjoining the palace of Tiberius. So that it would seem that Caligula during his reign occupied this southern portion of his new palace and the palace of Tiberius, the two being thrown into one. This also accounts for Caligula's being killed in the place where that event occurred. For in returning from the games had the northern portion of his palace been completed he would have entered it by one of the staircases leading up from the *Clivus Victoriae*, and would never have taken such a circuitous route as to ascend to the top of the hill and enter the *crypto-porticus*; whereas if he were occupying the southern portion (the northern portion being as yet unfinished) this would be the natural route.

(b) Matters concerning religion

During the twelve years A.D. 30 to A.D. 42 the Apostles remained in Jerusalem, where the mission work of the new

religion continued, constantly gaining more and more adherents. In all that the Apostles did they were evidently following instructions which had been given them by Christ, and there is a very ancient and well-attested tradition that they had been ordered to remain in Jerusalem proclaiming the Gospel message to the Jews in Judæa for twelve years, and after that to spread their work to a wider field.¹

In the spring of A.D. 37, the first year of Caligula's reign, the Jews at Damascus, furious at the change of attitude towards the new religion which St. Paul was exhibiting, formed a plot to kill him.² He escaped from Damascus and went to Jerusalem and presented himself to the Apostles in his new rôle of convert. It must have been a strange meeting; for when they had last seen him he had been their chief enemy, and had gone to Damascus on purpose to destroy their brethren in that city.³ At first the Apostles and other disciples were all afraid of him in consequence of his former cruelties against their community, and held aloof from him, until by the action of St. Barnabas they became convinced of his sincerity and were reconciled to him.⁴ Thereupon, owing to the Jews in Jerusalem persistently endeavouring to kill him, St. Paul was sent away by the Apostles by sea from Caesarea to his own city of Tarsus in Cilicia, to remain there in seclusion.⁵

After St. Paul in A.D. 37 was sent away to Tarsus, it is stated in the Acts of the Apostles that the Church at Jerusalem obtained for some time a respite from the persecution they had been enduring at the hands of the Jews. This was owing to one of the follies of Caligula. As a tangible sign of his divinity he resolved to set up a statue of himself in the Temple at Jerusalem. This proposal raised such a storm among the Jews that for a time it entirely diverted their thoughts from the followers of the new religion, who thus obtained the respite mentioned.

At this period the chief activity is displayed by St. Peter. We find him during the next four years (A.D. 37-41), that is, during the whole of the reign of Caligula, visiting all the communities of converts throughout Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria,

¹ Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century* (Bampton Lectures, 1913), p. 36.

² Acts of the Apostles, ix. 23-25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ix. 26-28.

³ *Ibid.*, ix. 1-2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ix. 29-30.

and eventually arriving at Lydda, where we are told of his making many converts, and from thence proceeding to Joppa, where also many details of his successful missionary labours are related, and where he remained a long time, staying in the house of Simon, the tanner.¹

In A.D. 41, we are told of St. Peter being summoned from Joppa to Caesarea, and of the conversion there, under very noticeable circumstances, of Cornelius, a centurion of the portion of the Roman legion quartered at Caesarea, and others (presumably Roman soldiers) with him, the whole of the circumstances of this conversion being very fully detailed.² This was a greater step than the admission of Jews, or of Samaritans, who were half Jews. The admission of a "Gentile" involved the abandonment by those converts who were Jews by race of all their accustomed religious prejudices, which made it unlawful for a Jew even to associate with Gentiles.³ It is probably on account of its importance from this point of view that the circumstances are so fully related, St. Peter being specially commanded to lay aside all that he had hitherto held in this respect, and to admit these uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church.

¹ Acts of the Apostles, ix. 32-43.

² Ibid, x. 1-48 and xi. 5-18.

³ Ibid, x. 11-16, 28-29, 34, 45, and xi. 2-3.

CLAUDIUS

A.D. 41 — 54

(a) Matters other than religion

On the death of Caligula, Claudius,¹ the second son of Tiberius' brother Drusus, was made emperor by the Praetorian Guards because he was the brother of their favourite Germanicus. In the confusion which took place on the murder of Caligula a number of the guards rushed into the palace and began furiously plundering its rooms, crowded as these were with all kinds of costly articles collected by the extravagant Caligula. In the midst of the uproar an individual was seen hidden behind a curtain in a dark corner; whereupon with much violence he was dragged forth by the soldiers, who to their astonishment discovered that he was the neglected and despised uncle of Caligula. He threw himself on the ground in an agony of terror and begged for his life, but the soldiers instead of killing him as he expected, carried him off to their camp, where he was formally proclaimed emperor, and the Senate was forced to acquiesce.²

Claudius, feeble in character, lame, and unable to speak with distinctness, had been as a boy despised even by his mother Antonia, and his natural timidity being increased by neglect and insult, by the time he was chosen emperor at the age of fifty-three was looked upon by all as a nonentity. But the terrible vagaries of Caligula had produced the result that almost any one was preferable to the latter as emperor. The Romans had at all events obtained freedom from the Julian branch with its mad revel of crime, and were again under one of that Claudian branch which had ever shown a desire to rule with justice, even though he might be a very feeble representative of that race which in times gone by had produced so many noble examples.

Moreover Claudius, though intensely feeble in character, was

¹ Plate XVI (p. 90). Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

² See also p. 116.

by no means so wanting in brains as the Romans had supposed. During his thirteen years' reign he carried out various sound measures, enacted laws for the protection of slaves from oppression, abolished the harsh laws regarding high treason which had become an engine for prosecuting private animosities and for much injustice, lightened taxation, increased the number of aqueducts suppling pure water to Rome, and reduced the excessive number of festivals, while his reign is notable for important additions to the Roman empire by the conquest of Britain and Mauretania. He was most painstaking in the work of government, and laborious in personally administering justice. He was fond of literature and archaeology, and himself wrote several books; but none of his writings have survived. Speaking of Claudius' peculiar combination of ability to consider great questions of politics, war, and finance combined with contemptible pusillanimity and weakness of character, Signor Ferrero says:—"He was intelligent, and he looked stupid. . . . He dared undertake great projects, like the conquest of Britain, and he lost his head at the wildest fable about conspiracy which one of his intimates told him. He had mind sufficient to govern the empire as well as Augustus and Tiberius had done, but he could not succeed in getting obedience from four or five slaves or from his own wife."¹

Upon being made emperor Claudius set himself without delay to remedy many of the evils of Caligula's demented reign. Assisted by the advice of several of the best men in the Senate he saved Rome from the famine which threatened it, owing to all the ships being taken away for the bridge at Baiæ, by promptly breaking up the bridge and subsidizing additional ships to bring corn speedily to Rome; he released prisoners, restored exiles, and lightened the heavy taxation which had been imposed by Caligula to provide funds for his many follies; and he recalled his nieces Agrippina and Julia Livilla from banishment, and restored as much of their confiscated property as was possible.²

¹ Ferrero, *The Women of the Caesars*, p. 250.

² An interesting memorial of the reign of Claudius is the temple erected in this same year A.D. 41 at Vienne, in Gaul, to the memory of Augustus and Livia. Used as a church during the Middle Ages, it still stands in the town of Vienne, and is in fair preservation.

Claudius added two more to the aqueducts supplying Rome with pure water, the *Aqua Claudia* and the *Anio Novus*, the former being forty-two miles long and bringing water from the vicinity of Subiaco, and the latter fifty-one miles long, and starting from the sources of the Anio river. Claudius also constructed a new and much needed harbour at Ostia. The whole maritime trade of the capital had become seriously interfered with owing to Rome's port of Ostia having become choked up by the deposits of the Tiber, which had also changed its course. Claudius accordingly formed a new harbour on the fresh channel of the river; though so rapidly does the Tiber silt up that this harbour of Claudius had itself to be abandoned for the same reason about sixty years later. In making this harbour Claudius made use of the vessel which had transported Caligula's obelisk from Egypt. It was formed out of an enormous fir tree, and Claudius sank it to form part of one side of the new harbour. Pliny says:—"Nothing certainly ever appeared on the sea more astonishing than this vessel; 120,000 bushels of lentils served for its ballast; the length of it nearly equalled all the left side of the port of Ostia. The thickness of the tree was as much as four men could embrace with their arms."¹ Claudius also completed the great Roman road over the Brenner Pass and through Rætia, called the *Via Claudia Augusta*, connecting Italy with the upper Danube. To the two obelisks which had been brought from Egypt by Augustus, and that brought by Caligula, Claudius added a fourth much smaller one,² which on its arrival he set up outside the mausoleum of Augustus.

But the most important event of the reign of Claudius concerned Britain. Although Julius Caesar had in B.C. 55 invaded Britain, defeated the Britons, and for a time partially subdued the tribes inhabiting the southernmost part of the island, Britain was not as yet part of the empire, no Roman administration having as yet been set up in Britain, nor any troops quartered there, and the real conquest of Britain took place under the emperor Claudius. In A.D. 43 Claudius ordered Aulus Plautius, the Roman commander in Gaul, to invade Britain, taking with him four legions, or a force of about 48,000

¹ Pliny, xvi. 76.

² That now in the Piazza del Quirinale.

men. The legions ordered on this service were the Second, the Ninth, the Fourteenth, and the Twentieth, and of these the Second and the Twentieth remained ever afterwards quartered in that country so long as the Romans held Britain.¹

The expedition was extremely distasteful to the troops thus detailed for it. They declared that Britain lay beyond the boundaries of the world, and at first refused to proceed thither. Claudius sent the freedman Narcissus, his chief minister, from Rome to expostulate with them, but they jeered at him as a slave. Eventually however their objections were overcome, and the expedition started. The transport of 48,000 men across the Channel was a long and difficult operation, as may well be understood, especially as the force included cavalry, but at length the landing was effected. The Britons were led by Caradoc (Caractacus), who had not long before succeeded to his father Cunebelin's kingdom, and had also gained a supremacy over several of the other kingdoms; they made a fierce resistance, but were soon defeated by the forces of Aulus Plautius, and retired into forests and marshes behind the river Medway, where they hoped the Roman troops could not penetrate. But Aulus Plautius had brought with him a force of Batavian cavalry,² and the latter, led by Vespasian (afterwards emperor), by managing to swim the river, unexpectedly fell upon the Britons, who retreated and took refuge behind the Thames, which they hoped would prove an insurmountable obstacle. But the Batavian cavalry managed to swim that river also, while the rest of the troops crossed higher up, apparently in the neighbourhood of London. The Britons were again attacked and defeated, but the pursuit was pushed too far, the Romans became entangled in the marshes of Essex, suffered heavy losses, and were obliged to retire again across the Thames. Aulus Plautius was thereupon forced, or pretended to be so, to send a messenger to Rome asking for reinforcements, and for the presence of the emperor himself.

Claudius (displaying an energy which was certainly not in

¹ The Fourteenth legion was withdrawn by Nero, making three legions the garrison of Britain, and subsequently the Ninth legion was replaced by the Sixth.

² Tacitus says that the Batavi inhabited the delta of the Rhine, and were originally a part of the Chatti.

keeping with the character afterwards given to him by Tacitus and Suetonius in their desire to belittle and traduce the emperors of the family of the Caesars) upon receiving this summons started in A.D. 44 himself for Britain, taking with him forces which had been held in readiness for this purpose in case they should be required. Extraordinary as it seems, we are told that these forces included a troop of war elephants. Led by capable officers, and under the nominal command of the emperor, these reinforcements sailed from Ostia to Marseilles, disembarked there, traversed the whole length of Gaul, probably by means of navigable rivers (for there were at that time no roads in Gaul and the country was for the most part covered with forests), reached the shore of the Channel, again embarked there, crossed the Channel, landed in Britain, and effected a junction with the army of Aulus Plautius on the southern bank of the Thames. To any one who possesses any knowledge of military affairs and takes into consideration the size of the vessels of that period, the arrangements necessary (particularly as regards water and food) in the conveyance of horses on board ships, the absence of roads in the countries traversed, and the many other difficulties of such an operation as the transport of a force of this kind from Rome to the Thames, this movement carried out by the troops of Claudius in A.D. 44 will appear little short of marvellous. No wonder that the Romans made themselves the masters of the world when they could perform such feats.

Suetonius declares that Claudius upon his arrival on the banks of the Thames had a bloodless victory, though Dion Cassius asserts that the Britons had gathered in great force at their capital Camalodunum (Colchester), under the leadership of Caractacus, and that Claudius with the combined forces crossed the Thames, and fought a battle in which Caractacus was defeated. In any case Colchester was taken, and the Britons for the time submitted. Claudius did not stay long in Britain. Leaving Aulus Plautius to carry on the conquest of other parts of the island, he recrossed the Channel, spent the winter in Gaul, and returned to Rome in the following spring, where he celebrated a triumph, the Senate conferring on him the title of Britannicus. This title was by him given as a name to his son Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, then four years old, who thence-

forward was never known by any other name than that of Britannicus.

Only a small part of Britain, however, had as yet been conquered. Though Caractacus had lost Colchester, which became for a long time the headquarters of the Roman forces in Britain, he continued to resist, and was soon afterwards joined by Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, inhabiting the territory now known as Norfolk and Suffolk. Aulus Plautius marched against Caractacus, who had retired westwards, and sent Vespasian against Prasutagus. Vespasian was so successful that Prasutagus submitted and acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor. Tacitus says that Vespasian in this campaign gave such evidence of his ability that to this was mainly due his being selected as emperor twenty-two years later. In A.D. 47 Aulus Plautius was recalled to Rome, where he was treated with much honour by Claudius, and was given an "ovation," or lesser triumph.¹

Besides the conquest of Britain another province was also added to the empire during the reign of Claudius, viz. Mauretania, at the western end of North Africa, finally conquered by the Roman forces in A.D. 42.

Unfortunately however Claudius, though anxious to govern with justice, through his contemptible weakness of character produced almost as many evils as the most unjust and tyrannical emperor could have done, causing his reign to be one in which numerous tragedies were enacted. His feeble character placed him entirely under the dominance of certain freedmen,

¹ Tacitus has an interesting remark about the wife of Aulus Plautius. He says: "Pomponia Graecina, a distinguished lady, wife of the Plautius who returned from Britain with an ovation, was accused of some foreign superstition and handed over to her husband's judicial decision. Following ancient precedent, he heard his wife's cause in the presence of relations, involving as it did her legal status and character, and he reported that she was innocent. This Pomponia lived a long life of unbroken melancholy. After the murder of Julia, Drusus' daughter, by Messalina's intrigues, for forty years she wore only the attire of a mourner, with a heart ever sorrowful. For this, during Claudius' reign, she escaped unpunished, and it was afterwards counted a glory to her" (*Annals*, xiii, 32). It has been conjectured that the "foreign superstition" spoken of was Christianity; it could not have been Judaism, since the latter, like most of the foreign religions, was a *religio licita*, and therefore tolerated.

Pallas, Narcissus, Callistus, Felix, Polybius, Harpocrates, Posides, and others, most of them Greeks of inferior extraction, and under their influence he committed many judicial murders and other cruelties. He never got over the fright he had sustained when seized in the palace after Caligula's murder, and by working on his easily aroused terror these freedmen were able to make him commit any crime. These men surrounded him as sycophants and directors, and did with him as they pleased, amassing great wealth meanwhile, since none could hope for the removal of an adversary, or the gain of any personal advantage, unless he first purchased the assistance of one or other of these ignoble favourites; ¹ while any one who appeared likely to interfere with the rule which they exercised over the feeble emperor was quickly got rid of. In this manner many of the best men in the State were put to death on false charges of treason,² and Roman ladies banished on false charges of immorality, and forced to commit suicide; while the degraded race of "informers" were ever ready to invent false evidence against any one, man or woman, whom it was desired thus to remove.

These proceedings in Rome, however, troubled the empire no more than the capsizing of a ship affects the Atlantic Ocean. So sound was the administrative organization and the system of government established by Augustus and carried on by Tiberius, that neither inefficiency nor profligacy on the part of such emperors as Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, nor frequent tragedies in Rome, affected the empire at large. Nothing indeed is more remarkable throughout the reigns of these three emperors than the fact that while an orgy of vice and crime constantly disturbed the atmosphere in Rome the empire at

¹ Pallas got his brother Felix appointed procurator of Judæa by Claudius.

² Among these was Caecina Paetus, whose death in A.D. 42 was chiefly notable on account of the conduct of his noble wife Arria. Upon his being accused of implication in a conspiracy his wife, knowing the inevitable result, urged him not to submit to the indignity of a public execution, but to commit suicide; and when he hesitated Arria, being determined not to survive him, and in order to induce him to follow her advice, took the dagger and plunged it into her own breast, and as she sank dying handed the dagger to him saying, "It does not hurt, Paetus" (Pliny, iii, 16; vii, 19; and ix, 13).

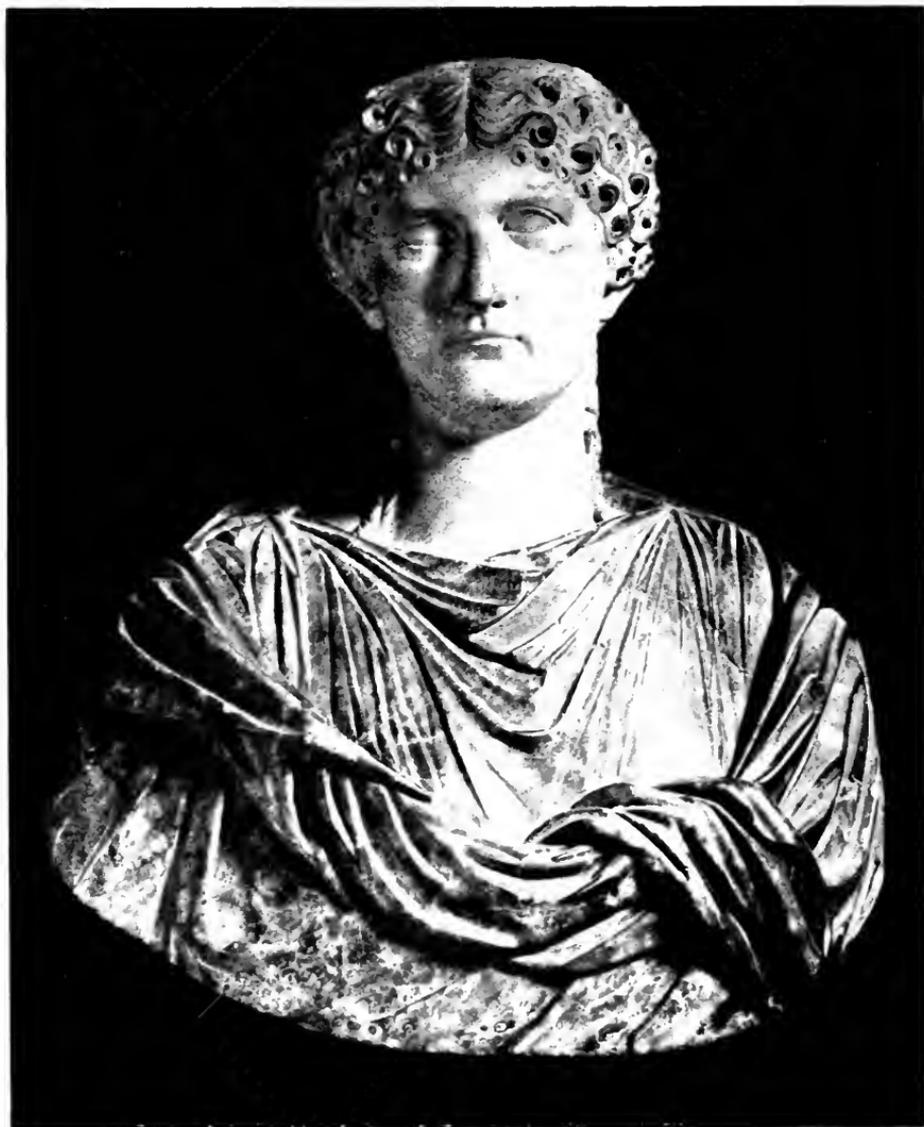


ALINARI.

Portrait-bust supposed to be that of
DOMITIA LEPIDA, GRANDDAUGHTER OF OCTAVIA, THE SISTER OF AUGUSTUS.

(The mother of Valeria Messalina.)

Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



BROGI.

VALERIA MESSALINA, WIFE OF CLAUDIUS, AND GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER OF AUGUSTUS' SISTER OCTAVIA.

Portrait-bust in the Upper gallery, Florence.

large felt no ill effects, and that the provinces, even under a Caligula or a Nero, enjoyed greater freedom from oppression than they had experienced under the Republic.

It is unfortunate that the writers on whom we have to depend should have concerned themselves almost wholly with the scandals in Rome, taking little interest in the concerns of the empire at large, or in any deeds of these emperors which did not affect the city of Rome. The few references which we meet with regarding Gaul, Britain, Spain, North Africa, and other provinces show that emperors such as Caligula and Nero, though depicted by the writers of a generation later as entirely given up to vice and crime, not only possessed genius in ruling but also found time in the midst of a career of unexampled licentiousness and frivolity to devote satisfactory attention to public affairs, and that they were far more efficient rulers of the empire than Tacitus and Suetonius have represented.¹ As a consequence of the attitude which these writers have adopted the history of the time becomes mainly that of the events taking place from time to time in the family of the Caesars, and of the long domestic tragedy which eventually brought that family to an end.

Claudius when he was about twenty was married to Plautia Urgulanilla, whom he divorced after she had borne him two children, Drusus and Claudia, who both died in their childhood. He then married, when he was about thirty-five, Ælia Petina, who bore him a daughter, Antonia, but was in A.D. 26 likewise divorced. His third marriage, made in A.D. 39, when he was fifty-one, was to Valeria Messalina, the daughter of Valerius Messala Barbatulus and Domitia Lepida.² Valeria,³ then sixteen, was the most beautiful girl in Rome, her gold-coloured hair and large deep-set eyes being specially admired. Both through her father and her mother she was descended from the Julian branch of the imperial family,⁴ a fact considered both by herself and others of the highest importance. But Valeria

¹ See also Chap. II, p. 46 (footnote), in regard to the genius of the Caesars in ruling having been hidden by Tacitus.

² Plate XVII. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

³ Plate XVIII. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

⁴ Her father and mother were first cousins, their respective mothers being both of them daughters of Octavia, the sister of Augustus.

Messalina was in the bloom of youth and beauty, and with a susceptible heart, while Claudius, thirty-five years older than herself, was lame, uncouth in his gestures, repulsive in his mode of eating, afflicted with an impediment in his speech, and laughed at even by the populace. Moreover this universally admired girl soon found she could make him do anything she chose; he was her abject slave, while he also stood in much awe of her on account of her Julian descent. Such a marriage could not bring anything but disaster.

In A.D. 40, the year after this marriage, while Caligula was still reigning, Valeria Messalina bore Claudius a daughter, to whom she gave the name of Octavia, after her great-grandmother, the sister of Augustus. In A.D. 41, one month after Claudius became emperor, she bore him a son, given the name Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, but after the conquest of Britain always known as Britannicus.

It was not long before the conflict between the rival branches of the imperial family was resumed, but in a different form, and to a more intensified degree, than in the previous generation. For to the feelings of revenge for a supposed usurpation on the part of the Claudian branch which had inspired the rancour of Agrippina the elder against Tiberius was now in this third generation added that of feminine jealousy. Claudius being a nonentity, the chief antagonists were now two women, on the one side Valeria Messalina, the beautiful young empress, eighteen years old, the queen of Roman society, universally admired, with a doting and subservient husband, and on the other Agrippina the younger, twenty-six years old, niece of the emperor, daughter of Agrippina the elder, and full of all her mother's force of character and ambition. One was the great-granddaughter of Octavia, the other the great-granddaughter of Augustus; and each had a son who she intended should succeed Claudius on the imperial throne. Both of them were entirely unscrupulous, and on occasion destroyed lives ruthlessly to gain their objects; but their aims were different. Valeria Messalina was bent on admiration, love, and the enjoyment of life, as well as upon retaining her position of empress, and her domination over the feeble Claudius; Agrippina on the other hand was intent upon power, and determined at all costs to sweep from her path all who stood in her way to

it To this was also added in Agrippina's case the most malevolent jealousy of which a perfectly unscrupulous woman not possessed of beauty is capable against a younger rival, one admired by all the society around them both as the most beautiful woman of her time.¹

Agrippina was prepared to stick at nothing in order to oust her rival and her rival's son in favour of herself and her son, but very soon had a lesson to walk warily and carefully conceal her aims. Her sister Julia Livilla, three years younger than Agrippina, set herself to gain the favour of her uncle Claudius and to undermine the influence of Valeria Messalina, to whom she refused to show any deference as empress, or even common courtesy. Valeria promptly whispered to Claudius information regarding an intrigue between Julia Livilla and the brilliant and wealthy Lucius Annæus Seneca, then thirty-eight, who was a general favourite among the inner circle of the court of Claudius; ² whereupon Julia Livilla was again banished to the Ponza islands, where she was shortly afterwards starved to death, Seneca, whom Valeria knew to be also opposed to her influence with Claudius, being at the same time banished at her instigation to Corsica.³ Exactly the same thing took place twelve months later with regard to the widow of Agrippina's

¹ It is noticeable that although Tacitus freely uses the Memoirs written by Agrippina the younger regarding the events of the two generations preceding that in which he wrote, he considers Agrippina the younger herself capable of any enormity; and also that he and other writers attribute immorality to her as freely as she attributed it to her rival. Pallas, the freedman, is said by him to have been one of the lovers of Agrippina.

² Seneca, whose father owned large estates in Spain, where Seneca was born and brought up, came to Rome as quite a young man about the middle of the reign of Tiberius. He took up the branch of the Stoic philosophy which combined that philosophy with a more or less Epicurean style of life, and lived in much luxury. His works are invaluable, being (except the poems of Petronius) the sole writings by a contemporary which exist regarding the reigns of Claudius and Nero, written moreover by one who was a member of the inner circle of the court. Seneca remained in exile for eight years, until, upon Valeria's death, Agrippina came into power and caused him to be recalled to court.

³ Valeria worked in such matters in conjunction with the most influential of the freedmen who surrounded Claudius.

brother Nero, Julia,¹ who similarly attempted to undermine Valeria's influence with Claudius, and perished in the same way. Agrippina thereupon determined to show no sign of attempting to gain influence over her uncle ; Valeria Messalina was reckless and made many enemies, and Agrippina bided her time, hoping that ere long her adversary would bring to pass her own destruction. Meanwhile Agrippina looked about for a husband powerful enough to protect her, and after having proposed herself to the influential commander Galba, and been slapped in the face by the mother of his wife, whom Agrippina suggested he should divorce, she eventually induced Crispus Passienus, a man much older than herself, to divorce his wife Domitia and marry her instead.

For seven years (A.D. 41-48) the splendid and gorgeously decorated palace which had been built by Caligula overlooking the valley of the Forum ² was the scene of this covert struggle unceasingly carried on between these two antagonists, the wife and the niece of the emperor. But the contest between these two high-born ladies was a veiled one. Valeria Messalina, the first empress since Livia, was a very different character from the latter. Proud of her double line of descent from the Julian family, young, acknowledged the most beautiful woman in Rome, fond of amusement, surrounded by a crowd of admirers, and profusely extravagant, she lived a life which was a round of perpetual pleasure. The imperial palace had seen no social festivities for twenty-seven years, since the death of Augustus. Valeria, after first furnishing the new palace in the most luxurious style, held therein entertainment after entertainment to which she gathered all the noble families of Rome. Meanwhile Agrippina, plain in feature, sour in temper, gnawed by a bitter jealousy, consumed by ambition, and courted by few, hid the feelings by which she was possessed, and in the midst of these constant entertainments watched perpetually for an opportunity of destroying the rival to whom she showed a smiling face while feeling for her, as all knew, a deadly hate.

Claudius in A.D. 44 departed for Britain, but his departure

¹ Julia (3), the daughter of Tiberius' son Drusus and Livilla, see Appendix I.

² Pages 92-93.

made no difference to any one at the court, he being not by any means an addition to any society, and being seldom seen at the entertainments of the empress. In the spring of A.D. 45 he returned, and celebrated his triumph, joining with himself therein his little son Britannicus, then four years old.¹ The triumph must have been a grand spectacle to those who, like Valeria Messalina, looked down upon it from the lofty windows of the palace as it wound its way through the Forum valley below. After this event the education of Britannicus was taken in hand. Valeria appears to have been very fond of both her daughter Octavia and her son Britannicus, and showed much good sense in the manner in which she brought them up, as a result of which both of them grew up notable exceptions to the general character of those around them in the corrupt court of Nero. Britannicus was surrounded with a band of well chosen attendants and his education placed in the hands of men of a high character, and in consequence grew up a manly boy, who showed, we are told, much promise. The general Vespasian, who had distinguished himself so greatly in Britain, had a young son, Titus, who was exactly the same age as Britannicus, and it was arranged that the two boys should be brought up together in the imperial palace, with the result that Titus and Britannicus became close friends. However much Valeria Messalina may have been fond of gaiety and pleasure she evidently was by no means wanting in good sense; and it is noticeable that the most satisfactory part of Claudius' reign was the period of seven years during which she was his wife.

At length in A.D. 48 Valeria Messalina, by this time twenty-five, disgusted with the imbecility and repulsiveness of Claudius, and deeply in love with Caius Silius, who had been chosen consul for the ensuing year, determined to bring about a revolution, to marry Silius (which would give him a right to the throne as the husband of one belonging on both sides to the Julian family), and to cause Claudius to be put to death. Circumstances favoured her purpose. For Claudius had seen

¹ The Twentieth legion in Britain was at the same time given the name it ever afterwards bore of "Legio Valeria Victrix," in memory of Valeria Messalina and the victories gained in Britain while she was empress.

or heard of various portents supposed to prognosticate that in that year "the husband of Messalina" was destined to die, which entirely upset his weak mind. Sobbing and spluttering with nervous agitation, he incoherently explained to the Senate the danger that menaced his life, as indicated by a number of the most ridiculous portents; after which, consumed by a panic of fear, he signed a divorce, sanctioned a marriage between Silius and Valeria, and gave the latter a dowry; his idea being that after the prophecy had been fulfilled by the death of Silius he would then reclaim Valeria. Claudius thereupon departed to Ostia, and Caius Silius and Valeria Messalina were publicly married in the autumn of A.D. 48 with all the usual legal ceremonies.

But this step alarmed Claudius' directors the freedmen, who foresaw that Claudius would be murdered, and their occupation be gone. The most influential of them, Narcissus, therefore told Claudius that the only chance for his life was to return to Rome; on getting him there, speechless from fright, Narcissus first caused him to put to death Caius Silius and other knights, and then extracted from him a sort of consent that Valeria Messalina should also be put to death, though immediately afterwards Claudius said he would see her the next day. Narcissus however at once sent a tribune to murder her, telling him it was the emperor's order; and she was killed with the sword while lying at the feet of her mother in her beautiful gardens (formerly the gardens of Lucullus) on the Pincian hill. The contemptible Claudius, whom nothing moved but terror for his own life, when told that the young wife he had adored was no more, made no remark and seemed to forget all about her.

Valeria Messalina has almost passed into a proverb for excessive immorality; but in actual fact we know absolutely nothing whatever about this side of her character. We have only what Tacitus,¹ some sixty years afterwards, found recorded by Agrippina in her memoirs regarding the rival for whom she felt a hatred more deadly even than that which her mother had felt for Tiberius, while besides this hatred on

¹ Together with Suetonius who followed him, embellishing the record with more sensational details.

personal grounds she had also a special political object in drawing as black a picture of that rival as possible.¹ From such a source on such a subject no testimony is of the slightest value. Still less so as a historical record on such a point are the satires of Juvenal,² who, like Tacitus, wrote about sixty years after Valeria Messalina's death, or the prurient gossip of Dion Cassius,³ who wrote more than 150 years after that event. Moreover it is to be noted that Seneca, a much more reliable authority, a contemporary, one who had been on the most intimate terms with both Valeria Messalina and Agrippina, and knew all the secrets of the innermost life of the court, one also whose banishment had been effected by Valeria herself, and who had every reason to hate her, both on his own account and on that of the woman for whom he had formed an attachment, banished at the same time, says nothing whatever against Valeria Messalina's moral character (though he was writing in the next reign, and when Agrippina was in power), refusing to lend the authority of his name to accusations on the part of Agrippina which he knew to be inspired by the most deadly hate.⁴ Above all there is also the fact that Agrippina had watched daily for seven years with the utmost intentness for an opportunity of causing Claudius to divorce Valeria, and if a tenth part of the allegations of gross immorality made against the latter in these various writings had been true that would at once have given Agrippina the opportunity she so much desired, but never found. So that it is singularly hard in Valeria

¹ See p. 111.

² Hardly anything is known of Juvenal. His writings show that he was a man of the lower grades, whose exclusion from the ranks of Roman society aroused in him a rancorous hatred of those more fortunate in this respect. He is supposed to have been born about A.D. 43. He apparently flourished about the beginning of the reign of Trajan (98-117), and is believed to have died in exile. Nothing else is known of him except his sixteen satires, inspired by a bitter indignation, and drawing a most lurid picture of Roman society in the time of Domitian and (from hear-say) in that of preceding reigns.

³ See Note B (p. 271).

⁴ It is particularly noticeable that both the children of Valeria Messalina, Octavia her daughter and Britannicus her son, grew up with exceptionally fine characters, their conduct being in prominent contrast to that of all those around them.

Messalina's case that a charge which was the usual one made in that age against nearly every woman in her position should have attached itself pre-eminently to her. It may have been deserved, or it may not; we simply know nothing on the subject; while Seneca's silence under the circumstances seems to show forcibly that it was not deserved.

The way was now cleared for Agrippina, whose second husband, Crispus Passienus, had died two years before. She promptly established an entire domination over her feeble uncle, and largely assisted by her former lover, the freedman Pallas, soon persuaded Claudius to marry her, a special law being passed to make the marriage of an uncle with his niece legal; and early in A.D. 49, less than three months after the death of Valeria Messalina, Claudius was married to Agrippina. Claudius was at this time sixty, and Agrippina thirty-three, her son Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus being eleven, and Claudius' son Britannicus eight. Agrippina at once began schemes for causing her son to supplant Claudius' own son Britannicus. After a time she managed to persuade Claudius to adopt Lucius Domitius into the imperial family. Claudius was much opposed to the step, on the ground that it might injure the prospects of Britannicus as his successor to the throne, but at length being persuaded that there was no danger of this gave way, and Lucius Domitius was adopted by him and given the names Nero Claudius Caesar. Agrippina then obtained one honour after another for Nero, while keeping Britannicus in the background. Claudius was also reminded by her on all occasions that Nero was descended from Augustus, but Britannicus only from Octavia.¹ Agrippina had, however, one powerful opponent in Claudius' chief minister Narcissus, who was entirely in favour of Britannicus and fathomed her schemes, and she accordingly employed every artifice to ruin him, but for a long time unsuccessfully.

But Agrippina did more than this. She now brought forward her Memoirs (practically the memoirs of three generations), their main object being to create, in all classes, a feeling in favour of herself and her son, and of antagonism both to the

¹ She thus ignored altogether Nero's father Ahenobarbus; also ignoring that Britannicus was not only descended from Octavia, the sister of Augustus, but also from the Claudians, and showed it.

Claudian branch and to Valeria Messalina and her son. These memoirs contained that legacy of hatred which Agrippina the younger had inherited. The malice which had inspired the party of Scribonia against Livia, the vituperative animosity of Agrippina the elder against Tiberius and the Claudian branch, and the venom of Agrippina the younger herself against Valeria Messalina, the young and beautiful antagonist who had for seven years stood in her way, and whose son she desired to oust in favour of her own son, were all embodied in these celebrated Memoirs, which after they had served the immediate purpose for which they were written became subsequently the chief source whence the history of three generations of the imperial family was drawn; thus destroying the fulfilment of Tiberius' dying hope that posterity would do justice to his memory, and handing down a false history regarding Livia, Tiberius, and Valeria Messalina. In these celebrated Memoirs the character of Valeria Messalina was purposely painted of an extravagant blackness in order not only to gratify the venomous animosity of her rival, the author of the Memoirs, but also to make as strong a contrast as possible to the figure of Agrippina the elder, who was depicted as the ideal Roman matron, the faultless victim of a vile tyrant who with the help of his evil mother had usurped the throne.

Meanwhile the further conquest of Britain had been continuing, and Rome was now to see a British king led in chains through the Campus Martius. As successor to Aulus Plautius in A.D. 47 Claudius had sent to Britain Ostorius Scapula, who proved himself a capable commander. The territory which had thus far been gained by the Romans covered roughly all that lies to the south of a line drawn from Bath to London including Colchester. Caradoc, whom the Romans called Caractacus, after his previous defeat had taken refuge in his own country, that of the Silures, who occupied the southern part of Wales, and of which tribe he was king. In this contest against Rome the Silures took the prominent part, and it is worth noting that four hundred and fifty years afterwards, when the Romanized Britons were battling for existence against the Saxons, it was Arthur, prince of the Silures, in whom the Saxons met their most stubborn opponent. Soon after Ostorius reached Britain the Iceni again revolted. He marched

against them, reduced them to submission, and then marched into the centre part of Wales, where during the years 48-49 he gained much success, penetrating as far as Carnarvonshire with apparently three out of his four Roman legions.

From thence Ostorius marched into what is now Lancashire, and subdued the Brigantes; after which he returned southwards to engage Caractacus, who, besides his own tribe of the Silures, had formed an alliance with the Ordovices (occupying Cheshire and the northern part of Wales), in whose territory Caractacus awaited the Roman commander, taking up his position on a lofty hill, which he strongly entrenched, situated apparently near Leintwardine, on the Teme. Here in A.D. 50 Caractacus' final battle was fought. The Roman legions attacked the entrenchments vigorously, and suffered heavy losses, but eventually gained a complete victory. Among the prisoners captured were the wife and daughter of Caractacus. He himself escaped, and fled for refuge to Cartismandua, the queen of the Brigantes, but was by her put in chains and delivered a prisoner to the Romans. He had held out against the latter for eight years, and his fame had spread over all Britain, Gaul, and even Italy.

Caractacus was ordered to be brought a prisoner to Rome, and he expected to be there put to death. Claudius, however, to his honour, spared the captive king's life and treated him well. In the Circus Maximus (the seats round which held 250,000 spectators) all who could obtain places were gathered together towards the middle of the year A.D. 50, to see the famous British king brought a prisoner before the emperor. The Praetorian Guards were drawn up along one side of the vast enclosure, and in the *exedra* (or imperial box) sat Claudius, and by his side Agrippina, dressed in their imperial robes. Tacitus says that this was looked upon with disfavour by the Romans, as it was felt unsuitable that a woman should take part in a military display.¹ As however Agrippina was now the real ruler of the empire she followed her instincts in publicly demonstrating the fact. Entering the Circus Maximus at one end, the procession advanced towards the emperor; in front were borne collars of gold and other spoils which Caractacus

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 37.

had won in his wars with other British tribes ; behind these came his brothers, his daughter, and his wife ; and last of all Caractacus himself in chains. Standing in front of the emperor, Caractacus made a short and dignified speech, one worthy of a British king, in which, according to Tacitus,¹ he said, " I had horses, soldiers, arms, and wealth. Was it to be wondered at if I was loath to part with them ? You are determined to rule the whole world ; but does it follow that all the world is to welcome loss of liberty ? Had I at once surrendered to your power, neither my fall nor your triumph would have gained their present distinction. Put me to death, and my whole story will be forgotten. Spare me, and your clemency will be remembered for ever." Claudius pardoned him and his family, but would not permit them to return to their own country, and Caractacus retired to live for the rest of his life near Rome upon a pension.

But the Silures were not vanquished even by the loss of their brave king ; they continued the contest, and inflicted upon the Roman forces more than one severe defeat. At last Ostorius, enraged at their stubborn resistance, declared that the very name of the Silures should perish, even like that of the Sigambri had perished.² He attacked them strenuously for several months in their mountainous territory, but at length, about the end of A.D. 50, worn out with difficulties and hardships, died. He was succeeded by Didius Gallus, who however in the seven years that he commanded in Britain (A.D. 50-57) only managed to retain the territory which the Romans had thus far conquered.³

Agrippina having prepared the ground in the manner already noted, in A.D. 52, when Nero was fifteen, advanced another step towards her project by inducing Claudius to consent that

¹ Some have doubted how much of the speech belongs to Caractacus and how much to Tacitus, but the speech in some of its expressions has a British ring, unlike those which would have been invented by a Roman ; so that it may be judged that Tacitus has reported the sentiments expressed with tolerable correctness, though no doubt giving them a polish of his own.

² A tribe on the Rhine frontier which had been removed bodily by Augustus into Roman territory. As has been seen (p. 111) Ostorius failed to effect his threat.

³ For the further operations in Britain, see Chap. IV, pp. 133-134.

Nero should be married to his and Valeria's daughter Octavia,¹ now twelve years old, regardless of the fact that Octavia detested Nero even at that age. Agrippina² during the six years that, in conjunction with the freedman Pallas, she ruled Claudius, was not hampered by any scruples in regard to causing the death of any whom she thought likely to interfere with her objects. She obtained the death or removal of all the attendants on Britannicus who had been chosen for him by his mother; while all persons who favoured the succession of Britannicus were banished or put to death. Fearing that the beautiful and wealthy Lollia Paulina, who had been proposed as a wife for Claudius after the death of Valeria Messalina, might gain influence over him, Agrippina caused Lollia to be tried on a fictitious charge, with the result that she was banished. This however did not satisfy Agrippina, who therefore sent after her a tribune with orders to put Lollia to death and to bring back her head, so that she might be sure that she was dead; which was done. Finding that Nero's aunt, Domitia Lepida,³ was beginning to have an influence over him, Agrippina caused her to be put to death. Finally when Nero had reached the age of seventeen she obtained the banishment of Narcissus⁴ (who suspected her design against Claudius), and as soon as Narcissus had left Rome Agrippina, in October, A.D. 54, poisoned Claudius,⁵ and proceeded to gain the throne for Nero with the help of the Praetorian Guards.⁶ Thus perished Claudius, at the age of sixty-six, after a reign of thirteen years during which he

¹ This was done by Agrippina because she felt the claim of Valeria Messalina's children to be so much stronger than that of Nero. Seven years afterwards when Nero proposed to divorce Octavia in order to marry Poppaea, the blunt soldier Burrhus, who commanded the Praetorian Guards, said openly that Nero had only been given the throne by those troops because he was married to Octavia. And this was probably the reason why Nero hesitated so long before divorcing Octavia.

² Plate XIX. Statue in the Capitol museum, Rome.

³ She was the sister of Nero's father Domitius Ahenobarbus.

⁴ Followed soon afterwards by his suicide.

⁵ Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 67. Tacitus states that it was done by means of a dish of poisoned mushrooms. It is believed that Pallas assisted Agrippina to carry out this murder of Claudius.

⁶ See Chap. IV, p. 125.



AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER, DAUGHTER OF AGRIPPINA THE ELDER, AND MOTHER OF NERO.
Statue in the Capitol museum, Rome.

had lived in almost constant fear of assassination and had been perpetually the puppet of those around him.

Claudius did not build a fresh palace on the Palatine hill as each of his predecessors had done. Nor had he any reason to do so ; for the splendid palace begun by Caligula must, for the reasons already stated,¹ have been completed by Claudius, and been furnished and adorned by him, or, since he was a nonentity, by Valeria Messalina during the time that she was empress (A.D. 41-48). And it is with the scenes connected with Valeria Messalina that the many interests attaching to the palace of Caligula begin. It was in this splendid palace, then just completed, that for seven years she reigned supreme as the wife of an emperor who was her obedient slave ; here she gave her sumptuous entertainments, and received the universal homage of Roman society both as empress and as the most beautiful woman in Rome ; it was here that she fell in love with Caius Silius, and carried out the marriage with him which caused her destruction ; it was here that the news of her death was brought to Claudius while he was at supper, and that the latter on hearing that this idolized wife was no more asked no questions, and merely ordered a slave to give him some more wine ;² here Claudius consumed his last fatal supper of poisoned mushrooms prepared for him by Valeria's successful rival and successor, Agrippina ; and it was in the banqueting hall of this palace that, the year after Claudius' death, Valeria's handsome young son Britannicus, on coming of age, was poisoned by the evil youth who had been put in his place.³

(b) Matters concerning religion

In A.D. 41, the first year of his reign, Claudius made an important change as regards Judæa. Since the death of Herod the Great in B.C. 4 that country had been governed by a Roman procurator.⁴ Claudius now gave the kingdom to Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, while still retaining a Roman procurator in military command of the country. Herod Agrippa had been educated in Rome, and was a friend of Tiberius' son Drusus, of Claudius, and of Cali-

¹ Page 93.

² Tacitus, *Annals*, xi. 37-38.

³ Chap. IV, p. 128.

⁴ Chap. I, p. 13.

gula. He was in Rome at the time of the murder of Caligula, rescued his body, and arranged for its being burnt on the Esquiline hill, while he also had no small share in Claudius' peaceful accession to the throne. Caligula had previously given Herod Agrippa the rule of Galilee and Peraea; Claudius now rewarded him by adding thereto Judæa and Samaria, thus giving him a kingdom equal to that ruled by his grandfather Herod the Great.

During the thirteen years of the reign of Claudius the new religion, which had for twelve years been confined almost entirely to Judæa, made a great stride forward, chiefly owing to the strong position for itself which it established at the capital city of Syria, Antioch; and there it gained the name which it has ever since borne.

Antioch was the third city of the Roman empire, ranking next after Rome and Alexandria. It was the capital of that portion of the Grecian empire which after the death of Alexander the Great became, about B.C. 300, the kingdom ruled by Seleucus and the dynasty which he founded.¹ It was a most magnificent city, and about 150 years after the time of Seleucus had been still further enlarged and beautified by Antiochus Epiphanes, the monarch who was the persecutor of the Jews. It had four parts, each separately walled, whence it was called "Tetrapolis" (four cities), and in point of situation, architectural grandeur, and resources for pleasure, at this time far surpassed Rome, under whose dominion it passed in B.C. 67 when Syria was conquered for Rome by Pompey. The chief resort was the celebrated cypress-grove of Daphne, which had existed long before the city, and was famed throughout the Grecian empire for its unbounded excesses of licentiousness. This grove, amidst beautiful scenery, in a secluded glen overhung by mountains, was about four miles from the city, and was connected with it by a suburb of lovely villas and gardens, described by the ancient writers in ecstatic terms. In the grove of Daphne stood a celebrated Temple to Apollo, the worship of Apollo being specially cultivated at Antioch. The city was particularly praised for its streets and their covered porticoes. The principal street, four miles long, running right through the city from east to west, had a broad road in

¹ It was named after Antiochus, the father of Seleucus.

the centre, and two covered roads, one on either side of the broad open one, the roofs of these covered roads being supported for their entire length of four miles by handsome columns ornamented with gold. These roads were paved with granite. The river Orontes flowed along one side of the city, and huge aqueducts, whose ruins are still admired for their great size and strength, brought a plentiful supply of pure water to its inhabitants. Such was the city which was now to become, as it were, the capital of the Christian religion. From Antioch as a centre the whole work of converting the world to Christianity was undertaken; it has been said, "From that city the Christian name sounded out into all the earth."

In A.D. 41, the year that Claudius began to reign, some of the followers of the new religion who had in A.D. 33 been driven out of Jerusalem at the time of the martyrdom of the deacon Stephen,¹ after first going to Cyrene and Cyprus, proceeded to Antioch, the most important city in Asia, and there preached the new religion to its Greek inhabitants.² Through their preaching many converts were made at Antioch, and on hearing of this the Apostles at Jerusalem sent St. Barnabas thither, with the result that in a short time the number of followers of the new religion at this important capital became very considerable.³

In the following year (A.D. 42) St. Barnabas, feeling the need of assistance in the work at Antioch, which was growing enormously, proceeded to Tarsus and sought out St. Paul. The latter had remained there almost entirely in seclusion for nearly six years, presumably because his former cruelties against the adherents of the new religion, combined with the special hatred which the Jews felt for him as a Pharisee who had become a convert, opposed formidable barriers to his preaching, especially as long as the work was chiefly among the Jews. In the epistle which he subsequently wrote to the Galatians he relates that during these six years he first went for a time to Arabia, thence returned to Damascus, and about A.D. 39 paid a short visit to Jerusalem, where he only saw

¹ Chap. II, p. 84.

² "To the Grecians." Acts of the Apostles, xi, 20.

³ Acts of the Apostles, xi, 22-24.

St. Peter and St. James the Less ;¹ after which (presumably by their instructions) he returned again to his own city of Tarsus, and remained there in entire seclusion for the whole of the next three years. St. Barnabas now sought him out and brought him to Antioch, and they preached together there for a whole year, converting large numbers of people. The Greek population of Antioch accepted the new religion much more readily than the Jews had done, and the Church at Antioch flourished exceedingly. And at Antioch the followers of the new religion were now for the first time given a name, and were called by their enemies "Christiani," the followers of Christ.² The name is evidently not one which the Christians originated themselves, and its Latin (instead of Greek) form shows that it emanated from the Roman officials at Antioch.

Meanwhile in Judæa matters had undergone a considerable change, owing to the action of Herod Agrippa. In the spring of A.D. 42 Herod Agrippa, who had arrived in Palestine towards the end of A.D. 41, anxious to gain favour with his new subjects the Jews, proceeded to carry out a persecution of such of the Christian Jews in Jerusalem as he could lay hands upon. It would appear that most of the Apostles had at this time either removed from Jerusalem,³ or contrived to remain hidden, but Herod was able to seize St James (the brother of St. John), and thereupon put him to death. He also seized St. Peter and imprisoned him, but the latter was delivered from the prison,⁴ and, we are told, forthwith departed from Jerusalem "to

¹ Epistle to the Galatians, i, 17-19.

² Acts of the Apostles, xi, 26.

³ They were probably in concealment outside Jerusalem. They cannot have been far off or St. Peter would not have left a message for them (see below).

⁴ Acts of the Apostles, xii, 1-17. The graphic account of how St. Peter on being delivered from the prison went to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, after knocking for some time gained admission, astonished those within, related his escape, and then after leaving a message to be given to St. James and other of the Apostles, rapidly departed (while it shows that the disciples were keeping themselves hidden) is considered by Mr. Edmundson to have "every internal mark of having been derived directly from the maid-servant Rhoda, whose name is otherwise so unnecessarily mentioned."

another place." This seems most likely to refer to some place in Judæa where St. Peter would be shielded by friends from Herod's observation, the name of which place there were therefore special reasons for not mentioning. Or it may refer to some city outside Palestine; in which case Antioch seems the most probable. It may of course refer (as some have thought) to Rome, where, as in so many other cities, there was by this time a small community of Jewish Christians, the result of the preaching on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 29; though in that case there seems no reason why the name of the place should not have been mentioned. At all events from the time that St. Peter disappeared in the dark of the night from the house of St. Mark's mother in Jerusalem in the summer of A.D. 42 we hear little more (except in a few scattered references) about this leader of the Apostles, of whose work up to that time we are given such full accounts.

It is unfortunate that the subject of St. Peter's movements and work from this time onwards to his death twenty-three years later has been so much mixed up with religious controversy that it is exceedingly difficult to arrive at the impartial view of the matter which is desired by a historian. It seems best to say at once that the evidence that St. Peter was in Rome on more than one occasion during his life, and that he exercised great influence in the portion of the Church inhabiting that city, is to any one who approaches the subject with an unbiased mind practically conclusive. But whether he went there at this time would appear to be exceedingly doubtful.¹ It is, however, in reality a matter of little consequence, and of far less importance than has been attached to it. For if St. Peter went to visit the community at Rome at this time he evidently did not remain there long, nor did he carry out any special work there, such as for the first time founding a Church at that city or making a large number of converts; for if he had done so, anything of the kind would inevitably have been mentioned in the same way as had been done in the case of his

¹ Mr. Edmundson in his *The Church in Rome in the First Century* argues that the "other place" to which St. Peter departed is undoubtedly Rome, and also that St. Mark's Gospel was written at Rome during this visit; but his arguments are not considered to be very convincing.

deeds at Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea the year before.¹ And shortly afterwards he and all the other Apostles were gathered at the city of Antioch where the great work of distributing the future areas of missionary labour among them was now to take place.

The efforts of the Church at Antioch, mainly carried out by the preaching of St. Barnabas and St. Paul, had had immense results. At Antioch, the third city in the empire, and a city which was both larger and for this particular purpose more important even than Rome, the Christian Church, no longer working in the confined atmosphere of Judaism, but coming out as it were into the Roman world, and brought into contact especially with the keen intellect of the Greek race, had gained both greatly increased strength in numbers, and also a much wider outlook; and it was now ready to spread its wings and carry the Gospel message far and wide through the Roman Empire. It was time therefore for the Apostles to settle upon their respective spheres of work. Accordingly, from Antioch as its centre and capital, the Christian Church now began its long campaign against Paganism, and at that city about the year A.D. 44² the distribution of the various countries of the world among the Apostles took place, and they separated, never again all to be gathered together.³

Owing to so many more writings of St. Paul having survived than is the case in regard to any of the other Apostles a false estimate has been formed of the labours of the latter. Their widespread activity and the immense area over which they spread the knowledge of Christianity has been entirely overlooked. How small a portion even of Asia Minor was ever visited by St. Paul is seldom realized.⁴ It is necessary, therefore, to remember that within a comparatively few years after the work was distributed at Antioch the Gospel message was spread by the Apostles and those whom they chose as

¹ Pages 94-95.

² In this year Herod Agrippa died, after having reigned over the Jews for three years. Felix, who was one of the freedmen surrounding Claudius, was at the same time made by the latter the Roman procurator of Judæa.

³ See p. 123.

⁴ This point has been brought to notice by the late Professor Bigg in his Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude.

their assistants over all the wide area extending from Antioch to Scythia and Sarmatia on the north, to Persia on the east, to Egypt and Ethiopia on the south, and even to the shores of southern India.

We have only records regarding the respective spheres of work assigned to four ¹ of them (St. Peter, St. John, St. James the Less, and St. Paul), and traditional accounts regarding the others. Regarding tradition, however, it must be remembered that in such cases it stands on a very solid basis. Tradition is by no means to be held as synonymous with legend. And where tradition is the result of written records handed down through many generations, but at length destroyed in one of the various persecutions, its force in a case of this kind is almost as strong as a written record.

St. Peter's First Epistle, St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and St. John's various writings give us information on the subject as far as these three Apostles are concerned. St. Peter, having received the command to go to the Jews,² took the countries north, east, and south of Antioch, where the majority of them were. Most of the Jews were not in Judæa, but scattered over many eastern countries, all such being called Jews "of the dispersion." Those who had been addressed by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost³ were the Jews of the three principal dispersions ("diaspora"), viz. :—

- (i) "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and those of Mesopotamia"; i.e. those to the east, the first dispersion, the descendants of the ten tribes carried off to Media and Assyria, and of the remnant of the two tribes left in Babylon.
- (ii) "Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia" (the Roman province of that name in Asia Minor); i.e. those to the north, called the second dispersion.
- (iii) "Egypt, Libya, and Arabia"; i.e. those to the south, called the third dispersion.

St. Peter therefore took these countries as his special charge; and during all the next ten years (A.D. 44–54) he appears to have been engaged on this work, first for three years travelling through the countries occupied by the first and second "dis-

¹ St. Mark and St. Luke were Evangelists, not Apostles.

² "To the elect people of God."

³ Acts of the Apostles, ii, 5–14.

persions" (going to Mesopotamia and then to Cappadocia and Pontus), and then for seven years (A.D. 47-54) establishing himself at Antioch, where he organized the Church of Antioch, acted as its head, and superintended from that city the missionary work among the Jews in the countries to the north, east, and south. The fact that for seven years before going elsewhere St. Peter was thus occupied in founding and ruling the Church of Antioch and making that place the centre of his missionary work is attested by all the early writers.¹ And in A.D. 50 he despatched St. Mark, the "interpreter" and constant companion of St. Peter, from Antioch to Egypt to carry the Gospel message to the Jews of the third dispersion, and St. Mark remained there eleven years (see below).

Of St. John we hear little or nothing at this period, though much at a later period of his life. He appears to have remained at Antioch assisting in the work there, and taking charge of that Church during St. Peter's various absences,² until (about twenty-two years later) he removed to Ephesus and took up the general charge of the Churches in Asia Minor.³

St. James the Less was assigned Jerusalem as his special sphere, acted as head of the Church of Jerusalem, and was eventually killed there by the Jews.⁴

Of the remaining Apostles, except St. Paul, we have only traditional accounts. They evidently did not go to the West, as had they done so we should find some mention of them subsequently in the writings of the early Christians. St. Matthew (who was still living in A.D. 62) is stated by traditional history to have gone to southern Egypt, and later on to Ethiopia, to have remained there twenty-three years, and to have been martyred in Egypt about A.D. 67. St. Thomas is stated to have gone by sea to southern India, where there are traces of him, and where he founded a Christian Church. St. Andrew is stated to have gone to Scythia and Sarmatia,⁵ subsequently to have travelled to Greece, and to have been martyred at Patras. St. Philip is stated to have gone to another part of

¹ Regarding the rest of St. Peter's life, see Chap. IV, pp. 149 and 155-162.

² See Chap. IV, pp. 156-157.

³ See Chap. V, p. 183.

⁴ See Chap. IV, p. 153.

⁵ St. Andrew has been made by Russia her patron saint in consequence of his connection with these countries.

Scythia, to have preached there for twenty years, and to have been martyred in Phrygia. St. Bartholomew is stated to have travelled to India, to have returned from thence to Armenia, and to have been martyred in Cilicia. St. Simon and St. Jude are stated to have preached together in Mesopotamia and Persia, and to have been martyred in Persia. Lastly St. Matthias is stated to have preached in Judæa, and to have been martyred there by the Jews.

While of the other Apostles we have only such fragmentary information, of the work of St. Paul during the next twenty-three years we have very full accounts, both from his own epistles and from the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul had received the command to go to the non-Jewish races.¹ And this was evidently the sphere in which he was likely to have most success, since the Jews hated him more than they did any other Apostle; he could not even appear among them anywhere without their at once raising a storm against him, and wherever he went they were always his bitterest opponents. In accordance with the above command we find him making extended missionary tours from Antioch through various of the Greek cities of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece, staying for lengthened periods at Ephesus and Corinth, and afterwards visiting Italy and Spain. After a visit in A.D. 46 with St. Barnabas to Jerusalem, we find him in the years A.D. 47-49 with St. Barnabas and St. Mark making a tour through Cyprus, Pamphylia, and Pisidia, and returning to Antioch. At the end of the year A.D. 49 there took place at Jerusalem the council of the Apostles held to decide the dispute regarding the circumcision of Gentile converts,² at which council, though all the Apostles could not have been present, some of them having departed to such distant spheres of work, yet apparently the majority were so, including St. Peter, St. John, and St. James the Less, who are mentioned by name.

After attending this council and returning to Antioch we find St. Paul in the years A.D. 50-53 making a second still longer tour through Cilicia, Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, crossing from Troas into Macedonia, and visiting Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth (where he stayed a year and a half), and

¹ "To the Gentiles."

² Acts of the Apostles, xv, 2-29.

from thence sailing to Ephesus, thence to Caesarea, visiting Jerusalem, and returning to Antioch. While at Corinth he wrote (some time in the year A.D. 52) the first two books of the New Testament to be written, viz. his *First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, and also later on in the same year his *Epistle to the Galatians*.

Meanwhile St. Barnabas and St. Mark had in A.D. 50 visited Cyprus, from whence the former returned to Antioch and St. Mark proceeded to Egypt, where he remained for eleven years (A.D. 50–61), teaching Christianity throughout northern Egypt, founding the Church of Alexandria, and about A.D. 54 writing there the *Gospel of St. Mark*. In speaking of a man as the founder of the Church of a particular city the early Church did not signify the first gatherer of a few converts, but referred to the man who, after a collection of such converts had taken place, visited that city and organized them into a permanent body, appointing a leader of the community, and laying down rules for its guidance. It was in this manner that St. Peter was the founder of the Church of Antioch, and St. Mark of the Church of Alexandria.

In A.D. 53, the last year of the reign of Claudius, St. Paul started again from Antioch on a third tour, proceeding through Galatia and Phrygia to Ephesus. It is strange when studying these journeys of St. Paul during the years A.D. 45–54, and the letters written by him to the new converts in various places, to remember that this is the time when in Rome the events were taking place which are connected with the names of Claudius, Valeria Messalina, and Agrippina the younger.

CHAPTER IV

REIGNS OF NERO, GALBA, OTHO, AND VITELLIUS

NERO

A.D. 54 — 68

(a) Matters other than religion

THE death of Claudius was kept secret by Agrippina for a day until she had first made all secure with Burrhus, the commander of the Praetorian Guards. Then suddenly the gates of the imperial palace were thrown open, and, while Agrippina kept Britannicus with her, Nero came forth attended by Burrhus, who announced to the troops that Claudius was dead, and, notwithstanding that voices were raised for Britannicus, conveyed Nero to the camp of the Praetorian Guards, where after promising large rewards to the troops he was proclaimed emperor. Though it was felt that Britannicus had a prior right, this decision of the troops was accepted by the Senate. It is significant that the will of Claudius was not read, presumably because it left the throne to Britannicus.

Nero, born in A.D. 37, the only child of Domitius Ahenobarbus and Agrippina the younger, and adopted at twelve years old by Claudius so reluctantly owing to fear that it might endanger the succession of his own son Britannicus, was seventeen when he thus became emperor by one of the basest intrigues ever perpetrated. His appearance was not prepossessing; just as strongly as his step-brother Britannicus showed all the characteristics of high descent, so did Nero display all the signs of low descent; he had a short thick neck, low brow, and protruding under lip; he had small abilities,

hated learning, and though from the age of twelve he had been given the celebrated Seneca¹ as a tutor, turned even as a boy to singing, dancing, and chariot-driving in preference to any more solid attainments.

Once more the Romans had one of the "heaven-born" Julian branch as emperor, the great-grandson of Julia, and grandson of Agrippina the elder; and they evidently hoped that this time the result would be better than their former terrible experience under Caligula. There may, however, have been some who, with a knowledge of hereditary tendencies, dreaded that the "wild beast" nature manifested in Agrippina the younger's brother Caligula might again make its appearance in his nephew. Nor did Agrippina's own character or the manner in which she had gained the throne for him augur well as regards the eradication of Julian tendencies in the blood of her son.

During Nero's fourteen years' reign (A.D. 54-68) the empire at large remained, as in the case of the two previous reigns, undisturbed by the terrible episodes which occurred from time to time at the capital. Except for the revolt in Britain in A.D. 60,² peace was everywhere maintained by a powerful and well-organized army, the provinces were well governed by able proconsuls, and the sound system of administration devised by Augustus continued to keep the condition of the people satisfactory and prosperous. Hence the history of Nero's reign centres chiefly in the terrible deeds enacted in the city of Rome, a wild drama of magnificent pageants, assassinations, music, chariot-driving, cruel public torturings, banquets of surpassing extravagance, terrible fires, grand theatrical displays, and fiendish massacres, and including in its course the final phase of the long domestic tragedy of the Caesars which brought that family to an end.

Seneca, Nero's tutor, had even in the latter's early years seen the "wild beast nature" in his character, that terrible nature which as one of the Julian branch he inherited, and with three-fold force;³ and seeing this, Seneca, we are told, had thought to prevent its showing itself, or at all events to put off the evil

¹ Regarding Seneca's history and writings, see Note B (p. 271).

² Pages 133-134.

³ Chap. III, pp. 86-87.

day of its manifestation, by smoothing away all opposition to Nero's wishes, and turning a blind eye to his youthful escapades. It does not give one a high idea of Seneca's wisdom. Such a youth, if destined to be the future emperor, should have been sent to one of the legions ruled by some capable commander to learn discipline, as Octavius had been sent by Julius Caesar. No man can rule successfully who has not first learnt to obey, and in the case of a nature like Nero's such a course of discipline was doubly necessary.

However, during the first year of Nero's reign Seneca's plan seemed to be successful ; Nero's good temper continued, and for a short time all went well. But when at length Nero, at the age of eighteen, found himself opposed by his mother's strong will, the wild beast nature in him burst forth, and he entered upon a career of blood and crime which eventually turned him into a monster. It has sometimes been argued that towards the latter end of his career he was mad. But Nero was only mad with the madness which any human being creates in himself by systematically yielding to criminal impulses.

During the first year of Nero's reign his ambitious mother Agrippina, who had at last attained that which had been her aim for thirteen years, wielded the whole power. She was, however, secretly opposed by Seneca and Burrhus, both of whom foresaw that ere long a struggle would ensue between mother and son, and desired to be on the side of the emperor.

That struggle soon began. Nero at seventeen fell in love with Acte, a Greek girl, a freedwoman, who was an attendant on his mother Agrippina. She was beautiful, modest, and unassuming ; during the four whole years that she held entire sway over Nero she never used her power to obtain the ruin of any of her many enemies, and none have ever recorded anything against her. When he was eighteen Nero declared that he should divorce Octavia and marry Acte. Agrippina was furious ; such a divorce would destroy the strongest ground on which Nero's claim to the throne rested ;¹ a violent scene took place between her and Nero, at the end of which she threatened that if he carried out his intention she would take Britannicus to the camp of the Praetorian Guards and cause

¹ Chap. III, p. 114 (footnote).

him to be proclaimed emperor. And though she afterwards tried to smooth matters over, her words sealed the fate of Britannicus.

In February A.D. 55 Nero's promising young step-brother and cousin Britannicus attained his majority and was invested with the *toga virilis*. His handsome face and figure are well shown in his statue, now in the Lateran Museum at Rome.¹ A few days afterwards, at a banquet in the imperial palace, Nero, in order to show his mother that he was not going to be ruled by her, and to remove any possibility in the future of her carrying out her threat, poisoned Britannicus. Nowhere in the history of the tragic reign of Nero is the scene more vividly brought before us in the glimpses given than in this episode of the poisoning of Britannicus. We see the splendid banqueting hall in the extravagantly decorated palace of Caligula, with Nero, his mother Agrippina, his unfortunate young wife Octavia, her half-sister Antonia, Britannicus, his friend Titus, and others reclining on the couches round one side of the curved table, loaded with gold vases, flowers, and many delicacies. We see the poisoned cup given by a confidential slave of Nero to Britannicus, and after he had drunk from it see it passed by him to his friend Titus, who was just about to drink also when it was whispered to him not to do so ;² and at that moment we see Britannicus sink back dead upon the couch, whereat, we are told, all looked at Nero, who coolly remarked that it was only an epileptic fit, and ordered the slaves to carry Britannicus out. We see the grief and horror of Octavia at this awful death of her beloved brother, a feeling shared by her half-sister Antonia, but both of them, in fear of Nero, endeavouring to hide their sentiments of horrified detestation. And we see Agrippina, full of wrath, and making no attempt to conceal her horror at the crime,³ but at the same time inwardly appalled at the determination to throw off her authority which it showed.

But Agrippina was not yet beaten. After this tragic death of Britannicus⁴ she endeavoured by taking up the cause of the

¹ Plate XX. Statue in the Lateran Museum.

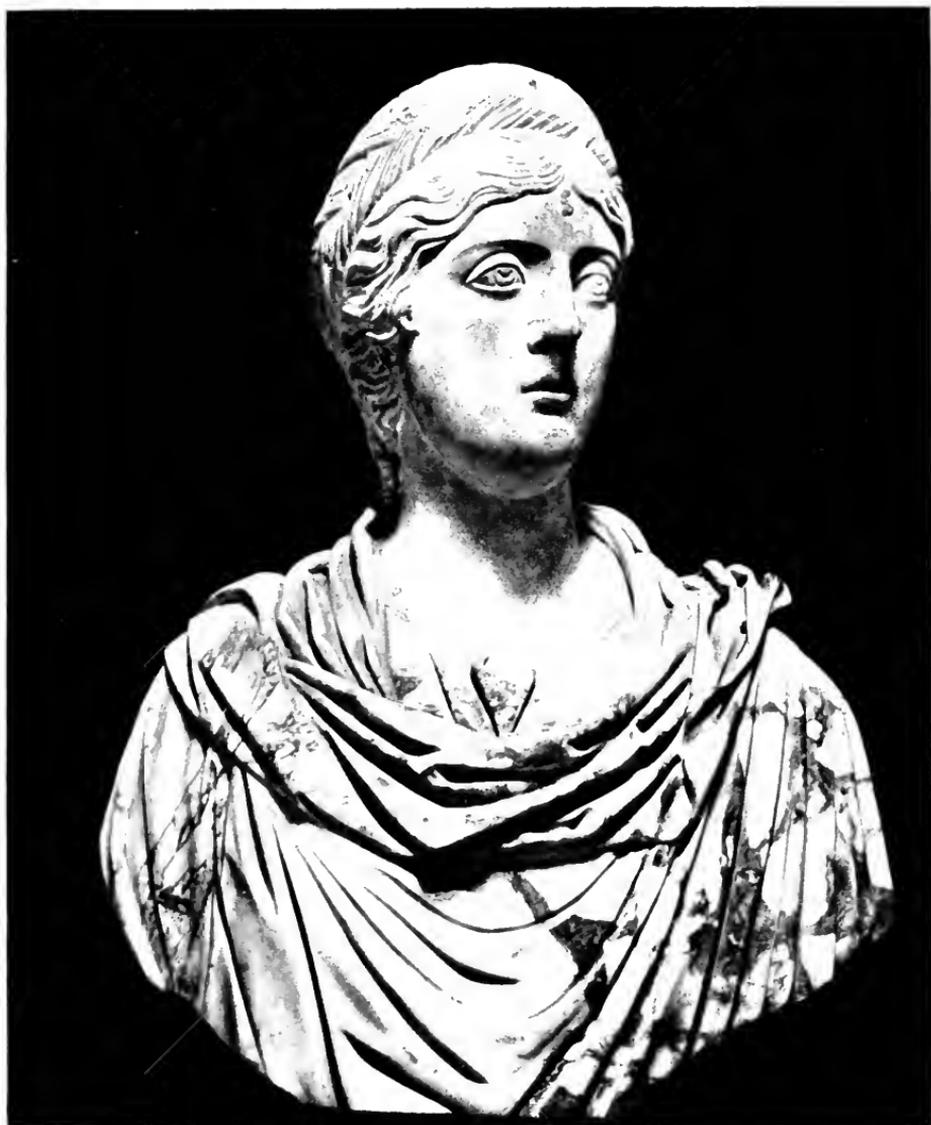
² Titus had a narrow escape. ³ Tacitus, *Annals*, xiii, 18.

⁴ Britannicus was the last male descendant of the Claudian branch of the family.



BRITANNICUS, SON OF CLAUDIUS AND VALERIA MESSALINA.
Statue in the Lateran museum, Rome.

Brogl.



POPPAEA SABINA, SECOND WIFE OF NERO.
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

ALINARI.

neglected Octavia to form a party in the court to restrain Nero. But the latter replied to this by removing Agrippina's personal guards, and requiring her to quit the palace and withdraw to the palace of Augustus, where she was closely watched. At the same time the haughty freedman Pallas, who had been the infamous accomplice of Agrippina ever since she became empress, was deprived by Nero of all his offices and dismissed from Rome.¹ Soon afterwards Nero accused his mother of conspiring against his life, and sent Seneca and Burrhus to investigate the charge. But Agrippina, with just indignation, denounced the charge as an insult, and successfully repelled it. After which for a time matters continued with an outward appearance of peace between mother and son, Agrippina meanwhile protecting Octavia, whose modest and attractive character had won the respect and affection of the Roman people.²

In A.D. 56 an interesting project was made in Gaul which if Nero had taken it up would have given lasting credit to his name. The project was made by Lucius Vetus, the Prefect of the Upper Rhine, to provide a route by water through eastern Gaul from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. It only required the cutting of a canal from the river Saône to the Moselle, when vessels would have passed up the Rhone to Lyons, thence by the Saône to the canal, and thence by the latter into the Moselle, and so to the mouth of the Rhine. The project did not fall through owing to any engineering difficulties, but solely through the jealousy of the Prefect of Belgica, who persuaded Vetus that the emperor would be displeased at a proposal which did not emanate from himself.

In A.D. 58 Nero, then twenty-one, being tired of Acte, fell under the dominion of Poppaea Sabina,³ the wife of his gay and profligate companion Otho. She was the greatest beauty of her time, very wealthy, and enormously extravagant; contemporary writers tell of her remarkable hair the colour of

¹ Pallas lived in retirement for seven years, but at length his enormous wealth excited Nero's cupidity, whereupon Pallas was poisoned and his wealth confiscated.

² Unfortunately we have no authentic portrait of Octavia.

³ Plate XXI. Portrait-bust in the Capitol Museum, Rome.

golden amber,¹ her mules shod with gold, and her daily bath in asses' milk to provide which she maintained 500 she-asses. She was quite unscrupulous, and would have nothing to say to Nero unless, sweeping away all obstacles, he would make her empress. Otho, twenty-six years old, and passionately enamoured of his beautiful wife, refused to divorce her ; persisting in this refusal he was sent to govern the distant province of southern Gaul, where he remained until Nero's death. But to make Poppaea empress involved not only her divorce from Otho, and Nero's divorce from Octavia, but also the murder of Nero's mother ; for Agrippina offered a firm front against any proposal to get rid of Octavia, and desired to prevent Nero from being ruled by such a woman as Poppaea. The final result was that in A.D. 59 Nero, whose birth had been ushered in with the pleasant prophecy of his father to his mother that her child would go far in evil, committed a crime unparalleled in the world's history, by murdering his mother Agrippina, who was then at her villa on the Lucrine lake near Baïæ. To effect this he first attempted to drown her by means of a small and highly decorated ship for pleasure excursions which he gave her, constructed by his infamous accomplice Anicetus so as to fall to pieces at a given moment ; and when upon this attempt being made she escaped by swimming to the shore, he sent Anicetus with a band of assassins who murdered her at her villa by the lake.

Agrippina the younger did not inherit her mother Agrippina the elder's stormy temperament, but being cursed with an insatiable ambition, and much more unscrupulous than her mother, she created for herself a no less troubled life. Married at seventeen to a vicious husband ; plotting when she was twenty-four to compass the murder of her brother ; punished by him by being made to carry the ashes of her lover the whole way from Gaul to Rome, and then banished to a prison where she lived for two years in daily expectation of death ; plotting for seven years to get rid of a younger rival whom she secretly hated ; marrying an imbecile uncle nearly thirty years older than herself in order to gratify her ambition ; scheming in every way to obtain the advancement of her son in place

¹ Its colour is said to have made amber fashionable.

of the son of her rival ; consigning to death all who stood in the way of that object ; and at length gaining the throne for her son by intrigues ending in the murder of her contemptible husband, she did not, even when the object of her ambition was thus attained, find either happiness or peace. Forced, through her desire to rule, almost at once into a bitter conflict with her son ; deprived by him of all power and banished from the imperial palace ; insulted by an accusation on his part that she aimed at his life ; and treated by him with harshness and suspicion, Agrippina's last five years of life were no less troubled than the rest of her existence. And when, at the age of forty-four, she saw herself condemned to die by the hands of brutal assassins sent for that purpose by her only son, she must have felt that the severest blow of all was not the stroke of the assassin's sword, but the fact that death was dealt by the son for whose sake she had committed so many crimes and struggled against so many antagonists during eighteen years of a life which had scarcely known any tranquillity from its beginning to its terrible end.

Nero after perpetrating this atrocious crime, one which could not be hidden, and which he made no attempt to hide, added to its enormity by pretending, in order to screen himself from the odium attaching to it, that his mother had been plotting against his life, at the same time falsely accusing her of various other crimes. For this purpose Seneca, as servile as all others, to his lasting shame prepared for Nero a letter to the Senate in which this ignoble son solemnly accused his mother of a long list of crimes (including all the atrocities of the reign of Claudius), which letter Nero then presented to the Senate. One of their number, the noble Paetus Thrasea, was so disgusted that as a silent protest he at once rose and walked out of the Senate-house ; but the rest of the servile senators greeted Nero with fulsome congratulations on his life having been saved from his mother's plots against it.

And then we have another strange scene in the life of this son of Agrippina who had been placed by her upon the imperial throne. Nero was nothing if not dramatic. And so, while a public festival of thanksgiving was organized and profuse offerings to the gods for the preservation of Nero's life made in all the temples of Rome, we have the amazing spectacle of the

triumphal golden chariot of Augustus, drawn by four elephants, being driven in state round the Circus Maximus in the midst of its 250,000 spectators, and upon it Nero, seated high aloft clad in purple robes, and receiving the acclamations and congratulations of this vast crowd of Romans for the murder of his own mother. And amidst all that community there was no one sufficiently brave to raise his voice in denunciation of the matricide.

But Nero did not at once after this great atrocity proceed to divorce Octavia and marry Poppaea. It is possible that he did not yet feel himself strong enough upon the throne to abandon the claim to it which he possessed through Octavia. Moreover the abominable crime which he had committed in murdering her whom he had himself called "the best of mothers" when she succeeded in gaining for him the throne, caused him to become for many months the prey of all sorts of terrible hallucinations and visions, and these, haunting him day and night, produced in him a period of melancholy madness. This was followed by a reaction in which he plunged into the wildest excesses and the most fantastic extravagances, and for a time chariot-driving, lyre-playing, singing, banqueting, and performing in various kinds of degrading theatrical exhibitions before the people, occupied all his attention. And so debased had all classes become that even Seneca, in order to curry favour with the tyrant, assisted at these entertainments and led the venal applause.

This condition of things produced dire effects in the wealthier class of society in Rome, among whom a perfect pandemonium of evil set in. All the old Roman ideas of plain living were cast aside, and a wild revel of extravagance and crime took their place. The luxury was appalling; the Egyptian roses for a single banquet of Nero's cost £35,000;¹ while even his mules were shod with silver.² The Roman race possessed solid virtues in regard to law, order, organization, national duty, courage, and endurance, but it was without that spirit of refinement and artistic taste which animated the Greek race. Consequently with the Roman all luxury tended to coarseness. The extravagance of the constant feasts

¹ Suetonius, *Nero*, c. 27.

² *Ibid.*, c. 30.

was fabulous ; the whole known world was ransacked to find the rarest and most unheard of delicacies ; everything was gross ; no feast was complete unless at its conclusion the guests were lying dead drunk on the reclining couches ; poison was so common that every man of importance had his " taster " ; and every vice, natural and unnatural, of which human nature is capable was rampant. Such was the condition to which the greater part of Roman society had come in little more than forty years from the death of the austere and plain-living Augustus.

In A.D. 60 affairs in Britain assumed a serious aspect for the Romans. Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, whose territory, besides including Norfolk and Suffolk, surrounded the small Roman colony of Colchester, had left his vast wealth to his two daughters. But upon his death the rapacity of the Roman officials at Colchester, who had long been bent upon seizing his wealth, caused them to be guilty of the greatest atrocities. The palace of Prasutagus was plundered by them, his queen Boadicea was cruelly scourged, his daughters were outraged, the nobles were stripped of their property, and the people were maltreated. The Iceni thereupon rose in revolt, led by their brave and capable queen Boadicea ; Colchester was attacked by her and taken, the Ninth legion under Petilius Cerialis, who advanced from his camp near the Wash to the assistance of Colchester, was defeated by Boadicea and almost destroyed ; London was taken and reduced to ashes, Verulam met the same fate, 70,000 persons of non-British blood were put to the sword, and for a time eastern Britain was lost to Rome. Thus within a space of sixteen years from the time of the endeavour to conquer Britain being begun, first Caractacus, and then Boadicea, had shown the Romans how formidable a race they had to meet in that country, and how severe was likely to be their task before they would conquer the whole of Britain.

But Boadicea's triumph over the Romans was short. She had defeated and nearly destroyed a Roman legion, had taken London, and had slain all the enemies of her country in eastern Britain, but she still had to reckon with three other Roman legions. The Roman commander in Britain at this time was Suetonius Paulinus, who had been sent to that country by Nero in A.D. 58, and was one of the most capable soldiers that

the empire possessed. Apparently he had subdued the Silures during the year A.D. 59, and at the time when this disaster to the Roman arms occurred was occupied in endeavouring to conquer the island of Anglesey. Upon hearing of this serious reverse in eastern Britain he forthwith abandoned further operations in Anglesey, and started eastwards with the legion which was with him, the Fourteenth, being joined by the Twentieth legion near where Chester now stands.¹ There were as yet no roads in Britain; the country was almost entirely covered with thick forests often so impenetrable that a way had to be found round them, and with ranges of forest-clad hills, and intersected by unbridged rivers, making a march of troops across Britain a long and troublesome operation. Traversing North Wales, Paulinus with his two legions crossed Britain, and towards the end of A.D. 60 advanced upon London. Somewhere in the vicinity of London the decisive battle between Boadicea and the Romans was fought, though the exact locality is not known. Dion Cassius relates how before the battle Boadicea, burning with her wrongs, addressed her troops from an artificial mound erected for the occasion, and speaks of her great stature, her stern features, and fierce eyes; her hair, of the deepest red, fell in thick luxuriance to her hips, while she was clad in a tunic of coloured tartan, with a thick cloak buckled over it, wore round her neck a heavy chain of twisted gold, and held a spear in her right hand. But Boadicea's troops were no match for the Roman legions when commanded by a general such as Suetonius Paulinus. The latter gained a complete victory; Boadicea rather than fall again into the hands of her cruel enemies poisoned herself; a general massacre of the Britons followed, not only the fighting men, but the women, and even the cattle which drew their wagons, being indiscriminately slain; and the insurrection was rapidly crushed, Suetonius Paulinus carrying fire and sword through the whole of eastern Britain. In the following year (A.D. 61)

¹ The Ninth legion had apparently been allotted to eastern Britain, and was practically destroyed for the time; the Twentieth legion appears to have been engaged in guarding the Lancashire and Cheshire districts against the Brigantes; the Fourteenth legion was with Paulinus, engaged in the conquest of Anglesey; and the remaining legion, the Second, was apparently stationed in the valley of the Severn.

Suetonius Paulinus was recalled by Nero, who about the same time removed the Fourteenth legion from Britain, leaving henceforth only three legions in that country, the Second, the Ninth (to which large reinforcements were sent from the Rhine), and the Twentieth.¹

Early in A.D. 62, three years after he had murdered his mother, Nero² proceeded to marry Poppaea. With the help of the detestable Anicetus, who to meet Nero's wishes was vile enough to pretend to confess to a criminal intrigue between himself and Octavia, which all knew to be a lie, Nero divorced the latter, and banished her to that place of so many melancholy memories, the island of Pandataria. Thereupon Otho, still absent in Gaul, was arbitrarily divorced from Poppaea, and Nero married her. Octavia, twenty-two years old, virtuous, modest, and beloved by the Roman people, on her arrival at Pandataria was ordered to die by having her veins opened and then being suffocated in a steam bath; after which her head was cut off and sent to Nero as a testimony that she was dead. It is often stated that her head was sent to Poppaea, but as Poppaea was not naturally cruel this fact may be doubted.

From this time forth Nero's extravagant luxury under the influence of Poppaea, and his reckless slaughter under the influence of the infamous Tigellinus, both grew apace. Everyone who incurred the tyrant's displeasure or offended his egregious vanity was promptly deprived of life; while the temporary loss of Armenia in A.D. 63 and an earthquake at Pompeii about the same time made Nero fear that the gods were deserting him, and gave occasion to outbursts of wrath which invariably resulted in some one being put to death.

Nero now began to form vast building projects. For ten years the imperial palace occupied by him had been the immense palace built by Caligula, combined with the smaller one built by Tiberius. But whether instigated by Poppaea, as seems probable, or out of his own insatiable desire for grandeur, Nero now began to consider this palace, large as it was, to be too small for him, and to form plans for a much more extensive one, which should include within its boundaries all kinds of

¹ The Ninth legion was subsequently replaced by the Sixth.

² Plate XXII. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

arrangements for extravagant luxury and pleasure. But no ground sufficiently extensive for this purpose was available unless a large part of the city in the vicinity of the Palatine hill could be cleared of its existing buildings. Moreover simultaneously with this project Nero had also formed ideas of an entire rebuilding of the whole city of Rome on a grander plan which should redound to his glory and manifest his artistic taste.

These views could only be carried into effect by such a general clearance of the existing city as would be caused by its being almost entirely burnt down. And there is little doubt that the immense conflagration which now occurred was arranged by Nero. This conflagration, which consumed three-fourths of Rome, broke out on the 19th July A.D. 64. As it began in various parts of the city simultaneously it seemed evident that it was pre-arranged. Nero was at the time at Antium (about thirty miles from Rome), where he had a country house, but on the fire breaking out returned to the city. The fire raged for nine nights and eight days, at the end of which time, out of the fourteen quarters of the city, only four remained undestroyed, nearly 500,000 persons being rendered homeless. As this clearance was just what the emperor had desired all believed that he himself had caused the fire. This brought him into great odium, especially with those who had lost everything they possessed. Moreover nearly all the most precious monuments of the past, the most sacred trophies, and many highly honoured temples were destroyed. It was also said that the emperor had watched the conflagration from a tower on the Esquiline hill, playing on his lyre and reciting the verses of Virgil describing the burning of Troy.

All this made the Romans furious. Nero made strenuous efforts to allay their indignation, and to regain his former popularity. To house the homeless multitude he threw open to the people all the public buildings which survived, and constructed shelters in the open spaces of the city and even in his own gardens; he arranged for bringing to Rome large supplies of corn, and lowered its price; and he caused propitiatory sacrifices to be offered to the gods of Rome. But these efforts did not alter the temper of the people, more especially since Nero as soon as the fire was subdued proceeded



NERO.

[BROGI.]

Portrait-bust (in basalt) in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

to appropriate an immense portion of the devastated area with a view to constructing his new palace thereon; they continued to attribute the destruction of the city to him, and forcibly to resent it.¹

When therefore Nero found that all his endeavours in this respect had failed, he tried another method. In order to divert the popular suspicion from himself he took advantage of the general odium attaching to the Christians, and in the early part of A.D. 65² caused accusations to be preferred against them of having set fire to Rome, and issued orders for their being seized throughout the city and brought before the tribunals. As the result of this malicious action the seizure of Christians, either in their various houses or in the hiding-places in which after a time they sought refuge, went on throughout the months of March, April, and May A.D. 65, the persecution steadily growing in intensity, a host of "informers" being employed by Nero's inhuman adviser Tigellinus, and the Christians being put to death in whatever cruel ways the latter could devise for the amusement of the populace. Finally, about the month of June, a general massacre of all who remained took place, carried out by Nero in his gardens by night in a sensational fashion, as a sort of theatrical display in which he himself took part.³ Nevertheless this cruel massacre was after all of no effect for the purpose for which it had been arranged; for the Romans still continued

¹ Tacitus says: "But neither man's efforts, nor the munificence of the ruler, nor propitiatory sacrifices to the gods, were able to remove the dishonour from Nero of its being believed that the conflagration had been ordered."

² It has been pointed out by Mr. Edmundson that it is erroneous to suppose, as has hitherto been done, that this persecution of the Christians took place in August A.D. 64; that the fire was not subdued until the 29th July; that the immense task of erecting shelters and providing food for some hundreds of thousands of destitute persons must have taken a considerable time; that Tacitus distinctly says that Nero did not try to shift odium from himself by inflaming odium against the Christians until he had exhausted all the means for gaining popularity and diverting the suspicions of the populace by these measures; and that the instructions for prosecuting the Christians were apparently not issued until the early part of A.D. 65 (Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century*, p. 125).

³ See pp. 162-163.

indignantly to attribute the destruction of Rome to Nero, and he never regained his former popularity.

The fire having given him the clearance he sought, Nero set about removing the ruins and rebuilding Rome with wider streets and on an improved plan, though it was many years before this was completed and all the ruins cleared away. At the same time he began energetically the building of his new palace. The enormous size of this, the fourth palace of the Caesars, called by Nero "The Golden House," may be realized from the fact that it covered part of the Palatine hill, the Velia, the site afterwards occupied by the Temple of Venus and Rome, part of the Cœlian hill, a large part of the Esquiline hill, and the whole of the valley between these hills in which the Colosseum now stands. No act of Nero's caused so much indignation among the Roman people, for the new palace took up a large portion of the city which before the fire had been thickly populated.¹ This palace was one of the wonders of the age. It united the palaces of Tiberius and Caligula on the Palatine hill with the villa of Maecenas on the Esquiline hill, while also taking in a large part of the Cœlian hill for a park, and the valley between for a great lake,² round which were built various pleasure houses. The Baths of the palace were supplied with sea water brought in pipes all the way from Ostia; and in the park an ornamental waterfall was constructed by bringing the water of the Claudian aqueduct along the Cœlian hill to a fall³ down which its waters were discharged into the lake. Suetonius, describing this palace, says:—

"The entrance porch was so high that there stood in it a colossal statue of Nero himself, 120 feet in height,⁴ and the space included in the palace was so immense that it had a triple portico a mile in length, and a lake like a sea, surrounded with

¹ It was chiefly on this account that the palace was destroyed by Vespasian, and the land given back to the people.

² The Colosseum occupies part of the site of this lake.

³ Remains of this still exist.

⁴ This colossal statue, in gilded bronze, the work of the Greek sculptor Zenodorus, was afterwards removed by Hadrian by means of twenty-four elephants to a spot in front of the Colosseum, and it is from it that the latter obtained its present name. The entrance to the "Golden House" thus stood where is now the church of S^{ta} Francesca Romana (see Chap. VI, pp. 232 and 233).

buildings that were like a city. Within its area were fields, vineyards, pastures, and woods containing a vast number of animals of various kinds, both wild and tame. In other parts of this palace the buildings were entirely overlaid with gold, and adorned with jewels and mother-of-pearl. The supper-rooms were vaulted, and compartments of the ceilings, inlaid with ivory, were made to revolve and scatter flowers, while they also contained pipes which showered scents upon the guests. The chief banqueting hall was circular, and its ceiling, adorned with imitations of the celestial bodies, revolved perpetually, night and day. Upon the dedication of this magnificent house Nero said, in approval of it, 'I have now a dwelling fit for a man.'¹ And Tacitus, speaking of this palace, says, "There one did not so much admire the gold and precious stones, for such things were a usual and common luxury, but fields and lakes, and the spaces and vistas that revealed themselves between the groves."²

This palace of Nero's was destroyed by the emperor Vespasian five years afterwards when he came to the throne, and his son Titus completed its destruction by building a set of Baths on the top of that part of it which occupied the slope of the Esquiline hill. A portion of this still remains (underneath the ruins of Titus' Baths) and was excavated in the beginning of the 19th century. It consists of nine halls and a long corridor, the ceilings ornamented with beautiful paintings of birds, animals, flowers and other designs. One of the halls, the *Triclinarium* or summer banqueting room, had at the end originally a garden, with a fountain of which the porphyry vase now in the Vatican Museum was the basin. In two of the halls are alcoves for couches, and in one hall a group representing Venus attended by Cupids. In one of the smaller rooms the statue of Meleager, one of the most beautiful statues in Rome (now in the Vatican museum), was found. All the paintings in these halls are of the character of those at Pompeii, and until those in the House of Livia were unearthed were considered the best remains of ancient pictorial art in Rome.³

¹ Suetonius, *Nero*, c, 31.

² Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 42.

³ In the 16th century Raphael penetrated into the long corridor and copied there the mural designs which he afterwards elaborated in the ornamentation of the *Loggie di Raphael* in the Vatican.

Almost as great a marvel as anything else connected with this immense palace is the rapidity with which it was constructed, for though the ruins left by the fire had first to be cleared away, it was evidently finished, or nearly finished, when Nero returned from Greece three years later, and it is astonishing that paintings and other decorations so quickly executed should yet have been so well done as to have survived for nineteen centuries.

But marvellous as was the palace which Nero constructed, of far greater interest is that which it superseded. Of all the palaces of the Caesars none equals in interest that which up to this time had been Nero's residence, the palace of Caligula, inhabited by Nero for twelve years out of his fourteen years' reign.¹ During the twenty-five years that it had been occupied by the imperial family (A.D. 41-66) this palace was the scene of events which must ever make it full of the deepest interest to all who gaze upon its ruins. It had seen the murder of Caligula, the riot which ended in the proclamation of Claudius as emperor, the events of the seven years' rule as empress of Valeria Messalina, her brilliant social entertainments, her marriage to Caius Silius, and the events of the six years' rule as empress of Agrippina; it witnessed the death of Claudius, the manœuvres by which the throne was gained for Nero, the tragic death of Britannicus, the love passages with Acte, the fall of Agrippina from power, the neglected and sorrowful life of Octavia, the banquets and orgies, each more extravagant than the last, in which Nero indulged after his mother's death, and the trial of St. Paul before Nero; and finally it had become the home of the empress Poppaea. But perhaps no less interest lies in the fact that it was in this palace² that those Christian servants of the imperial household some of whom are mentioned by St. Paul,³ and others of them known to us by their tomb on the Appian way,⁴ lived while performing their daily work of

¹ Plate XXIII. Portion of the upper part of the north-western corner of the Palace of Caligula.

² Plate XXIV. Small rooms in the lower portion of the Palace of Caligula.

³ Epistle to the Romans, xvi, 5-15, and Epistle to the Philippians, iv, 22.

⁴ Page 168.



J. ANDERSON.

PORTION OF THE UPPER PART OF THE NORTH-WESTERN CORNER OF THE PALACE OF CALIGULA.



ALINAFI.

A SECTION OF THE LOWER PART OF THE PALACE OF CALIGULA.

Showing a portion of the massive sub-structures, and some of the small rooms inhabited by the servants of the imperial household.

attendance in various capacities upon Agrippina, Nero, Britannicus, Octavia, and Poppaea, inhabiting those many small rooms which are still to be seen in the lower portions of this palace, and that it was from here that they were dragged away to perish in the terrible tortures of the persecution of A.D. 65.¹ So that the ruins of this palace are replete with interest, while the excavation of that portion still hidden beneath the Farnese gardens is much to be desired.

From the time that Caligula came to the throne a period set in, lasting through the reigns of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, which to the minds of Seneca and other writers who lived after him always presented the aspect of "the Terror." And this terrible condition of things, constantly becoming more aggravated, reached its climax in the last half of Nero's reign, the years A.D. 61-68. Seneca, whose power of moral diagnosis is unrivalled, and whose writings, in their awful revelations of the vices of his own age, shed a lurid light upon the prevailing social conditions, treats even the appalling sexual immorality then rampant as a secondary matter, and considers that greater in its evil results than even this was the universal lust for gold, the treacherous cruelty which it produced, and the base servility which this engendered. To him human life has become a ferocious struggle of beasts of prey, eager for plunder, and heedless of those destroyed in the foul contest.²

Treachery reigned supreme, and dogged the steps at every hour of the day, in the Forum, at the theatre, in the social gathering, and even in the domestic circle, rendering necessary the constant wearing of an armour of hypocrisy. A universal dissimulation had been taught by the cunning cruelty of the wild beast upon the throne. At such a court, says Seneca, it is a miracle to reach old age, and the feat can only be accomplished by systematically accepting the grossest insult or injury (either to oneself or to one's nearest and dearest) with a smiling face.³ For him who fails to wear an armour of hypocrisy there is always ready the rack, the poisoned cup, or the order for suicide. A chance word, an unguarded look, a smile, or a failure to smile at the right moment, might cause forthwith the death of the person thus off his guard. More-

¹ Page 168.

² Seneca, *De Ira*, ii, 8.

³ Seneca, *De Ira*, ii, 33.

over, it needed a supreme watchfulness never thus to be caught unawares; for in the social circle, amidst the never-ceasing battle of malicious gossip, a seeming friend might at any moment be laying traps to invite a sneer or an allusion, such as might give occasion for a secret accusation resulting in the victim's fortune passing partly to the seeming friend and partly to the emperor, even if such accusation did not result in a prompt end to the victim's life.

A sudden and violent death, by one of the cruel methods in vogue, had become a matter of every day occurrence. In the midst of the most luxurious surroundings, while reclining on the couch at the gorgeous and costly banquet in a dining-hall of which the walls were adorned with jewels and gold and the ceilings scattered flowers and showered scents, while exchanging banter with extravagantly dressed, beautiful, and clever women, or listening to the whispered account of the last highly-spiced tale of dark guilt from the palace, at any moment might come the summons to die; conditions which caused even the most luxurious surroundings and the most festive gatherings to be pervaded by an ever haunting shadow. We see this effect constantly showing itself in the writings of Seneca. "In reading Seneca's writings, especially those of his last years, you are conscious of a horror which hardly ever takes definite shape, a thick stifling air, as it were, charged with lightning. Again and again you feel a dim terror closing in silently and stealthily, with sudden glimpses of unutterable torture, of cord and rack and flaming tunic. You seem to see the sage tossing on his couch of purple under richly panelled ceilings of gold, starting at every sound in the wainscot, as he awaits the messenger of death. It is not so much that Seneca fears death itself. . . . The gloom of Seneca seems rather to spring from a sense of the terrible contrast between wealth and state and an ignominious doom which was ever ready to fall."

Seneca had had opportunities such as no other man possessed of knowing all that went on behind the scenes at the imperial court during the reigns of Claudius and Nero. He had been one of the inner circle of the court from the time of the death of

¹ Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 13.

Caligula, had daily seen the manœuvres of the freedmen surrounding Claudius, had formed one of the brilliant company at the entertainments of Valeria Messalina, had been banished for an intrigue with the emperor's niece Julia, and had witnessed the artifices of her elder sister Agrippina ; later on he had been recalled from banishment by the latter, had been for five years Nero's tutor, had witnessed the treacherous poisoning of Britannicus, and the murder of Agrippina by her son, and lastly had become Nero's chief minister. He had endeavoured for a time to restrain or mitigate the excesses of the latter, stooping even perhaps to crime in order if possible to save the Roman commonwealth from the results which he foresaw, and finally had retired in A.D. 62 into seclusion when his great wealth roused the cupidity of enemies who blackened his character and excited the jealousy of Nero. Moreover we may gather from Seneca's Letters that in his seclusion he was often placed in the position of a confidential director of oppressed souls, his counsel being sought by some whom the conditions of the time or their own circumstances had rendered desperate. Thus Seneca (to a greater degree than even the confessor of Louis XI of France) carried a heavy burden of knowledge of ghastly crimes, and it was no wonder that there ever brooded over his spirit that dark shadow which at times deepened into positive horror.

While this is the aspect which the period covered by the reigns of Claudius and Nero bore to one who lived in it, Tacitus shows another side of "the Terror." Tacitus had not, like Seneca, lived under its shadow, as he was only a boy of fourteen when Nero died, but he was conversant with most of its aspects, while he had lived during the period when it was to a certain extent revived in the latter half of the reign of Domitian. And in his eyes the worst of its effects was the fawning servility which it engendered. Tacitus enlarges upon the repulsive picture of both Senate and people vying with each other in grovelling self-abasement and fulsome congratulations to Nero after he had murdered his mother ; again upon how, after Nero's discovery of the conspiracy of Piso, the poet Lucan tried in vain to purchase safety by involving his own mother ; and again upon how the conduct of "Epicharis, the poor freedwoman of light character, who endured the accumulating

torture of scourge and rack and fire, and the dislocation of every limb," and eventually strangled herself, rather than betray others, shone in contrast with the behaviour of "high-born senators and knights who, without any compulsion of torture, betrayed their relatives and friends"; and again upon how, in the general display of cowardly servility, one member of that society after another, "when he heard of the murder of a brother or a dear friend, would deck his house with laurels, and falling at the emperor's feet, would cover his hand with kisses."¹ Only in the army can Tacitus find any remains of the manly spirit which all Romans had once possessed; and he relates with delight how an officer of the Praetorian Guards told Nero to his face that he loathed him as a murderer and an incendiary.²

But even in the time of Nero there were examples of purity of life, courageous faithfulness, and a manly refusal to adopt the fawning servility followed by the majority. Octavia, the unfortunate first wife of Nero, living spotless in the midst of the orgy of vice with which he surrounded both himself and her, was a conspicuous instance. So also was Antonia, her half-sister, who rather than marry the bloodstained and polluted Nero after Poppaea was no more, chose death. So also were the slave-girls of Octavia, who when they were called upon by Nero to substantiate the trumped-up charge against her which had been fabricated by the vile Anicetus, chose torture and death rather than thus traduce her. There were men like Thrasea, who scorned to follow the sycophancy of the other senators, and earned death as the result. There were tender women who voluntarily shared the deaths of brothers or husbands, or followed them into exile. Arria, Thrasea's wife, was another instance of noble women who even under "the Terror" shone out as bright and brave exceptions to the majority. She was a daughter of that Arria who twenty-four years earlier, in the reign of Claudius, had stabbed herself to death to encourage her husband Paetus to avoid by suicide an ignominious public execution.³ Arria the younger, when her husband Thrasea was condemned to die, wished to follow her

¹ Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 47-48.

² Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 67.

³ Chap. III, p. 102 (footnote).

mother's example, and was only prevented from doing so by his refusal to permit it and by the earnest expostulations of her friends.¹ And throughout the reign of Nero there were a minority of noble Roman families who held aloof from the society of the court, and retaining the principles of an earlier age showed examples of pure women and high-charactered men.

One is inclined at times to look with contempt upon the leading Romans for so long enduring such enormities as were perpetrated by Nero. For eleven years the aristocracy had suffered even greater degradation than when trodden under the heel of Caligula. Not only were the members of their order slaughtered indiscriminately, but also all who valued their lives were forced to adopt perpetually a fulsome adulation of the tyrant which brought the aristocracy to the very *nadir* of self-abasement. Nero had never even as a boy met any other human being on a level of equality, and consequently was consumed by an egregious vanity which required that all should look upon his very mediocre talents as though they were the miraculous attributes of a god; and any who failed to express sentiments of this nature had an exceedingly short shrift. And when to this were added the grossest insults to those nearest and dearest, it seems surprising that men of any spirit should so long have failed to endeavour to remove this second representative of the Julian branch of the Caesars in the same way that the first had been removed when his crimes became insupportable. But we must remember that he was protected by the Praetorian Guards, a force of some 12,000 men, who were paid for guarding the emperor's life, and whose duty, as well as interest, it was to care only for that object. Moreover Nero, strange though it be, was undoubtedly, at all events for a long time, popular with the mass of the people. Whatever were the qualities possessed by him which produced this effect, of the fact itself there is no doubt. Nero was never hated by the people as they had hated Caligula.

At length, however, all those of the aristocracy who still nourished some portion of the spirit of former times, and felt a burning indignation at the degradation of being subjected to

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, xvi, 34.

such a rule as that of Nero, resolved to make a determined effort to rid the State of this hateful yoke. Accordingly in the autumn of A.D. 65, not long after the massacre of the Christians, a widespread conspiracy headed by Calpurnius Piso was formed among all the leading Romans to remove the monster who had seized the throne. Unfortunately the plot was discovered, being revealed by Scaevinus, a man of the highest rank, who found that he had been betrayed.

The discovery of this conspiracy plunged Nero into the wildest terror, and as a result Calpurnius Piso, Fœnius Rufus (the Praetorian prefect), Plautius Lateranus (the consul-designate), Subrius Flavius, Lucan, Paetus Thræsea,¹ and later on the degraded Petronius,² with many others, including some of Nero's most intimate friends, were one after another put to death. Seneca himself (who had taken no part in the plot) did not escape, and was removed in the usual manner. For to such a pass had things come that when Nero wished any one removed all that was necessary was an intimation that the emperor desired he would put an end to himself. All men knew it was useless to expect any clemency, so did as they were ordered; and thus departed Seneca. Soon afterwards Poppæa also perished, being killed by a kick from

¹ Paetus Thræsea has been called the Stoic saint, and was one of the noblest Romans of the age. Reserved and highminded, he would not join in intrigues against Nero, nor would he join in the base adulation of one who had murdered his own mother. He therefore absented himself from the Senate for about three years. It was for this that he was put to death, Nero in revenge causing him to be accused of complicity in the conspiracy of Piso, a plot in which he had not joined. When condemned, Thræsea would not allow Aurelenus Rusticus to endanger his own life by interposing his veto, as Tribune of the people, to the unjust sentence.

² Petronius was a man who made the pleasures of vice a fine art, and his judgment was regarded as the standard of taste in all matters of luxury. He was named the Arbiter, as the director of the emperor's pleasures. Seeing that his fate was determined, "having opened his veins, he bade the physician bind them up again, and repeating this operation at intervals, he spent his last hours at a banquet, amusing his friends with wanton verses. He also composed an account of the unnatural orgies of the emperor, and sent it to him under seal. This led to the banishment of a woman named Silia, whom Nero suspected of having betrayed the scenes in the palace in which she had taken part" (Bury).

Nero when she was about to become a mother, in his rage at being disappointed in the hope he had formed of finding treasure at Carthage. Thus Poppaea never saw the new palace, many details of which she had probably suggested; for she died only a few months after it had been begun.

Upon the death of Poppaea, Nero proposed to marry Octavia's half-sister Antonia, but she, displaying a spirit worthy of her grandfather Drusus and the grandmother whose name she bore, boldly refused, though she must have been fully conscious of what would be the result; she was accordingly put to death on a charge of aspiring to the throne. Antonia was the last of the Claudian branch, of which Agrippina and her son Nero together had in turn slain four members, Claudius, Britannicus, Octavia, and Antonia, the Julian branch having thus finally disposed of the descendants of Livia. Nero then chose Statilia Messalina, the wife of one of his boon companions, Atticus Vestinus; a party of soldiers were sent to put Vestinus to death, and Nero then married Statilia.

Meanwhile Pontus, in the north of Asia Minor, had been conquered and added to the dominions of the empire in A.D. 64, and this had been followed by the re-conquest of Armenia, carried out by the Roman general Corbulo, and in A.D. 66 Nero summoned Tiridates, the brother of the Parthian king, to Rome, and in a ceremony of the utmost splendour conferred on him the crown of Armenia. Tiridates on his return to his kingdom ordered worship to be offered to Nero as a god. Nero then left Rome for Greece, where he remained for a year and a half. At this time he put to death the brothers Scribonius Rufus and Scribonius Proculus, the two commanders on the Rhine, against whom nothing was alleged, and also, with the greatest ingratitude, Corbulo, who on landing in Greece, fresh from his success in Armenia, was met by an order for his execution. While in Greece Nero planned a canal to be cut through the isthmus of Corinth; but his time was chiefly occupied in performing in the theatres as an actor, in being fêted and applauded by the Greeks, and in committing every kind of vice and extravagance.

Early in A.D. 68 Nero returned to Rome, and took up his abode in his new palace, the "Golden House," where his follies and crimes grew ever greater. But a disgusted world could

endure him no longer. The legions in Gaul, in Spain, and on the Rhine all set up the standard of revolt, the veteran general Galba being declared emperor by the legions under his command in Spain. At the same time at the capital the Romans made plans for putting an end to the tyrant whose enormities had become insupportable. Finding himself deserted by all, Nero secretly stole away from his vast palace to the villa of his freedman Phaon on the Via Nomentana, outside the city, and on the approach of those who came to seize him committed suicide.¹ He died on the 9th June A.D. 68, at the age of thirty-one. He left no children, and with him the Julian branch of the family ended; as the Claudian branch had ended when he murdered Antonia.

His statues were broken down, his name was decreed by the Senate to be accursed, and his "Golden House" was two years later swept away. His career of fourteen years, with its fantastic revels and its terrible crimes, and the contrast between its splendid opening with an adoring world at his feet and its desolate close, seized upon the imagination of mankind, and his name became for all time a synonym for unlimited wickedness.

But even Nero found one faithful soul to mourn over him and give him burial. Acte, deserted and forgotten in the countless orgies of ten years' debauchery, had never turned from Nero, and on his death she went to Phaon's villa, conveyed Nero's body by night to the foot of the Pincian hill, and there buried it in the tomb of his father's family the Domitii. Suetonius says, "Acte, having wrapped his remains in rich white stuff embroidered with gold, deposited them in the Domitian monument which is seen under the Hill of Gardens."² The tomb was of porphyry, having an altar of Luna marble, surrounded by a balustrade of Thasos marble." The spot was for centuries considered accursed, until to put an end to this feeling a Christian church was built upon it.³

Thus had the Julian branch succeeded in destroying the family of the Caesars. By their vindictive jealousy of the

¹ It is said that while hesitating Nero gave vent to the characteristic speech, "Alas, what an artist the world will lose in me."

² The Pincian hill.

³ The church of Sta. Maria del Popolo.

far nobler Claudian branch they had ended in leaving no descendants of either branch. Agrippina the elder, pursuing an insane jealousy, had led two of her sons to destruction, her sister-in-law (with no little suspicion that it was at Agrippina's instigation) had murdered Tiberius' son Drusus, her fourth son had murdered Tiberius' grandson Tiberius Gemellus, Agrippina the younger had murdered Claudius, her son Nero had murdered Claudius' three children, Britannicus, Octavia, and Antonia, and had wound up by putting an end to himself. It was the final act of the long domestic tragedy in which the Julian branch had slain in turn six members of the Claudian branch, a tragedy the seeds of which had been sown when Octavius fell in love with Livia and divorced Scribonia.

(b) Matters concerning religion

During the fourteen years of the reign of Nero many notable events occurred in regard to Christianity. Throughout this period that religion was being still further spread, both to the north, east, and south of Antioch and also in Asia Minor and Greece, and was beginning to meet with fierce antagonism from other races besides the Jews. Towards the end of A.D. 54,¹ the first year of Nero's reign, we hear of St. Peter and St. Barnabas working together at Corinth.² In the early Church St. Peter and St. Paul were regarded as joint founders of the Church of Corinth. Thus a letter of Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, in A.D. 168 to Soter, Bishop of Rome (quoted by Eusebius), says :—"The Church, the plantation of Peter and Paul at Rome and at Corinth ; for they both together here in Corinth planted us and taught alike." In A.D. 55, the year that Nero murdered Britannicus, St. Peter and St. Barnabas appear to have travelled to Rome, and to have remained there about a year. There are several references by the early writers to this visit of St. Peter and St. Barnabas to Rome, and the latest

¹ See Note A, Chronology of events in the Christian Church in the 1st century (p. 203).

² Considered by the latest authorities to be confirmed by the words in First Epistle to the Corinthians, ix, 6, and Second Epistle xii, 11.

authorities consider these to be confirmed by various scattered remarks of St. Paul in his epistles.¹

St. Paul, after arriving at Ephesus on his third missionary journey,² spent three years there (A.D. 53-56), and from thence wrote (about the end of the year A.D. 55) his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*. In the spring of A.D. 56 there occurred at Ephesus, in consequence of his preaching, the serious riot in connection with the Temple of Diana.³ After it was over St. Paul sailed from Ephesus to Macedonia, and from Philippi wrote his *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (A.D. 56). After remaining some time at Philippi he travelled into Greece and reached Corinth, remaining there three months. And from Corinth he wrote (towards the end of the year A.D. 56) his *Epistle to the Romans*, i.e. to the Christians in Rome. Various references show⁴ that there was by this time a considerable Christian community at Rome, and that there were Christians among the servants of many important men in that city, and also in the imperial palace.

From Corinth St. Paul returned through Macedonia, and in the spring of A.D. 57 sailed from Philippi for Judæa, stopping on the way at Troas and other places, including Miletus, where he sent for the elders of the Church at Ephesus and other adjacent cities, and bade them a sorrowful farewell, having previously told them that after visiting Jerusalem he must proceed to Rome, and now telling them that they would see his face no more.⁵ From Miletus he sailed to Tyre, and thence to Caesarea, and at length reached Jerusalem. There, a week or two after his arrival, the Jews raised a tumult, seeking to kill him, whereupon the Roman governor arrested him, and sent him to Caesarea, where he was kept a prisoner for two years,

¹ Mr. G. Edmundson in his *The Church in Rome in the First Century*, pp. 79-86, brings forward various proofs of this visit of St. Peter and St. Barnabas to Rome in A.D. 55, and considers that the remarks of St. Paul alluding to his being unable to go to Rome at this time were due to this cause, as he would not "build upon another man's foundation."

² Chap. III, p. 124.

³ Acts of the Apostles, xix, 24-41.

⁴ For instance, the list of salutations at the conclusion of this epistle to the Romans (see p. 167).

⁵ Acts of the Apostles, xx, 17-38.

A.D. 57-59. Most authorities consider that the *Gospel of St. Luke* was written at this time. Late in the year A.D. 59 St. Paul, having appealed to the emperor, was despatched by Festus, the Roman procurator of Judæa, who had in that year succeeded Felix, towards Rome, being allowed to take St. Luke with him ; they were wrecked at Malta and wintered there, and arrived at Rome in the spring of A.D. 60.¹ About the same time St. James the Less,² who acted as head of the Church at Jerusalem,³ and was the only Apostle then left at that city, wrote the *General Epistle of St. James*.

St. Paul on reaching Rome was handed over by the centurion Julius, who had escorted him from Caesarea, to the commander of the Praetorian Guards, and was at first kept a prisoner in the extensive camp of the Praetorian Guards, chained to a soldier, but allowed to see his friends. After a short time, in accordance with his appeal to the emperor, he was brought before Nero. The palace in which St. Paul's examination before the latter took place was that which had been built by Caligula and finished and adorned by Claudius, in which palace Nero resided for the first twelve years of his reign. It must have been a strange interview, Nero having the year before murdered his mother Agrippina, and having at this time plunged into all that series of wild excesses which followed that event. This first examination appears to have been a preliminary one. As its result St. Paul was allowed to reside in open arrest in Rome in his own hired house, pending his final trial before the emperor when all the evidence against him should have been received

¹ Acts of the Apostles, xxvii, 1 to xxviii, 31.

² St. James the Less (together with Jude and Joses) was the son of Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and was thus the first cousin of Jesus Christ. The term applied to him of "the Lord's brother" has often created difficulties unnecessarily. This term is the universal eastern custom ; as for instance in India, where the term "bhai" (brother) is invariably applied to first cousins as well as brothers, first cousins being looked upon as the same as brothers.

³ He is often spoken of as Bishop of Jerusalem, but this does not seem correct. The title of Bishop was used regarding the men whom the Apostles placed as leaders of the Churches in different cities, but not of an Apostle himself, even though he might act as such a leader for many years, as, for instance, St. Peter at Antioch or St. James at Jerusalem.

from Judæa, and he lived in this house¹ for the next two years (A.D. 60-62).

The consideration with which St. Paul was throughout treated by the Roman authorities is very marked. Though we are told nothing, either by St. Paul himself or by his faithful follower St. Luke, regarding St. Paul's family and worldly circumstances, it seems evident that he must have been fairly well born and have possessed a certain amount of property. The mere fact that he was by birth a Roman citizen would not by itself account for the degree of consideration with which we constantly find him treated by the Roman officials. The respect shown to him by the Roman tribune Lysias,² the attention that he received in succession from the Roman procurators Felix and Festus,³ the hope nourished by the former that he might receive money from St. Paul or his family,⁴ the courtesy with which he was treated throughout his journey to Rome by the centurion Julius, the leniency shown to him when on his first arrival at Rome he was a prisoner in the camp of the Praetorian Guards,⁵ the favoured treatment accorded to him in permitting him to live for two years at liberty in Rome while still nominally a prisoner, together with the fact that for some four years he was able to meet heavy expenses, show that St. Paul was by no means poor, and that he was regarded by the Roman officials as a person of some distinction. Nor was this due to any reverence which was paid him by the Christian community; for we find no such treatment accorded by the Roman officials to St. Peter.

During the two years that St. Paul dwelt in his hired house in Rome he wrote (A.D. 61) his *Epistle to the Colossians*, his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, and his *Epistle to Philemon*. At the same time St. Luke, who was living with him, wrote the *Acts*

¹ Said by Jewish tradition to have been at the corner of the Via Lata, where that street joined the Via Flaminia (now the Corso). The lower rooms of this house are still to be seen, lying some 15 feet below the present ground-level, with the archways which opened from it into the street, the former Via Flaminia.

² Acts of the Apostles, xxi, 40; xxii, 26-30; xxiii, 17-19; and xxiii, 23-24.

³ Ibid., xxiv, 23-26; xxv, 12; and xxvi, 24-32.

⁴ Ibid., xxiv, 26.

⁵ Ibid., xxviii, 16-17.

of the *Apostles*, containing the history of most of the events which had happened in the Christian Church from its foundation in A.D. 29¹ up to the end of A.D. 61, with which year this book ends. In the spring of A.D. 62, shortly before his final trial, St. Paul appears to have been removed from his hired house to a more strict confinement in the Praetorian camp, and there wrote his *Epistle to the Philippians*, the tone of which is in marked contrast to that of his three earlier epistles from Rome. About this time St. James the Less was murdered at Jerusalem by the Jews, who stoned him to death. Josephus says that they killed him because they were enraged at St. Paul's escape from them. Josephus also states that in the following year he himself went to Rome to intercede for some Jewish priests who had been arrested and sent to Rome, and that he obtained the interest of the empress Poppaea on their behalf, and through her was successful in gaining their release.

In the spring of A.D. 62 the final trial of St. Paul before the emperor took place. Regarding the charges made against him by the Jewish Sanhedrim of disturbing the worship of the Temple and bringing an uncircumcised person into the Temple courts, the Romans cared nothing, but he was also charged with on several occasions creating riots, a much more serious offence. Ordinary appeals to the emperor were heard by officials specially appointed for that purpose, and not by the emperor himself, but criminal appeals were almost invariably heard by the emperor in person. And in this case the charge, that of causing frequent disturbances to the peace of the empire by being the ringleader of a troublesome sect, was the most serious one possible in the eyes of a Roman, being equivalent to the crime of *majestas*, or treason against the State, the punishment for which was death. Tiberius and Claudius had been accustomed to hear such cases in the Forum, but Nero reverted to the custom of Augustus, hearing them in the Basilica of the imperial palace; and here, about the month of March A.D. 62, the trial of St. Paul appears to have been held. Nero on such occasions took his seat on a slightly raised dais at one end of the splendid hall, with on either side of him his assessors, twenty senators of the highest rank, each of whom at the end of the

¹ Chap. II, p. 84.

trial gave his opinion in writing to the emperor. It is probable that Poppaea, who had just been married to Nero, was present, sitting beside the emperor; for the trial was one which with her strong Jewish tendencies she is certain to have desired to watch. In the time of both Claudius and Nero it was often customary for the empress to be present at such trials,¹ seated beside the emperor, and a document is extant which states that it was necessary at this period to increase the width of the seat of the tribunal owing to a change in the fashion of the dress of the Roman ladies.

The witnesses against St. Paul were apparently the delegates from the Jewish Sanhedrim in Jerusalem, together with Jewish witnesses from Ephesus, Corinth, and other places where disturbances had been aroused by his preaching. Nero never discussed a case with his assessors, as former emperors had always done, but after reading their opinions gave sentence according to his pleasure, quite regardless of what might be the opinions of the majority. On this occasion it might have been expected that the sentence would inevitably be one adverse to the prisoner. For Poppaea was at the height of her influence; if not actually a Jewish proselyte, she was at all events a strong adherent of Judaism;² various cases are on record of accused persons belonging to that race obtaining her intercession on their behalf with successful results; and the Sanhedrim would certainly have spent money freely in order to gain her assistance to their cause. But for some reason unknown Nero took a different view from that which might have been expected. Just at this time the Jews in Jerusalem had built a high wall to prevent the Temple courts being overlooked from the palace; Festus, the Roman procurator, had ordered the wall to be pulled down, a riot had occurred, Jerusalem (as so often) was in a disturbed state, and the Jews were out of favour in consequence. Whether this had any

¹ As for instance in the case of Valeria Messalina on the occasion of the trial of Valerius Asiaticus in the reign of Claudius (*Tacitus, Annals*, xi, 2) and of Poppaea herself at the trial of the Piso conspirators (*Annals*, c, 61).

² When she died three years later she was buried with Jewish rites, instead of her body being burnt according to the Pagan custom (*Tacitus, Annals*, xvi, 6).

effect in the case of the trial of St. Paul it is impossible to say, but at any rate Nero took a view favourable to the prisoner and unfavourable to his accusers ; and St. Paul was pronounced guiltless of the charge, and was forthwith liberated.

Upon being thus set free from his captivity St. Paul at once left Rome and travelled into Spain, as he had said he would do. All the ancient writers, including the Muratorian Canon, Clement, Irenæus, and Theodoret, mention this journey of his to Spain, and speak of his reaching "the furthest bounds of the West." In this same year (A.D. 62) St. Matthew in Egypt wrote the *Gospel of St. Matthew*, chiefly for the Jews in Judæa, who now by the death of St. James the Less were left without any Apostle dwelling in their midst.

In the year A.D. 63 St. Peter again arrived at Rome. The subject of St. Peter's having for a part of his life resided in Rome and of his connection with the Church established in that city, has long been a much debated question. And a generation or two ago one might have said that there was no evidence (other than tradition) that St. Peter ever was in Rome. Modern research however has caused an entire change in this respect, and the question has become one which, so far as scholars are concerned, no longer admits of controversy. Not only do the ancient writers constantly speak of St. Peter and St. Paul as the joint founders of the Church at Rome (thus confirming tradition), and write of St. Peter first founding the Church of Antioch and, after ruling it for seven years, then proceeding to Rome and acting as head of that Church for many years, but also both modern scientific research and modern Biblical criticism confirm their statements. From the archaeological point of view also similar testimony is contributed ; so that we find the high authority Professor Lanciani saying :—"For the archaeologist, the presence and execution of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome are facts established beyond a shadow of doubt by purely monumental evidence."¹

As to the particular years in which St. Peter visited Rome, the point thus appears to be one of little importance. The evidence is ample that he was on several occasions in that city, that he

¹ Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 125.

was regarded by the Church there as the Apostle to whom that Church chiefly looked for guidance, that he was uniformly spoken of by the early Christian writers as the founder of that Church conjointly with St. Paul, and that the strong influence which he exercised over its members is demonstrated by various archaeological remains.

Whether, however, the writers of the 4th century,¹ after the obscurity induced by the age of the persecutions had come to an end, were correct in speaking of St. Peter as having remained permanently at Rome and acted as Bishop (episcopus) of the Church in that city for some twenty-three years up till his death may perhaps be doubted. That a man of the force of character possessed by St. Peter should have remained permanently at a place like Rome throughout a large part of the reign of Claudius and almost the whole of the reign of Nero without ever becoming known to the authorities, or receiving any mention, however slight, in the writings of the time as being at Rome, seems almost inconceivable. This, though it might possibly happen in the case of a distant eastern city like Antioch, could scarcely happen at Rome, the centre of Roman life. It seems much more probable that throughout the long period mentioned St. Peter maintained a general supervision over both the Church at Rome² and the Church at Antioch, visiting Rome for a year or more from time to time,³ and in the intervals visiting Antioch in the same way, and from both places continuing to carry on the supervision of the work of evangelizing the countries of the east. The First Epistle of St. Peter, now generally acknowledged to have been written by him at Rome not long before his death, and addressed in its opening words to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, shows that St. Peter had never discontinued this latter portion of his

¹ As, for instance, Eusebius and St. Jerome.

² Both tradition and the ancient writers maintain that St. Peter himself appointed the first Bishop of Rome, Linus, and this is concurred with by the most modern authorities. If so, then this strongly supports the view that St. Peter only visited Rome from time to time, and did not remain there acting as Bishop of that Church for a long number of years.

³ Tradition has always maintained that St. Peter when in Rome lived on the Aventine hill, in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.

labours however much attention he may also have paid to Church affairs at Antioch and Rome. His journeys to and fro between Antioch and Rome, if undertaken in the summer, would be performed by sea without difficulty. Two reasons probably drew St. Peter to add this work at Rome to his primary task of supervising the missionary work in the east ; first, the fact that at Rome there were an abnormally large number of Jews,¹ and secondly, a desire to establish a strongly organized Church at the capital of the Roman Empire.

But however certain it may be that St. Peter was several times in Rome, that he acted as the head of the Church at that city for a long number of years, and that he was uniformly regarded as the founder of that Church conjointly with St. Paul, all this gave no ground for the adoption by that Church of a tone of superiority over others. For other Churches, notably that of Corinth, claimed St. Peter in the same way as their founder conjointly with some other Apostle ; while, above all, the Church of Antioch, of which St. Peter was universally acknowledged both as the sole founder, and as having acted as its head for seven years before ever proceeding to Rome, and established in the city which was the centre from whence the work of evangelizing the world had been undertaken, and which was therefore regarded as the capital of the Christian religion, had claims in this respect which neither the Church at Rome, Corinth, or any other city could dispute. Nor were they ever disputed at this period, or for long afterwards, and it is not until the 4th century that we find any such idea first put forward.²

Whatever differences of opinion regarding former visits of St. Peter to Rome may exist among the various authorities, practically none exist with regard to his last visit, that in A.D. 63–65, which ended with his martyrdom. Thus Mr. Edmundson, the latest authority, in maintaining that St. Peter arrived in Rome on the last occasion in A.D. 63, says :— “ That Peter visited Rome between the years 62 A.D. and 65 A.D. and that he was put to death there by crucifixion is admitted by everyone who studies the evidence in a fair and

¹ In the time of Claudius and Nero the majority of the Christians in Rome were Jews by race.

² In the time of Pope Damascus I (366–384). See Chap. XV, p. 537.

reasonable spirit.”¹ St. Peter, reaching Rome the year after St. Paul’s departure, arrived there at a critical time. A little more than a year previously Nero had been married to Poppaea, and was now launching out into one fabulous and preposterous extravagance after another, while his cruelties under the influence of the inhuman Tigellinus were causing a state of things in which no man rising from his bed in the morning could feel any degree of certainty that he would live to lie down on it at night ; in the following July there occurred the great fire which consumed three-fourths of Rome ; and this was followed in the spring of A.D. 65 by consequences for the Christians which from that time forward altered materially the whole attitude of the Pagan world towards them, changing what had hitherto been cold dislike into fierce and vindictive enmity.

St. Peter before leaving Antioch on this occasion² had appointed as Bishop there a man whose name during the next fifty years became renowned throughout all the east, the celebrated Ignatius of Antioch, a man destined to exercise a wide influence over the whole Church, both then and even down to the present day.³ Ignatius was apparently at this time about forty years old. These two appointments by St. Peter, that of Linus as Bishop of Rome and that of Ignatius as Bishop of Antioch, not only strongly support the theory that St. Peter did not remain permanently at Rome, but exercised a general supervision over both Antioch and Rome, visiting each of those cities from time to time, but they also serve to throw into strong relief the remarkable difference between these two Churches at this period. For great indeed is the contrast between the first Bishop of Rome and the first Bishop of Antioch. St. Peter in selecting a man for Bishop of the community at Rome naturally chose the man among the Christian community at that city who was best fitted for the post of leader ; and he of course did the same at Antioch. But

¹ Edmundson, *The Church in the First Century* (1913), p. 47.

² It is universally attested by the early Church that Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was appointed by St. Peter, and that when he died in 113 he had been Bishop there for fifty years ; so that he was appointed in A.D. 62 or 63. Theodoret specially says that he was appointed “by St. Peter’s own hand.”

³ Regarding Ignatius’ celebrated Letters, see Chap. VI, p. 225.

among the members of the Church at Rome, largely composed (so far as the men were concerned) of persons who were either slaves or converted Jews, it is evident that St. Peter could find no man really fitted for the office of leader, and was compelled to choose a man who, whatever he may have been in other respects, was without any real capacity. Thus it resulted that of Linus, the first Bishop of Rome, so little is heard, not only in subsequent writings but also in tradition, that it has even been doubted by some whether he ever existed, and nothing has been recorded of him beyond his name. On the other hand, in the case of the Church at Antioch, mainly composed of individuals belonging to the Greek race, and forming a much larger community, one also which had for nearly thirty years received the teaching of St. Peter, St. John, St. Barnabas, St. Paul, and other Apostles, St. Peter found no such difficulty, and was able to select a man as the first Bishop of Antioch whose after history widely proved his great capacity, who became renowned throughout all the Churches of Asia Minor and the east, and whose letters have ever since been looked upon as second only to the epistles of an Apostle.

And now the most tragic of all the acts in the terrible drama of Nero's reign is unfolded before us, and there pass before our eyes those wild and pathetic scenes when the first battle was fought of which the Roman world was to witness so many during the next 250 years,—those strange battles in which absolute weakness was pitted against absolute strength, in a cause which must have seemed to the onlookers so supremely hopeless.

This first of these unequal conflicts began in the spring of A.D. 65.¹ Accused by Nero of having caused the conflagration in Rome, and of being the "enemies of mankind," the Christians—men and women, boys and girls—were one after another seized in different parts of the city,² dragged before the magistrates, subjected to a short examination, and upon confessing that they were Christians were forthwith cast into prison, and in batches delivered over to death by various cruel methods as a spectacle

¹ Page 137 (footnote).

² Up to that time Christianity had not been proscribed, so that many of the Christians were probably well known as such to all their neighbours.

for the people in the Circus Maximus. That vast enclosure which had witnessed the scene of Nero, seated in his triumphal car, receiving the congratulations of thousands for the murder of his mother, now saw a still more thrilling spectacle, in which Christians of all ages and both sexes died in torments, some being sewn up in the skins of wild animals and torn to pieces by dogs, some being stripped naked and dragged like Dirce on the horns of infuriated bulls, and some being crucified.¹ From their answers before the magistrates the names of others who had meanwhile sought hiding places were obtained; so that there continued for a month or more to be a constant series of these cruel spectacles, devised by Tigellinus and enacted for the amusement of the populace. But this was merely the prelude, the skirmishes of the advanced-guards before the general engagement; and while this preliminary action was continuing four important events occurred regarding St. Peter.

About the month of April A.D. 65, while this persecution of the Christians was day by day gathering increased force, St. Peter, at this time not less than seventy years old, wrote in Rome the *First Epistle of St. Peter*, addressed to those Jews of the second dispersion who had become Christians, "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."² It was written while St. Peter from his place of concealment was daily hearing of these terrible scenes in the Circus Maximus, and seeing friends or neighbours dragged away to prison and death. To this time belongs the beautiful *Quo Vadis* legend, relating how that St. Peter, temporarily overcome with fear at the things which were happening in Rome, started to fly from thence, but about a quarter of a mile outside the Appian Gate of the city³ was met by Christ, and to his question "Lord, whither goest Thou?" (*Domine, Quo Vadis*) received the reply, "I go to Rome, to be crucified again." Whereupon St. Peter, coming to himself, and feeling how he who had just written to the persecuted Christians in Pontus

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 44, and *Epistle of St. Clement*, v.

² Most authorities are now of opinion that the First Epistle of St. Peter was written by him at Rome and that it bears internal evidence of being written during the earlier stages of the persecution of A.D. 65.

³ The church of *Domine Quo Vadis* now marks the spot.

and Galatia to stand firm and endure such things,¹ was by this flight again denying his Master, returned to the city. This story is related by St. Ambrose, and is considered by most authorities to point to the fact that St. Peter did at this time make an attempt to fly from Rome.

A week or two after writing his First Epistle and despatching it from Rome by the disciple Silvanus,² that which had befallen others befel St. Peter also, possibly through information gathered at some of the examinations of Christians. He was seized and thrown into prison, and knew from what he had seen in the case of many others around him that it could only be a matter of a few days before he too would be led forth to die. Unlike St. Paul, who for the reasons already noted was always treated by the Romans with a certain degree of consideration, St. Peter appears to have been looked upon by the Roman officials as of no more consequence than any other Christian, except so far as they may have gathered that he was a leader among this accursed sect, and so have made the conditions of his imprisonment more severe. Apparently while thus in prison he wrote during the month of May A.D. 65, the short *Second Epistle of St. Peter* (addressed to all Christians generally) which bears strong internal evidence of being written under just these circumstances. It also contains an affectionate reference by name to St. Paul, and is in many of its expressions singularly touching as the last words of the great Apostle. Its breadth of view is extraordinary, and nowhere perhaps do we see so well how justly St. Peter deserved to be the leading Apostle; his thoughts soar far and wide over Christendom, embracing the whole world. And to see him who had once been the rough warm-hearted fisherman of the Lake of Galilee, who had in forty years grown into the Apostle so revered that every collection of Christians in Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and even to the far regions of Pontus and Mesopotamia, desired to have the honour of his name attached in some way to their community, yet who tradition has said could never hear a cock crow without weeping, sitting on the ground in his bare and harsh Roman prison, and with the knowledge that he was

¹ 1 Peter, ii, 21; iii, 14; and iv, 16.

² *Ibid.*, v, 12.

soon to die a cruel death,¹ dictating to some humble disciple these last affectionate words to all Christians of every race and clime, is a picture calculated to touch any heart.

It is the last glimpse that we have of St. Peter; we know nothing more of him from documentary evidence. But tradition has always asserted that during the last two or three days of his life he was removed to the terrible prison of the Tullianum (still to be seen under the hill of the Capitol in Rome), was carried thence, bound, to a spot near the palace of Nero on the Vatican hill, and was there crucified, but at his own request with his head downwards.² His body was buried in a small cemetery on the Vatican hill near where he was crucified; in the 3rd century, during the persecution of Valerian, his remains were removed to the Catacombs, but they were brought back to their original resting-place early in the 4th century, and interred where the cathedral of St. Peter's now stands, in the crypt of which cathedral is his tomb. His martyrdom apparently took place in the month of May, A.D. 65.³

Meanwhile the climax of this contest, in which those who fell were styled some thirty years later by St. Clement as "noble athletes," approached. Nero had now thought of a more poignant spectacle, one which would make a grand *finale* to the persecution, and would wipe out all the remaining Christians in Rome in a manner both satisfactorily complete, and also from his point of view artistically gratifying. For this purpose in June, A.D. 65, assisted by the tigerish Tigellinus, he devised an evening entertainment in his Vatican gardens which should be altogether unique, one in which the torture of the Christians should be combined with music, flowers, and chariot-driving. Accordingly the Christians who had not yet suffered were diligently sought out in their hiding places throughout the city,

¹ Second Epistle of St. Peter, i, 14-15, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle. . . . Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things in remembrance."

² Seneca mentions that the Romans sometimes, as a more severe punishment, crucified men with their heads downwards, and Eusebius says that several martyrs were crucified in this fashion.

³ See p. 169 (footnote). The time-honoured theory that St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred at the same time, and even on the same day, is no longer accepted by scholars.

and collected in the prisons until the arrangements for this evening entertainment were complete.

Nero's extensive Vatican Gardens had been made by him very beautiful, and in them he had laid out a circus-ground for his private chariot-driving, spread with gold-coloured sand, and profusely adorned with works of art. On the *spina* constructed down the centre of this circus there stood the Egyptian obelisk which had been brought to Rome by Caligula. Upon a fine night in June, A.D. 65,¹ the Christians of all ages and both sexes were driven in troops to these gardens. Tacitus speaks of them as "an immense multitude," and describes how "in long succession troops of prisoners in chains were dragged along and stood at the gates of the imperial gardens."² Tacitus was at this time a boy of eleven years old, and his vivid language gives the idea that he himself saw this piteous spectacle; while his testimony has all the greater weight from the fact that the sight stirred in him no feeling of pity, as his subsequent remarks show.³ Round the whole of the circus-ground in his gardens Nero had caused strong posts to be erected, and on each of these a Christian man, woman, or child was now fastened a few feet from the ground, with a sharp spike under his or her chin. Seneca, who witnessed this tragedy, says that in some cases the stake was driven right through the person's body, coming out at the mouth. Those thus bound on the posts were then wrapped in tow steeped in pitch, and set alight. Nero, delighted with the shrieks of the victims, and mounted in an ivory chariot, dressed in his green charioteer's costume, drove slowly round and round the circus thus hideously illuminated, accompanied by bands playing music, and troops of girls waving garlands of flowers and scattering incense.⁴ So ended the first battle of the 250 years' campaign.

¹ Regarding this date of June, A.D. 65, instead of that formerly accepted of August, A.D. 64, see footnotes to pp. 137 and 169.

² Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 58.

³ See below.

⁴ The gardens of Nero in which this cruel massacre of so many innocent persons of both sexes occurred covered the site now occupied by St. Peter's and the Vatican palace. The Egyptian obelisk which stands in the centre of the piazza in front of St. Peter's is that which ornamented the *spina* of Nero's circus at the time, and round which this spectacle took place. Its exact site on the circus-ground was a spot outside the present sacristy of St. Peter's, and is marked by a slab placed in the pavement.

To obtain an idea of the very different aspects which this First persecution, in which the entire Christian community of Rome perished, has presented to those belonging to the two opposing parties in a conflict which, here begun, was to continue for two and a half centuries, let us hear on the one side how a great Pagan writer of the time describes it, and then on the other side how a Christian writer of a later age speaks of it.

The Roman historian Tacitus,¹ relating this persecution of the Christians at Rome by Nero, says:—"With this view" (viz. that of diverting the popular suspicion from himself) "Nero contrived that accusations should be brought against those who, under the appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy, and subjected them to the most exquisite torments. They derived their name and origin from one Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius Caesar had suffered death by the sentence of the Procurator of Judæa, Pontius Pilatus. For awhile this dire superstition was checked, but it burst forth again, and not only spread itself over Judæa, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, where all things horrible and shameful collect together from every quarter and are practised. Those therefore who confessed² were first brought to trial, and afterwards by the information derived from them an immense multitude were also seized, and they were all condemned, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city, as for their hatred of mankind. They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses, others were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the fury of dogs, others, again, were smeared over with combustible materials and used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were chosen for the terrible spectacle, which was made a public show in the circus, and

¹ Tacitus was a son-in-law of the capable Julius Agricola, who was the governor of Britain from A.D. 78 to 84. By profession he was a lawyer. Fourteen years old when Nero died, he lived after attaining man's estate through the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva and Trajan, and was an eyewitness of the events at Rome in their reigns. He ranks beyond dispute in the highest place among literary men of all ages. (See also Note B, p. 271.)

² He does not mean confessed to causing the fire, but confessed to being Christians.

honoured with the presence of the emperor himself, who mingled with the populace, standing in a car, in the dress of a charioteer.”¹

Had a Christian written this account of what was endured by that community to whom St. Paul had six years before written his Epistle to the Romans, it would almost certainly have been set down as exaggerated ; but the source from which this cold, bald statement emanates precludes any possibility of doubt as to the sufferings borne by this band of devoted people. Other things which this account by Tacitus shows are :—(i) that the Christians had by this time become very numerous in Rome, and (ii) that there was a strong prejudice against them sufficient to make the people credit them with monstrous crimes. An examination of the causes which led to this feeling against them will help to explain the long series of persecutions which followed.

There were several features in this new religion, which, as soon as men began to pay attention to it, would appear to the Roman world highly objectionable. First, it was not a national religion. Rome recognized that Egypt worshipped Isis, Persia the sun, and so on, and allowed the nations she conquered to retain these national religions undisturbed. But Christianity was not the religion of any country. The Roman therefore objected to it on that ground. Secondly, it was contrary to all the Roman's idea of a religion. The Christians at first having no churches and meeting in private houses, presented to the Roman a spectacle of godlessness. People who had no temples or statues or altars seemed to the Roman to have no god ; and in fact the commonest accusation against the Christians was that they were atheists—godless.² Thirdly, their principal act of worship, and the exclusion of strangers from it, gave rise to accusations that they sacrificed children, were accustomed to eat the flesh of their victims and drink their blood, and indulged in horrible orgies. Fourthly, the ancient Pagan religious ceremonies were mixed up with all the business, the amusements, and the social life of the people ; this forced the Christians to hold aloof from these. Hence they appeared to be

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 44.

² There was an ancient law against private worship. Christian worship (in this private manner) therefore offended also on that ground.

morose, bad neighbours, bad citizens, hostile to the gods of Rome, and "enemies of mankind"; as Tacitus calls them. Lastly, the Christians formed all over the empire an association unrecognized by the law, bound by their own rules, and obedient to their own leaders. They thus appeared to the Roman statesman like a network of secret societies, an *imperium in imperio*, than which nothing was more obnoxious to Rome, which acknowledged but one will and allowed no secret societies. No wonder that the Roman authorities called it a "dire superstition," one to be stamped out.

Having thus seen how this slaughter of the Christians appeared to a great Pagan writer, and what were the features in this religion which seemed to him to justify the treatment they received, let us turn to the other side of the shield and hear how the same things are described by a Christian writer. Here we find the life and ideals of the Christian community, and the slaughter of that community by Nero, described thus:—"In the midst of that luxurious corrupt city, with its cruel pleasures, its lawless crimes, its base servilities, had silently arisen a band of men and women, of all ranks, and peoples, and kindreds, and tongues—Greek slaves, Roman women of the noblest families, Jews and Jewesses—bound to each other, and separated from the rest of the world, by a faith and a worship which made them abandon all other worship as a crime. . . . Ties of country, even of kindred, seemed feeble compared with the ties which bound them to each other. . . . Those doors so open to all who would enter seemed to those who entered to shut in a home of warmth and light, a world of love and hope and peace, compared with which all the world outside was as a cold Hades of shades and dreams. . . . Nero considered that not only would the anger of the people be turned from himself, but also out of the conflict with this new fanaticism might be created a drama, a theatrical entertainment, more realistic, more passionate, more artistic, more wildly exciting than any yet dreamt of. For these Christians, while ready to die for this name which was to them as a magic spell, had something which, in spite of their fearlessness of death, made life and its pure affections, the freedom of men, the chastity of women, not less sacred and precious to them than to all beside. Depths of anguish, therefore, were possible to them in seeing each other suffer which might

make a persecution of Christians a spectacle more pathetic, more tragic, more capable of exciting varied emotions than any poem or drama ever conceived by Homer or Aeschylus. And so the wildest horrors of the most diseased imagination were perpetrated among the charred ruins of those devastated hills. . . . Thus opened that Book of the Acts of the Martyrs called by one who saw its grandeur without sharing its inspiration 'that extraordinary poem of Christian martyrdom, that epic of the amphitheatre, which will last 250 years, and from which will spring the ennobling of woman, and the emancipation of the slave.'"¹

Scarcely a single name has come down to us of those slain in this persecution; for since all, man, woman, and child, were destroyed, none remained to give that information. Nevertheless we may gather the names of a few of them with tolerable certainty. For in his Epistle to the Christians at Rome St. Paul sent greetings to some of them.² And since only six years had meanwhile elapsed, and few of them are likely to have had a chance of moving from Rome (where most of them were slaves or freedmen) we may be fairly certain that all those persons to whom St. Paul sent salutations formed part of the "immense multitude" mentioned by Tacitus as having died in this persecution. Besides these, tradition also supplies the names of a few, reported subsequently by Pagan friends or relations. Among these are St. Thecla, bound on the horns of a bull and gored to death, and St. Faustus, clothed in the skin of a wild animal and torn to pieces by dogs.

In this destruction of the Christians at Rome Nero must

¹ Mrs. Rundle Charles, *Martyrs and Saints of the First Twelve Centuries*, pp. 16-20.

² *Epistle to the Romans*, xvi, 5-15. The following names are mentioned:—

Epœnetus.	Herodian.	Philologus and Julia.
Mary.	Tryphena.	Nereus and his sister.
Andronicus.	Tryphosa.	Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes,
Junia.	Persis.	and the brethren that are with
Amplias.	Rufus.	them.
Urbane.	Asyncritus.	The household of Narcissus (i.e. the
Stachys.	Olympas.	Christian servants of that person).
Apelles.		The household of Aristobulus (i.e. the
		Christian servants of that person).

have slaughtered not a few who were servants in his own household. For St. Paul, when writing from Rome his Epistle to the Philippians, written not very long before this persecution began, in mentioning those who send greetings to their fellow Christians at Philippi, says, "Chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."¹ And all such Christians, having no opportunity of seeking concealment in various places in the city like others, would have been among those first seized and so have perished in the earlier stages of the persecution. Moreover we have an interesting memorial of some of them. On the Appian Way, just outside the present gate of the city, is the "Tomb of Caesar's household." It is known to be the tomb for the upper servants of that household in the time of Nero; and it was closed immediately upon Nero's death three years after this massacre. There are Christians among them, as can be seen at a glance. The ashes of all those who were Pagans are in jars placed in niches in the walls (*columbaria*); whereas those of them who were Christians are buried in the walls with a full-length stone slab over them, on which is inscribed the name of the person, so that the two classes are distinguished at once. And among the names on the stone slabs covering the remains of Christian members of the household are three of those in the list contained in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, viz. Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Rufus, this tomb therefore showing us that these three persons were upper servants in the imperial household. It is evident that they died just at this time, since the tomb was closed so soon afterwards, and it seems most probable that they died in this persecution, since had any survived one or other of them would have left some record of the names of special friends who perished.

In any case the testimony of this tomb, together with the references in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, shows that Christianity had by this time gained a footing even in the imperial palace; while the burial of these Christian servants of the imperial household by their Pagan fellow-servants in the tomb set apart for them all shows that they were well thought of by them. In the case of one maidservant her Pagan fellow-servants did not know her name, and instead of it they have inscribed on her tomb-stone the words, "To the maid who

¹ *Epistle to the Philippians*, iv, 22.

used to take care of the little dog." Presumably she was the last of the Christian servants of the household to die, as otherwise they could easily have found out her name from other Christians in the household. It is strange to realize that these Christian servants in the imperial household, many of them well known to St. Paul, must have been brought daily into close contact with all the evil which is associated with the names of Agrippina, Nero, and Poppaea.¹

In the same year that this persecution of the Christians occurred at Rome St. Paul returned from Spain, travelling towards Jerusalem. Whether because on being liberated he had been prohibited by the Roman authorities from revisiting Rome, or in accordance with his principle not "to build upon another man's foundation,"² he made no attempt to visit that city, and probably travelled by sea. On the way he stopped at Crete, and left Titus as Bishop there. After visiting Jerusalem he travelled to Philippi, and on the way sent Timothy to

¹ Much obscurity must always surround the subject of the actual dates of the First Epistle of St. Peter, of the death of St. Peter, and of this massacre in the Vatican Gardens. Mr. Edmundson places the beginning of the persecution in the spring of A.D. 65, the Vatican massacre in May, 65, the writing of the First Epistle of St. Peter in June, and the martyrdom of St. Peter about a month later. But it is almost inconceivable, if St. Peter had been writing after such a wholesale massacre of the Christians in Rome, including many whose names must have been by that time well known in other Christian communities, that he, writing as the sole survivor (as he would in that case have been), should not have made some definite allusion to this great massacre, or at all events have made mention of the names of some of those who had perished in it. Moreover in the epistle he sends salutations from "the Church" of the place where he is writing, adding "and so doth Marcus my son." Again, had not Silvanus, the bearer of the epistle, and also St. Mark, already left Rome, and St. Peter been martyred, before the Vatican massacre took place, all three of them would have perished in that massacre. All the circumstances in fact seem to indicate that the First Epistle of St. Peter was written in the spring during the earlier stages of the persecution (to which a few expressions in the epistle perhaps allude), that St. Peter was martyred about May, that St. Mark thereupon escaped from Rome, and that the Vatican massacre followed about a month later in June.

² Upon both of the only two occasions that St. Paul was in Rome he was taken there as a prisoner.

Ephesus to remain there as Bishop of that city. From Philippi he proceeded to Nicopolis, where he wintered, and from thence wrote, about the end of A.D. 65, his *Epistle to Titus*. In the spring of A.D. 66 he visited Corinth, and from there wrote his *First Epistle to Timothy*. From Corinth, leaving Erastus as Bishop there, he crossed to Asia, and visited Miletus, leaving Trophimus there ill.¹

About the autumn of A.D. 66 St. Paul was arrested, probably near Miletus, for what reason we do not know, and was sent as a prisoner for the second time to Rome.² There he was treated with much greater severity than on the previous occasion, and was kept in close confinement for about a year, during which time he wrote his *Second Epistle to Timothy*.³ St. Luke was with him, and he also sent for St. Mark. About the same time the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, supposed to have been written by St. Barnabas, was written in Asia Minor, addressed generally to the Jews. And also about the same time (spring of A.D. 67) St. Matthew was martyred in Egypt.

During the period A.D. 66-67 St. Paul remained shut up in his prison in Rome. Nero was in Greece, Poppaea was dead, while in Rome vast works were in progress, both for clearing away the ruins caused by the fire, and for constructing Nero's new palace "the Golden House," making the lake, and laying out the immense area round it in the manner designed by Nero. By this time, that is to say about two years after the Vatican massacre, a few Christians had begun again to gather in Rome. From the *Second Epistle to Timothy* it appears that Aquila and Priscilla had escaped from Rome before the persecution began in the spring of A.D. 65 to Ephesus, and were still there. The

¹ *Epistle to Titus* and *First Epistle to Timothy*.

² *Second Epistle to Timothy*.

³ The authenticity of the epistles to Timothy and Titus has been strenuously questioned. But Sir William Ramsay, than whom there is no higher authority, justly says: "It is far more difficult to frame any rational theory how these letters came into existence, if they are not the work of St. Paul, than it is to understand them as composed by him, and as completing our conception of his character. . . . Regarded in the proper perspective, they are historically perhaps the most illuminative of all the Pauline epistles; and this is the best and the one sufficient proof that they are authentic compositions" (Ramsay, *Commentary on the First Epistle to Timothy*).

whole tone of that epistle shows that St. Paul, writing in Rome, the city in which there had been such a large body of Christians at his previous visit and which was now so bereft of them, felt lonely, desolate, and depressed. Some however had returned. There is no longer any mention of "those of Caesar's household," or of those in "the household of Narcissus" and "the household of Aristobulus," or any of those whose names he had mentioned on previous occasions; all these had perished. He however mentions among those who had returned to Rome four persons,¹ Eubulus, Pudens, Claudia, and Linus.² But St. Paul's whole soul longs for Timothy, and twice over in this epistle he urges him to come to him, and says "do thy diligence to come before winter."

But before Timothy was able to respond to this appeal St. Paul was no more. We are not told of any trial, or upon what charge he was put to death. It could not have been simply on account of his being a Christian, as other Christians such as Pudens, Linus, and Claudia were unmolested and were apparently allowed to visit him. One can only suppose that the Jews at Miletus may again have stirred up animosity towards him, that riots ensued, and that this being the second offence the Roman authorities put him to death on that ground. He was martyred towards the end of A.D. 67, about six months before the end of Nero's reign, and apparently before the latter returned from Greece. Supposing that St. Paul was twenty-five at the time of the martyrdom of St. Stephen, he must have been almost sixty years old when he was put to death. Tradition states that he was led out of the city to the third milestone on the road to Ostia, and there at *Aquae Salviae* (now *Tre Fontane*) was beheaded, being spared from any more cruel death because he was a Roman citizen. Weeping friends, presumably Pudens, Linus, and Claudia, took up his body, and the Roman matron *Lucina*, who owned a vineyard about a mile nearer Rome in which there existed a very ancient *cella memoriae*, inviolate by Roman law, gave them a burial-place. There the Apostle's body was buried; and there about 250 years later Constantine

¹ *Second Epistle to Timothy*, iv, 9 and iv, 21.

² Although he was Bishop, Linus had evidently escaped from Rome when the persecution began, as he lived until about A.D. 80.

the Great built a small church over his grave.¹ In 389 Theodosius the Great built in place of this a much larger church, which in many centuries gradually grew into the magnificent basilica of *St. Paul's outside the Walls*.

In A.D. 67, not long before St. Paul was put to death at Rome, the Jews, always the most turbulent race in the empire, had risen in a serious insurrection. To subdue this revolt the general Vespasian with a large army was sent to Judæa, accompanied by his son Titus, by this time twenty-six years old. The insurrection was rapidly subdued by Vespasian so far as the rest of Judæa was concerned; but the Jews, believing Jerusalem to be impregnable, crowded into that city; and there they were caught by the Romans as in a net. A long siege followed in which all that had been foretold² came upon the Jews, whose calamities were chiefly caused by so immense a multitude, far beyond the ordinary population of the city, being crowded within its walls, in disregard of the warning against this very thing. Before the siege began the Christians in Jerusalem, mindful of the horrors predicted, removed to the small town of Pella, in Peraea, and were the only portion of the inhabitants of Jerusalem who escaped death or captivity. This siege was still continuing when Nero died.³

GALBA

A.D. 68—69

The news of Nero's death was at once despatched to Galba in Spain. Galloping day and night the messenger, Icelus, performed the long journey with speed which is remarkable (especially when we consider that it involved the crossing of the Alps), reaching Galba in seven days after leaving Rome, and covering the last 332 miles (from Tarraco to Clunia) at the rate of ten miles an hour. Galba at once proceeded to Rome, where on his arrival the election of the troops in Spain was ratified and

¹ In the case of both the tomb of St. Peter and that of St. Paul Constantine encased the sarcophagus in bronze and fixed upon it a gold cross.

² *Gospel of St. Matthew*, xxiv, 15; *Gospel of St. Mark*, xiii, 14; and *Gospel of St. Luke*, xix, 43-44 and xxi. 20-24.

³ Regarding remainder of the siege, see Chap. V, pp. 183-184.



[MUSARI.]

OTTO.

Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



[MUSARI.]

GALIA.

Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

he was forthwith accepted by the Senate and people as emperor.

Galba¹ was sixty-five years old when he gained the throne. He had a high reputation both as a general and as an administrator, and in ordinary times would probably have had a successful reign. But the fourteen years' orgy of Nero had caused a general demoralization, which was not to be brought to an end without a severe struggle and the fall of three emperors in quick succession. Galba was much esteemed by the troops he commanded, and had shown himself worthy of his high reputation by his seven years' successful government of Spain. But in Rome he was without the support of the troops who appreciated him and had chosen him as emperor, and his strict discipline by no means pleased the Praetorian Guards, who preferred Nero's lax methods and profuse bribery. At the same time Galba's opposition to extravagance made him unpopular with the people, accustomed for so long to Nero's lavish expenditure and ostentation; while his refusal to flatter the Senate and his independent modes of action soon made him equally unpopular with that body. After he had reigned for seven months a conspiracy against him was formed among the Praetorian Guards which was joined by Otho, and Galba was killed in the Forum by a party of these Guards on the 15th January, A.D. 69.

OTHO

A.D. 69

Otho,² who had considerable abilities, had ruled well over southern Gaul for ten years. When Galba was proclaimed emperor in Spain, Otho, in revenge for the way in which Nero had robbed him of his wife, joined Galba and accompanied him to Rome. After a few months he began to hope to be adopted by Galba as his successor. When, however, Galba nominated Piso as his successor Otho conspired with the Praetorian Guards, who slew both Galba and Piso, and Otho was proclaimed emperor. It speaks well for his disposition

¹ Plate XXV. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

² Plate XXVI. Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

that one of his first acts was to re-erect the statues of Poppaea, which on Nero's death had been everywhere thrown down. He re-instated Nero's household officials, announced his intention of completing the "Golden House", and gave every indication of ruling well.

But his reign was short. Aulus Vitellius, who had risen by various infamous devices during the reign of Nero, and was specially noted for his gluttony, had been given the command on the Rhine. Upon hearing of the death of Galba he bribed the legions on the Rhine to choose him as emperor, and in March 69 these legions advanced into Italy under the command of their generals Caecina and Valens. Vitellius himself followed in more leisurely fashion, accompanied by every luxury, including, we are told, countless cooks, comedians, charioteers, and arrangements for feasting. Thereupon Otho, collecting what troops he could, marched to oppose the army of the Rhine, and Italy was faced with civil war.

Otho's force was much inferior in numbers to that led by Caecina and Valens; but Otho's troops were devoted to him. The two armies met on the banks of the Po at Bedriacum, near Cremona. There a furious struggle took place; but Otho's troops were at length overpowered, the greater part of them being slain. Otho was not present at the battle, but heard of the result next day at Brixellum, where he had established his headquarters. Upon receiving news of the defeat Otho, though he was expecting considerable reinforcements, decided to put an end to this civil war between Romans by taking his own life. He made a dignified speech of farewell to his officers, retired to his tent, slept for some hours, and at dawn stabbed himself with his dagger, dying at the age of thirty-seven after a reign of only three months (17th April, A.D. 69).

Nothing is more remarkable than the career of Otho. Beginning as the abandoned associate of Nero in all the latter's vicious excesses, he afterwards ruled with credit for ten years over southern Gaul, then gave promise of ruling well as emperor, and finally deliberately killed himself for the welfare of his country with a calm nobility which has often been held to redeem the earlier part of his life. Moreover he so strongly won the affections of his soldiers that when they found him

lying dead in his tent, slain by his own hand to save further butchery, his Praetorian Guards kissed his wounds, and carried him with tears to burial, many of them killing themselves over his dead body.¹

VITELLIUS

A.D 69

Vitellius had also a brief reign. After hearing on his journey of the victory gained by Caecina and Valens, he reached Cremona with 60,000 additional troops on the 15th of May, and from there visited the scene of the battle. Tacitus has related how Vitellius, gross, brutal, and cowardly, after gloating over the hideous scene of carnage on the battlefield of Bedriacum, strewn with the mouldering remains of dead Romans, gratified still further his lust of blood by holding great combats of gladiators at Cremona and Benonia.² Having thus celebrated his victory, Vitellius early in July advanced to Rome, where he allowed his troops to ravage the capital of the empire as if it had been an enemy's city, Rome being given up to massacre and plunder, interspersed with huge feasts and gladiatorial shows, in which, Suetonius says, Vitellius squandered in four months a sum equal to seven millions sterling.³ As an example of the style of his feasts we are told that his brother having entertained him at a banquet at which 2000 choice fishes and 7000 rare birds were served, Vitellius in return gave a feast at which the principal dish was a compound of the brains of peacocks, the tongues of flamingoes, the livers of pheasants, and the entrails of lampreys, and cost more than the whole of his brother's banquet.

Meanwhile the army of the East had in July elected as emperor their commander Vespasian, then engaged in subduing the Jews. Vespasian thereupon left his son Titus to continue the contest in Judæa, proceeded himself to occupy Egypt (the most important point in a war against Italy), and sent forward towards Italy as many other legions as he could collect under Mucianus. A month later the legions in Mœsia,

¹ Tacitus, *History*, ii, 49.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 70-72.

³ Suetonius, *Vitellius*, c. 13.

Pannonia, and Illyricum also declared for Vespasian, and under their commander Antonius Primus advanced in September A.D. 69 upon Italy, Primus being joined on reaching Verona by the scattered troops of Otho. Thereupon Vitellius despatched Caecina with the victorious legions of the Rhine from Rome to confront the army of the Danube on the banks of the Po, and on the 26th October 69, these rival forces of West and East fought a second battle at Bedriacum which has been spoken of as a species of Armageddon, so various were the forces engaged. On the one side were troops from Italy, Spain, Gaul, the Rhine, and even from distant Batavia and Britain; on the other were the legions from the Danube frontier, with contingents from Syria, Egypt, the Euphrates, and the Tigris. In vivid language Tacitus has described the tremendous struggle between these evenly matched forces, relating how the very trees were torn up, the crops trampled into mire, the soil soaked with blood, and the battlefield covered with the mangled bodies of men and horses. Eventually the army of the Danube won, Caecina's forces retreating to the Apennines. Early in December Primus advanced to force the Apennines; the troops of Vitellius retired to Narni, and upon Primus reaching that place on the 17th December they went over in a body to the cause of Vespasian.

Primus at once advanced rapidly upon Rome, where, upon his army entering the city, a fierce battle ensued between his troops and those which Vitellius had kept for defence of the capital. Tacitus, who as a boy of fifteen saw some of the horrors of this civil war in Rome, draws a vivid picture of it. The terrible conflict raged from street to street, every possible crime of outrage and cruelty was perpetrated, and the Romans beheld with mingled shame and wrath the burning of the revered Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, set on fire in a contest between Romans.

While the struggle was proceeding the degraded Vitellius looked on at the conflict, and the burning of the Temple of Jupiter, from the lofty pillared terrace on the north-western side of the palace of Tiberius. But upon his troops being vanquished he found himself deserted even by the meanest of his attendants, and knew that his end had come. Shud-

dering with fear in the vast solitude of the now deserted imperial palace, he sought a hiding-place in a small room where the dogs were kept, but was soon seized. With his hands bound behind him he was dragged with insults and execrations to that place of summary slaughter, the Gemonian Stairs, and there slain (20th Dec A.D. 69). The news was at once sent to Vespasian, then at Alexandria, who forthwith proceeded to Rome, and was accepted by the Senate and people as emperor. And the eighteen months' anarchy which followed the death of Nero was at an end.

CHAPTER V

REIGNS OF VESPASIAN, TITUS, DOMITIAN, AND NERVA

VESPASIAN

A.D. 69—79

(a) Matters other than religion

VESPASIAN,¹ who was born near Reate in the country of the Sabines, and whose full name was Titus Flavius Vespasianus, founded the Flavian dynasty which held the imperial throne for three reigns, those of Vespasian himself and his two sons, Titus and Domitian. His wife Flavia Domitilla, the first of four women of this family having that name,² had died during the campaign in Judæa.

Vespasian was a man of honourable character, plain, blunt, and straightforward, and was determined to re-establish order and good government after the anarchy of the preceding two years. He had no particular genius, but he had strength of character, common-sense, and determination, just the qualities which the occasion demanded. He was sixty years old when he became emperor, had served with honour in all parts of the empire during forty years, and had seen much hard fighting in Britain at the time when the conquest of that country was begun in the years A.D. 43–50. He quickly reformed the army, which in the civil war of the previous

¹ Plate XXVII. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

² They were, (a) the wife of the emperor Vespasian, (b) the niece of the emperor Vespasian, (c) his daughter, the sister of the emperors Titus and Domitian, and (d) the niece of Titus and Domitian, daughter of (c), and married to her cousin Flavius Clemens.

year had become completely demoralized, and re-introduced order into the government. While exercising a strict economy in all other matters, he spent much on public works and on restoring the appearance of Rome, which was still disfigured in many places by the ruins caused by the great fire of five years before, and plans were forthwith begun for a new Forum, a fresh set of public Baths, a new and much larger amphitheatre, and for rebuilding the Temple of Jupiter.

The vicious extravagance of Nero and Vitellius had thrown all financial affairs into chaos. We are told that the public debt on Vespasian's accession amounted to a sum equal to £320,000,000 sterling. And Vespasian, who personally maintained a moderate and unostentatious style of living, was forced to incur considerable unpopularity on the double ground of an economy which to the Romans, after the lavish style of Nero's expenditure, appeared to be niggardly parsimony, and of the increased taxation which he was compelled to impose in order again to bring order into the public finances. Nevertheless, secure in the regard felt for him by the army, Vespasian boldly faced this unpopularity, devoting money freely to those public works which he considered to be needed, but exercising a rigid economy in all other directions. It is however noticeable that, notwithstanding this charge of parsimony, Vespasian was the first emperor who gave a fixed endowment to learned men, and founded a system of public education for the empire.

But greater than all this was the revolution which Vespasian worked in the whole moral atmosphere of Rome. This distinguished soldier, who had gained so much renown for the way in which he had led his troops in the battles under Aulus Plautius in Britain, the dashing leader of the Batavian cavalry, and the conqueror of the Iceni, by his own sole strength and ability rescued the Romans from the abyss in which they had for more than thirty years been engulfed, put an end to "the Terror," and restored sanity to the nation. It was a task at which any man might have quailed, seeing that a whole generation of Romans had grown up accustomed to the vicious excitement, license, sensational crimes, and general demoralization which had characterized the reigns of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, and were inclined to resent being made to live with-

out these excitements. But Vespasian, by his strength of character, firmness, honesty of purpose, and the knowledge gained in forty years' military service of how to command men, in a marvellously short time completely effected the task, and the Pandemonium of riotous living and crime which had so long reigned in Rome was swept away like an evil dream. The natural result of such action was that his reign was felt to be prosaic, and hence Vespasian has been little praised by the literary world; whereas he deserves to be held as one of the greatest of the Roman emperors for carrying through a change which few would have had the courage to attempt, and fewer still the strength and force of character to effect.

In A.D. 70 took place the chief event of Vespasian's ten years' reign, the conclusion of the war in Judæa by the capture of Jerusalem¹ by the Roman army under the emperor's son Titus. The city was totally destroyed; all the Jews who were not killed were sold as slaves; and so great was the number that it is said that the slave-markets of the whole empire were glutted with Jews. About 30,000 of them were kept by Titus and sent to Rome to be employed in building the immense amphitheatre which Vespasian was about to construct. In A.D. 71 Vespasian and Titus celebrated at Rome that greatest pageant of the Roman empire, a Roman triumph, in honour of the victorious conclusion of the war in Judæa. At this triumph Titus rode in a magnificent car to which were attached captive Jews in chains, behind him were borne the sacred vessels of the Jews carried off by him from the Temple (p. 184), and at the conclusion of the triumph the principal prisoner, Simon Bar Gioras, the brave defender of Jerusalem, was put to death. The rest of Vespasian's reign was uneventful, and the "peace of Vespasian" passed into a proverb.

¶ In A.D. 72 Vespasian, having destroyed Nero's palace and given back to the people all the ground covered by it, except the portion of the valley between the Palatine, Caelian, and Esquiline hills where the lake had been, began to erect on that site his huge amphitheatre, known as the Flavian Amphitheatre.² It was built by the captive Jews, and took ten years to complete. It is formed of blocks of traver-

¹ See p. 183.

² Now the Colosseum.



[Brogi.]

VESPASIAN.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.



[Brogi.]

TITUS, ELDER SON OF VESPASIAN.

Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



tine stone, without any mortar, each block clamped to the next with iron clamps. It was the largest ever built, covered six acres, and could hold 90,000 spectators, while by the excellent arrangement of its passages and staircases and its sixty-four entrances it could be emptied in ten minutes. Its eighty rows of seats were covered with cushions, the spectators being protected from sun and rain by a canopy, and the air refreshed by scented fountains.¹

At Seleucia, the port of Antioch, Vespasian constructed a remarkable aqueduct or channel which still exists. It is cut out of the solid rock, and is nearly two miles long, with a width of 22 feet; part of it is open to the sky, with walls of rock 120 feet high, and part is a tunnel 22 feet wide and 24 feet high. At its entrance is an inscription cut in the rock saying, "Divus Vespasianus et Divus Titus fecere."²

In A.D. 78, the last year of the reign of Vespasian, the latter sent to command in Britain the capable Julius Agricola. He was a fine soldier, a wise administrator, and a man of high character. He had previously commanded the Twentieth legion in Britain, had then been governor of Aquitaine in Gaul, and in A.D. 77 had returned to Rome and been elected Consul. During his six years' command in Britain he thoroughly pacified the country after the disturbances which had followed the rebellion headed by Boadicea in Nero's reign, and consolidated the Roman dominion in Britain. His character as an administrator is shown by his words saying, "Little can be done by war unless the causes of hostile feeling are rooted out." He traced those causes in Britain to the conduct of the Roman officials, and he gradually removed the hostility by a stringent control over the latter. At the same time Agricola did much towards beginning the Romanization of Britain. He began to educate the sons of the British chiefs in Latin and in the arts of civilization, and states that he found these youths markedly superior in ability to those of similar rank in Gaul. He also encouraged the people of Britain to adopt the civilized habits of the Romans,³ and

¹ Vespasian also began the construction at Rome of a new forum, but this is now buried beneath modern buildings.

² "The divine Vespasian and the divine Titus made it."

Including, we are told, the use of the bath.

their towns began to be adorned with temples and other public buildings. In the same year that Agricola arrived in Britain he extended the Roman dominion by subduing the Ordovices, annexing North Wales, and completing the conquest of Anglesey. Agricola fixed the headquarters of the three legions in Britain as follows:—Legio Augusta at Caerleon-on-Usk (*Isca Silurum*), Legio Victrix at York, and Legio Valeria Victrix at Chester.¹

Early in A.D. 79 Vespasian died, at the age of seventy. He was noted for his habit of making quietly humorous speeches, and on his deathbed, referring to the deification of each emperor at his death, is said to have whispered to those about him, "Methinks I am becoming a god." This deification of the Roman emperors had now become a carefully observed custom, the Senate, on the decease of the emperor, by a solemn decree placing him among the gods, and the ceremonies of his funeral being often blended with those of his apotheosis. Each emperor on being thus deified was provided with a temple, while even during his lifetime sacrifice was regularly made on his altar as to a god. Part of the temple of Vespasian still remains.

The Flavian emperors began a practice which lasted permanently throughout the whole history of the Roman Empire, and has even been continued down to modern times. Octavius assumed the surname of Caesar as the adopted son of Julius Caesar, while the name of Augustus was conferred on him by the Senate as expressive of his rule. The name of Caesar should properly have expired with Nero, the last of the family of the Caesars. But the custom of five reigns had caused this name to become associated with the office of emperor. Vespasian and his sons therefore carried this on, and the appellation of Caesar was uniformly continued, not only by their successors, but even into the times of Charles the Great and the German emperors of the Middle Ages, while it still continues in the forms "Kaiser" and "Czar." After the time of Hadrian, while the title of *Augustus* was reserved for the emperor himself, the title of *Caesar* became generally applied to his heir.

¹ Regarding the further conquests of Agricola in Britain, see pp. 186 and 188.

(b) Matters concerning religion

By the beginning of Vespasian's reign all the Apostles except St. John appear to have been dead. St. James, the brother of St. John, had been martyred in A.D. 42, St. James the Less in A.D. 62, St. Peter in A.D. 65, and St. Matthew and St. Paul in A.D. 67; while of the rest none appear to have lived for more than twenty-five years after the separation of the Apostles to their different spheres of missionary work in A.D. 44.¹

St. John (who was apparently only about twenty at the time of the crucifixion of Christ) appears to have removed from Antioch to Asia Minor about the time of St. Paul's death, when St. John was about fifty-four, establishing himself at Ephesus (where Timothy was Bishop), and from thence taking up the general superintendence of the various churches in Asia Minor which had been exercised by St. Paul. There St. John appears to have remained for the next twenty-five years, and we do not hear of him again until he was about eighty years old.²

The siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 69-70 was not brought to an end until the defenders were in the last stage of misery. The Jewish historian Josephus has given a powerful description of the horrors suffered by the Jews during this siege. The city became a prey, not only to famine and pestilence, but also to civil war. And it was the profanation of the Temple by the Jewish force within the city, and the atrocities committed by the priests and people, which eventually caused its capture and destruction. The city was finally taken in September A.D. 70, by the unusual method of constructing a huge trench and rampart all round it. This was what had been foretold; ³ but it is noticeable that it was done against Titus' intention and desire. He earnestly wished to be spared the labour and delay of making such a trench and rampart, but was eventually compelled to adopt that method in order to bring the siege to an end. He also strongly desired to spare the city and the Temple from destruction, and it was with great reluctance that he was forced, by the action of its

¹ Chap. III, pp. 120-123.

² Page 196.

³ Gospel of St. Luke, xix, 43.

Jewish defenders, into destroying the city, while the Temple was burnt in contravention of his express commands.

The war left all the cities of Judæa ruined and deserted, those Jews not killed or sold as slaves having fled from the country. After a time a few Jews returned and lived in huts in the midst of the ruins of Jerusalem. The headquarters of the Jewish religion became transferred to the city of Tiberias, situated in the least desolate part of the country, and there a new form of the Jewish religion grew up. The Sanhedrim, the Jewish priests, and the Temple services were of course all at an end; and in their place a new school of Jewish religious teaching sprang up under the "Rabbis," the new leaders of the people. Out of their teaching grew the "Mishna," a commentary on the Old Testament, and later on the "Gemara," a commentary on the Mishna, and these two books are those now commonly quoted among the Jews.

At the Roman triumph which Vespasian and Titus celebrated after the capture of Jerusalem were borne, as the principal trophies of Titus' victory, the sacred vessels of the Temple, the seven-branched golden candlestick, the tables of the shewbread, and the Books of the Jewish law. These all appear, depicted in stone, on the triumphal arch in Rome erected in Titus' honour. What it must have been to the Jews to see the sacred vessels of the Temple and their sacred books carried as trophies in a Roman triumph, and to be made themselves to work as slaves in erecting such a building as a Roman amphitheatre, we can scarcely imagine. Even now, more than eighteen centuries afterwards, no Jew will pass under the Arch of Titus.

TITUS

A.D. 79 — 81

(a) Matters other than religion

As a boy Titus,¹ born in A.D. 41, was brought up in the family of the emperor Claudius, being a great friend of the

¹ Plate XXVIII (p. 180). Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

latter's son Britannicus, the two boys being the same age ; and Titus had a narrow escape from being poisoned at the same banquet as his friend. He was very handsome, had a commanding presence, and was a thorough soldier. He was accomplished, spoke Greek perfectly, and was fond of music, and being good-natured, with pleasing manners and much commonsense, was a universal favourite. He had served in the army with distinction for about twenty years, on the Rhine frontier, in Britain, and under his father in Syria, before being appointed to conduct the war in Judæa which he had brought to such a successful conclusion.

Titus was married early in life, first to Arrecina Tertulla, and afterwards to Marcia Furnilla, by whom he had a daughter, Julia,¹ subsequently married to her second cousin Flavius Sabinus. But during the campaign in Judæa Titus fell deeply in love with the attractive Jewish princess Berenice, belonging to the family of the Herods, and called by the Romans Veronica ; whereupon he divorced Marcia Furnilla, and brought Berenice with him to Rome. The Romans however were offended at the idea of a Jewish empress, and Titus after a time was forced by his father Vespasian to send Berenice back to her own country. He succeeded to the throne at the age of thirty-eight and at once became exceedingly popular, and was called "the love and delight of mankind."

Titus continued his father's policy of large expenditure on public works in Rome, including the construction of another set of Baths. The great public Baths erected by the Roman emperors were practically a sort of people's palace, containing, besides the elaborate bathing arrangements, provision for various kinds of amusement. Two sets of such Baths had already been built, one by Marcus Agrippa in Augustus' reign, and the other by Nero. Titus built a third and still more splendid set of Baths, constructing it over a part of Nero's palace,² on the slope of the Esquiline hill. He also began the construction of the Arch of Titus, at the highest point of the Via Sacra, but it was unfinished when he died and was completed by his brother Domitian.

¹ Plate XXIX. Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.

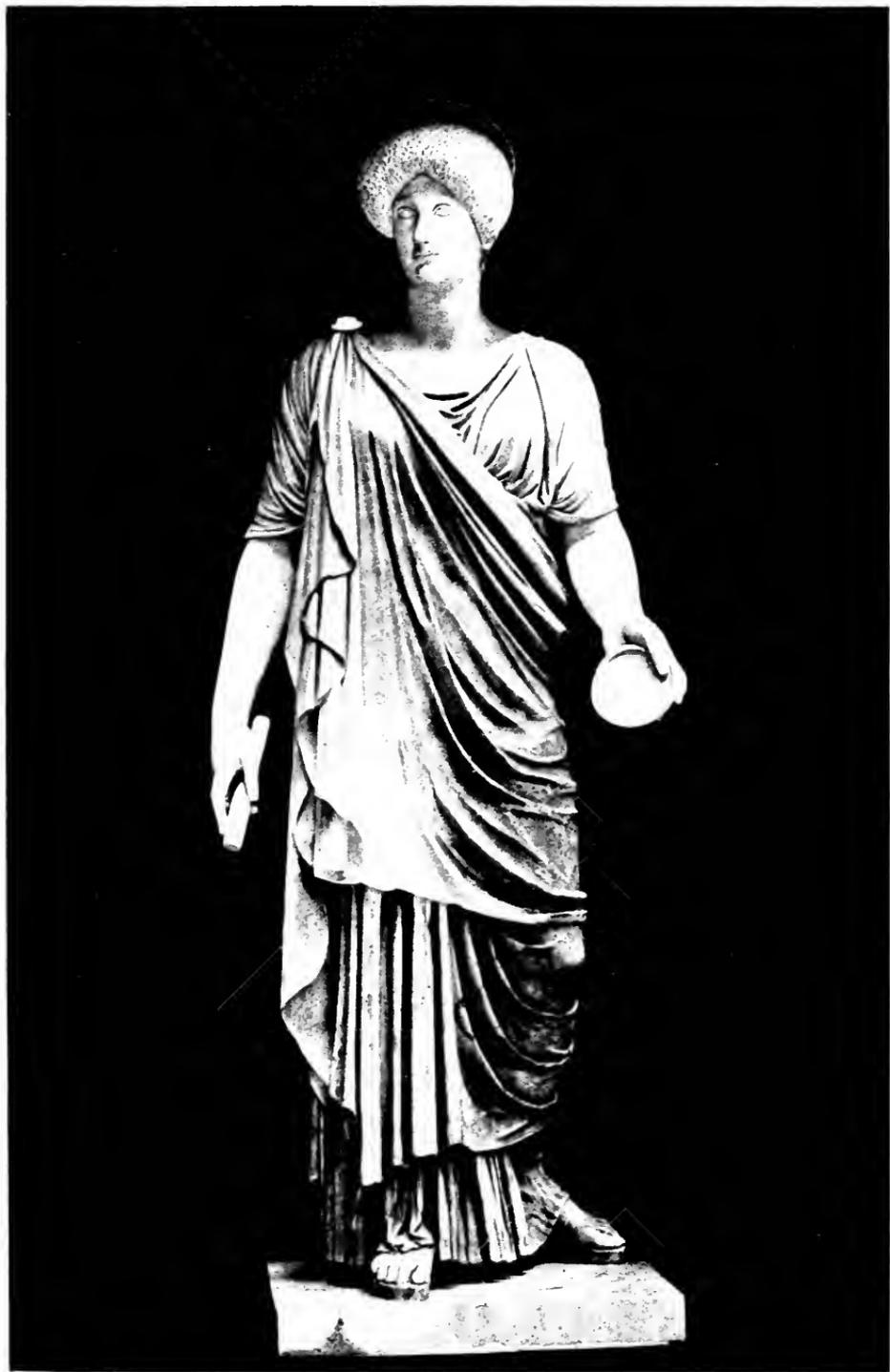
² Chap. IV, p. 139.

The year that Titus came to the throne the Flavian Amphitheatre (the Colosseum) was completed, and was opened by Titus with huge contests of gladiators, wild animals, and naval combats, lasting many days. In the same year (A.D. 79), also occurred the great eruption of Vesuvius which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum. The emperor proceeded at once to the desolated district, contributed largely to relieving the distress caused by the eruption, and showed much personal sympathy with the sufferers. In the year after this disaster (A.D. 80) Julius Agricola in Britain carried the Roman conquests still further, advancing into Scotland as far north as the Forth. Thereupon he constructed a line of forts from the Forth to the Clyde, which line he desired to make the northern frontier of Britain, but it did not become so until long afterwards.

Much as the Romans delighted in Titus they had considerable fears as to what would be their fate under his successor, as Titus had no son, and the cruel and dissolute character of his brother Domitian, who was eleven years younger than Titus, inspired them with dread. Consequently when in September A.D. 81, after a reign of only two years, Titus died at Reate at the age of forty there was very general mourning, together with a strong suspicion that his death had been caused by Domitian. On his deathbed Titus is stated to have said there was only one thing which he repented; and this was taken to mean his having spared his brother Domitian, who had more than once plotted against Titus' life, and whose reign was certain to bring calamity upon the nation.

(b) Matters concerning religion

About this period there began to arise various strange sects which offered a strong opposition to Christianity. These, under the different names of Ebionites, Docetæ, Cerinthians, Nicolaitans, and the general term Gnostics, taught certain systems of religion based upon the Pagan philosophy but into which were interwoven some of the Christian doctrines. These sects were all violently opposed to the Christians, but frequently troubled the latter greatly by calling themselves



JULIA, DAUGHTER OF TITUS.

Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.

This statue shows an example of the ordinary dress of a Roman lady.

Christians and deceiving many of the new converts. They were strongly denounced by the Apostle St. John when some years later he came to write his first Epistle (p. 197). During the reign of Titus was written the *General Epistle of Jude*.

DOMITIAN

A.D. 81 — 96

(a) Matters other than religion

On the death of Titus, his brother Domitian,¹ the second son of Vespasian and Flavia Domitilla, became emperor. He reigned fifteen years (A.D. 81–96), and was the exact opposite to his brother. He was twenty-nine when he succeeded Titus, and up to that time had firmly refused either to adopt a military career or to take any part in public affairs, preferring a life of pleasure. He had no ability, was cruel and dissolute, and as emperor ere long proved himself a grievous tyrant. On becoming emperor he married the beautiful daughter of Corbulo,² the unhappy Domitia Longina,³ whose husband Lucius Æmilianus was made to divorce her, and whose life was a long misery owing to Domitian's crimes. A year later he gave great scandal by his incest with his niece Julia, whom he took away from her husband Flavius Sabinus; nevertheless Julia exercised a softening influence over Domitian until her death in A.D. 89.

At first Domitian seemed disposed to rule well. He personally administered justice, carefully supervised the actions of the governors of the provinces, passed various sound laws to advance the cause of agriculture, and, notwithstanding his own glaring private vices, posed as a reformer of morals and religion. He completed and richly adorned the Temple of Jupiter, covering its roof with gilded bronze plates which cost a sum equal to £2,400,000 sterling, built many other

¹ Plate XXX. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

² Domitia Longina erected at Gabii a monument to the memory of her brave and honoured father Corbulo, who had been murdered by Nero with such deep ingratitude.

³ Plate XXXI. Portrait-bust in the Capitol, Rome.

temples, and made the laws against adultery and other forms of immorality more strict, and rigorously enforced them. He also conducted a stringent enquiry into the conduct of the Vestal Virgins, as the result of which one of them was condemned to the terrible punishment of being buried alive.¹ Very rarely throughout their whole history were there any cases of unchastity among the Vestal Virgins, and as the evidence when such charges were brought was usually that given by slaves under torture it is considered that in most even of these few cases this cruel death was probably suffered by an innocent Vestal. This case in the reign of Domitian was specially pathetic, as Pliny, who relates it, shows that the Vestal was condemned without any sufficient evidence, and simply at the wish of the emperor Domitian.

During the early years of Domitian's reign the capable Julius Agricola² practically completed the conquest of Britain, which had caused the Romans strenuous fighting for forty years. In A.D. 82 he crossed the Clyde and subdued the tribes inhabiting the Mull of Cantyre. In Tacitus' remarks regarding this campaign we have the earliest mention of Ireland; he says:—"I have often heard him (Agricola) say that Ireland could be conquered and held by a single legion and a moderate contingent of auxiliaries, and that such a conquest would help greatly to consolidate our power in Britain." In A.D. 83 Agricola crossed the Forth, as the year before he had crossed the Clyde, and conducted a successful campaign in the barren mountains of Scotland against the Caledonians, ending with a great victory in a battle fought at Murdock Moor in Perthshire. But these successes roused the jealousy of Domitian, and earned for Agricola much the same fate as Corbulo had received at the hands of Nero; Agricola in the midst of his victorious career was in A.D. 84 recalled to Rome and sent into retirement, and a year or two later died, Tacitus declares owing to poison given under the emperor's orders.

In the same year Domitian accused his wife Domitia Longina of infidelity, and divorced her. But the indignation of the

¹ See Chap. I, p. 40.

² Some authorities have said that Tacitus has unduly exaggerated the achievements of his father-in-law, but even allowing for this Agricola certainly showed much capacity during his rule over Britain.

people at the injustice of the charge was so great, and so forcibly expressed, that Domitian in fear of the result was compelled to revoke the sentence and recall Domitia to the palace, the only case on record of such pressure being put upon an emperor. Notwithstanding that both Procopius and Josephus declare Domitia Longina to have been all her life a virtuous woman, there were not wanting writers of the time who, according to the usual custom, accused her of the deepest immorality, attributing conduct to her equal to that which other writers have attributed to Valeria Messalina. The fullest refutation to these charges is, however, given by this event; for the Roman people would never have been roused to such indignation, or have had power to bring such pressure to bear, had Domitia been the kind of woman these writers have asserted.

In A.D. 85 the Dacians, under their leader Decebalus, crossed the Danube, defeated the Roman legions opposed to them, and over-ran the province of Mœsia.¹ During a three years' contest Domitian, in his efforts to overcome them, suffered several defeats, and though in A.D. 88 the Dacians were eventually driven out of Mœsia the war was only brought to an end by Domitian's concluding with them a peace the terms of which were most ignominious for the Romans, including as they did the payment of an annual subsidy to Decebalus which was practically a tribute. Nevertheless upon his return to Rome in A.D. 89 Domitian celebrated a triumph for the results of the war, and a colossal bronze equestrian statue of him was set up in the Forum.

During the first six years of his reign Domitian had governed with some degree of justice, though the effects of his avaricious and cruel disposition made themselves felt from time to time. Gradually, however, his execution of wealthy Romans on fictitious charges in order that he might seize upon their confiscated estates, and his various other crimes, caused so strong a detestation for him to grow up that he began to fear assassination. And from the time of his failure against the Dacians, either owing to depression at his ill-success, or to

¹ For list of the various incursions of the barbarian tribes into the empire during the 250 years from Domitian to Constantine, see Appendix IV.

a naturally suspicious disposition, he entered upon a course of tyrannical cruelty almost equal to that which had been pursued by Nero, all who aroused Domitian's suspicion or dislike being promptly executed, poisoned, or otherwise removed. To its consternation the Roman world found all the conditions of "the Terror" re-established; while the hateful race of "delators" (or informers) reappeared, and began again to ply their odious trade, a tribe of such delators being always ready to find occasion for a charge of treason, followed by rich rewards to themselves as the result of the victim's death.

How exceedingly lucrative this detestable trade of informer, or delator, was is exemplified by the case of Aquilius Regulus, who rose to high eminence in this way during the reign of Domitian, and whose career illustrates the conditions of the time. By profession a lawyer, delighting in slaughter, and thirsting for wealth, Regulus first flourished exceedingly during Nero's reign, "lust of blood and greed for gain driving him on to the wholesale destruction of innocent boys, noble matrons, and men of the most illustrious race," until he amassed great wealth. Keeping prudently out of sight during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, he reappeared as one of the most capable and dreaded agents of "the Terror" in Domitian's reign. Though called by Pliny "the most detestable of bipeds," he not only continued to accumulate increased wealth through the death of victim after victim, becoming possessed of estates in Tusculum, Umbria, and Etruria, but also was one of the leading lights of the Roman bar, feared and fawned upon by all around him. He survived his employer Domitian, and strange to say died a natural death in the reign of Trajan.

Two very notable men flourished in the reign of Domitian, Apollonius of Tyana and Plutarch. Apollonius, the severe Pythagorean missionary and wonderful preacher, is surrounded with an atmosphere of mystery. He travelled through many lands, frequented the temples of all the gods, discoursed with the priests of all religions, and was apparently looked upon by all as an authority. He visited Rome in the time of Nero, and the temples were thronged in order to hear him, though he condemned many aspects of the popular

worship. He taught a high and pure religion, objected to sacrifices, inveighed against all materialism, and urged a high spiritual ideal. He addressed great crowds at Ephesus, rebuking them for their luxury and effeminacy, and condemned the cruel combats of the amphitheatre. Finally he again visited Rome about the year A.D. 90, and fearlessly asserted the cause of righteousness in the presence of the tyrant Domitian. Plutarch, the prince of biographers, born about A.D. 46, lived most of his life at his native town of Chaeronea in Bœotia, but visited Rome in the reigns of Vespasian and Domitian. He was a passionate admirer of Greece and its great memories of the past, enjoyed the friendship of many of the most learned men of his day, and wrote many notable works, the greatest of them being his parallel "Lives of illustrious Greeks and Romans," containing forty-six biographies arranged in pairs, with a comparison of the two, to which book, with its marvellous talent for biography, he owes his fame. He is believed to have died about A.D. 120.

In A.D. 91 the Christians for some reason came under Domitian's displeasure; whereupon he began to cause them to be seized and put to death wherever found.¹ This was followed by the discovery of a widespread conspiracy against the tyrant, causing Domitian to strike blindly in all directions; never were the delators so busy; and as Domitian grew more and more suspicious and regardless of human life, a general reign of terror set in. Moreover Domitian, having a deep natural love of cruelty, delighted to play with his victims. Dion Cassius gives a weird account² of a funeral banquet arranged by Domitian at which the company of selected guests were ushered into a banquetting hall hung entirely with black; at the head of each dining-couch stood a tombstone with the guest's name upon it, and a lamp over his head of the kind used in tombs; a troop of naked boys, black like all else, first went through a funeral dance, and then brought round a meal such as was customarily offered to the spirits of the departed; while through the semi-darkness of the hall the voice of the emperor was heard relating for the edification of the guests gruesome tales of bloody deaths similar to their own which would shortly take place. By

¹ Pages 195-196.

² Dion Cassius, 67, 4.

such methods Domitian took pleasure in enhancing the dread with which his name was spoken. All who on account of high station or ability seemed to him in any way formidable were one after another accused upon false charges and put to death ; none of any eminence could feel themselves secure ; and even Domitian's own wife, the unhappy Domitia Longina, knew that her life was threatened.

Meanwhile Domitian was busy in the chief work of his reign, the completion of his new palace (see below), and it was in the midst of this general reign of terror that the profusely decorated walls of that palace were raised. Nor did that terror spare the emperor himself. His suspicion of all men grew until he became possessed by no other thought. In his new palace he caused the corridor in which he took his exercise to be lined with mirrors, so that no unseen assassin should strike him from behind. He lived in an atmosphere of superstitious dread. Even the image of Minerva, which stood by his bedside, ceased at length to give him comfort, as a dream informed him that Jupiter had forbidden his daughter any longer to protect her favourite.

But the more suspicious and terror-stricken Domitian grew the more ruthlessly he took human lives. And when at length in A.D. 96 he most cruelly and unjustly put to death his own first cousin Flavius Clemens, and banished the latter's wife Flavia Domitilla, Domitian's own niece, to the island of Pandataria as a preliminary to her murder, matters reached a climax.¹ As a result Domitian was assassinated (in an inner room of that portion of the Palace of the Caesars which had been built by Caligula)² on the 18th September A.D. 96 by Stephanus, a freedman of Flavius Clemens, who was furious at the death of his master and the cruel sentence on Domitilla ; he was assisted in destroying the tyrant by Parthenius, Maximus, and others who felt their lives to be in danger. Domitian was forty-four when he was thus removed by the only means which were possible in the case of an emperor who became an insupportable tyrant.

Domitian completed the fifth palace of the Caesars, known

¹ It has been thought that Domitian's action was caused by discovering that Flavius Clemens and Domitilla were both secretly Christians (see p. 201).

² See below.



[Bronz.]

DOMITIA LONGINA, WIFE OF DOMITIAN.
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.



[Bronz.]

DOMITIAN, YOUNGER SON OF VESPASIAN.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

as the Flavian palace, occupying the centre of the Palatine hill, and adjoining on one side the palace of Augustus and on the other the palaces of Tiberius and Caligula. This Flavian palace consisted only of State apartments; ¹ for their private apartments Domitian and his successors Nerva and Trajan continued to occupy the palace of Caligula, a branch subterranean passage (or *cryptoporticus*) being constructed from the previously existing *cryptoporticus* ² to connect the private apartments in the palace of Caligula with the State apartments forming the Flavian palace.

Thus from Domitian's time onwards the four palaces built respectively by Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Domitian formed one great imperial palace, the State apartments being in the centre, with the private apartments (the palaces of Tiberius and Caligula, and the palace of Augustus) on either side. This "Palace of the Caesars" must have presented a magnificent appearance when thus completed by the addition of Domitian's splendid group of State apartments as the central block of the whole palace.

The palace built by Domitian has in recent times been laid bare, enabling us to trace the size and character of these State apartments of the imperial palace. They consist of the Tablinum (or throne-room), the Basilica (or judgement-hall), the Peristyle (or central open court), the Triclinium (or banqueting hall), the Nymphaeum (or inside garden), the Lavarium, with altar and pedestal for a statue, several smaller rooms opening into the Peristyle, and a wide staircase leading to another range of rooms above, now destroyed. Domitian decorated this palace so extravagantly that Plutarch likened him to Midas, who wished everything to be made of gold, and traces of this profuse decoration can still be discerned. The entire palace, both walls and floor, was lined with rare kinds of coloured marbles, such as *giallo antico*, *rosso antico*, *verde antico*, *pavonazetto*, *cipollino*, and others. The throne-room had its walls adorned with columns of *pavonazetto* and *giallo antico* marble, and with niches in which were statues made of porphyry. The Basilica, or judgement hall, with a

¹ The inscription upon it, "Ædes Publicae," was placed by the next emperor Nerva, to show its public character.

² Chap. III, p. 93.

marble screen dividing off the apse, is interesting as showing the shape and form of hall which the Christians afterwards adopted as the plan for their churches.¹ On the side of the throne-room opposite to the judgement-hall is the Lavarium, with its altar, and beyond this a few remains of the grand staircase which led to the upper floor. Between the throne-room and the banqueting hall is the large open Peristyle, which was surrounded with columns of Oriental marble, portions of which still remain. The fine banqueting hall, with part of its splendid pavement of red and green basalt still to be seen, opens out of the Peristyle, and next to it, separated from it only by large windows, is the Nymphaeum, with a marble-lined fountain and recesses for plants and statues. Plutarch, Statius, and other writers give glowing descriptions of this palace. In 1720, as the result of extensive excavations made here, an immense quantity of fragments of statues and coloured marbles were discovered which had adorned the palace. Among these were found in the throne-room sixteen beautiful fluted columns of *pavonazetto* marble, fragments of porphyry statues, and an immense door-sill of Pentelic marble which now forms the high altar of the Pantheon. The emperor in coming from his private apartments in the palace of Caligula reached the throne-room by the flight of stairs which ascends from the branch of the *crypto-perticus*.

(b) Matters concerning religion

Fifty years had passed since Christianity had been first preached to the Pagan world from Antioch. During that time, with the exception of the massacre of the Christians at Rome by Nero (which was not inspired by animosity against their religion, but adopted as a means of diverting inconvenient suspicion from himself), the Christian communities in the different cities of the empire had lived unmolested. Now however the Christian Church was to be tried by the fiery test of a long series of persecutions, occurring as a rule at intervals of about a generation, the first three persecutions

¹ The church of "St. Agnes outside the walls" at Rome is in form and arrangement exactly similar to this hall.

being confined to particular cities, but the subsequent persecutions being carried out over most of the empire.

Nero had set the fashion of the massacre of Christians when political capital could be made out of it, and Domitian in the tenth year of his reign, whether prompted by similar motives or not, followed this example and began the Second persecution, which lasted for five years (A.D. 91-96), and appears to have affected chiefly Rome, Corinth, and possibly Ephesus. The motives which induced this action on Domitian's part have never transpired. Two however seem probable. He may, like Nero, have adopted this course from a desire to divert from himself the increasing unpopularity caused by his actions; or again it seems not unlikely that the persecution of the Christians may have been instigated by their bitter foes the Gnostics,¹ the suggestion commending itself to Domitian as a reformer of religion.

As regards the Church at Rome at this period, Linus, the Bishop appointed by St. Peter, appears to have died about the year A.D. 80, during the short reign of Titus, being succeeded by Anencletus, the second Bishop, regarding whom almost the only fact recorded is his having erected small monuments over the burial-places of St. Peter and St. Paul to mark them. Anencletus is stated to have been Bishop for twelve years, dying about the year A.D. 92, and tradition asserts that he was martyred in this Second persecution. Anencletus was succeeded by Clement (A.D. 92-101), the writer of the well-known Epistle of St. Clement.² Regarding the Churches at other places at this time we have little or no information, except that about the year A.D. 92 St. John (shortly before being seized in this persecution) appointed as Bishop of the Church at Smyrna Polycarp, who from his boyhood had been taught by St. John himself, and was at this time about thirty years old.

This Second persecution, which began the year before Clement became Bishop of Rome, was evidently not confined like that of Nero to that city, but was carried out also in at all events some of the cities in Greece and Asia Minor. For not only was the Apostle St. John seized and tortured (see below), but also we know from the Epistle of St. Clement that

¹ Page 186.

² See pp. 198-200.

the persecution was taking place at Corinth at the same time that it was occurring at Rome. During the twenty-six years that had elapsed since Nero's persecution many fresh persons in Rome had become converted to Christianity, and the Christians there had again become a considerable body.

As in the case of the First persecution, scarcely any names of those who suffered have come down to us, not a single name being recorded of those who suffered at Corinth, and only five names of those who suffered at Rome. But it is evident from the Epistle of St. Clement that the number who perished in Rome alone must have been considerable, since Clement (writing either while this persecution was taking place or immediately after it ended), after saying that the cause of the delay in replying to the letter from the Church at Corinth has been "by reason of the sudden and successive troubles and calamities which have befallen us," speaks of the great number who had suffered tortures and death, including "many matrons, and maidens, and slave girls." Out of all who suffered only the names of five persons have been preserved, viz. Nicomedes, a priest; ¹ Vitus, of whom we know nothing; two girls, Crescentia and Modesta; and lastly the Apostle St. John, then about eighty years old, the latter being tortured, but not killed. Besides these, tradition asserts that Flavia Domitilla was afterwards brought back from Pandataria to the mainland and upon refusing to sacrifice to the Pagan gods was burnt alive at Terracina, with her two Christian servants, Nereus and Achilles.

Whether St. John had gone to Rome and was seized there, or whether (as is most probable) he was seized at Ephesus and taken to Rome to be brought before the emperor, we do not know. But Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, the pupil of St. John for many years, and also Irenæus and Tertullian, who both lived near enough to the time to know, all assert that St. John was seized in this persecution, that outside the gate of Rome leading to Latium he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil,² but miraculously preserved, and that

¹ He is commemorated in the Church of England Prayerbook on the 1st June.

² Commemorated in the Church of England Prayerbook on the 6th May, with the words "St. John before the Latin Gate."

he was then banished by the emperor Domitian to the island of Patmos. There, apparently about the year A.D. 95,¹ St. John wrote the *Book of the Revelations*² and the *First Epistle of St. John*. And, apparently also during this time at Patmos, were written his two short letters, the *Second Epistle of St. John* (written to "the elect lady and her children") and the *Third Epistle of St. John* (written to "Gaius, the well-beloved").

The whole question of St. John's banishment and the writing of the Book of the Revelations is a matter upon which there are great diversities of opinion. The record that St. John was banished to Patmos by the emperor Domitian about the year A.D. 92, and there wrote the Book of Revelations about the year A.D. 95, is that which has been handed down for many centuries, being the statement of men who lived less than eighty years after the event. On the other hand in the present day the most diverse opinions have been put forward on the subject. One set of writers support the traditional view; another set of writers maintain that while the book was written about the year A.D. 95, it was not written by the Apostle St. John, but by another John; others maintain that it was neither written by the Apostle St. John nor at the traditional date; and again the most recent writer on the subject³ holds that it was written by the Apostle St. John, but that he was banished to Patmos in A.D. 70, in the reign of the emperor Vespasian, and wrote the Book of Revelations in the spring of that year. Agreement on the subject is not likely ever to be attained; and this being so, it would seem that the traditional view has much greater weight than any other, being that held by men who lived so close to the time as to make their opinion far outweigh that of any one living eighteen centuries afterwards, and that those who support that view stand upon the strongest ground.

Either in A.D. 95 while this Second persecution was still

¹ See p. 198 (footnote).

² Perhaps incorporating in it some writings written about A.D. 70; as maintained by W. R. W. Ponder in his *Historical Notes on the Book of Revelations* (1913).

³ Mr. G. Edmundson, in his *The Church in Rome in the First Century*, pp. 164-178.

continuing, or in A.D. 96 immediately upon its being ended by the death of Domitian,¹ Clement, who had been Bishop of the Church at Rome since A.D. 92, wrote the celebrated *First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, an epistle which in its lofty sentiments and language is scarcely to be distinguished from those of the Apostles, and which was looked upon by the early Church as almost canonical; so much so that it is included in the New Testament in the most ancient copy of the latter in the British Museum, and for many centuries used to be regularly read in the various Churches in the same manner as the epistles of the Apostles.

This epistle gives us an important glimpse into the condition of the Christian Church at this time, that is to say about fifty-five years after Christianity had been first preached at Antioch. It is a reply to the Church at Corinth regarding the dangers and difficulties which they were experiencing in the Second persecution, and about which they had solicited advice from the Church at Rome. Throughout the whole Epistle Clement's aim is to sink his own personality and to

¹ The date of this Epistle of St. Clement, like that of the Book of the Revelations, has been a matter of much controversy. But the opinion of the highest authority on the subject, Bishop Lightfoot (invariably most cautious in his statements on such points), has almost placed the matter beyond further controversy, his words being: "The date of Clement's epistle is fixed with a fair degree of certainty at A.D. 95 or 96, as it was written during or immediately after the persecution under Domitian."⁽⁴⁾ On the other hand Mr. G. Edmundson, in his recently published *The Church in Rome in the First Century*, holds that this epistle, and the Book of the Revelations, were both written early in A.D. 70. His chief argument in favour of this date is in both cases the same, viz. that Revelations xi, 1 and Clement xli contain references to the Temple as still standing and the daily sacrifices as still being offered. But various critics have pointed out that Mr. Edmundson throughout adopts an over-literal method of interpreting the early Christian documents, and that in these two cases especially he has not in their opinion at all grasped the extent to which the early Church was in the habit of using language about the Temple and its ritual in a manner which regarded it, not in its literal and transient sense, but with a larger and more permanent spiritual Christian meaning, and that to interpret Clement's words in the way Mr. Edmundson does is to ascribe to the Church at Rome in his time a spirit quite out of keeping with its Pauline traditions.

⁽⁴⁾ Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i, p. 342.

write merely as the representative of the community in whose name he speaks, the Church at Rome; never once does he speak in the first person singular. This epistle, written during the time of Domitian's persecution, makes mention of the suffering they at Rome are also enduring, and its chief interest is as a letter from one Christian community to another at such a time, showing the mind of the Christian Church at that period, and in what spirit they endured such sufferings.

At the time the epistle was written the community as whose representative Clement writes was experiencing terrible trial, each member of it living in the knowledge that at any hour he or she might be called away to suffer tortures and death. Nevertheless they show only sentiments of love, humility, calmness, and patience. At its close this letter is called the "First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," but that is not the manner in which it is headed at its commencement. There it begins thus:—"From the Church of God sojourning at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." It would have been well for the world if in after centuries all communications from the Church at Rome to sister Churches had ever been couched in this same tone, and if all Bishops of Rome had merged their own personality in that of their Church as St. Clement did.

The letter begins by explaining that the delay in sending a reply is due to the persecution they at Rome have also been suffering, briefly stating that many of their community have suffered cruel tortures and death. It then, in order to inspire the Christians at Corinth with courage, makes allusion to the details of the former persecution under Nero which were known to the Christians at Corinth,¹ mentioning the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, speaking of the brave examples which had been shown by "a great multitude of the elect who suffered through jealousy many outrages and tortures," and saying that "many women and girls, being persecuted, endured terrible and monstrous outrages, and after having

¹ Excepting any who may have seen these things as Pagan spectators in the time of Nero, and been converted since then, none of those who were Christians at Rome in Clement's time had actually seen these terrible cruelties of Nero's persecution, but they were well known to all, both at Rome and Corinth.

suffered in the guise of Danaïds¹ and Dirces,² safely reached the goal in the race of faith, and received a noble reward, feeble though they were in body"; and it then says, "We are in the same lists; the same conflict engages us."

The epistle then urges, as the remedy for the troubles at Corinth, calmness, obedience, love, purity, truth, humility, and patience. The language is as lofty in sentiment as that of the epistles of St. Paul, and very touching now and then in its allusions to the "examples from among ourselves." Towards the end it mounts to an intercession for the fallen, the weak, the hungry, and the prisoners; also for the governors who are their persecutors. And at its close it rises into a magnificent exhortation to love as the cure for all ills.

Such is the first letter that we possess written by a Christian Bishop,—the first written evidence of what had been accomplished by the work of the Apostles, furnished by one of those whom they had taught. It demonstrates that a new tone had come into the world.³

Clement's origin has been much debated. He may of course have been the Clement who is mentioned by St. Paul as his "fellow labourer"; but this is not now considered probable. It is evident that he was highly educated and also rich, as he fitted up a hall in his palace for use by the Christians as a church (apparently the earliest church in Rome), the remains of which still exist underneath the crypt of the present church of St. Clement, two other churches having in succession been built over Clement's original one. The name Clemens (Clement) was a common one in the Flavian family, and it has long been traditionally held that Clement the Bishop was one of this family, and a connection of the emperor Domitian.⁴ That

¹ Alluding to those who had been clothed in skins and torn to pieces by dogs.

² Alluding to those who had been stripped naked, bound on the horns of wild bulls, and gored to death.

³ Besides this well-known epistle various other writings are attributed to St. Clement, which shows the importance attached to his personality, whether these other writings are actually his or not, a matter greatly disputed.

⁴ This view is also supported by Mr. Edmundson, who considers that Clement was a brother of Arrecina Tertulla, the first wife of the emperor Titus (Edmundson, *The Christian Church in Rome in the First Century*, pp. 234-235).

he remained untouched throughout the persecution under Domitian (being martyred early in the reign of Trajan) seems strongly to support this view.

It is in the time of the Flavian dynasty that we first see the Christian Church making converts of much higher rank than those who had chiefly¹ formed its members in the time of St. Paul. Not to mention others, Flavia Domitilla,² the niece of the emperor Vespasian, was exiled by him to the island of Pontia for being a Christian and refusing to marry when ordered by the emperor; Marcus Acilius Glabrio,³ who was Consul in A.D. 91, was put to death by Domitian in A.D. 95 upon a charge of "atheism and Jewish manners," which is believed to indicate in reality his being a Christian, especially as his tomb has in recent years been discovered in the 1st century cemetery of Priscilla; and Flavia Domitilla, the niece of Domitian, with her husband Flavius Clemens, were punished almost certainly because they were Christians. The excavation in recent years of the cemeteries of Priscilla and Domitilla, both of which cemeteries belong to the 1st century, has also brought to light other tombs of Christians belonging to the upper classes in the time of Domitian.

NERVA

A.D. 96—98

(a) Matters other than religion

On the death of Domitian, Nerva,⁴ a quiet, honest, and dignified senator of sixty-four, who had twice been Consul, was invited by the Senate to become emperor. His accession put an end to the reign of terror of the previous five years.

¹ Though not entirely, as the case of Pomponia Graecina shows (Chap. III, p. 101).

² Her tomb has been discovered in recent years by De Rossi in the 1st century cemetery of Domitilla, with a marble slab on which her name is written, showing conclusively that she was a Christian.

³ His tomb was discovered in 1888 by De Rossi in the cemetery of Priscilla, with a marble slab over it on which his name was written; thus confirming the fact that he was a Christian, since the bodies of Pagans were burnt, not buried.

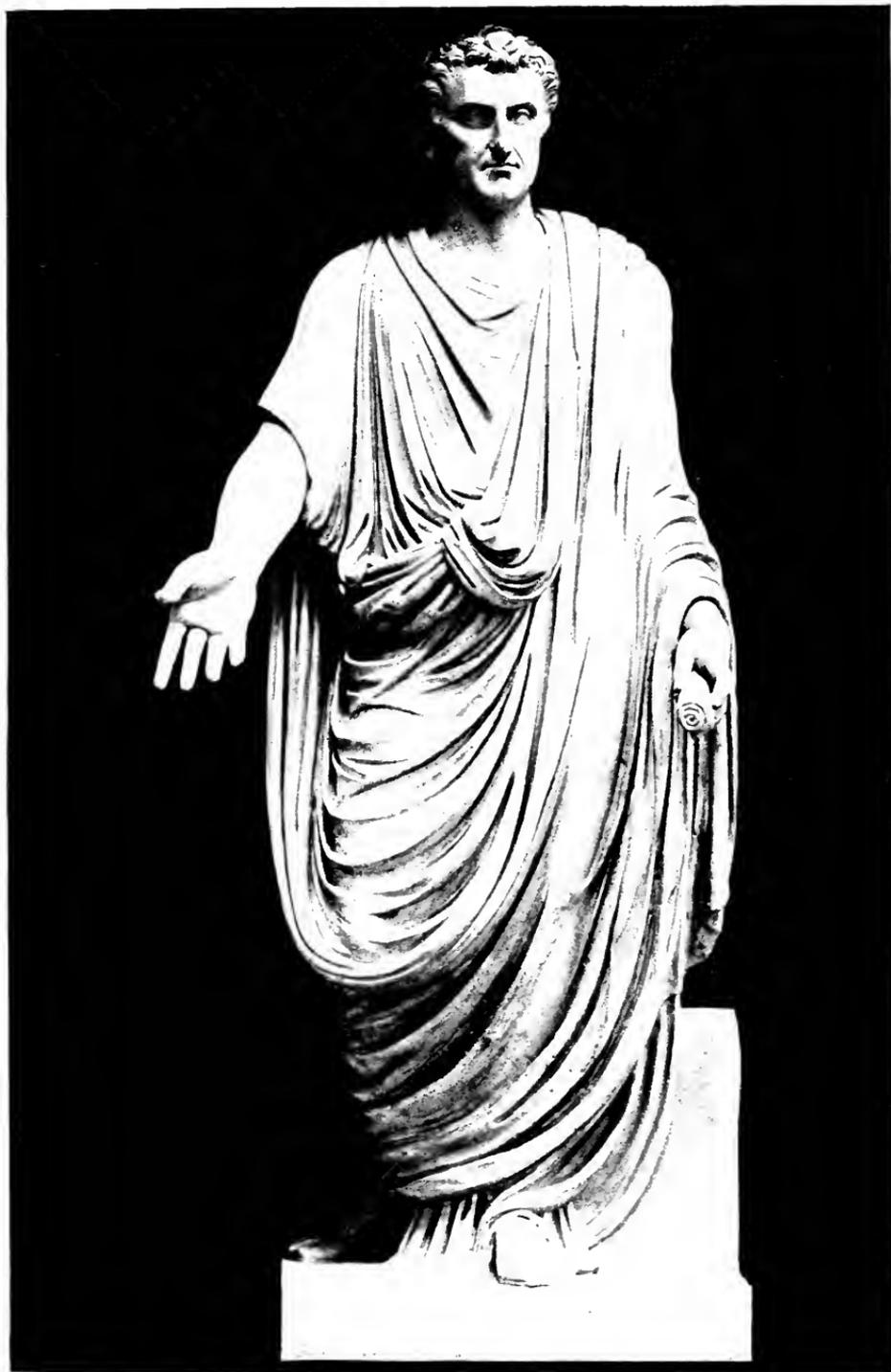
⁴ Plate XXXII. Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.

He annulled Domitian's unjust sentences of banishment, rigorously put down the evil class of "informers," lightened taxation, and set himself in every way to rule justly and well, passing various measures for the relief of the poorer classes. But Nerva was weak, and finding himself unable to cope with the Praetorian Guards, who defied his authority, he associated with himself a distinguished soldier, Trajan, then commanding the legions on the Rhine, and without recalling him to Rome formally adopted him as his son and colleague.

Nerva completed the new Forum which had been begun by Domitian, that known as the Forum of Nerva, and soon afterwards died, somewhat suddenly, in January A.D. 98. He was succeeded by Trajan, who was at once accepted by the whole empire with satisfaction.

(b) Matters concerning religion

On the accession of Nerva St. John, then about eighty-five years old, was liberated from his exile at Patmos, and returned to Ephesus. Irenæus, Eusebius, and Theophylact all state that from that time he lived at Ephesus, and died there in the reign of Trajan. In A.D. 98 he wrote at Ephesus the *Gospel of St. John*, the last book of the New Testament. Its difference from the other Gospels is accounted for by the historical difference in the circumstances. Nearly forty years had elapsed since the other three Gospels were written, and great changes had taken place. The men and women converted when Christianity was first preached had now been Christians for fifty years, and even their grandchildren were grown up. Thus St. John addressed Christians thoroughly familiar with all that the other Apostles had taught, and he could therefore take for granted that those to whom he wrote could understand things not to be understood by the first believers in Christianity.



NERVA.

Statue in the Vatican museum, Rome.

This statue shows an example of the ordinary dress of a Roman senator.



NOTE A

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DURING THE 1ST CENTURY ¹

Reign.	EVENT.	Date.
TIBERIUS	Christ put to death at Jerusalem . . .	Spring, A.D. 29
	Martyrdom of St. Stephen	A.D. 33
	Conversion of St. Paul at Damascus . . .	A.D. 35
	St. Paul driven out of Damascus . . .	Spring, A.D. 37
CALIGULA	St. Peter's tours through Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, visit to Lydda, and sojourn at Joppa	A.D. 37-41
	Conversion by St. Peter of Cornelius, the centurion, at Caesarea	A.D. 41
CLAUDIUS	Preaching of the Christian religion at Antioch begun by Jewish converts	A.D. 41
	St. Barnabas sent from Jerusalem by the Apostles to Antioch.	A.D. 41
	St. James (the brother of St. John) put to death by Herod Agrippa at Jerusalem, and St. Peter imprisoned	Spring, A.D. 42
	St. Barnabas and St. Paul preaching together at Antioch	A.D. 43
	Distribution at Antioch of the various countries of the world among the Apostles, and their separation, St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul, St. Barnabas, and St. Mark remaining for a time at Antioch	A.D. 44
	St. Peter undertakes a three years' tour through Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, and Pontus, probably with St. Mark, and then visits Jerusalem	A.D. 44-46

¹ Authorities are much divided regarding many of the dates, and will probably always remain so. The chronology here given is that which appears to have the most general acceptance.

Reign.	EVENT.	Date.
CLAUDIUS	St. Barnabas and St. Paul proceed from Antioch to Jerusalem, bringing alms from the Christians at Antioch (Galatians ii, 1-10)	A.D. 46
	St. Peter establishes himself at Antioch, making it the centre of his missionary work, founding the church of Antioch, and acting as its head for seven years	A.D. 47-54
	St. Paul and St. Barnabas, with St. Mark, starting from Antioch, proceed upon their first missionary journey through Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra, and returning to Antioch	A.D. 47-49
	Disagreement between St. Peter and St. Paul at Antioch (Galatians ii, 11-14)	A.D. 49
	Council of the Apostles at Jerusalem over the question of the circumcision of the Gentile converts	End of A.D. 49
	St. Paul starts from Antioch with Silas on his second missionary journey, proceeding through Syria, Cilicia, Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, to Troas	A.D. 50
	St. Barnabas starts from Antioch with St. Mark, and visits Cyprus, whence St. Barnabas returns to Antioch, St. Mark proceeding to Egypt (see below)	A.D. 50
	St. Paul and Silas cross the Ægean Sea from Troas into Macedonia, proceed to Philippi, and from thence to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth.	A.D. 50-51
	St. Paul remains at Corinth for a year and a half.	A.D. 51-53
	<i>First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, and Epistle to the Galatians, written by St. Paul from Corinth.</i>	A.D. 52

Reign.	EVENT.	Date.
NERO	St. Paul sails from Corinth, visits Ephesus, sails to Caesarea, visits Jerusalem, and returns to Antioch, from whence he had been absent three years	Spring, A.D. 53
	St. Paul starts from Antioch on his third missionary journey, proceeding through Galatia and Phrygia, and from thence to Ephesus.	A.D. 53
	St. Mark remains in Egypt for eleven years, founding the Church of Alexandria, acting as its head, and preaching throughout Egypt	A.D. 50-61
	<i>Gospel of St. Mark</i> written by him at Alexandria.	A.D. 54
	St. Paul remains at Ephesus for nearly three years	A.D. 53-56
	St. Peter and St. Barnabas working together for a time at Corinth	End of A.D. 54
	St. Peter and St. Barnabas in Rome for about a year	A.D. 55-56
	<i>First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> written by St. Paul from Ephesus	End of A.D. 55
	St. Paul leaves Ephesus, crosses into Macedonia, and visits Philippi.	Spring, A.D. 56
	<i>Second Epistle to the Corinthians</i> written by St. Paul from Philippi.	A.D. 56
	St. Paul from Philippi travels into Greece, and reaches Corinth, staying there three months	A.D. 56
	<i>Epistle to the Romans</i> written by St. Paul from Corinth	End of A.D. 56
	St. Paul returns to Philippi, sails from thence to Troas, and thence proceeds viâ Assos, Mitylene, Miletus, Rhodes, Tyre, and Caesarea, to Jerusalem	Spring, A.D. 57
	St. Paul arrested at Jerusalem, sent to Caesarea, and imprisoned there for two years	A.D. 57-59
<i>Gospel of St. Luke</i> written by him while with St. Paul at Caesarea	A.D. 58	

Reign.	EVENT.	Date.
NERO	St. Paul and St. Luke sent from Caesarea in autumn of A.D. 59 in charge of an escort to Rome, and after a tempestuous voyage and shipwreck at Malta arrive at Rome . . .	Spring, A.D. 60
	<i>General Epistle of St. James the Less</i> written by him at Jerusalem . . .	A.D. 60
	St. Paul kept a prisoner in Rome for two years, but allowed to live in his own hired house	A.D. 60-62
	<i>Epistle to the Colossians, Epistle to the Ephesians, Epistle to Philemon</i> , written by St. Paul in Rome . . .	A.D. 61
	<i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> written by St. Luke in Rome	A.D. 61
	St. James the Less murdered at Jerusalem by the Jews	Spring, A.D. 62
	<i>Epistle to the Philippians</i> written by St. Paul in Rome	Spring, A.D. 62
	Trial of St. Paul, his acquittal, liberation, and departure from Rome into Spain	A.D. 62
	<i>Gospel of St. Matthew</i> written by him in Egypt for the Jews	A.D. 62
	Ignatius made Bishop of Antioch by St. Peter	A.D. 62
	St. Peter in Rome	A.D. 63-65
	The great fire in Rome	July, A.D. 64
	Persecution of the Christians in Rome begun	March, A.D. 65
	<i>First Epistle of St. Peter</i> written by him in Rome	April, A.D. 65
	St. Peter imprisoned at Rome	May, A.D. 65
	<i>Second Epistle of St. Peter</i> written by him from his prison	May, A.D. 65
	Martyrdom of St. Peter at Rome	May, A.D. 65
	General massacre of the Christians in the Vatican gardens at Rome	June, A.D. 65
	St. Paul returns by sea from Spain, proceeding towards Jerusalem, and on the way leaving Titus as Bishop at Crete	A.D. 65

Reign.	EVENT.	Date.
	St. Paul proceeds from Jerusalem to Philippi, leaving Timothy as Bishop at Ephesus, and from Philippi proceeds to Nicopolis, where he winters	End of A.D. 65
	<i>Epistle to Titus</i> written by St. Paul from Nicopolis	End of A.D. 65
	St. Paul, quitting Nicopolis, visits Corinth, and from thence, leaving Erastus as Bishop there, crosses to Asia, and visits Miletus.	Spring, A.D. 66
	<i>First Epistle to Timothy</i> written by St. Paul apparently from Corinth.	Spring, A.D. 66
	St. Paul arrested, probably near Miletus, and sent a prisoner to Rome.	A.D. 66
	<i>Epistle to the Hebrews</i> written, probably by St. Barnabas	End, A.D. 66
	St. Paul's second captivity in Rome	A.D. 66-67
	<i>Second Epistle to Timothy</i> written by St. Paul from his prison in Rome	A.D. 67
	St. Matthew martyred in Egypt	A.D. 67
	St. Paul martyred at Rome	End of A.D. 67
VESPASIAN	Jerusalem destroyed by Titus, the Christians in that city escaping before the siege to Pella	Sept., A.D. 70
TITUS	Anencletus becomes second Bishop of Rome in succession to Linus	A.D. 80
	<i>Epistle of St. Jude</i> written	A.D. 80
DOMITIAN	Persecution of the Christians by Domitian.	A.D. 91-96
	Polycarp made Bishop of Smyrna by St. John	A.D. 92
	Clement becomes third Bishop of Rome in succession to Anencletus.	A.D. 92
	St. John seized, tortured at Rome, and exiled to Patmos.	A.D. 93
	<i>Book of the Revelations, First Epistle of St. John, Second Epistle of St. John, Third Epistle of St. John,</i> written by St. John in Patmos	A.D. 94-95
	<i>Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians</i> written	A.D. 96

Reign.	EVENT.	Date.
NERVA	St. John liberated from Patmos and returns to Ephesus	A.D. 97
	<i>Gospel of St. John</i> written by him at Ephesus	A.D. 98
TRAJAN	Death of St. John at Ephesus . .	A.D. 100

CHAPTER VI

REIGNS OF TRAJAN AND HADRIAN

TRAJAN

A.D. 98—117

(a) Matters other than religion

THE Roman Empire, inaugurated by Augustus, and brought to so much perfection by the principles of administration laid down by him, now made a second great step forward. With Trajan begins a period of eighty-two years (98–180), under the four emperors Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, which was more splendid and prosperous than any which the empire had yet seen. These emperors demonstrated in a marked degree that capacity to administer with ability the affairs of an entire world which was so essentially the characteristic of the Roman race. The defence and gradual civilization of a barbarous country like Britain in the extreme north-west, the maintenance of Rome's power, 4,000 miles from thence, on her eastern frontier in Parthia, the affairs of remote colonies far to the south on the borders of the African desert, the fortifications and roads necessary to maintain in strength the long line of the northern frontier from the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube, the discipline and training of the army upon which the existence of the empire depended, the numerous wants of the more settled provinces in the centre of the empire, and in Rome the various arrangements for the health, comfort, or convenience of the inhabitants of the capital city, all received unremitting attention from these enlightened emperors.

Nevertheless Rome was still the primary consideration even with these emperors. Their conquests were made in order to add to the glory of Rome; their chief buildings were

TRAJAN (*Matters other than religion*)

erected to increase the splendour of Rome ; the agricultural needs of North Africa received attention in order that that province might supply vast quantities of corn to be stored in Rome so that the inhabitants of that favoured city should receive the daily gift of free bread ; and it seems probable that a main reason for the great popularity of one of these emperors, Antoninus Pius, was the fact that he never moved from Rome and that his chief interests centred in that city.

TRAJAN,¹ who was forty-five when he became emperor, reigned twenty years, and was the greatest military emperor between Augustus and Constantine. Belonging to a Roman family settled in Spain, son of the Proconsul of the province of Asia, and a soldier from boyhood, he had served all over the empire with distinction, and had risen to be Proconsul of that part of the Rhine frontier which the Romans called Upper Germany² when he was chosen to be emperor. In character he was brave, just, frank, and upright, qualities which made him highly popular with the troops. His military ability, the close personal relations which he maintained with his troops, his habit of sharing all their hardships, his strict discipline, and his invariable justice, enabled him to wield an authority over the army such as no emperor before him had possessed. His first act on succeeding to the throne was characteristic. The Praetorian Guards had gradually been becoming the masters of the throne, and had openly defied the authority of Nerva. Trajan at once ordered a large portion of them to the Rhine frontier and drafted them into the legions there, and they did not dare to disobey him. His next action showed what he considered to be the greatest danger menacing the empire, and the most important matter requiring his attention. For on receiving while at Cologne the news of Nerva's death, before proceeding to Rome he spent nearly two years in making a thorough inspection of the entire line of the northern frontier, and framed an immense scheme for strengthening it, including a complete reconstruction of the great "Limes," or fortified rampart, between the upper courses of the Rhine and the Danube.

¹ Plate XXXIII. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

² Roughly, the upper course of the Rhine.



TRAJAN.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

[ANDERSON.]



[BROCK.]

PLOTINA, WIFE OF TRAJAN.

Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.



[BROCK.]

MARCIANA, SISTER OF TRAJAN.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

The "Limes," the greater part of which is still traceable, consisted of a wide ditch and high rampart, with forts, watch-towers, and fortified camps at intervals along its course. It was not meant, like Hadrian's wall subsequently built in Britain, as an absolute barrier against incursions, but rather to form, with the military roads leading to its chief points, a line of observation from whence troops could easily be concentrated upon any threatened point. It extended from the Rhine near Bonn to the Danube at Regina Castra, now Regensburg (Ratisbon). Regina Castra (the Royal Camp) was an immense fortified camp, occupying a rectangle 585 yards long by 480 yards wide. Some portions of its walls and gateways still remain.

But Trajan did not only pay attention to the northern frontier and the great camps of Cologne on the Rhine and Regensburg on the Danube. Far away to the south, across the Mediterranean, on the border of the African desert, he in this same year A.D. 100 founded the great fortified camp of Timgad, situated on a fertile plateau on the slope of the Aures mountains, and destined to grow in the 4th century into a city of great magnificence,¹ and to become to the Roman Empire on its southern frontier what Cologne and Regensburg were to its northern frontier.

In A.D. 100 Trajan arrived at Rome, and soon became as popular with the Senate and people as he already was with the army. He treated the Senate with the respect which had been accorded to it by Augustus and Tiberius, but which had fallen into abeyance under later emperors. Disliking ostentation, he was simple in his habits, and freely accessible to all, while his wife Plotina² and his sister Marciana³ were as

¹ Regarding remains of Timgad, see Vol. II, Appendix XVI.

² Plate XXXIV. Portrait-bust in the Vatican gallery, Rome.

³ Plate XXXV. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome. The manner in which these ladies arranged their hair, to be seen in the portraits of Titus' daughter Julia, of Domitian's wife Domitia Longina, of Trajan's sister Marciana, and of Hadrian's wife Sabina (Plates XXIX, XXXI, XXXV, and XXXVII), is extraordinary, and in much contrast to the almost modern style in which the ladies of a more aristocratic time, that of the Caesars, wore their hair, to be seen in the portraits of Livia, Antonia, Agrippina the elder, Domitia Lepida, and Poppaea (Plates V, VII, XIII, XVII, and XXI).

agreeable to all classes and as opposed to ostentation as he was himself. It is related by Dion Cassius that as Plotina upon her arrival at Rome ascended the steps of the imperial palace she turned and said to those with her, "As I enter this palace to-day, I trust I shall leave it when the time may come." To which he adds, "And she so bore herself throughout the whole reign as to incur no blame." The writer Pliny is loud in praises of Plotina, declaring that she was an embodiment of all the virtues. Trajan, unostentatious as he was in his own personal style of living, spent money lavishly on public entertainments, especially on gladiatorial combats, which were carried to their highest point in his reign; and he especially pleased the people by having the imperial *exedra* (or royal box) in the Circus Maximus removed, whereby 5,000 additional places were provided.

But Trajan while occupied in thus delighting the citizens of Rome, had his eye fixed on the distant locality where he saw that danger to the empire was brewing, and he knew that he could not long remain enjoying the easy life of the capital. His tour of inspection along the Danube frontier had revealed to him the dangerous results which had ensued from Domitian's ignominious peace with the Dacians. That peace not only agreed to the payment of an annual subsidy to Decebalus, the king of the Dacians, but also undertook to provide him with engineers and artificers skilled in the construction of military works. As a consequence, during the ten years which had since elapsed, Decebalus had organized a powerful army equipped and trained on the Roman pattern, had erected numerous fortifications, and had made Dacia a most formidable enemy to the whole of the Roman provinces on the Danube frontier. Trajan, convinced of the dangerous menace to the empire thus created, did not wait for the Dacians to attack and ravage the Roman provinces, but determined himself to take the initiative. He therefore refused to continue to pay the subsidy, and in March 101 left Rome for the Danube frontier to prepare for war with the Dacians.¹ He first spent a considerable time in making a road at the "Iron Gates"

¹ For the various foreign wars conducted by the Romans between the time of Trajan and that of Constantine, see Appendix V.

(near Orsova), where the Danube flows between two high walls of rock,¹ and in collecting supplies for his force of about 60,000 men, and this done, he crossed the Danube by a bridge of boats at Viminacium (now Kastolats), and entered on the arduous campaign before him. The mountainous nature of the country, the fortifications which had everywhere been erected, and the excellent training which the Dacian troops had received, caused Trajan to encounter in this war heavier fighting than even that which Julius Caesar, 150 years before, had met with in his campaigns in Gaul. Decebalus proved himself an opponent not unworthy to be pitted against even so able a commander as Trajan. Nevertheless after desperate fighting, including a severe battle at Tapae, on the Tibiscus, in which one entire legion was destroyed, and after withdrawing for the winter to Pannonia, Trajan in the summer of 102 took fortress after fortress and at last reached Sarmizegetusa, the capital of Decebalus, and he submitted. Trajan's Mauretanian cavalry specially distinguished themselves in the final victory. Decebalus was made to agree to level all fortifications, to surrender all weapons and prisoners, and to become merely a ruling prince subject to the suzerainty of Rome. Trajan returned to Rome in 103, laden with trophies of his victory, and celebrated his first Dacian triumph.

But the peace thus arranged did not last long. Decebalus, unable to reconcile himself to the loss of his independence, again declared war, and Trajan in 104 had once more to leave Rome and enter on a still more severe campaign in Dacia. This time Trajan took with him a force of 12 legions, equal to about 144,000 men, and having determined to annex Dacia, and in order to keep open his communications with Moesia, he built a massive stone bridge across the Danube at Egeta (now Turnu Severin), a wonderful engineering feat,² by which bridge he crossed into Dacia. A prolonged and desperate struggle followed, the Dacians defending their mountainous country with a valour and determination which won the admiration even of the Romans, and the Dacian army was only beaten by being almost exterminated. At length, in 106,

¹ An inscription cut in the rock by Trajan at the narrowest part still records his making of this difficult road.

² The architect was Apollodorus of Damascus.

Sarmizegetusa was captured and set on fire.¹ Decebalus, refusing to survive defeat, committed suicide; his kingdom was annexed, and made a Roman province,² and towards the end of 107 Trajan returned to Rome with an immense quantity of captured weapons, prisoners, and treasure. There he celebrated a triumph which surpassed in splendour all that had ever preceded it. Games were held continuously for four whole months, 10,000 gladiators fought in the arena, and 11,000 animals were killed in the various combats. Congratulatory embassies came from all lands, even from India. The Dacians, who had thus given the Romans the severest fighting the latter had experienced, remained ever afterwards loyal to the empire, and that race furnished in subsequent generations a large number of Rome's best troops.

It is an error to suppose that the Roman army was composed solely of men born in Italy, or that such an arrangement would have been desirable. It would have been a mistake both from a military and a political point of view to have confined the Roman army to Italy as its sole recruiting ground; from a military point of view because Italy could not have provided a sufficient number of men of the best fighting material; and from a political point of view because such a course would have failed to raise a newly conquered province to full equality with the rest of the empire. Rome, therefore, having conquered the Dacians, did not exclude them from her army, and in after generations reaped the benefit of this sound policy from the stout fighting qualities of her Dacian soldiers, many of whom rose to the highest rank.³

The conquest of Dacia being concluded there followed seven years of peace (107-113), during which Trajan was occupied in countless measures for the protection and welfare of

¹ A number of the Dacian nobles, when the city was about to be taken, assembled for a last banquet and together drank a poisoned cup. This episode is depicted upon Trajan's column in Rome.

² The new province of Dacia included about half of what is now Hungary, and was bounded by the Theiss, the Carpathian Mountains, the Sereth, and the Danube.

³ See also Chap. XVI, p. 569. The same course has been taken by our own government in India, more particularly with regard to the Sikhs after the conquest of the Punjab, and with equally satisfactory results.

his vast empire. A thorough reform of the army was carried out, Trajan re-modelling the entire military organization; and so sound were the principles on which this was done that the military organization as settled by him remained unchanged for 200 years, until again re-modelled by Constantine. But this by no means exhausted Trajan's energies; his administrative measures were innumerable, and being all on sound principles gave universal satisfaction. He reduced taxation by wise financial reforms, and protected the people from oppression at the hands of provincial governors by stringent regulations. To guard against famine in Rome he is recorded to have kept stored in the public granaries sufficient corn for no less than seven years' consumption. He increased the importation of articles of food by wise fiscal arrangements. He augmented the internal trade of the empire by well-considered regulations for the due maintenance of the great main roads, as well as by laying out many additional roads. His care for the welfare of the poorer classes led him to inaugurate his important institution of the *alimenta*, whereby means were provided for rearing destitute children. He improved many details in the administration of justice; he prevented corruption in the election of the magistrates by introducing the ballot; and he restored many of the privileges and powers of the Senate which had fallen into abeyance. Trajan also added a tenth aqueduct, called the Aqua Trajana,¹ to the nine which already existed for supplying pure water to Rome, the supply brought by Trajan's aqueduct being taken from the Sabatine Lake in the mountains to the north-west of Rome. By these and other similar measures Trajan earned a right to no small portion of the extravagant eulogies which were lavished upon him in Pliny's celebrated "Panegyric." And as if to show that, while introducing measures to meet the multifarious needs of a world-wide empire, no subject was too small to engage his attention, Trajan for the benefit of the public of Rome organized the "Corporation of bakers."

In the midst, however, of his many public virtues we must not put entirely out of sight that in his private life Trajan was no paragon. He is stated to have been tainted with the same vices as his successor Hadrian, and he was also

¹ Still in use, and now called the Aqua Paola.

undoubtedly a drunkard. Merivale speaks of him as only retaining his self-respect owing to the bluntness of his moral sense. But these were matters which to the Romans of the 2nd century were mere peccadilloes, and Trajan's high sense of public duty, his justice, and his firm and equable rule made him universally honoured.

Trajan did not feel impelled, like nearly all his predecessors, to add still further to the imperial residence on the Palatine hill. The magnificent palace to which he succeeded, embracing as it did the palaces of Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula, and the group of State apartments erected by Domitian, more than sufficed for all his needs. He therefore turned his building energies to the construction of a magnificent Forum. Begun immediately on his arrival at Rome in 100, and completed before his death, the Forum of Trajan,¹ his chief work in Rome, was the last and most magnificent of all the Fora of the emperors. To obtain space for it he cut away a whole spur of the Quirinal hill which till then had joined that hill to the Capitol. This splendid Forum adjoined that of Augustus, and consisted of four parts, the Forum proper, the Basilica (or hall of justice), the two Libraries, one for Greek and the other for Latin books, with an open court in the centre in which was his Column, and lastly the Temple of Trajan. The principal entrance led from the Forum of Augustus, and was a triumphal Arch, decreed in honour of Trajan by the Senate. This was adorned with beautiful bas-reliefs representing Trajan's deeds in war; and these bas-reliefs still remain, as 200 years later the emperor Constantine transferred them to his own Arch, which still exists.² Beyond the triumphal Arch lay the Forum proper; this was 220 yards in width, with, in the centre, the great equestrian statue of Trajan, in bronze. Three entrances on the western side of this Forum led into the five-halled Basilica Ulpia (called after Trajan's family name), the central hall being 27 yards in width, and the whole Basilica being 61 yards in width. This, as we can see from the portion of it which has been excavated, had fluted columns of yellow marble and a rich pavement of Oriental coloured marbles. Beyond this Basilica

¹ Designed by his capable architect Apollodorus of Damascus, who had also designed the massive stone bridge across the Danube.

² Chap. XII, p. 376.

was an open court with, on either side, the two Libraries. And beyond this court was the Temple of Trajan, completed after his decease by his successor Hadrian.

In the centre of the court between the two Libraries Trajan erected his celebrated marble Column, the finest monument of the kind in the world. It still exists in perfect preservation after 1800 years. It is 100 feet high, the height corresponding with that of the hill which Trajan cut away, as is recorded by the inscription on the pedestal. Around the column from base to summit runs a spiral band, 3 feet wide and 660 feet long, covered with bas-reliefs representing Trajan's war with the Dacians, and containing, besides animals and machines, as many as 2500 human figures, each about two feet high at the base of the column and increasing in size towards its summit, so as to preserve the same proportion to the eye when seen from below. At the foot of the column is a sepulchral chamber, intended for receiving the ashes of the emperor; and Dion Cassius states that Trajan's ashes, enclosed in a golden urn, were buried beneath the column in this chamber.

The splendid group of buildings composing this Forum of Trajan, consisting of his triumphal Arch, the Forum proper, the Basilica, the Column, the two Libraries, and the Temple, was justly considered the finest of all the many magnificent buildings of Rome. And no testimony to their grandeur could be more impressive than the description of the effect which they produced upon Constantine the Great—himself a man of vast ideas—some 200 years afterwards. Ammianus Marcellinus says:—"But when he entered the Forum of Trajan, the most marvellous invention of human genius, he was struck with admiration, and looked round in amazement, without being able to utter a word, wondering at the gigantic structures which no pen can describe, and which mankind can create and see only once in the course of centuries. Having consequently given up any hope of himself building anything which would approach, even at a respectful distance, the work of Trajan, he turned his attention to the equestrian statue placed in the centre of the Forum, and said to those with him that he would have one like it in Constantinople."¹ But Constantine's admiration of these buildings did not prevent him from pulling to pieces Trajan's beautiful arch and

¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, xvi, 10.

transferring its bas-reliefs to his own arch,¹ a barbarous act of vandalism. Though, as Constantine's arch still exists, while Trajan's arch has long since been destroyed, it is owing to this same vandalism that these beautiful bas-reliefs have been preserved.

Trajan's views in regard to civil government and the responsibilities of the Proconsuls of provinces were as wide-minded as might have been expected from such a ruler. He was entirely free from the small-mindedness which always shrinks from decentralization and expects subordinates to refer nearly every matter to the decision of the supreme authority. He boldly gave to the Proconsuls of provinces great freedom of action, and constantly endeavoured to teach them not to refer matters to him unless of the highest importance, but to act on their own responsibility; and since the best results are only achieved when men are given considerable power of initiative, Trajan thereby showed that he had grasped the first great principle of successful government. This is markedly demonstrated in his letters to Pliny. The celebrated orator and writer Pliny the younger was one of Trajan's chief friends, and was appointed by him as Proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus. They were in constant correspondence, and the emperor's replies to Pliny reveal much of Trajan's character. These letters,² while they show Trajan's views on many subjects, show also that he was continually endeavouring quietly to teach Pliny that most of the matters which the latter referred to him should not have been so referred, but should have been decided by himself. Both Pliny, one of whose chief works is his Panegyric on Trajan, and his friend the renowned lawyer and rhetorician Tacitus, were great admirers of Trajan; and it was in the reign of the latter that Tacitus, apparently with much the same object in regard to Trajan as that aimed at in his friend Pliny's "Panegyric," began to write his *Annals*.

The desolate condition to which the Roman Campagna was brought after the 6th century is in strange contrast to the description of it in the time of Trajan given by Pliny.

¹ See Plate LIV. (p. 376).

² The well-known letter from Pliny to Trajan regarding the Christians (see p. 223), written in 112, is one of these.

He says :—" Such is the happy and beautiful appearance of the Campagna that it seems to be the work of a rejoicing nature. For truly so it appears in the vital and perennial salubrity of its atmosphere, in its fertile plains, sunny hills, healthy woods, thick groves, rich varieties of trees, breezy mountains, fertility in fruits, vines, and olives, its splendid flocks of sheep, abundant herds of cattle, numerous lakes, and wealth of rivers and streams."

At the end of the year 113 Trajan once more left Rome for active operations in the field, this time on the eastern frontier, where the attacks of the Parthian empire upon Rome's vassal state of Armenia were insulting the majesty of Rome. Trajan therefore determined to annex Armenia to the Roman Empire, and thoroughly to subdue Parthia. He first went to Athens, and after a short stay there proceeded to Antioch, the principal city on the eastern side of the empire, and the starting point of all military operations towards the east. There he spent the whole of the year 114 reorganizing the eastern legions and gathering reinforcements, and in the spring of 115 advanced into Armenia. During the next three years, in a series of brilliant campaigns, Trajan advanced Rome's frontier greatly to the east; the astonished Senate were perpetually receiving news of fresh nations conquered; Colchis, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoëne, and the tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills, all in turn submitted to him.¹ In 115 he took Arsamosata and declared Armenia a Roman province. In the same year he conquered Mesopotamia, and made it also a Roman province. After returning to Antioch for the winter, during which he built a fleet on the Euphrates, Trajan in 116 crossed the upper waters of the Tigris into Carduene, drove back the Parthian forces, and annexed Assyria. Putting the Parthian king to flight, he took Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital, capturing the golden throne of the Parthian empire, which he sent to Rome, and sailed in triumph down the Tigris from the mountains of Armenia to the head of the Persian Gulf. For these victories Trajan received the title of " Parthicus." Finding, however, that such extensive conquests would be too burdensome for the empire to maintain he in 117 gave back Assyria to the Parthians, retaining

¹ See Map C.

only three provinces beyond the Tigris. The Roman army then returned towards Syria, but on the way in besieging Hatra in the Mesopotamian desert, where the want of water prevented him from employing the whole of his force, Trajan, then sixty-five years old, suffered a defeat for the first time in his long life of warfare, had a narrow escape from being killed, and was forced to retreat. At the same time the Jews scattered over the various countries of the east at a given signal suddenly rose in revolt in his rear, and Trajan, worn out and ill, had to abandon affairs in Mesopotamia, and hasten back to Antioch to deal with this formidable and widespread revolt. The Jews had massacred 240,000 of the Roman and Greek population in Cyprus, and 220,000 in Cyrene. The Romans massacred the Jews in return, but it was some time before the insurrection was put down. Then Trajan prepared to return from Antioch, where Plotina had rejoined him, to Mesopotamia to wipe out his defeat; but ill health compelled him to embark for Italy, and his illness increasing on the way he landed at Silenus in Cilicia, and died there on the 8th August, 117, at the age of sixty-five. His ashes were conveyed by Plotina to Rome, and buried at the foot of his column.¹

When at his death Trajan was deified an exception to the usual rule was made, his name alone among all those of the emperors being permitted to retain attached to it a title won in the field, that of "Parthicus." He was sincerely mourned by the Roman people, who knew that his wars were undertaken, not for conquest, but for the security of the empire. The character of his reign, and the estimation in which it was held ever afterwards by the Romans, is sufficiently demonstrated by the speech with which each succeeding emperor was saluted on his accession, "May you be better than Trajan, and more fortunate than Augustus."

As Trajan had been absent for four years at such a distance from Rome, and during the last year of his life had been involved in so many pressing anxieties, there was at first a doubt as to whom he had nominated as his successor, as he had left no document to indicate this. But on the empress Plotina's assertion that Trajan had nominated his cousin

¹ See p. 217.

Hadrian, whom he had left in charge of affairs in Mesopotamia, the latter was accepted as Trajan's successor. It is perhaps the only instance on record where an emperor succeeded to the throne of the world upon the simple verbal testimony of a woman, and the fact shows the high estimation in which Trajan's wife Plotina was held by the Roman people.

(b) Matters concerning religion

In the second year of Trajan's reign (A.D. 100) the Apostle St. John died at Ephesus, being then nearly ninety years old.¹ Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Clement of Alexandria all state that before his death some of the Bishops of the Churches of Asia Minor brought to him copies of the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, and that thereupon he publicly acknowledged these three Gospels as authentic and correct.

An important change had by this time taken place in the status of Christianity. That religion was no longer little known, as in the time of Claudius and Nero. And as it became better known, Rome had begun to realize that this new religion was a foe to all her most cherished institutions, her entire political and social life being bound up with the worship of the gods of Rome. The result was that it had now been declared *against the law* to be a Christian. No longer, therefore, was it necessary to trump up charges against Christians; the simple fact of being a Christian was enough. Any one who bore a grudge of any kind against a Christian had merely to denounce him or her to the authorities as such, and the latter were bound by law to put the accused person to death, and could not spare the person even if they wished to do so. This therefore placed Christians in a much more perilous position than they had hitherto occupied.

Soon after Trajan became emperor Clement, the Bishop of the Christian community in Rome, was thus denounced to him

¹ Some of the ancient writers, Eusebius in particular, say that his death took place much later, Eusebius saying that St. John lived to the age of 120. But Eusebius, writing in the 4th century, while generally correct as to facts, is often mistaken as to dates.

as being a Christian. Clement had been Bishop of Rome for six years, and during the first four of those years the persecution under Domitian was taking place. He can apparently only have escaped a similar denunciation at that time owing to being a relative of the emperor Domitian, as asserted by tradition, confirmed by the most recent authority.¹ But such a relationship was in the time of Trajan far from being any kind of protection, and Clement was therefore denounced to him by some enemy of the Christians. Many among the Pagan community, however, so honoured him that they wished to save him, and when he was brought before the Prefect, Mauritius, the latter found no fault with him, and interceded for him with the emperor. Trajan's reply was that the law must be obeyed, and that Clement must sacrifice to the gods of Rome. As Clement refused to do this he was banished to the Crimea, a lenient sentence. There, however, he continued to preach and make converts, and was again denounced; whereupon Trajan condemned him to death, and he was tied to an anchor² and thrown into the sea (A.D. 101).

This history has advanced fifty years since in the reign of Nero we obtained a glimpse of the Christians from a Roman's point of view. That record was written by one looking around him in the capital of the empire. We now have another such glimpse, giving us a view of the impression that Christianity was making in a distant province of the empire, and how it was regarded by another important Roman writer, the celebrated Pliny, then Proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus. We have both his letter to Trajan and the latter's reply. In the year 112, Pliny, having lately taken over charge of the province, writes to the emperor making various enquiries as to how he is to treat this sect whose doctrines he finds very prevalent.³ After saying that he has "never been present before at any examination of Christians," he asks for instruction on the following points:—"What is the usual object of

¹ Page 200 (footnote).

² Churches dedicated to St. Clement have the sign of the anchor. One such may be seen in the city of London. St. Clement is commemorated in the Prayer Book of the Church of England on the 23rd November.

³ Pliny, *Letters*, x, 97.

inquiry or punishment?—Should any distinction be made between old and young?—Is the name itself, or the crimes connected with it, the object of punishment?” He states:—“Hitherto I have ordered those who showed obstinate perseverance to be executed; for of this I had no doubt, whatever was the nature of their religion, that stubbornness and obstinacy ought to be punished.” But he says that he finds that the thing is spreading. Also that he had caused some who were accused by anonymous informers to repeat after him an invocation to the gods, to revile Christ, and to offer worship to the emperor’s statue, and those who did this he had released. Also that he “found it was their custom to meet before daylight, to say a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by an oath (*sacramentum*)”; that he had prohibited these meetings, and had “judged it right to hold an inquiry by torture upon two females who were said to be deaconesses, but could elicit nothing from them but a depraved superstition.” He also states:—“The contagion of this superstition has spread, not only through cities, but even to villages and the country, and the temples have been in some places nearly deserted.” This letter shows how strange and incomprehensible Christianity appeared to a highly educated Roman, and also how widely it was spreading.

Trajan’s reply is short and decisive. He says:—“These people ought not to be sought after. If they are denounced before you and convicted let them be executed. Yet with this restriction, that if any one of them consents to worship our gods let him be pardoned, even though he has been a Christian formerly. But anonymous accusations ought in no case to be listened to; for it is a dangerous precedent, and quite inconsistent with the principles of our age.” This, according to Roman ideas, was a merciful and temperate reply.

In this, known as the Third persecution, besides Clement, another great leader among the Christians was also to suffer a martyr’s death. Ignatius, at this time about ninety years old, had been Bishop of Antioch for nearly fifty years, i.e. during nearly forty years of the life of the Apostle St. John. He had been about twenty years old when Christianity was first preached at Antioch, had known personally St. Peter,

St. John, St. Barnabas, St. Paul, and other Apostles, had been taught by St. John himself, and when he was about forty had been made by St. Peter ¹ Bishop of the most important of all the Christian Churches, the venerated mother-Church of Antioch. He was deservedly respected throughout the East, and his opinion on all matters connected with the Christian Church was highly valued, both on account of his being head of the most important community of Christians, and owing to his long personal acquaintance with the Apostles. In the year 114 Trajan, being at Antioch making his preparations for the Parthian war, was irritated at finding the Christians mustering so strongly there, and at their failure to adopt that attitude towards the majesty of Rome, in his person, which all other communities demonstrated, and he ordered the venerable leader of this community to be brought before him. The record of the trial has been preserved. Trajan begins by the question, "What impious being art thou, both to transgress our commands and to inveigle others into the same folly, to their ruin?" After various other questions and answers the emperor's final sentence runs thus:—"This Ignatius, who says that he bears about within himself Him that was crucified, and is called Theophorus (the God-bearer), we command to be taken, bound, by soldiers to Great Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the amusement of the people."

The venerable Bishop was at once sent off in charge of a military escort, and taken viâ Seleucis to Smyrna. There he met Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (himself to suffer martyrdom fifty years later), and many deputations from the Churches in Asia Minor. Thence he was taken by sea to Troas, thence to Neapolis, across Macedonia to Epirus, and across the Adriatic to Puteoli (in the bay of Naples), and thence to Rome. From several of these places he wrote letters to the different Churches in Asia Minor, and these letters, containing as they do much important information as to the views of the Church at that time on many subjects, are highly valued. He reached Rome on the last day of the games, was at once hurried into the arena of the Colosseum, where two lions were let loose upon him, and he was torn to pieces. A few of the larger bones only were left, which the Christians in Rome collected that night,

¹ Chap. IV, p. 158.

and buried beneath the altar of the church of St. Clement in that city.¹

Ignatius' letters, written on the above journey, which are considered the most valuable evidences of the Christian Church of the 1st century, have for over 300 years formed the subject of much controversy, which has now been set at rest. Calvin (who died in 1564) declared Ignatius' letters to be forgeries, and it is true that the twelve letters known in his time laboured under much suspicion of interpolation. But in 1644 a manuscript was discovered at Florence which contained seven of Ignatius' letters, and these seven letters of the Florentine manuscript have since been subjected to the most searching criticism of the German experts, with the result that the whole of them are now pronounced to be undoubtedly genuine.

There appears to be a mistake in the date usually assigned to the martyrdom of Ignatius, and, consequently, to that of Ignatius' letters, universally held to have been written during his journey as a prisoner to Rome. The martyrdom of Ignatius is generally stated to have occurred in 107, and all authorities have assigned this date to his letters. It is sometimes added by writers that his condemnation to death by Trajan occurred when the latter was passing through Antioch on his return from the war in Dacia, which is evidently a complete mistake, as a glance at the map will show. Trajan, laden with prisoners, trophies, and treasures, and anxious to get back to Rome after an arduous campaign, would never have diverged to go off (without any reason) to Syria; nor is there any record of his having done so. Other writers state that this condemnation of Ignatius at Antioch occurred when Trajan was passing through that city on his way to the war in Parthia; and this is

¹ See Chap. V, p. 200. This fact of the interment of the bones of the martyred Ignatius beneath the altar of the church of St. Clement, which had always been carefully handed down by tradition, has in recent years received remarkable testimony. In 1857 the lower church of St. Clement was accidentally discovered beneath the present church, this lower church being filled to its roof with earth, to form a firm foundation when the present church was built over it in the 11th century. It was carefully excavated, and, among various other interesting reminiscences of the past, beneath the site of the ancient altar were discovered these revered relics of the martyred St. Ignatius, deposited there so many centuries before.

no doubt correct. But Trajan did not arrive at Antioch on his way to the war in Parthia until early in 114. This year 114, therefore, and not 107, must be the date of Ignatius' martyrdom, and the date of his letters.

Trajan was stern and strict, but he was eminently just, and devoid of all vindictiveness against any religious sect, as his letter to Pliny shows. His action regarding Clement and Ignatius was in both cases governed by law, and not inspired by a vindictive spirit. The Christians must have appeared a more or less objectionable sect in his eyes, but he would not authorize any general ill-treatment of them, or any stretching of the law in order to suppress them. And his stern prohibition against seeking them out, and against listening to anonymous accusations regarding them, does him honour. Under an emperor of this description the Christians throughout the empire lived during the twenty years of his reign in far greater tranquillity than they had experienced since the attitude of the Pagan world towards them was altered by Nero's persecution, and we are shown by Pliny's letter how largely Christianity under these conditions was at this time spreading.

HADRIAN

117.—138

(a) Matters other than religion

HADRIAN,¹ born at Rome, a cousin of Trajan, under whom he had served throughout the severe campaigns in Dacia and Parthia, was at the time of Trajan's death commanding the army on the eastern frontier. On being proclaimed as Trajan's successor he was at once accepted by the army and the nation with approval. He was then forty-two years old, and was undoubtedly the fittest man who could have been selected.

Hadrian reigned for twenty-one years (117–138). On coming to the throne he gave up Mesopotamia and Armenia, drew back the eastern frontier again to the Euphrates, and devoted himself to the strengthening and consolidation of the empire. He reached Rome early in 118, but almost immediately had to proceed to the Danube to deal with a Sarmatian invasion, which he quickly defeated. Returning to Rome he devoted the next two years to internal administration, and then in 121 set out upon an immense tour round the empire, in the course of which he visited nearly every province.² He first traversed the whole of the northern frontier, passing through Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia to the lower course of the Rhine, then spent some time in Gaul,³ and from thence in 122 crossed into Britain. There, after re-establishing the small Roman colony at Londinium (London), he travelled by the Roman road to York (then the principal settlement in Britain), and proceeding to the northern frontier, designed, laid out, and saw begun the huge Roman wall (constructed of stone) known by his name, from the Tyne to the Solway, 73 miles long, an enormous work which took many years to complete, and required 12,000 men to garrison its various forts.⁴

¹ Plate XXXVI. Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

² See Map A.

³ Trajan's wife Plotina died at Rome at this time, and Hadrian erected a splendid mausoleum to her memory at Nismes in Gaul, where he was when he heard of her death.

⁴ See Chap. VIII, pp. 286–288.

Having inaugurated this great work, Hadrian quitted Britain,¹ passed through western Gaul into Spain, and thence in 123 crossed into Mauretania, where he drove back an incursion of the Moors and repaired the towns which they had devastated. He then travelled through North Africa to Cyrene, crossed from thence to Asia Minor, and thence proceeded in the autumn to the Euphrates, where by an interview with the Parthian king he averted a war. He then in 124 travelled to the shores of the Black Sea, and turning once more westwards traversed Pontus and Bithynia, crossed into Thrace, passed in 125 through Macedonia, Epirus, and Thessaly, and in the autumn reached Athens, where he stayed for some time collecting various treasures of art. From Greece in 126 he sailed to Sicily, and, having made the circuit of nearly the whole empire, returned in the end of that year to Rome, where he forthwith began the construction of the immense "Villa" which he laid out at Tivoli.

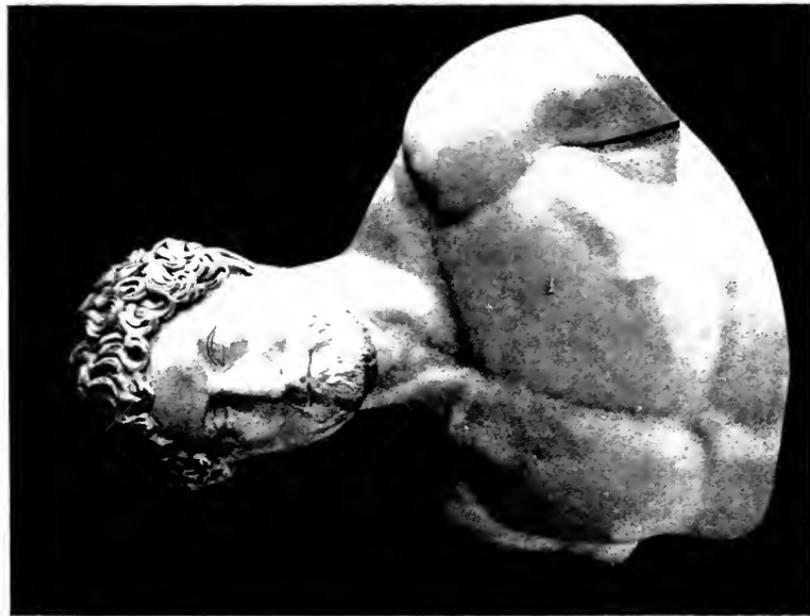
After remaining a little more than a year in Rome Hadrian started again in 128, travelled first to Athens, where he spent the winter, crossed thence in 129 to Ephesus, traversed Pisidia and Cilicia, and in June reached Antioch. Thence he visited Palmyra and Judæa, travelled to Arabia, apparently sailed down the Red Sea as far as Aden,² and from Arabia in 130 proceeded to Egypt, where he spent more than a year. After visiting Alexandria, he ascended the Nile, visiting Memphis, Heliopolis, Thebes, and Philae, returned down the Nile, and then proceeded in 132 to Jerusalem, where he put down an insurrection raised by the Jews.³ From Judæa in 133 he travelled to Greece, and from there in 134 returned to Rome, where he took up his abode in his vast Villa at Tivoli, which was by this time sufficiently advanced to be occupied.

Thus out of his reign of twenty-one years Hadrian was for nearly fourteen years almost uninterruptedly on the move, visiting the various provinces, learning their needs and resources, becoming acquainted with their inhabitants, and

¹ A coin of Hadrian's (with the name "Britannia" upon it) has the traditional figure of Britannia which has ever since been adopted.

² It was probably at this time that the splendid Roman water-tanks at Aden, which are the chief sight in that desolate spot, were constructed.

³ See p. 229.



[Bronze.]

HADRIAN.

Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

For an Hadrian's time onwards the Pagan emperors wore beards.



[Bronze.]

SABINA, WIFE OF HADRIAN.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

inaugurating both administrative measures and public works for their benefit. No emperor before or after him perhaps so well understood the true task of a Roman emperor, or performed it with such success. Peace, prosperity, and contentment followed his steps as he thus traversed province after province of an empire which covered almost the whole known world. He was as careful over the discipline, training, and efficiency of the army as Trajan, but except in the case of Mauretania and Judæa he managed to avoid having to employ it. Everywhere that he went he left lasting traces of his energy. He was accompanied in these tours by a body of architects and artisans organized like a Roman legion, and by this means was enabled to gratify his passion for building. Aqueducts, bridges, fortifications, public buildings, and temples, together with numerous administrative and charitable measures for the benefit of the people, were the results of these immense progresses. And if Trajan was the greatest of the four emperors who brought the Roman empire to so high a point at this period, Hadrian (except for the shadow cast over the last two or three years of his life) approached Trajan closely in furnishing an example of an ideal Roman emperor of the Pagan epoch, though the gross immorality of his private life in regard to sins which had been so forcibly denounced by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans necessarily marred his record as compared with that of the emperors who lived two centuries later.

In the year 132 there occurred in Judæa a final revolt of those Jews who in the sixty years since the destruction of Jerusalem had gradually collected again in that country. The revolt was severely crushed; every Jew was banished from the country, and death was decreed as the penalty for any of that race who should thenceforth enter Judæa. In order entirely to blot out Jerusalem Hadrian erected a new city, inhabited by a Greek population, on the ruins of the Jewish city, gave it the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, and on the site of the Jewish Temple built a temple to Jupiter.

Hadrian was married not long before Trajan's death to Sabina,¹ the granddaughter of Trajan's sister Marciana, but their marriage did not prove a happy one, though not through

¹ Plate XXXVII. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

any fault on the part of Sabina. During Trajan's reign his wife Plotina, his sister Marciana, and the latter's daughter Matidia, Sabina's mother, formed a circle whose ideas were of a very strict type, and Sabina, brought up in this atmosphere, strongly resented Hadrian's gross immorality. She was cultured and virtuous, but her intelligence was of a moderate order and not such as could appreciate the vast schemes of a Hadrian, and mutual dislike caused him to treat her as a nonentity.

It was while Hadrian was in Egypt during the last of his tours, that while sailing down the Nile he lost his favourite Antinous, who was mysteriously drowned, or drowned himself,¹ in the Nile. Hadrian was inconsolable; he gave Antinous' name to a newly discovered star, cities were called after him, medals struck with his effigy, statues erected to him all over the empire, temples built for his worship, and festivals celebrated in his honour. A great impulse was thus given to sculpture, by the endeavour to produce an idealized representation of Antinous, and to this we owe several of the most beautiful statues now in the Roman museums.

Hadrian, besides his talents as a soldier and an administrator, possessed others which demonstrated his versatile character and wonderful mental energy. His knowledge in regard to painting, sculpture, music, and philosophy, all of which subjects he had studied deeply, was sufficient to make him a critic to whose opinion great value was attached, and he could maintain an argument successfully on any of these subjects even with men who had made them the study of a lifetime. He also evinced much talent as a poet. But the subject on which he specially prided himself was architecture; and many of the great works built under his auspices were mainly designed by himself, though in regard to others he was indebted to the talents of Trajan's celebrated architect, Apollodorus of Damascus.

Hadrian, after returning from his last tour in 134 spent the remaining four years of his life at Rome, and there he indulged his passion for building on as grand a scale as in other parts of the empire. The four chief results of this were the immense "Villa of Hadrian" (near Tivoli), eight miles in circuit, begun

¹ See p. 234.

in 127 and continually added to up to the end of his reign, his palace on the Palatine hill, his Temple of Venus and Rome, and his Mausoleum.

The "Villa of Hadrian," covering an area of several square miles on the lower slopes of the hill of Tivoli, was designed by him in order to collect within its limits works of art and models of everything which had specially won his admiration during his wide travels through his vast empire. The magnificence of its conception, its lovely views over the Campagna, the numerous masterpieces of art which its ruins have yielded, and its splendour even in decay, make us feel lost in wonder at what it must have been in its perfection. Hadrian's biographer Spartian calls it "a marvel of architecture and landscape-gardening." In this immense Villa Hadrian gathered a collection of all the choicest works of Greek art; and notwithstanding centuries of destruction, this Villa has furnished nearly a third of the works of art now in the Vatican and Capitol Museums in Rome. The chief portions of the Villa which can still be traced are:—the *Stoa Poecile*, a huge colonnade 250 yards long and 110 yards wide, surrounding an open court with a large water basin in the centre, an imitation of the painted portico of the same name at Athens which was ornamented with frescoes of the battle of Marathon; the *Hundred Chambers*, for the emperor's guards; the *Hall of Philosophers*, with niches for statues; the *Æcus Corinthius*, with semi-circular recesses for fountains; the *Academy*, a reproduction of the celebrated grove at Athens; the *Greek Theatre*, with remains of the rows of seats; the *Odeum*, for musical performances; the *Latin Theatre*, with stage and rows of seats; the *Swimming Bath*, with statues of Nymphs, and an artificial island ornamented with columns; the *Library*, having beyond it a garden; the *Triclinium*, or banqueting hall, commanding a beautiful and extended view; the *Doric Peristyle*, where was found a fine mosaic floor now in the Vatican Museum; the *Basilica*, with thirty-six marble pillars and remains of a splendid marble pavement; the *Domed Hall*, with semi-circular apse and a fountain; the *Lyceum*, with a handsome colonnade; the *Throne-room*, with a raised platform and *exedra*; the *Golden Court*, surrounded with a colonnade of sixty-eight columns of Oriental granite and *cipollino* marble

which were profusely decorated with gold; the *Stadium*, or foot-race ground; the *Cryptoporticus*, with a suite of rooms opening from it overlooking the Stadium; the *Hippodrome*, for chariot races; the *Baths*, with remains of handsome decorations; the "*Valley of the Styx*," 220 yards long, ending in a large recess cut out of the rock; the "*Valley of Canopus*," artificially cut out of the rock, with a canal and temple in imitation of that at Canopus in Egypt; together with various other buildings, temples, etc., all of them imitations of notable structures in Greece or Egypt.

This celebrated country residence of the emperors, fifteen miles from Rome, with its beautiful gardens, Greek masterpieces, and artistic buildings, remained intact for 400 years, through the times of Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Alexander Severus, Decius, Aurelian, Diocletian, Maxentius, Constantine, Constans, Valentinian I, Theodosius I, Honorius, Galla Placidia, and Theodoric the Ostrogoth, but was eventually ruined by the Goths when in 547 it was used by Totila as a fortress; while it afterwards furnished the quarry from which most of the palaces and churches of the town of Tivoli have been built. That nevertheless so much still remains demonstrates the size and character of this notable Villa and the vastness of Hadrian's conceptions.

Hadrian's palace in Rome was built on the eastern side of the Palatine hill, and was a further addition to the private apartments of the imperial palace. But the only portions of this palace which now remain are the Stadium, or foot-race ground,¹ the Odeum (for musical performances) opening out of the Stadium, and below this three other chambers, all the rest having been incorporated in the later palace built by Septimius Severus.

Hadrian's huge Temple of Venus and Rome, designed by himself, was a double temple with entrances on both sides and a double apse in the centre, each side of this apse containing an image, on the one side of the goddess Venus and on the other of the goddess Roma.² It was the most superb temple

¹ Where Suetonius mentions young girls running races in presence of the emperor and the court.

² To make room for it the colossus of Nero, which had stood in the entrance porch of Nero's palace, had to be moved to lower ground near the Colosseum (see Chap. IV, p. 138, footnote).

in Rome, and was covered with gilded bronze tiles which were removed in the 7th century to St. Peter's. The temple was 120 yards long and 58 yards wide, surrounded by a colonnade 180 yards long and 110 yards wide, with 150 columns. The design of this temple was adversely criticised by the celebrated architect Apollodorus (see below). It was the last temple dedicated to the Pagan worship ever erected in Rome. One half of it is now a Christian church.¹

Hadrian's Mausoleum was built in 136 on the opposite bank of the Tiber, and was connected with the city by a bridge, built at the same time, called by him the Pons Ælius. We now know the Mausoleum as the Castle of St. Angelo and the bridge as the Ponte St. Angelo. This Mausoleum, constructed of travertine, was entirely faced with white Paros marble. It had three stories, the lower one encircled by Doric columns with spaces between them for epitaphs of those buried within, the second encircled by Ionic columns with between them statues of gods and heroes, and the third encircled by Corinthian columns with similar statues between them; and on the summit of the Mausoleum was a colossal statue of Hadrian.² Six emperors (Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Septimius Severus, and Caracalla), with members of their families, were buried in this Mausoleum. In the interior is the Tomb Chamber, in the centre of which was Hadrian's porphyry sarcophagus. The Mausoleum has suffered cruelly by being used as a fortress, all traces of its marble casing, rows of columns, and statues having long since disappeared. In the 5th century the senate turned it into a fortress; in the 6th century it was besieged by the Goths, and its beautiful statues were used as missiles; in the 12th century Hadrian's sarcophagus was used as a tomb for Pope Innocent II, and in the 14th century was destroyed in the fire which burnt the church of the Lateran. The lid of this sarcophagus, after being used for nine centuries as the tomb of the emperor Otho II, who was buried in St. Peter's, is now the font in that church. From the 10th century onwards Hadrian's Mausoleum became the fortress and prison of the Popes, and as

¹ The church of Sta. Francesca Romana, which thus stands on the site of the entrance to Nero's "Golden House."

² The head of this statue is now in the Vatican museum.

such has been the scene of innumerable tragedies connected with the history of Rome in the Middle Ages.

Hadrian also brought from Egypt another obelisk, the fifth and largest up to that time brought to Rome, 84 feet in height, and erected it to the memory of Antinous in the Circus Varianus.¹

In 136 Hadrian's wife Sabina died at the Villa he had built at Tivoli, and the remaining two years of the emperor's life were a time of dread to all those around him in consequence of the sullen and suspicious frame of mind into which he sank. In this vast Villa, surrounded by everything that was most beautiful in art or nature, Hadrian, ill in health, and moody and dejected in spirit, spent the last two years of his life in a state bordering on melancholy madness. He wandered through his lovely gardens and temples ever mourning the loss of the dead Antinous, who it was rumoured had voluntarily surrendered up his life to satisfy an Oriental prophecy which had declared that Hadrian was doomed unless the person he loved best was offered as a sacrifice. The empire ruled by Hadrian had been covered with works of public utility erected by him, the coinage of every province proclaimed the benefits which he had conferred, the poorest and most miserable everywhere acknowledged gratitude to him, but Hadrian's mind became more and more unhinged, oscillating between suicide and homicide. He put various principal men to death, and these cruelties marred the lustre of the rest of his reign. It was dangerous to disagree with him on any subject, as the architect of Trajan's splendid Forum, Apollodorus, discovered, he being promptly put to death for criticising Hadrian's design for the temple of Venus and Rome.² The more politic Favorinus, being drawn into an argument with the emperor over a grammatical point, yielded it, remarking afterwards that "it was unwise to dispute with the master of thirty legions." At length in 138, suffering greatly from dropsy, Hadrian removed to Baiæ, where he was only saved from suicide by the filial care and companionship of his adopted son, Antoninus Pius, whom

¹ It now stands in front of the church of Sta. Trinita de' Monti at Rome. It was found amidst the ruins of the Circus Varianus, near the church of Sta. Croce in Gerusalemme, but outside the present walls of the city.

² Some writers deny that Hadrian put Apollodorus to death.

he had nominated as his successor. The beautiful little poem to the soul,

“ Animula, vagula, blandula,
 Hospes comesque corporis,
 Quae nunc abibis in loca
 Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
 Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos ? ”¹

was written by Hadrian when dying. He died at Baia in July 138 at the age of sixty-three, his ashes being carried to Rome and buried in his Mausoleum.

✠ A villa eight miles in circuit crowded with all the choicest specimens of Greek art, a temple the most magnificent in Rome, and a tomb which has for centuries been a fortress, are the memorials left behind him by Hadrian in the capital city of an empire of which almost every principal city possessed some great work initiated by him. In every province of that empire the condition of the people had been ameliorated by the beneficent results of his energy. And not the least of his benefits to the empire was the wise selection which he made in regard to the man whom he chose as his successor.

(b) Matters concerning religion.

In Hadrian's reign an important change for a time took place as regards the Christians. The latter were now liable to prosecution as contravening the law by the mere fact of being Christians ; but hostile action against them was very variable. Sometimes a private enemy would endeavour to get rid of a rival by reporting him to the authorities as being a Christian ; or sometimes a bad harvest, an earthquake, or a military defeat would cause a cry to be raised that the gods were enraged against the Christians, and there would follow a popular clamour for them to be put to death.² Or at the games a man

¹ “ Little soul, wandering, tender,
 Guest and comrade of the body,
 Into what places wilt thou now be going,
 Pale, and stiff, and naked,
 And no longer making merry, as thou art wont ? ”

The beauty of the Latin diminutives cannot be rendered into English.

² As one of them wrote :—“ If the Tiber rise the cry at once is ‘ The Christians to the lions ; ’ if famine or pestilence threatens Rome ‘ The Christians to the lions ’ is the invariable remedy.”

might raise a cry of "The Christians to the lions," and if it swelled into a general acclamation governors felt bound to defer to it. But Tertullian mentions that the governors did not all act alike; that a humane governor would often turn a deaf ear to such clamours, or make a way for the accused to evade the necessary sacrifice, whereas evil governors would make even a slight demonstration an excuse for action against the Christians, and used the power the law gave them over Christians to gratify their own greed or lust.

Hadrian, however, made an important change in this respect, and soon after becoming emperor issued an edict which is notable in that whereas all other imperial edicts regarding the Christians made the laws against them more severe, Hadrian's edict is the only one which had an opposite effect, and which until it was rescinded by the emperor Marcus Aurelius gave the Christians a respite from persecution. Serenus Granianus, Proconsul of the province of "Asia,"¹ applied to the emperor for instructions, somewhat as Pliny had applied to Trajan, asking how he was to act when a popular cry was raised for persecution of this community or when the names of Christians were denounced to him. He says:—"It seems to me unreasonable that the Christians should be put to death merely to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial, and without any crime proved against them," and he asks what course should be taken. Hadrian replies thus:—"Men are not to be disturbed without cause; and base informers are not to be encouraged in their odious practices. If the people of the province will appear publicly before you and make open charges against the Christians, so as to give the latter an opportunity of answering for themselves, let them proceed in that manner only, and not by rude demands and mere clamour. But it is proper, if any person accuse them, that you should take cognizance of such matters. If, then, any accuse them, and show that they actually break the laws, you should determine according to the nature of the crime. But, by Hercules, if the charge be a mere calumny, I direct that you estimate the enormity of such calumny, and punish it as it deserves."

¹ The province called by the Romans "Asia" only included a small portion of Asia Minor, that in the south-western part to the west of the river Halys.

This edict, though somewhat obscure, practically resolved itself into a declaration that Christians were not to be put to death merely for being Christians, nor without trial; that if they were accused it was to be, not by popular clamour, but by a regular procedure in which such Christians were to be given opportunity of answering for themselves; and that the practices of informers were to be sternly put down. Of course the edict might be read in different ways; but it does not appear to have been so, and its effect was very marked. For during the twenty-one years of Hadrian's reign there were no martyrdoms, and the Christians had peace from persecution.

A general review at the end of the reign of Hadrian of the position to which Christianity had attained at the close of the first hundred years from the time that the followers of the new religion had been first called Christians and begun to spread their religion among the Greek race at Antioch gives the following results. All over Asia Minor and the countries formerly under the Greek empire Christian churches were numerous, and also throughout Egypt and North Africa, while there were churches thinly scattered over the Parthian empire, Arabia, and other countries of the east. In the west, besides Rome, there were churches scattered here and there in Italy, in Gaul, and in Spain. Everywhere were various persons who had heard the preaching of one or other of the Apostles and been their disciples. Christianity was no longer confined to the slaves; various Romans high in the social world were secretly adopting it; the religion was rapidly assuming a more important position, and some even of the philosophers had begun to join it. Persecution had ceased under the emperor Hadrian, and a more tolerant attitude towards Christians had been adopted.

CHAPTER VII
REIGNS OF
ANTONINUS PIUS AND MARCUS AURELIUS

ANTONINUS PIUS

138 — 161

(a) Matters other than religion

AURELIUS FULVUS ANTONINUS, called Antoninus Pius, belonged to a Roman family settled at Nismes in Gaul. As quite a young man he filled various important public offices with success, and before he was thirty-four was chosen Consul. Subsequently he became Proconsul of the province of Asia, where his wise and just rule greatly increased his reputation, in consequence of which he was adopted by Hadrian as his son, and nominated by him as his successor. During the last three years of Hadrian's life Antoninus both saved his adopted father from suicide and also saved many noble Romans from being put to death by Hadrian, acting in every way as a most faithful and affectionate son to a father; and it was his conduct in this respect which gained for him the surname of Pius.

Antoninus Pius¹ was fifty-two years old when he became emperor. The wisdom of Hadrian's choice was fully demonstrated, for Antoninus Pius proved one of the best emperors Rome ever had. Peace-loving, temperate, just, exhibiting on all occasions an imperturbable equanimity, and absolutely unselfish, his was an ideal character, and throughout his reign he appeared to have no other thought than the good of the empire and the welfare of its inhabitants. Unlike Trajan and Hadrian, he passed almost the whole of his tranquil reign of

¹ Plate XXXVIII. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

twenty-three years at Rome, or at his villa of Lorium, of which he was exceedingly fond. He was the personification of beneficence and good-will; even conspiracies formed against him were by Antoninus merely turned into opportunities for showing his clemency. He was fortunate in reigning at a time when no incursions of barbarians disturbed the empire, and his reign was one of absolute peace, and a time of general happiness and contentment to which the Romans in after ages always looked back with delight.

The chief work of Antoninus Pius was done in regard to the Roman system of law. With the assistance of all the leading Roman legal authorities of his time he drew up an immense code of the Roman law for use throughout the empire, a work which occupied the greater part of his reign. In addition to this he passed various new enactments, all of them exhibiting his just disposition and care for the people.

It is generally stated that Antoninus Pius never left Rome, but this seems to be a mistake, as both John of Malala and the rhetorician Aristides mention that he spent two years at Antioch. And it must have been while there that Antoninus Pius inaugurated his most lasting monument, the great temple which he erected at Baalbek, near the upper course of the river Leontes in Syria. Its ruins still exist, and it has always been considered one of the wonders of the world. It would seem as though in erecting this temple to Baal Antoninus Pius had ideas of combining the religions of the east with those of the west. There are in fact two temples, the larger one dedicated to Baal, and the smaller one dedicated apparently to Ceres, while the general arrangement is somewhat similar to that of the Jewish Temple at Jerusalem destroyed by Titus. The 174 columns of the principal court, each 22 feet long, are of Egyptian rose granite. The larger temple, inside the anterior courts, is raised high on extraordinarily solid foundations. Outside it is a fine terrace composed of stones 29 feet long; and over these, supporting the coping of the terrace, are the three great stones which from their immense size gave this temple in the Middle Ages the name of the "Temple of the Three Stones," and are the main reason for its being considered one of the world's chief wonders. Each of these stones is 62 feet long, 14 feet high, and 11 feet broad, while a fourth similar

stone lies in the adjacent quarry. The work of lifting these stones into position must have been stupendous.¹

But the part of the empire in which Antoninus Pius chiefly interested himself outside Rome was Britain. From the time of the pacification of Britain by Julius Agricola in the reign of Vespasian and Domitian that country settled down to a condition of peace, and the chief work of the Roman forces in Britain became the protection of the province from the attacks of the unconquered tribes of the northern part of Scotland, this protection being carried out chiefly by the construction of immense walls erected across the narrow part of the island, and their defence against the Scots and Picts. The work of completing the huge "wall" laid out by Hadrian from the Tyne to the Solway still continued, the size and character of this great line of defence, with the vast amount of labour expended upon it, showing the value which the Romans attached to the province it was meant to protect. In addition to this wall Antoninus Pius caused Lollius Urbicus, the commander in Britain, to construct a wall joining the line of forts built by Julius Agricola from the Forth to the Clyde, protecting the additional territory conquered by the latter. This wall, called the "Wall of Antoninus," was 27 miles long and consisted of a rampart of earth 20 feet high and 24 feet thick, with a ditch 40 feet wide and 20 feet deep. The territory between this wall and that of Hadrian was, however, a more or less debatable tract, often in possession of the Caledonians, and Hadrian's much longer and more massive fortified stone wall, further to the south, remained the permanent boundary of the Roman dominions in Britain.

The wife of Antoninus Pius was Annia Galeria Faustina, known as Faustina the elder.² A long succession of writers (taking the statement from one another) have declared Faustina the elder to have been utterly depraved, one modern writer, in speaking of her daughter, Faustina the younger,

¹ It has been suggested by Mr. Oscar Browning (to whom I am indebted for these details regarding this temple) that Antoninus Pius erected this splendid temple of Baalbek as a great centre of spiritual illumination for the whole of Syria, perhaps because he disapproved of Hadrian's violent measure in blotting out Jerusalem.

² Plate XXXIX. Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.



[BROCK.]

ANTONINUS PIUS.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.



[BROCK.]

FAUSTINA THE ELDER, WIFE OF ANTONINUS PIUS.

Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

saying that the latter "deepened the infamy which she inherited from her shameless mother." It is astonishing after this to find that no statement of the kind is made by any of the contemporary writers regarding Faustina the elder, and that the accusation comes from an anonymous writer of the 4th century, who is the sole authority for it.¹ To find such an assertion made regarding any one upon the sole authority of an anonymous writer distant by two hundred years from the time of the person concerned, when none of the writers of the person's own time make any such statement, gives us a measure of the degree to which this kind of vilification has been carried.

We know very little about Faustina the elder, as she died two years after her husband became emperor. All that we know indicating her character is that when she died in 140 Antoninus Pius founded to her memory a charitable institution for orphan girls, who were called *Alimentariae Faustinae*, and erected in her honour, at one side of the Forum, the only temple ever erected in Rome to a woman.² After the death of Antoninus Pius his son-in-law and successor Marcus Aurelius re-dedicated this temple to both Antoninus and Faustina, placing over the portico the inscription which it still bears, "Divo Antonino et Divae Faustinae";³ an action which sufficiently shows that Marcus Aurelius did not hold an opinion regarding Faustina the elder agreeing with that given to her by the anonymous writer of the 4th century.

Antoninus Pius, though he lived the whole of his twenty-three years' reign in Rome, was the first emperor who added nothing to the buildings of Rome, except the temple dedicated to his wife Faustina. But there was in truth little need for further addition to the great collection of magnificent buildings with

¹ See Note B, p. 271. The only contemporary writer is Dion Cassius, and the portion of his History covering the reign of Antoninus Pius is lost; so that we have no statement from him (or any of his commentators) regarding Faustina the elder. Writers of the 3rd and 4th centuries, such as Aurelius Victor and Eutropius, also make no statement against her character. The solitary exception is the anonymous writer of the 4th century who adopts the name of "Julius Capitolinus."

² Part of this temple still stands, including the portico, with ten columns of *cipollino* marble, 46 feet in height.

³ "To the Divine Antoninus and the Divine Faustina."

which Rome was by this time adorned ; and splendid indeed must have been the appearance of the city in this reign of Antoninus Pius when all the buildings which had been successively erected by Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius, by the Flavian emperors, by Trajan, and by Hadrian were in their perfection.

The marble trade must have been prodigious. Even after fifteen centuries of destruction and burning of marble into lime, it has been estimated that there still remain in Rome about 9000 whole columns, some of them 6 feet in diameter, and that the number of columns landed at Ostia in ancient times reached at least 450,000.¹ Yet columns only formed a fraction of the whole amount of marble employed.

Antoninus Pius presents a remarkable contrast to his two predecessors. Throughout his long reign, though he evidently administered the affairs of the empire with the most satisfactory ability, yet all his interests appear to have centred in Rome. The immense praise bestowed upon him, combined with the fact that in so long a reign so few deeds are recorded of him, seems to indicate that the fact of his remaining always in Rome (so carefully recorded by the Roman writers) had no small share in his great popularity. He died on the 7th March, 161, at the age of seventy-five at his villa of Lorium on the Aurelian Way not far from Rome. The keynote of his life and character was given in the last word he ever uttered, spoken to the tribune of the night-watch who came to him to ask the password for the night, and received from the dying emperor the answer “*Æquanimitas.*”

(b) Matters concerning religion

The reign of Antoninus Pius shows how at this period the Christians in one part of the empire might be free from molestation while those in another part suffered severe persecution.

At Rome the Christians remained during this reign unmolested and were even able on at least one occasion to address the emperor on the subject of their religion. About the year 148 a celebrated “*Defence of Christianity*” was sent to Antoninus Pius by a prominent member of their community, and the

¹ Lanciani, *Ancient Rome*.

emperor took no action against the writer.¹ It was written by a remarkable man, who after being a notable Pagan philosopher had become a Christian. His name was Justin, afterwards (in the next reign) known as Justin the Martyr, or Justin Martyr. He was a Greek, born at Flavia Neapolis, a town in Samaria inhabited by a Greek population. A philosopher by profession, and deeply learned, he had for many years studied the various systems of philosophy then in vogue before at last becoming a Christian. He subsequently, in an elaborate work on the controversy between the Jews and the Christians, gave a detailed account of his experiences as a disciple of the various systems of philosophy, and by what means he had at length become convinced of the truth of Christianity.² He relates how, being anxious to learn the true philosophy, he first became a disciple of the Stoics, but left them when he found that they knew no more than he did about the matter; then how in turn he sought information from the Pythagoreans and other systems, and what folly he found in them all; then how he placed himself under a Platonist, and for a time thought he "had found the true philosophy and had become wise," but in the end discovered he was no wiser than before. Finally he relates his conversion to Christianity, and that there alone he discovered the true philosophy. On becoming a Christian he still retained his philosopher's dress, established a school of Christian philosophy at Rome, and taught Christianity there for nearly forty years during the reigns of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, until at length he was martyred in the reign of the latter emperor.³

But though in this reign the Christians at Rome did not

¹ This "Defence of Christianity" was addressed conjointly to Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius his adopted son. It was in three parts. In the first, the writer, Justin, points out that it is against the principles of justice to condemn the Christians, whose conduct is innocent and harmless. In the second part he sets himself to prove that the Christians alone teach the truth. In the third part he gives a full explanation of the mysteries of Baptism and the Eucharist, which the Pagans always misunderstood and distorted into abominable crimes (see pp. 258-259).

² He called this work a "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew"; his object in giving it the form of a dialogue with an imaginary person being to make it more readable.

³ Page 261.

suffer, a persecution occurred at Smyrna in 156, and is notable owing to the renowned Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, having suffered death therein. Polycarp, who had been Bishop of Smyrna for sixty years, was at this time the most remarkable man in the Christian Church. Like Ignatius, martyred forty-two years before, he had been taught by St. John himself, up to the age of about thirty; he had, Irenæus says, "been intimate also with others who had seen the Lord"; he had been appointed about the year A.D. 92 Bishop of Smyrna by St. John, and was apparently "the angel of the Church at Smyrna" referred to in the book of Revelations.¹ He was the last link which united the Church of the 2nd century with the age of the Apostles, and was at least ninety years old. The whole episode of his martyrdom is minutely recorded in a letter from the Church at Smyrna to the Church at Philadelphia, and may be read in the words of the survivors of the Christian community at Smyrna who saw the venerable Bishop die, and who, the letter says, "would gladly each one of us have died as he died."

During the celebration of the games at Smyrna an uproar arose, and a cry was raised clamouring for the death of the Christians, which as usual was quickly taken up by the mob, and was acted upon by the Proconsul, who ordered the Christians to be seized and thrown to the wild beasts. Many Christians were martyred, and then the people clamoured for the death of Polycarp, the Bishop. "This is the master of Asia," they scornfully cried, "the father of the Christians, the enemy of our gods." The Proconsul did not desire to put to death a man so highly respected, though having gone so far he could not turn a deaf ear to this cry, but he acceded most reluctantly, and did his utmost to save one so much revered.

At every stage of his trial Polycarp's dignity and gentleness seem to have touched his enemies. The soldiers sent to arrest him did so unwillingly; the magistrates endeavoured to save him; the governor took him up in his chariot and tried to persuade him that there could be no harm in sacrificing to the emperor; the Proconsul, Statius Quadratus, on his being brought before him earnestly besought him to consider his age; "Swear," he said, "and denounce the Christ, and I will release

¹ Rev. ii, 8.

thee." The answer is well known, and has rung through all the ages since, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never done me wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" The Proconsul continued to urge him to retract and to renounce Christianity, but without avail, and he was at length condemned. A herald advanced into the middle of the arena and proclaimed, "Polycarp has professed himself a Christian, and therefore dies." He was at once bound to a stake in the arena, a quantity of wood was quickly collected, "the Jews," we are told, "as was their wont, being specially zealous in the work," and he was burnt in the presence of all the people. Irenæus, his pupil, who was afterwards sent from Smyrna to Gaul, and in 177 became Bishop of Lyons, and who describes how he could remember the very attitude in which Polycarp used to sit and teach, probably saw him die.

This persecution at Smyrna in 156 was apparently an isolated case, for we hear of no others in the reign of Antoninus. From which it would appear that the general attitude of Antoninus Pius on this question concurred with that of Hadrian. For the absence of any such persecutions elsewhere throughout the empire during his long reign of twenty-three years can only have been due to its being generally known that this was the emperor's attitude.

MARCUS AURELIUS

161—180

(a) Matters other than religion

MARCUS AURELIUS,¹ whose original name was Marcus Annius Verus, had all the advantages of high birth, his father being Annius Verus, the brother of the empress Faustina, and his mother being Domitia Calvilla. His admirable qualities even as a boy of sixteen had attracted the attention of the emperor Hadrian, who in adopting Antoninus Pius as his successor did so with the proviso that Marcus should succeed Antoninus Pius as emperor. Marcus, whose father was dead, was accordingly adopted by Antoninus as his son and successor. On being thus adopted his name was changed to Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

His education was a marvellous one. He had a body of tutors all of them men of the most distinguished attainments, including Rusticus, Cornelius Fronto, Plutarch's nephew Sextus, the orator Herodes Atticus, and the jurist Volucius Marcianus, while he himself was a boy such as the world has seldom produced. Before he was ten years old he began to learn rhetoric and poetry; but at the age of eleven he was attracted by the Stoic philosophy and became an ardent Stoic, at the same time taking up law and philosophy as his chief studies. But this kind of education, excellent as it might appear in the eyes of the distinguished scholars who were his tutors, should have been supplemented by other training more suited to the position Marcus was to occupy.² It would have been better for the empire, and have saved a large part of the population whose welfare was committed to his care from extremes of misery at the hands of barbarous enemies, if Marcus Aurelius, since he was to succeed to the position of emperor, had in addition to such studies received the kind of training which Augustus, Tiberius, Vespasian, Trajan, and

¹ Plate XL. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

² Very different from this kind of education were the instructions as to what a future Roman emperor must learn which were given by Valentinian I to his son Gratian when the latter was thirteen years old (see Chap. XV, p. 505).

Hadrian had each in their youth gone through, instead of one fitting him only to shine as a philosopher.

The character of Marcus Aurelius was a highly attractive one. In his writings he says that among the things he learnt were, "to work hard, to deny myself, to avoid listening to slander, to endure misfortunes, never to deviate from my purpose, to be grave without affectation, gentle in correcting others, not frequently to say to any one, nor to write in a letter, that I have no leisure, nor continually to excuse the neglect of ordinary duties by alleging urgent occupations." And he also says, "I learnt from my mother, not only abstinence from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts." Amidst the luxury of a Roman palace he slept on a plank bed; and through all his severe Stoic training as a boy and youth he preserved, we are told, his natural sweetness of disposition.

From the age of seventeen Marcus Aurelius lived as his adopted father's closest companion, and at eighteen was given the title of *Caesar*, which denoted that he was to be the future emperor. At twenty he was made Consul, and in 145, when he was twenty-four, married Antoninus' daughter Faustina the younger¹ (then nineteen), who bore him a daughter in the following year. He was the constant associate and companion of Antoninus Pius in all the latter's occupations and amusements, until in 161 Antoninus Pius died and Marcus Aurelius became emperor at the age of forty. Hitherto all his nine children had been daughters, but in the first year of his reign Faustina gave birth to twins, one of whom was a son, Commodus, who succeeded him.

Marcus Aurelius, who reigned nineteen years, has been universally held to be "the best man that the Pagan world ever produced," and has been described as "The crown and flower of the Stoic philosophy." His chief book (the only portion of his writings which remains) is his *Meditations*. It is noticeable that it is written, not in Latin, but in Greek, this having become the language of highest culture; it has been translated into nearly every modern language. It is a sort of manual of practical morality, in which wisdom, gentleness, and benevolence towards mankind are blended in a

¹ Plate XLI. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

very fascinating manner, while the sentiments expressed are of the loftiest description.

The true reason why the age of the Antonine emperors (A.D. 98-180) was so highly extolled was that it offered so great a contrast to that which had preceded it. Notwithstanding many vices, it was dignified by a serious effort for a moral reform. The general moral standard was certainly not high, as can be seen by copious examples, but it was immeasurably higher than that which had previously obtained. It was an age when Philosophy was enthroned, Marcus Aurelius in particular giving the example of a ruler animated by the loftiest principles. And though the inherent defect of a bare Philosophy, unlinked with any deeper motive, caused those principles to fail to touch the masses, yet the example of such a ruler had its effect for a time upon the upper classes. The tragedy of his reign is that the lessons he desired to teach were robbed of all their effect when in the end mankind saw these lofty principles cast aside at the bidding of expediency.

Antoninus Pius, besides adopting Marcus Aurelius, had also adopted Lucius Verus as his son, and Marcus Aurelius on succeeding to the throne voluntarily associated Lucius with himself in the government, and gave him his eldest daughter, Lucilla (then sixteen), in marriage; but Lucius Verus, corrupt and dissolute, took little part in public affairs, and died after eight years. It is typical of the character of the age that even in the case of Marcus Aurelius malignant gossip did not fail subsequently to assert that he brought about his adopted brother's death by poison.

The reign of Marcus Aurelius bears a remarkable contrast to those of his three predecessors. While their reigns were a continuous record of success, that of Marcus Aurelius presents an almost equally continuous record of the reverse. Many of the misfortunes endured during his nineteen years' reign were no fault of his; but with a great part of them it was otherwise. His training, excellent as it was from one point of view, had not been of the kind which fitted him for ruling a wide empire and for coping with the sort of difficulties which came upon it in his time. Though his abilities were of the highest order in many respects, it is impossible not to believe that a Trajan or a Hadrian would have found means to obviate most of these



BROSD.
FAUSTINA THE YOUNGER, WIFE OF MARCUS AURELIUS.
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.



BROSD.
MARCUS AURELIUS.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



misfortunes, and in regard to the chief of them (the ravaging for so long of Roman provinces) we know would most certainly have done so.

His reign began with a disastrous inundation of Rome from a flood in the Tiber, which destroyed a large part of the city. This caused a famine in Rome; which appears to show that Trajan's great reserves of corn had not been kept up. This was followed by earthquakes, fires, and plagues of insects. At the same time the eastern frontier was attacked by the Parthians, who defeated the Roman army on that frontier, and war was waged against them unsuccessfully for four years before in 165 they were at length driven out of the Roman dominions. Unfortunately the troops who returned from this war brought with them a pestilence, and this after raging severely in Rome spread from thence through a large part of the empire, causing the greatest distress. The war on the eastern frontier was scarcely over when in 166 a revolt of the tribes in Britain began, while at the same time a more serious danger occurred by the first irruption¹ of the barbarian races of the north into the Roman Empire, and the operations against them met with so little success that it took fourteen years of devastating warfare over the provinces concerned before these foes were finally expelled.

This first incursion was made by the northern tribes called by the Romans the Marcomanni and the Quadi. They crossed the Danube, defeated the Roman forces, and swept over the whole of the provinces of Pannonia, Noricum, and Rætia,² ravaging the whole country, carrying off enormous numbers of Roman captives—the Marcomanni, it is said, 100,000, and the Quadi over 60,000—and threatening to invade Italy. So serious was this invasion that the Romans became panic-stricken, thinking that the end of the empire was about to take place. In order to re-assure them Marcus Aurelius, though unable to give much personal assistance in opposing the invaders, left Rome and established himself for three years

¹ If we except the incursion of the Dacians in Domitian's reign, afterwards obliterated by Trajan's conquest of Dacia and incorporation of that country in the empire.

² Corresponding roughly to about half of Austria, the southern part of Hungary, Bavaria, Tyrol, and Switzerland.

at Carnuntum on the Danube. In 169 peace was made for a time with the Quadi, and Marcus Aurelius returned to Rome, but the war continued against the Marcomanni; the operations were for a long time unsuccessful, and the Romans sustained defeat after defeat, the unhappy provinces of Pannonia, Noricum, and Rætia being brought to complete devastation, but at length in 172 the Marcomanni were for a time driven out.

Upon his return to Rome Marcus Aurelius devoted himself to innumerable details which show how indefatigably he laboured and the kind of matters which he considered it his duty to attend to as a conscientious Roman emperor. "The registration of the citizens, the suppression of litigation, the elevation of public morals, the care of minors, the retrenchment of the public expenses, the limitation of the gladiatorial games, the care of roads, the restoration of the privileges of the senators, the appointment of none but worthy magistrates, even the regulation of street traffic, these and numberless other similar duties so completely absorbed his attention that in spite of indifferent health (injured as a boy by Stoic austerities) they often kept him at severe labour from early morning until long after midnight."¹

But these labours all had reference to the city of Rome, and, however exemplary, were not the matters in which Marcus Aurelius should have been engaged. A Roman emperor, with an empire extending from Scotland to the Euphrates, should have been occupied with far different matters than local concerns of this kind, arranging for such matters to be duly administered by others. Labours such as these of course won for Marcus Aurelius high praise from the Roman writers, with their inveterate habit of regarding the whole empire as to be maintained chiefly for the benefit of the city of Rome; but it is an error when these praises on the part of the Roman writers are endorsed by English writers of the present day, belonging to a race one single portion of whose dominions² has a population greater than that of the whole Roman Empire, and presents similar problems of government, a race which has been taught by this experience how a wide empire should be ruled. These occupations on the part of Marcus Aurelius, so highly praised by the Roman writers, show forcibly how far the Antonine em-

¹ Tennemann.

² The Empire of India.

perors were from as yet appreciating that which the growth of empire had made the chief duty of the head of the Roman State, and demonstrate the marked contrast between their attitude and the wider outlook taken, for instance, by such an emperor as Constantine the Great.¹

But Marcus Aurelius was not left long at leisure to occupy himself with the local concerns of the people of Rome. In 173 the Marcomanni and Quadi again crossed the Danube and ravaged Pannonia, Noricum, and R ætia. Marcus Aurelius thereupon proceeded again to Pannonia, and remained there for nearly three years (173-175). Though he had himself no military talents his presence inspired the troops, besides enabling the necessary references from the commanders of the Roman forces to the emperor to be conducted with much less loss of time than if he remained at Rome. After three years of war the Marcomanni were driven out (175), suffering a severe defeat as they were retreating across the Danube. Soon afterwards a still more decisive victory was gained over the Quadi, with which is connected a celebrated episode, one sufficiently notable to be commemorated by one of the sculptures on the Column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome.² The historians of the time relate that the Twelfth legion of the Roman army, pressed by an overwhelming mass of the Quadi, was shut up in a defile, threatened with destruction, and reduced to great straits for want of water; that the Christian soldiers of the legion thereupon prayed for rain; and that not only did rain come which enabled the Roman troops to quench their thirst, but also a fierce storm of hail, accompanied by severe thunder and lightning, beat upon the enemy, and so terrified the Quadi that the legion was able to gain a complete victory over them. The Twelfth legion of the Roman army was ever afterwards called "The Thundering Legion."³ After this victory the Quadi sued for peace.

¹ Chap. XIII, pp. 396-397.

² Page 256.

³ Some say that a similar episode had occurred to this legion before, in the time of the emperor Augustus, and that it did not gain its name on this occasion of the victory over the Quadi, but on the previous occasion under Augustus. This, however, if the case, does not affect the episode in connection with the Quadi, which was chosen as one of the principal episodes to be recorded upon the Column of Marcus Aurelius.

Marcus Aurelius' wife, Faustina the younger, was thirty-five when he became emperor, the last of her eleven children, the twins Commodus and Galeria, being born in the same year. She was married to him for twenty-nine years, throughout which time he never ceased to have a strong affection for her. But the same anonymous writer already referred to ¹ has declared her guilty of the most shameless immorality throughout her whole married life, and has related regarding her a whole series of scandalous tales, her name being handed down as a by-word for licentiousness; while the same writer has asserted that Marcus Aurelius was fully acquainted with her mode of life, made no objection to it, and promoted several of her more exalted lovers to high offices. On the other hand the contemporary writer Dion Cassius, who was twenty years old when she died, and who eagerly records every scandal of which he can hear, knows nothing of all this, and has nothing to say against Faustina's moral character. Nor can this be due to any fear of her son Commodus; for Dion Cassius evidently wrote after the death of the latter, and discourses freely of the scandals connected with Faustina's children, Lucilla and Commodus. One other writer of the 4th century, the emperor Julian, though he does not go to any such lengths as regards Faustina's character, speaks of her in his scurrilous book *The Caesars* in a general way as dissolute; but it is uncertain whether he is doing more than repeating the popular view of her current in his time.

How far Faustina the younger deserved the character thus given her it is impossible to say. Certainly the total silence of Dion Cassius, the only contemporary writer, argues strongly in her favour. At the same time there are some facts which have an appearance calculated to show that a part of these allegations against her may be true. In any case, however, the statement that Marcus Aurelius was aware of such conduct on her part is beyond belief. For it is inconceivable that in that case Marcus Aurelius should have spoken so highly of his wife as he did in his *Meditations*, nor would he in such circumstances have dared to erect an altar to her memory.

As regards other aspects of Faustina's character, it is evident that she had no little ability, and that Marcus Aurelius relied

¹ Page 241.

much upon her advice ; several of his and Faustina's letters are extant which show that he was in the habit of consulting her on public affairs. She accompanied him on most of his campaigns, and coins prove that she gained the title of " Mother of the Camps." She had to endure the loss of nearly all her children, two only of her eleven children surviving her, the eldest, Lucilla, and the youngest, Commodus.

Scarcely had Marcus Aurelius returned to Rome a second time from the war against the Marcomanni and Quadi than he received news that the Allemanni ¹ had invaded the provinces on the lower Rhine, and he was obliged to set off thither. But on his arrival there (175) he received still more serious intelligence informing him that his ablest general, Avidius Cassius, the experienced commander of the Roman army on the eastern frontier, had revolted and proclaimed himself emperor. Dion Cassius asserts that Faustina was in love with Avidius Cassius and encouraged him in this revolt. But, curiously enough, the anonymous writer of the 4th century rejects this statement, and says that the reports to that effect were merely due to " a wish to defame the empress." Moreover a letter to Marcus Aurelius from Faustina (who had apparently been left behind in Rome when he proceeded to the Rhine) in regard to this rebellion urges him not to spare Avidius Cassius and his accomplices, saying :—

" You see how young Commodus is, and our son-in-law Pompeianus ² is old and is away. Do not spare men who have not spared you, and would not spare me and the children if they won."

Marcus Aurelius had thereupon to leave the campaign on the lower Rhine, and to start upon a still longer journey of nearly 3000 miles to Syria to put down this rebellion. It is hard for us in these days to realize what these immense journeys, —from the Danube frontier to Rome, from Rome to the lower

¹ The Allemanni (or All-men) received their name because originally this tribe was a collection of barbarians from various of the northern races.

² The second husband of Lucilla, to whom she was married by her father upon the death of her first husband Lucius Verus. Both Faustina and Lucilla resented the latter's being married to so old a man, but Marcus Aurelius was obdurate.

course of the Rhine, and from thence to Syria,—must have meant in an age when all had to be accomplished either on horse-back or in light vehicles on very rough roads, except where, as in the case of this journey to Syria, part of the journey could be performed by sea. Upon reaching Formiae, on the Gulf of Gaeta, where apparently he intended to embark for Syria, Marcus Aurelius received the intelligence that Avidius Cassius after ruling for three months had been assassinated. A letter written from Formiae by Marcus Aurelius to Faustina, apparently in reply to that in which she had urged him not to spare Cassius and his adherents, states that he is not disposed to show revenge, that he intends to spare Cassius' wife and children, and to exhort the Senate to be lenient in punishing his adherents, "because there is nothing which so much commends an emperor of Rome to the nations as clemency." He must at the same time have summoned Faustina to join him, for they proceeded together to the East. But on the voyage Faustina became ill; they disembarked on the coast of Cilicia, and at a small village near the foot of Mount Taurus Faustina died, at the age of forty-nine (175). Marcus Aurelius felt her death deeply, and paid various honours to her memory. He named the village where she died *Faustinopolis*; he founded in her memory a fresh charity for orphan girls, called "*Puellae Faustinianae*"; he set up a special altar with a silver statue of her in one of the temples in Rome, on which altar he directed that girls about to marry should offer sacrifice; and whenever he attended the theatre he had a gold statue of her placed on the seat by his side.

After performing the funeral obsequies of his wife and ordering her ashes to be conveyed to Rome, Marcus Aurelius continued his journey, and on reaching Syria acted on the principles he had enunciated in his letter to Faustina from Formiae. He treated those who had been concerned in the revolt with great clemency, burnt without reading it the correspondence of Cassius, and behaved with generosity to the latter's family. Having settled the affairs of Syria, he proceeded first to Greece, and from thence to Egypt, returning from there in 176 to Rome, where he was given a triumph for the victories of the Roman arms on the Rhine and Danube.

After his return from Egypt Marcus Aurelius remained

in Rome for about a year, during which time he issued in 177 his celebrated edict for a general massacre of all Christians throughout the empire.¹ In the same year, however, the Marcomanni and Quadi for a third time invaded the Danube provinces, and Marcus Aurelius proceeded to Pannonia to conduct the war against them, accompanied by Commodus, then sixteen, and lately given the title of *Caesar*. The contest continued without any decisive result for three years. The unhappy provinces of Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia (covering an extent equal to four modern countries),² which had almost continuously for a space of fourteen years been ravaged from end to end by these barbarous enemies, and devastated by the contests with them, were by this time reduced to the greatest misery and desolation. At length, while this war was still proceeding, Marcus Aurelius, who was then residing at Sirmium, was attacked by some infectious disease, and removed to Vindobona (Vienna), where he died on the 17th March, 180, at the age of fifty-nine. Commodus was with him when he died. His death from an infectious disease was of course considered by the Christians to be a direct punishment for the ruthless crime which is the great blot on his reign, the terrible three years' massacre of all Christians throughout the empire which he carried out.

Besides his celebrated *Meditations* (which have made Marcus Aurelius familiar to many who know nothing of much greater emperors), he also wrote his autobiography, but it has perished. His *Meditations* cannot but be admired by all, and are the more wonderful when we consider that they were written during long and troublesome journeys, or on the eve of battles on which the fate of the empire depended, and when it might be supposed that the emperor should have had his attention occupied by very different matters. They are believed to have been intended for the guidance of Commodus; but if so they furnish an example of how little real effect such discourses are apt to have; for Commodus, though from the age of fourteen he accompanied Marcus Aurelius everywhere, and must frequently have heard these views enunciated, turned out the very opposite of all which the *Meditations* so wisely inculcate. It is possible that in Commodus' eyes

¹ See p. 259.

² Page 249 (footnote).

the edict for a wholesale massacre of many human beings of both sexes deprived of any effect discourses on the duty of benevolence to mankind.

Commodus transported the ashes of Marcus Aurelius to Rome, where the dead emperor was as usual deified and his statue placed among the gods of Rome. And to his memory Commodus erected the "Column of Marcus Aurelius," which still stands in Rome. It is in the same style as that of Trajan, but inferior to the latter in execution; it is adorned with reliefs commemorating the victory of the "Thundering Legion" over the Quadi, and other victories claimed by the Roman army over the Marcomanni and Quadi.

But the most interesting memorial in Rome to Marcus Aurelius is his equestrian statue in bronze (once gilded) which now stands in the centre of the square of the Capitol.¹ Its original position is not known, nor when or where it was found, but in the Middle Ages it stood near the Lateran Palace of the Popes, and owes its preservation to the fact that it was supposed to be a statue of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor. It is the only one which survives out of all the many bronze equestrian statues which adorned Rome in the earlier centuries.

During a period of eighty-two years the empire had been governed by emperors chosen under a system by which each passed on the throne to a successor specially selected by himself as the fittest man in the whole empire for that position. Marcus Aurelius departed from this example set him by four predecessors, the splendid fruits of which were before his eyes, and named Commodus as his successor, though the latter's total unfitness for the position must have been palpable to him. Marcus Aurelius had also before him the fact that all the best emperors had succeeded to the imperial throne at an advanced age, Augustus at 35, Tiberius at 56, Vespasian at 60, Trajan at 44, Hadrian at 42, Antoninus at 52, and he himself at 40, and that the worst emperors had been those who succeeded to it at an early age, as Caligula and Nero had done; and yet he left this position of uncontrolled power to a youth of nineteen, who possessed no natural abilities and who had

¹ Plate XLII. Equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitol, Rome.



BRONZE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF MARCUS AURELIUS, ROME.

The only bronze statue of ancient Rome which has survived.

[BROGI.]



already shown vicious tastes. As was to be expected, the results were disastrous both to Commodus and to the State.

(b) Matters concerning religion

In the long battle of 250 years¹ which was fought between Paganism and Christianity there had up to this time only been isolated local contests; such as that which occurred in A.D. 65 at Rome, in A.D. 91 at Rome, and in A.D. 156 at Smyrna. Now, however, we come to the first general engagement in this long campaign, a pitched battle fought in the year 177 over the whole Roman empire.

Marcus Aurelius knew a great deal more about Christianity than any previous emperor. Not only did his studies in philosophy lead him to gain knowledge about the Christian philosophy, but also from the time that he was sixteen that religion had been regularly taught in Rome in the school of Christian philosophy established by Justin, and the latter had not only sent a "Defence of Christianity" to Antoninus Pius in 148 (which Marcus Aurelius who was then living with the latter must have read),² but had followed this up in the next reign by a second "Defence of Christianity" addressed to Marcus Aurelius himself. So that probably no other man who had not adopted Christianity had so thorough an acquaintance with its tenets, the moral code it taught, and the manner of life of its adherents.

Almost from the beginning of the reign of Marcus Aurelius a series of great public calamities,—inundations, earthquakes, famine, plague, incursions of barbarians, rebellions, and military defeats—had continued in one form or another for sixteen years. Whether in taking the action he did Marcus Aurelius was actuated by a feeling that these calamities were brought upon the empire owing to the wrath of the gods of Rome at the spread of Christianity, and by a desire to appease that wrath, or whether he was of opinion that the whole fabric of the State was so much bound up with the ancient religion that it was essential that the latter should be defended against a religion so hostile to it, we do not know; for he did

¹ A.D. 65 to A.D. 313.

² See also p. 243 (footnote).

not announce the reason which induced him to adopt the course he did. All that we know is that he ordered a general massacre of all Christians throughout the empire, and that he was the first emperor to do so.

During the sixty years since the accession of Hadrian Christianity had made great strides. And the more numerous its adherents became, the more this religion became disliked even by the most well-disposed Roman citizens. The Pagan religion not only interpenetrated all public transactions, ceremonies, and spectacles, but also entered into all the customs connected with marriages and burials, the daily courtesies of family life, and even the ordinary salutations between friends. A Christian was therefore forced not only to absent himself from all public ceremonies and festivals, and to desist from many ordinary courtesies and salutations, but even had to keep away from his nearest relations just at those times when families gathered together, such as for a marriage, and even at the last moments of those most closely connected with him by blood. As a consequence even the most well-disposed Roman felt a strong dislike to a religion which appeared to have so morose a character.

But there was another large class of the community who felt a much greater hatred towards it. The great strides which Christianity had by this time made had produced a very large falling off in the numbers frequenting the temples of the ancient religion, and consequently in the income derived by those attached thereto, and the entire priestly class, together with all those who depended in any way upon the Pagan religious system for their livelihood, were for this reason bitterly incensed against Christianity. To combat it they circulated among the people the most atrocious stories of the iniquities committed in the religious meetings of the Christians. Gibbon, quoting from Justin Martyr, says :—" It was asserted that a newborn infant, entirely covered over with flour, was presented like some mystic symbol of initiation to the knife of the proselyte, who unknowingly inflicted many a secret and mortal wound on the innocent victim ; that as soon as the cruel deed was perpetrated, the sectaries drank up the blood, greedily tore asunder the quivering members, and pledged themselves to eternal secrecy by a mutual consciousness of guilt. It was

as confidently affirmed that this inhuman sacrifice was succeeded by a suitable entertainment, in which intemperance served as a provocation to brutal lust." Nor was it only among the populace that these tales obtained credence. The general aspect which Christianity presented to the mind of the cultured Pagan may be judged from the writings of Caecilius, who describing the Christians says :—

“Men of a desperate, lawless, reckless faction, who collect together out of the lowest rabble the thoughtless portion, and credulous women deceived by the weakness of their sex, and form a mob of impure conspirators, of whose nocturnal assemblies, and solemn fastings and unnatural food, no sacred rite, but pollution is the bond. A tribe lurking and light-hating, dumb for the public, talkative at corners, they despise our temples with scorn, spit at our gods, and deride our religious forms. Pitiably themselves, they pity our priests; half-naked themselves, they despise our purple. Monstrous folly! Incredible impudence! Day after day their abandoned morals wind their serpentine course. Over the whole world are these most hideous rites of an impious association growing into shape.”

Therefore it will be seen that there were a very large number of persons of all classes always ready to support an emperor who might order the Christians to be destroyed, and that an order of this kind was a highly popular measure.

It was in the year 177 that Marcus Aurelius, who was then fifty-six years of age and had been sixteen years emperor, issued his edict for a general massacre of the Christians, man, woman, and child, throughout the Roman Empire, an action so remarkable in his case that it has obtained wide notoriety. In issuing this edict Marcus Aurelius ordered the most solemn and costly religious ceremonies, offered numerous sacrifices to the gods of Rome, repealed the edicts of Hadrian which had given partial protection to Christians, and (taking the very opposite course to that of his predecessors Trajan and Hadrian), deliberately directed the use of informers, the edict encouraging their operations by promising to them half the forfeited goods of all Christians convicted through their assistance; finally this edict for the first time directed torture to be employed upon the Christians, the officials being left free to use whatever tortures they might devise. No wonder that the

Christians felt that the worst evils they had endured under previous emperors were small in comparison.

This Fourth persecution (which continued for three years, until the death of Marcus Aurelius) was far more formidable than the three which had preceded it. They had been local, and the result of temporary excitement; this was universal and deliberate. And although nothing but abhorrence could be felt by a man with the mental training of Marcus Aurelius for the actions of such men as Nero and Domitian, yet we find him exceeding them in deliberate cruelty, and have here for the first time a Roman emperor ordering throughout Rome's vast empire countless numbers of men, women, and children to be consigned to the most cruel tortures, and to death amidst circumstances of utmost horror.

A general persecution throughout the empire carried out under an imperial edict directing the putting all who were found to be Christians to death in the cruel ways customary, and amidst all the excitement and horror of furious and mocking crowds of bitter enemies, was a terrible thing. All the vilest passions of the scum of a Roman city were let loose, and even encouraged. And devilish were the ways in which, either to please the populace, or to gratify their own cruelty, lust, or greed, unscrupulous governors carried out such persecutions. Moreover to be lenient towards Christians when such an imperial edict had been issued was at once to be liable to suspicion of disloyalty to the emperor, and to be open to accusation thereof by political enemies. So that even a humanely disposed governor felt himself powerless to protect those concerned. Some faint idea, therefore, may be formed of the nature of a general persecution under an imperial edict. It was an unrestrained Pandemonium, in which everything evil worked its will to the utmost extent of its desires upon those given up by authority to its cruelty, and whom none dared to pity or protect. Nor was flight of any avail since every country was under the same power, and the same edict in operation everywhere.

We shall never know one hundredth part of all the horrors which under this edict of Marcus Aurelius were inflicted, and courageously borne, in the various cities where Christians by this time existed. Even of what we do know there is much

that cannot be related. Moreover in the great Tenth persecution under Diocletian, 125 years later, nearly all the records of what had been suffered in previous persecutions were of set purpose sought out and destroyed. We only catch here and there a glimpse of what took place; the brief record of some one martyrdom that has survived reveals like a flash of lightning the scene and the actors for a moment, and then all is dark again, until another flash lights up a similar scene in some quite different part of the empire. We only know that the number of persons who thus perished must have been immense, Christians being by this time numerous everywhere. Regarding this point Dr. Arnold in his letters says:—"Gibbon has sneered at the statements on this point as exaggerated. But this is a thankless labour. Divide the sum total of reputed martyrdoms by twenty,—by fifty if you will,—but after all you have an immense number of persons, of all ages and both sexes, suffering cruel torments and death, for conscience' sake and for Christ's name."

In this persecution of 177 perished at Rome Justin, the Christian philosopher, who now earned the name by which we know him, that of Justin Martyr. Possessing the acute intellect of a Greek, and a philosophically trained mind, he had become a most powerful defender of Christianity; as we have seen, he had twice over written and presented a "Defence of Christianity" to two emperors in succession; and by his many attainments and his outspoken teaching of that religion he had become, since the death of Polycarp, the most prominent man among the Christians of the time. In the school which he had established, and wearing always his philosopher's dress that he had worn as a Stoic, he had preached Christianity for forty years in Rome. To an emperor who was himself so ardent an adherent of the Stoic philosophy, Justin who had been a Stoic philosopher and was now a Christian must have been specially obnoxious. Crescens, a Cynic philosopher, was a bitter enemy of Justin, and on the publication of the emperor's edict denounced him. Justin was thereupon seized and condemned to die; he behaved with great firmness and dignity, and earned the distinctive name of "The Martyr," which is always appended to his name.

Six other general persecutions succeeded this one during the

next 125 years. And as an example of the kind of scenes which took place during these persecutions it will be well to take the record of what occurred at Lyons in southern Gaul¹ during this persecution ordered by Marcus Aurelius. It furnishes a good example for the purpose because in this case the record is so exceptionally reliable.²

The account is given in a letter from the survivors of the churches of Lyons and Vienne (an adjacent Roman colony), to the churches of Asia Minor, whence they owed their origin. The letter is written in Greek; it tells its story very circumstantially, in simple language, and with an entire absence of exaggeration. Although Mosheim says that the persecution to which these churches of Lyons and Vienne³ were subjected was so terrible that these communities were almost entirely destroyed, yet in its simple fashion this letter written by the survivors only mentions by name just those few persons of whom it has something special to relate.⁴

The persecution began with the seizure of the Bishop, Pothinus. He was ninety years old and very infirm. He was taken before the Prefect, who reviled him, after which he was unmercifully dragged about and beaten.

“Those who were near insulted him with their hands or feet, and those at a distance threw at him whatever came to hand, and every one looked upon himself as deficient in zeal if he did not insult him in some way or other. For thus they imagined they revenged the cause of their gods. At last he was thrown into prison almost breathless, and after two days expired.”

¹ There are strong grounds for believing that our ancient British Church was founded by some who on this occasion escaped from southern Gaul, and crossing the Channel took refuge in parts of Britain not subject to the Romans. That Church was already flourishing at the time of the Ninth persecution (278–285), possessing several Bishops.

² Other accounts of the occurrences elsewhere during this persecution are furnished by Justin, Athenagoras, Apollinaris, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, and the Church at Smyrna.

³ In subsequent ages the Archbishop of Vienne bore the title of “Primate of Gaul” down to the 18th century.

⁴ The letter is very long; as much of it has been given in the original words as space permits, and the rest abbreviated.

Then began a general seizure of the Christians; they were assailed with shouts and blows, were dragged about by the mob, and were then thrown into prison, their goods being everywhere plundered.

“ Being brought before the Prefect they were examined before all the people as to whether they were Christians, and on their confessing that they were, the Prefect treated them with great savageness. A young Roman noble, Vettius Epagathus, was roused at this perversion of justice, and demanded to be heard on behalf of the Christians, saying he would prove there was nothing atheistic or impious in them. Those about the tribunal shouted against him; the governor, enraged at his interference, refused to hear him, and instead simply asked him if he too was a Christian; whereupon this noble young man confessed himself a Christian, and forthwith he also was put among the accused. Ten of them when questioned denied Christ, in fear of what was to come. Some of the Pagan servants of the accused were, at the suggestion of the soldiers, tortured until they accused the Christians of various abominable crimes, such as eating human flesh, sacrificing children, and indulging in horrible orgies. These things being commonly reported, all were incensed to madness against them; so that if some were on account of relationship or friendship previously more moderate towards them, they were now transported beyond all bounds with indignation.”

After describing how they were dragged to the amphitheatre in batches and subjected to various tortures, the account continues thus:—

“ They now sustained tortures which exceed the power of description. The mob vehemently demanded Attalus of Pergamum,¹ a man who had been ever a pillar and support of our church in Gaul; he was brought forth and led round the amphitheatre, cheerful and unmoved, with a tablet in front of him on which was written ‘ I am Attalus, a Christian.’ But being a Roman citizen he was sent back again to prison until the emperor’s express orders regarding him should be received. But first he had to see his son, Maturus, a late convert but most steadfast in the faith, suffer horrible tortures. The whole fury of the multitude, of the governor, and of the soldiers, was specially spent on these four, Sanctus, a deacon of the church at Vienne, Maturus, son of Attalus, Ponticus, a youth of fifteen, and Blandina, a slave-girl. . . . But notwithstanding that we all feared, and among the rest her mistress, who herself was one of the noble army of martyrs, that she would not be able to endure because of the weakness of

¹ In Asia Minor.

her body, Blandina was endued with so much fortitude that those who successively tortured her from morning till evening were quite worn out with fatigue, and owned themselves conquered and that their whole apparatus of torture was exhausted, and were amazed to see her still breathing; they confessed that any single one of the tortures ought to have been sufficient to dispatch her, much more so great a variety as had been applied. But that blessed one like a brave athlete drew strength and courage from her own confession, and there was to her an evident support and annihilation of her pain in simply many times repeating, 'I am a Christian, and no evil is committed among us.' Sanctus also, through long and intense tortures, would neither tell his name, nor that of his nation or state, or whether he was a freedman or a slave, but to every interrogation only answered, 'I am a Christian.' This, he used to say, was to him both name, and state, and race, and everything; and nothing else did the Pagans draw from him. . . . In the prison some of the younger ones died; and many who had denied Christ had nevertheless been thrown into prison. These were dejected and spiritless, forlorn, and in every way disgraced, and even insulted by the Pagans as cowards. But they who had been faithful did not reproach these, but only sought to encourage and restore them; which indeed they did. . . . An additional day having been added by the governor to the shows of the amphitheatre on account of these Christians, Maturus and Sanctus were again carried thither and underwent further tortures; they were beaten with stripes, dragged and torn by wild beasts, then made to sit in a red-hot iron chair, in which their bodies were roasted, and at length died under the tortures. Blandina was all the time suspended from a stake in the arena, but none of the wild beasts at that time touched her, and at the end of the day she was again thrown into prison, and reserved for another contest. . . . Regarding the cases of Attalus and others which had been referred to him, the emperor sent orders that all who had confessed Christ should be put to death. They were therefore again brought before the governor in the presence of the people. Some of those who had lapsed now withdrew their denial of Christ, and were added to the list of martyrs, and died in similar torments. During this re-examination a man who had lived many years in Gaul—a person of great endowments, a physician by profession—stood near the tribunal, and by his gestures encouraged those who were interrogated to confess the truth. The multitude seeing this clamoured against him as the cause of the recovered firmness of the lapsed. The governor ordered him to be placed before him and questioned him, when he declared himself a Christian; whereupon he was at once condemned to the wild beasts, and the next day, he, with Attalus, underwent all the usual tortures of the amphitheatre, and died with the other martyrs. . . . But the eyes of all were specially directed to the boy Ponticus and the slave-girl Blandina,

who having endured unutterable tortures for days were on the last day of the shows again brought in. No pity was shown to the youth of the one, or the sex of the other. After they had thus seen all the rest die under the tortures, these latter were aggravated for them by all sorts of methods, and the whole round of barbarities was inflicted. Ponticus, animated by her, his sister in suffering, who was observed by those who tortured them to strengthen and confirm him, after a glorious exertion of patience, expired. And so, last of all, like a brave mother who had inspired her sons to a noble conflict, and sent them victors before her, Blandina herself went by the same road, exulting, not as one thrown to the beasts, but as a guest at a marriage feast. After she had endured cruel stripes, the tearing of the beasts, and the terrible red-hot iron chair, she was enclosed in a net, and thrown to a bull, and having been tossed some time by the animal, she at length breathed her last. Even her enemies confessed that no woman among them had ever suffered such and so great things."

And so ends the record. Many similar scenes were taking place at other towns in the empire during this and the next three years.

While those features which Marcus Aurelius displays in his *Meditations* must always attract mankind, yet History will ever insist upon estimating a man, and especially a man in the position of an emperor, not by his words, but by his deeds. And because we admire the sentiments expressed by Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* that is no reason for suffering ourselves to be led by the Pagan writers to extol him as they did. The statement that Marcus Aurelius was "the best man the Pagan world ever produced" is perfectly true; but how very short a distance that carries us is seen as soon as this deed is examined. For this deed is not of the secondary character which has been given to it by his admirers. Although, for very obvious reasons, it has been lightly referred to by them, and belittled as much as possible, it is the one notable deed of his reign. It would have been otherwise had Marcus Aurelius had other achievements to show, either in war or peace; but this is not the case. The three heads under which his achievements naturally group themselves are, his deeds in war, his peace administration, and his action as regards the Christians. In war he was a conspicuous failure, being utterly unable to protect three great provinces of the empire (till then in a highly flourishing condition) from being continuously ravaged by

barbarous enemies during nearly the whole of his reign. But while it would not be fair to judge of Marcus Aurelius by his military record, that of his peace administration is no better able to raise him to a high place in general estimation. For whereas in the case of each of his three predecessors we find highly important measures for the benefit of the empire carried out, in the case of Marcus Aurelius no important measures of this kind are recorded, while his financial administration in particular was exceptionally defective. His action as regards the Christians thus becomes the one notable deed of his reign, and we are bound therefore to judge of him principally with reference to it.

Every endeavour has been made by modern writers to extenuate the conduct of Marcus Aurelius in carrying out this widespread and cruel massacre. The Pagan writers of the 3rd and 4th centuries felt no such necessity; to them expediency was a full excuse for the act, and they have bluntly declared that this was the sole reason for it. But modern writers, shrinking from the idea that a man who was the writer of the sentiments expressed in the *Meditations* should cast to the winds all that he had taught as regards the duty of benevolence towards mankind because expediency demanded it, have sought assiduously for other grounds of exculpation. They have forgotten in fact that they were dealing with an emperor of the 2nd century, and have desired to estimate him by the standard of their own age. But these efforts have been entirely without avail. The very weakness of the excuses adduced has shown the impossibility of the task, all that such apologists have been able to suggest being that Marcus Aurelius probably knew little about Christianity, that the edict though issued in his name may possibly not have proceeded directly from him, or that he may have been led into this action by others. But as has been shown¹ the truth is exactly the reverse in regard to each of these three suggestions. No previous emperor knew so much about Christianity as Marcus Aurelius, his action was entered upon with the utmost deliberation, and, above all, the fact that the action was entirely his own, and not even induced by any popular clamour at the time, is vouched for by all authorities.

¹ Pages 243 (footnote), 257, and 259; also p. 264, regarding the special reference made to him about some of those at Lyons.

It may be granted that Christianity was making great strides, that it was a stern foe to all those many political and social customs which were bound up with the ancient religion, and that Marcus Aurelius, both as a Stoic philosopher and as a Pagan emperor, felt impelled to crush out its life. But to excuse his action on this ground is merely in other words to bring forward the excuse of expediency, and so to look at the matter through Pagan spectacles.

Some have tried to find excuses for Marcus Aurelius by arguing that we must bear in mind the general standard of the age in which he lived. And this is in truth the only sound ground on which to search for such excuses ; since it is a fundamental error to judge characters in history by the standard of our own age, instead of by that in which they lived.¹ But even this will not provide an excuse for Marcus Aurelius. For his deed was one which other emperors of his own time—Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius—neither committed, nor could have committed.

Since therefore the utmost endeavours of so many writers have failed entirely to find any excuse for this deed, we are forced to conclude that the Pagan writers of the 3rd and 4th centuries were right as to the motive which prompted it ; and are compelled to estimate Marcus Aurelius as he appears in the light of that motive. On this occasion his maxims regarding the duty of benevolence to mankind stood opposed to the demands of expediency ; and when that occurred we see them thrown aside. And so the great crime which those who have estimated him only from his maxims have endeavoured so fruitlessly to extenuate was perpetrated. With the result that Marcus Aurelius, “ The crown and flower of the Stoic philosophy,” and the writer of the lofty sentiments expressed in the *Meditations*, carried out a three years’ massacre of thousands of Roman citizens—men and women, boys and girls, and even little children,—with every kind of horrible tortures directly ordered by himself to be inflicted, and with the deliberate employment by him of that odious race of

¹ Measured by the moral standard of their own age, those who were in advance of it, and those who were behind it, will both be correctly judged ; but neither of them will be so if the standard employed is that of our own age.

“informers” whom both Trajan and Hadrian had indignantly repudiated and prohibited.

What renders the action of Marcus Aurelius more especially derogatory to him is the fact that he succeeded two emperors whose procedure had been so notably the reverse, emperors with whose views regarding the persecution of Christians he must have been thoroughly acquainted. That a man who had been selected by Hadrian and seen his strictly tolerant rule, and had lived in daily and hourly association with the noble Antoninus Pius, should have deliberately cast aside their temperate and enlightened principles in regard to this question, and in preference thereto have reverted to those of the degraded tyrant Domitian, is the greatest condemnation of the character and conduct of Marcus Aurelius that could be made. Moreover his action did not merely affect the Romans of his own time, but was grievously disastrous to subsequent generations. For by being the first to order a general persecution he inaugurated a system of such persecutions, and set an example which was followed by other emperors during a period of 135 years, causing immeasurable misery and woe to countless numbers of the human race.

In thus acting Marcus Aurelius departed for the first time from a fundamental principle of the Roman Empire, that of toleration of all religions by the State. The first three persecutions had not done this; for though it had become against the law to be a Christian, yet so long as no accusation was lodged Christians had remained unmolested. In the Fourth persecution, however, Marcus Aurelius for the first time put in force the whole power of the State to stamp out a particular religion, thereby embarking upon a course which departed from that principle of toleration which had ever been pursued by Rome, and launching the Roman State upon a disastrous course in regard to religion for the next 135 years, until this line of action was at last reversed by Constantine, who returned to the original principle of the Roman Empire. For Constantine did not “establish Christianity” in the sense of making it the only religion permitted, but merely freed it from persecution,¹ while

¹ See Chap. XII, p. 385. The first article of the Edict of Milan promulgated in 313, which put an end to the persecution of Christians, was that “all men are to be free to follow whatever religion they choose.”

at the same time adopting it as the religion professed by the State.

This widespread massacre, carried out with such deliberate cruelty by an emperor who from the sentiments expressed in his writings should have been the last man in the world to be guilty of such conduct, has always been considered by thoughtful men the great blot on the character and reign of Marcus Aurelius. So much so that it led John Stuart Mill (who not being a Christian was quite unbiased), in deploring that such an action should have been committed by one whose *Meditations* he had considered to be almost equal to the Sermon on the Mount, to call it "one of the most tragical facts of all history."

It was by conflicts such as that which has been described, occurring again and again during the ensuing 135 years, that this unusual kind of battle was fought. Nor is any apology needed for devoting a considerable amount of attention to this struggle.¹ For this contest between Paganism and Christianity, owing to the permanent result which it brought about, is the leading historical feature of the period which lies between Augustus and Constantine, largely affecting as it grew more intense all political events. Moreover, it is these conflicts of the Christians which at this particular period supply the human element. In other directions we read of the wars conducted, the great public works erected, and the administrative measures carried out; but it is the Christians, in their sufferings, their sympathy, and their brave endurance, who alone provide that human element without which the page of history becomes but a dry record.

Lastly it is to be noted that these Christians are not men and women of another race than those who lead Rome's armies, administer her dominions, or construct her public buildings. The contest is not between Romans and Christians, but between Pagan Romans and Christian Romans. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, and Cyprian,² and Crescentia, Modesta, Blandina, Felicitas, and Vivia Perpetua,³ are of the same race as Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus

¹ See also Chap. XII, p. 389 (footnote).

² Chap. X, p. 327.

³ Chap. VIII, p. 296.

Aurelius, and as Antonia, Octavia, Plotina, Sabina, and Faustina. And the powers of mind, constancy, and bravery which those in the former category displayed as Christians were the qualities implanted in them as Romans. And nowhere does the Roman character shine out with greater lustre than in the deeds of so many of that race under the terrible trial of these persecutions. Many are the notable deeds of bravery, steadfast endurance, and self-sacrificing devotion by which Roman officers and soldiers have won honour in the wars of the Roman Empire. But it has not been equally recognized that none of them surpass in the display of exactly similar qualities, the deeds of many hundreds of martyred Romans exemplified by such men as Polycarp and Cyprian, such boys as Maturus and Ponticus, and such girls and women as Blandina and Vivia Perpetua.

NOTE B.

Our chief authorities for the history of the first two centuries are:—

Seneca. Born in A.D. 3 at Cordova. Went to Rome when quite young, and after a time adopted a branch of the Stoic philosophy which combined therewith a more or less Epicurean style of life. Was of the inner circle of the court in the reigns of Claudius and Nero. In A.D. 41 he was banished to Corsica by Claudius at the instigation of Valeria Messalina on a charge of an intrigue with the emperor's niece, Julia Livilla. In A.D. 49, after the death of Valeria Messalina, he was recalled to Rome by Agrippina, and soon afterwards was made tutor to her son Nero. He became Nero's chief minister during the earlier half of the latter's reign, but his wealth roused Nero's jealousy, and Seneca retired into seclusion. In A.D. 66 he was accused of complicity in the conspiracy of Piso, and forced to commit suicide. His chief works comprise treatises on *Anger*, on *Providence*, on *Tranquillity of Mind*, on the *Steadfastness of the Wise Man*, and on *Clemency* (addressed to Nero). Also seven books on *Benefits*, seven books on *Investigations of Nature*, and twenty books of moral letters.

Pliny the elder. Born in A.D. 23 at Como. Served with distinction in the army, and was eventually in the reign of Vespasian made governor of Spain. All his leisure was devoted to literature and science, but the only one of his works now existing is his *Natural History*, which contains information on a mass of subjects besides that which gives the title to his book. He perished in the eruption of Vesuvius which overwhelmed Herculaneum and Pompeii in A.D. 79.

Tacitus. Born in A.D. 54 at Rome and was fourteen years old when Nero died. Was by profession a lawyer, and an ardent devotee of Rhetoric. Was first appointed to a public office in the reign of Vespasian. Was quaestor under Titus, praetor under Domitian, and consul under Nerva. Married the daughter of the celebrated general Julius Agricola, and wrote his life. Lived in close intimacy with Pliny the younger, and obtained a high reputation as an orator. He died about A.D. 120. His two chief works are his *Annals* and his *History*. His *Annals*, written in the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98–117), in sixteen books (of which four are lost), contain an account of the principal events at Rome from the death of Augustus to the death of Nero, and are coloured by much bias against the Caesars. His *History* (of which much is lost), also written in the reign of Trajan, begins in the year A.D. 69 and ends with the accession of Vespasian in A.D. 70.

Pliny the younger. Nephew of Pliny the elder. Born in A.D. 61 at Como. Inherited his uncle's estates and mass of notes, and his love of literature. Occupied various civil offices and eventually was made by Trajan governor of Bithynia and Pontus. Was one of the most distinguished men of his time. His chief works are his letters (in ten books) and his *Panegyric* on Trajan. He died about 115.

Suetonius. Secretary to the emperor Hadrian. He wrote (probably about 125) the *Lives of the Caesars*, from Augustus to Domitian, covering the period from B.C. 28 to A.D. 96. He is a genial writer, and desires to be honest, but he is writing of times before his own, and unlike Tacitus, is so excessively fond of scandalous anecdotes that he will discard none because they are improbable. It will be seen that when writing regarding, e.g. the emperor Tiberius, he was writing of a time nearly a hundred years before that at which he wrote.

Dion Cassius. A Greek, born about 155, who came to Rome about the year 180 and obtained the rank of a Roman senator. He wrote a *History of Rome*, extending down to the year 229, but only the latter part of it has survived. He is by no means so pleasant a writer as Suetonius, being malignant in disposition and still more devoted than Suetonius to the lowest kind of scandalous gossip, invariably preferring it to truth. He lived during the reigns of Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus, dying about the year 230.

The Augustan History. A general history beginning from the reign of the emperor Hadrian, compiled by various writers whose names are not known.

PART II

Commodus to Constantine

(A.D. 180—314)

CHAPTER VIII

REIGNS OF

COMMODOUS, PERTINAX, AND SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

COMMODOUS

180 — 192

(a) Matters other than religion

THERE is a great dearth of reliable records during the hundred years from the close of the reign of Marcus Aurelius (180) until we reach the reign of Diocletian (285), but this is of less consequence owing to the general character of that period. Except the reign of Septimius Severus the greater part of it was occupied by the reigns of a number of incapable emperors, followed by a time of great disasters and general confusion, accompanied by frequent changes of emperors.¹ It therefore seems well to spend as little time as possible over this period from 180 to 285, during which the events in general were not of lasting importance. There is, however, one exception to this, viz. in the case of the growth of Christianity. For it was during this hundred years that the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth persecutions all took place; with the result that by the end of the 3rd century Christianity stood in a very different position from that which it occupied at the end of the 2nd century.

Commodus,² born in 161, was nineteen when he became

¹ Whereas previously in 240 years (from B.C. 28 to A.D. 211) the average length of the reigns of sixteen emperors had been fifteen years, there were between 211 and 285 twenty emperors in seventy-four years, their reigns averaging less than four years each.

² Plate XLIII. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

emperor. At fifteen he had been given the title of *Caesar*, and from the age of sixteen had been associated by Marcus Aurelius with himself in the government. Shortly before leaving Rome in 177 to accompany the latter to Pannonia, Commodus, then sixteen, was married to Crispina,¹ the daughter of the Senator Brittius Praesens, and she accompanied Commodus to Pannonia. Upon the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 at Vidobona Commodus quickly concluded a peace with the Marcomanni, and hastened back with his wife Crispina to Rome to enjoy the pleasures of the capitol. His sister Lucilla, fifteen years older than himself, was the only one of his ten sisters who was living when he became emperor.

Commodus was very handsome, with a finely proportioned figure and unusual physical strength, and was fond of comparing himself to Hercules ; but he was a youth of a degraded nature, being in his tastes and propensities more like the son of a gladiator than the descendant of two of the most well-born Roman families. He was not only the antithesis in this respect of such emperors as Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, but even had a nature which seemed to emulate in depravity that of the first Julia's abandoned son Agrippa Postumus.² Upon reaching Rome he ignored public affairs and gave himself up to a most profligate style of life ; though for a time this was kept from the public eye. His chief associates were common gladiators, a class the most vicious in Rome, and amongst them he spent his time in the seclusion of the palace, delighting to show his strength and skill in physical contests. The vast Palace of the Caesars, formed by the junction of the palace of Tiberius, the palace of Caligula, the palace of Domitian, and the palaces of Augustus and Hadrian, by this time covered almost the whole of the Palatine hill. And never before had this Palace of the Caesars witnessed such scenes as now took place in it, Commodus abandoning himself to a course of moral infamy which would have shamed even Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, and enacting scenes of the most monstrous and shameless vice, of which moreover he even forced his sister and his wife to be witnesses.

After Commodus had carried on this kind of life for nearly

¹ Plate XLIV. Portrait-bust in the British Museum, London.

² Chap. I, p. 22.



[AGINARI.]

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.

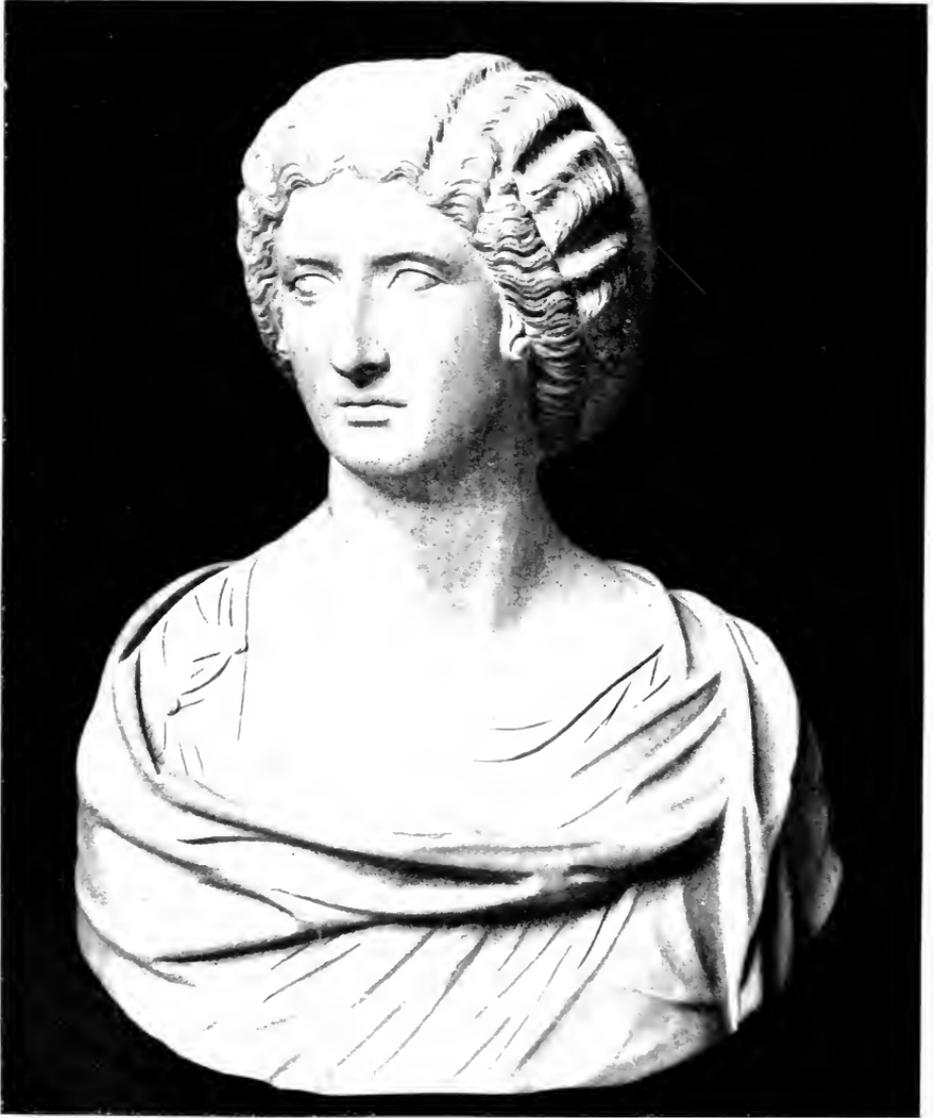
Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.



[BROCCI.]

COMMODUS.

Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



CRISPINA, WIFE OF COMMODUS.
Portrait-bust in the British Museum, London.

MANSILL.

two years a conspiracy was organized against him in 182 by his sister Lucilla, who instigated Quadratus,⁷ a young knight who was in love with her, to assassinate him. Quadratus, however, unwisely gave warning of the blow by declaring that he struck in the name of the Senate, and the attempt was foiled, Quadratus being killed. Thereupon Commodus executed a number of the senators and leading nobles whom he suspected of being involved in the plot, and banished Lucilla on a general charge of immorality to Capreae, where she was shortly afterwards put to death. There had been strong rivalry, if not animosity, between Lucilla and her sister-in-law Crispina, but nevertheless the latter did not escape a similar fate. It was declared that she had been too intimate with some of the young knights concerned in the plot, and she also was soon afterwards banished to Capreae, and there put to death. Dion Cassius makes a general charge against Crispina of leading a dissolute life, but apparently only because it was the customary charge.

Whether this accusation so continuously made against the wives and sisters of the emperors be true or not,¹ it requires to be remembered how little chance they had of being otherwise. Married as girls in very many cases to men who can only be described as monsters in depravity, and forced to live daily amidst scenes in which no woman could retain her purity, or even when not married to men of this kind yet nevertheless surrounded by an atmosphere to breathe which was pollution, and unassisted by the help which Christianity afterwards supplied to women so situated, it speaks well for these empresses and their sisters-in-law as a body that at all events some were found who resisted the poisonous atmosphere in which they were forced to dwell, and that even those who failed to resist it remained infinitely less evil than their brothers, husbands, and fathers; so that, for instance, it has been instinctively felt by all writers to be a falsehood when Dion Cassius asserts that Lucilla was as bad as her brother.

Commodus after putting to death his sister and his wife continued his career of outrageous depravity. Excepting the construction of the column to the memory of Marcus

¹ That it was sometimes false the case of Domitia shows (p. 189).

Aurelius, he did no notable work, and never quitted Rome. He turned the Palace of the Caesars into a huge seraglio, and the record of his reign of thirteen years is simply a record of his stupendous and shameless vices. He also developed, after the attempt upon his life in the second year of his reign, almost as cruel a disposition as Nero, and his constant murders of prominent men upon the slightest suspicion made him universally detested. But that for which the Romans chiefly hated him was his degradation of the imperial dignity by appearing as a gladiator in the arena, where, carefully protected from danger to himself, he killed wild animals and fought with gladiators (forced to engage with him with blunted weapons), calling himself the Roman Hercules. Various attempts were made to murder him, but all were unsuccessful, until at last after he had reigned thirteen years his favourite concubine Marcia ¹ (who after the banishment and death of Crispina occupied for seven years almost the position of an empress), his chamberlain Eclectus, and the Prefect of the Praetorian Guards, Laetus, finding their names on a list of those he intended to put to death, combined to get rid of him, and caused him to be strangled in his bed by a wrestler in December 192, at the age of thirty-one.

(b) Matters concerning religion

As Commodus took no interest in the destruction of Christianity, and as Marcia was against the slaughter of Christians,² he stopped the persecution.

The most notable man in the Christian Church at this period was Irenæus.³ He appears to have been absent from Lyons preaching Christianity in the northern part of Gaul at the time of the persecution, and so escaped notice. After the persecution was over he was made Bishop of Lyons in succession to the martyred Pothinus. He is the most celebrated

¹ Herodian says that Marcia strove, even with tears, to dissuade Commodus from the disgrace of appearing in public as a gladiator; and that it was in revenge for this that he marked down her name for death (Herodian i, 50).

² Marcia is stated to have given protection to various Christians who would have been put to death by Commodus.

³ Chap. VII, p. 245.

writer of the 2nd century. Being roused to defend the faith of Christianity by the spread of numerous forms of Gnosticism,¹ he set himself to expose the fallacy of these doctrines in a great work of five books called "The Refutation of all Heresies," which has survived, and has gained for Irenæus the title of the first theologian. In this work he details with great care the obscure tenets of the Gnostics,² and vindicates the faith of the Christian Church, defining it, for the benefit of both Christians and Pagans, with a clearness which no earlier writer whose works have been preserved had done. In view of his early date, and the fact that he had been taught by Polycarp, a pupil for so long of St. John, it is important to notice that the faith which Irenæus thus defined is in all essentials that which all branches of the Catholic Church still profess, there being only on minor points any divergence, and that with the exception of one or two of the smaller epistles he accepted as genuine all the books of what is now the Canon of the New Testament. He maintains it as one of the essential points of the Primitive Church that all its branches should keep the same ecclesiastical constitution, and he attaches great value to tradition.

The immense number of persons who perished in the persecution inaugurated by Marcus Aurelius in 177 and stopped by Commodus in the second year of his reign is evidenced by the long period of silence regarding Christianity which ensued. The almost entire absence of any mention of the Christians, in all parts of the empire north of the Mediterranean, from the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 to the accession of Alexander Severus in 221, is very marked, and tends to show that such a wholesale destruction of them had taken place that it was not until, after forty years, another generation had grown up that Christianity north of the Mediterranean came again into notice. It would appear however that south of the Mediterranean the persecution under Marcus Aurelius was not carried out with the same vigour as in Europe, as twenty-two years

¹ Chap. V, p. 186.

² In connection with this work by Irenæus it has been pointed out that in the present day the Swedenborgians, the Theosophists, and the Christian Scientists do but revive the ideas of these early heresies. Irenæus' book was written about the year 180.

after the death of Marcus Aurelius the Christians in North Africa attracted the attention of the Roman authorities, thus bringing about the Fifth persecution.¹

PERTINAX

193

On the death of Commodus the Senate chose as emperor Helvius Pertinax. He was an upright and honourable man of humble extraction who had gradually risen in the public service, and after being employed in Britain and Africa had become Prefect of Rome. He was weak and quite unfit for the position of emperor, and being unable to control the Praetorian Guards was murdered by a band of them after a reign of only three months.

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

193—211

(a) Matters other than religion

On the death of Pertinax the Praetorian Guards with the utmost effrontery declared they would give the throne to the highest bidder, with the result that it was sold to Julius Didianus. Meanwhile, however, three distinct groups of the army had severally chosen their commanders as emperor, the legions in Britain choosing their commander Albinus, those in Syria their commander Niger, and those in Pannonia their commander Septimius Severus. The latter in addition to his own three legions obtained also the adherence of the legions in Illyricum and part of those on the Rhine, thus gaining the preponderance of force. He marched to Rome, forced the Praetorian Guards to surrender, put to death their puppet Didianus, and was formally accepted as emperor by the Senate. His first act of power was to disband the Praetorian Guards, making arrangements to replace them by an entirely new

¹ Page 293.

force formed of veterans promoted from all the legions in the various provinces. He then marched against his rival Niger, who after a severe struggle was defeated and killed at the battle of Issus (194). Severus then spent two years in thoroughly subduing the partisans of Niger, after which he turned westwards to engage his other rival Albinus.

Clodius Albinus, the commander in Britain, had by his abilities and high character gained such a position of importance during the reign of Commodus that the latter offered him the title of *Caesar*, which meant succession to the imperial throne as Commodus' successor. Albinus however declined the offer, and subsequently lost favour with Commodus by denouncing him as a tyrant. Thereupon Commodus ordered him to be deprived of his command, but Albinus was so secure in the estimation in which he was held by the legions in Britain that he was able to disregard the order, and soon afterwards the death of Commodus occurred. Septimius Severus upon being recognized by the Senate as emperor again offered Albinus the title of *Caesar*, which this time was accepted by him. But Septimius Severus was only deceiving him until he had overcome Niger. He first tried to get Albinus assassinated, and when this failed marched into Gaul to attack him. Albinus, seeing that a contest was inevitable, had crossed into Gaul taking with him part of the legions in Britain, and was joined by a large part of the troops on the Rhine, but his force was inferior in numbers to that of Severus. The two armies, both of them composed of the most experienced Roman legions, met in southern Gaul near Lyons, where in February 197 the hardest fought battle since that at Philippi in B.C. 42 took place. At one time it looked as though Albinus would win, but Severus rallied his troops and eventually gained the victory. Albinus was captured and put to death, Severus carrying off his head to Rome to display to the Senate, many of whom had sympathised with the much more worthy Albinus. This victory left Septimius Severus, after a three years' struggle, undisputed master of the empire.

Septimius Severus ¹ was an African, and showed it both in his physiognomy and his speech. He had to acquire Latin as a foreign language, and spoke it with a strong African

¹ Plate XLV (p. 276). Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

accent. After he became emperor his sister, who had come to visit him, was by him sent away from Rome because he was ashamed of her abominable Latin. He was born in 146 at Leptis Magna (now Tripoli) on the coast of Africa, his father being in humble circumstances. As a young man Septimius Severus, having ambition, came to Rome to educate himself; after a time he entered the army, and having good abilities and much perseverance gradually rose until in 179, at the age of thirty-three, he was appointed by Marcus Aurelius to command a legion in Syria. In 186 he was made Consul, and during the next six years was appointed by Commodus to the rule successively of the provinces of southern Gaul, Sicily, and Pannonia, which latter province he was ruling when he received the news of the death of Commodus. He was then forty-seven years old.

The wife of Septimius Severus was the beautiful Julia Domna,¹ called also Julia Pia on account of her good disposition and benevolent character, whose family belonged to Emesa in Syria. He married her in 185 while in Syria. She was a woman of great attractions, high character, and much capacity, and in the reign of her son Caracalla took an able part in public affairs, and often succeeded in restraining his cruelties. She was a strong patroness of art and literature, and in this respect also gained a considerable reputation. The most important monument connected with her is the four-sided Arch which after her husband's death she erected to his memory at Tebessa, in North Africa. It has upon it a very perfect medallion of her which agrees exactly with her portrait-bust in the Vatican Museum at Rome.

After his victory at Lyons Severus proceeded to Rome, where he exhibited the severed head of Albinus, put to death nearly half the total number of the senators, they having, he had reason to believe, been on the side of the latter, and plainly announced to the Senate his future policy by reading to them a speech in which he declared that the clemency of Pompey and Julius Caesar had wrought their ruin and that the severity of Sulla, Marius, and Augustus had proved a safer course. Though not in any way brilliant, Septimius Severus had much shrewd common-sense, and he was thoroughly of opinion that

¹ Plate XLVI. Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.



BROGI.

JULIA DOMNA, WIFE OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.

Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

Also called Julia Pia, on account of her good disposition.

the history of three previous dynasties had shown that the Senate had caused many evils in the past, that the weak and servile spirit of its members rendered them incapable of duly exercising the powers they nominally possessed, and that those powers ought therefore to be in stronger hands.

Septimius Severus reigned eighteen years (193-211), and as emperor concentrated all power in himself, reducing the Senate to little more than a registering body, and relying solely upon the army, and all his measures were, without any concealment, carried out upon this principle. He adopted the autocratic title of *dominus*, abolished the distinction between officials of the Senate and officials of the emperor, ruled that in future the nomination to all offices should rest with the latter, placed military officers in various posts hitherto held by civilians, abolished many of the republican titles, and openly transferred the exercise of power from the Senate-house to the imperial Palace, while large civil jurisdiction was given to the Prefect of the reorganized Praetorian Guards.

Having inaugurated these changes in the administration Septimius Severus left Rome in 197 for the eastern frontier, and for the next five years (197-202) was absent from Rome, being occupied, first in war against the Parthians, and then in a long visit to Egypt and North Africa. During this period he allowed almost all authority to be exercised by the Prefect of the new Praetorian Guards, Plautianus, who acted practically as his representative. The changes which Severus had made in depriving the Senate of most of its authority had naturally been intensely distasteful to that body, and as Plautianus was left to carry out the new policy it is not surprising that we find the heaviest charges brought against him. Severus himself was stern, cruel, and bent upon striking terror into any who might think of opposing him, and it is not likely that his lieutenant Plautianus would be any more scrupulous. The latter is stated to have been cruel, arrogant, and corrupt, and to have "caused the whole empire to groan under his exactions." At the same time it is certain that Severus thought very highly of him, made no attempt to restrain his actions, and presumably approved of his conduct, while he at one time intended to entrust him with the guardianship of his two sons, Caracalla, born in 187, and Geta, born in 188.

In Parthia Severus was highly successful. Trajan's conquest of Mesopotamia was repeated, and that country was finally made a Roman province, the eastern frontier being again advanced to the Tigris. This conquest being completed, Severus proceeded to Egypt and made a thorough investigation of everything connected with that province and his own province of North Africa, enquiring into all matters, whether administrative, social, or religious. The contemporary writer Dion Cassius,¹ who knew him well, says in connection with this visit that Septimius Severus was not the man to leave anything, human or divine, uninvestigated. This, though beneficial in other directions, had grievous results to one section of the community, the Christians, to whom throughout Egypt and North Africa this visit was fraught with dire consequences.²

In 202 Severus returned to Rome and there celebrated a Roman triumph for his conquest of Mesopotamia, this triumph being commemorated by the Arch of Severus.³ At the same time his elder son Caracalla, then sixteen, was married to Plautilla, the daughter of Plautianus, and games on an elaborate scale to celebrate the event were held in all the principal cities of the empire.

During the next six years (203–208) Septimius Severus remained at Rome. In the first of these years occurred the fall and death of Plautianus, who fell a victim to an intrigue against him set on foot by his son-in-law, the emperor's elder son Caracalla. During these six years Severus completed the reforms in the administration which he had begun on gaining the throne. He greatly increased the efficiency of the army, not only by the change he had already carried out of making the Praetorian Guards a chosen corps of veterans filled by promotions from all the legions in the army, but also by increasing the honorary distinctions and emoluments of the legions, by reducing the size of the frontier commands and increasing their number, by making Italy a province and ruling that the troops stationed there should be under the direct command of the emperor, and by adding three addi-

¹ Dion Cassius was a senator for about fifty years, throughout the reigns of Commodus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus.

² See p. 293.

³ See p. 289.

tional legions to the army. He also carried out various changes in the civil administration advantageous to the provinces; the status and privileges of the district communities were reorganized; retired military officers were placed in many of the posts hitherto reserved for civilians of rank; and many much needed reforms simplifying the legal procedure were carried out. Severus was also occupied during these years in building his extensive palace on the Palatine hill, the last addition made to the imperial residence in Rome.¹

In 208 Septimius Severus once more left Rome, this time for Britain, where he spent the last three years of his life (208–211). The growing importance of the province of Britain in the 3rd century is very marked. A writer towards the end of that century speaks of its fertile fields, rich mines, and convenient harbours; and the defence of the northern frontier of this valuable province against the ever active Scots and Picts became during the 3rd century the principal field of military activity in the empire, the territory to the north of the Tyne and the Solway being the scene of almost perpetual military operations. No legions saw so much active service, and no generals had so many opportunities of distinguishing themselves and of winning the confidence and affection of their troops, as those stationed in Britain. That country became at this time to Rome what India became to Britain itself in after ages, "the nursery of Captains." As a consequence the commander in Britain began to occupy the position of importance which in the 1st century had appertained to the commander on the Rhine; York began to be of more importance from a military point of view than Cologne; while the commander in Britain on several occasions in the 3rd and 4th centuries became a candidate for the imperial throne.

On reaching Britain Septimius Severus entered upon a war against the Scots and Picts which occupied him for the greater part of three years. In this contest he cleared the territory south of the Forth of all enemies, and then advancing northwards penetrated into the Highlands of Scotland. There he endured enormous difficulties and hardships in making war in such a region, lost great numbers of men from the cold and

¹ Page 290.

wet, and achieved only very partial success. During this period Severus rebuilt and considerably strengthened the Roman "wall," originally constructed by Hadrian, from the mouth of the Tyne to the mouth of the Solway, which formed the permanent frontier of Britain. The work of reconstructing it was performed by the Sixth Legion.¹

It is seldom realized that we possess in England the most important remaining memorial of the Roman Empire. This huge Roman "wall," seventy-three miles long, drawn across the northern frontier of Britain to protect that province from its Caledonian foes, and forming with its Ditch, Wall, Camps, military Road, and southern Rampart practically one immense entrenched camp, was an enormous work. It exceeded in size anything of the kind constructed by the Romans elsewhere, is still after 1700 years for the most part in good preservation, and is the most impressive memorial of the Roman occupation of Britain. As we now see it this great line of defence is the joint work of Hadrian and Severus, an inscription in one of the quarries from whence the stone was taken being dated in the reign of the latter emperor. While this wall shows many traces of the work of Hadrian, most of its principal fortresses, together with the interesting remains of the military posts and small towns round them, belong to the time of Severus.²

This remarkable defensive work, which took about eighty years to complete, consists of a massive wall built of large blocks of stone, a ditch extending along its northern side, a road (20 feet wide and constructed of stone) along the inner side of the wall, and on the southern side of this road, at a

¹ The three legions in Britain from the end of the 1st century to the beginning of the 5th century were the Second (*Legio Augusta*), the Sixth (*Legio Victrix*), and the Twentieth (*Legio Valeria Victrix*), representing with their "auxiliaries" a force of about 36,000 men. The Second Legion was stationed at Caerleon-on-Usk (*Isca Silūrum*), the Sixth Legion at York (*Eburācum*), and the Twentieth Legion at Chester (*Deva*). Detachments from them held other points, including various small posts along the most important roads. The Roman gate of the camp at Chester (with a double gateway) is still in excellent preservation.

² It is sometimes called the "Wall of Hadrian," and sometimes the "Wall of Severus." Either name is equally correct.

distance of one or two hundred yards, an earthen rampart with on the southern side of the latter another ditch, this rampart and ditch being apparently intended as a defence against any attacks which might come from the Britons or other enemies in the rear. The stone wall is 16 feet high and 8 feet thick, the ditch on its northern side being 10 feet deep and 40 feet wide, the whole height from the bottom of the ditch to the crest of the wall being thus 26 feet. At intervals of about every four miles was a square walled "camp," or fortress¹; between these at about every mile were castles about 50 feet square; and between these again were watch-towers placed at intervals of about every 100 yards. So that the wall was very closely guarded. To hold this seventy-three miles of wall with any effect and garrison its numerous forts and posts must have required at least an entire legion with its "auxiliaries," i.e. 12,000 men. It follows the line of the highest ground, its highest point being about 1000 feet above the sea.² The difficulties of constructing such a work as this fortified wall so far away from all the resources of civilization must have been enormous. It stands, splendid in desolation, and at the furthest confines of the empire, a great monument to Roman energy and power.

The ruins of this great "wall," and of the small frontier towns which in the course of 200 years gradually grew up round each of its fortresses, may truly be called eloquent.³ In front, beyond the wall, stretched as far as the eye could reach barren and desolate moorlands, in winter covered for long months with snow, a cheerless prospect for the Roman sentries guarding the wall and watching day and night for the ever active Scots and Picts; but on the inner side of the wall, in these small frontier towns round its fortresses (several of which towns have in recent years been excavated), were all the elements of a busy life and of Roman civilization. At

¹ Herodian speaks of this wall as "the fortresses."

² At Winshields.

³ As a Roman legion never changed its quarters, the locality given it to defend becoming its permanent habitation, the population of these towns was mainly a military one, consisting of the troops, their families, and the traders who dealt in articles of various kinds required by the soldiers and their officers.

one of these towns, Borcovicus, are to be seen the remains of its Forum and Pretorium, and at another, Cilurnum, a street of houses, the arches of the town wall, and a set of Roman Baths. In one place we come upon the remains of the villa of a Roman noble (possibly the commander of that portion of the wall), with its baths and arrangements for heating the rooms of the villa with hot air.

Many votive altars also bring vividly before us the life of these Roman garrisons so far away from civilization, showing many touches of human nature which link those Roman soldiers with ourselves. As we stand amidst these ruins belonging to that far distant time we find on these altars the thanks offered by a party of hunters to the god Silvanus for help in their sport, a memorial slab put up by them to a famous boar which they had killed, an inscription in honour of a recently elected emperor, the mourning of a husband over a beloved wife, the regret of a master for the death of a faithful slave, the thanksgiving of an officer for his safe return from a dangerous service, the record put up by a tribune in memory of his little twelve-year-old daughter, and other memorials of a similar kind, the most pathetic of all being a slab with a graceful figure of a girl knitting, and under it an inscription recording that it is put up by "Basertes" in sorrowful memory of his young Palmyrean wife (who perhaps died from the rigour of that northern region, so different from her beautiful home in far-off Palmyra), detailing her gentle character and many virtues, and ending with the words,—they may be either hers or his,—“Alas for Basertes!”

The present fades. Again we hear the hoarse shouts of the conflict as the Scots make an attack upon the wall; again we listen to the rough jokes and loud laughter as at night the soldiers sit in groups over their wine discussing the incidents of the fight; again we see the Roman sentry as he stands at his post upon the wall on a bitter winter's night, stamping his feet to keep them warm, and ever watching for the restless and crafty enemy; again we witness the festivities when after a long interval an emperor visits this far-away frontier post; again we mourn with the unknown soldier Basertes as with a broken heart he lays in a desolate frontier grave the body of his devotedly loved young Palmyrean wife.

The control of the affairs of so wide an empire must have been difficult when the emperor was for three years at its furthest north-western corner, and that we do not hear of any such difficulties serves to show how excellent the Roman system of communications (with its regular organization for the rapid transmission of reports and orders by means of the corps of *frumentarii*) must have been, as well as the methods of government carried on by Severus and other emperors. Septimius Severus died in the imperial palace at York, the capital of Roman Britain, in February 211, at the age of sixty-five, after reigning eighteen years. He had taken his two sons with him to Britain, and Caracalla, his elder son, who was with him when he died, was suspected of having poisoned him.

The buildings in Rome connected with Septimius Severus are his Arch, his palace, his temple called the "Septizonium," and the Temple of Vesta. The small temple of Vesta, where the sacred fire was kept burning and the sacred relics guarded on which it was held that Rome's very existence depended, and which stood outside the House of the Vestal Virgins, was of course especially liable to destruction by fire. It was destroyed and rebuilt four times. The original temple built by King Numa Pompilius in B.C. 700 was destroyed by the Gauls in B.C. 390; the temple having been rebuilt was destroyed by fire in B.C. 241; again by fire in Nero's conflagration; and again by fire in the reign of Commodus. Septimius Severus rebuilt it for the fourth time; and the fragments of columns, cornices, etc., now lying round the ruined "podium" belong to this last temple built by Severus in 203. At the same time the empress Julia Domna rebuilt the House of the Vestal Virgins, the remains of which are still to be seen.

The Arch of Severus, which still stands, was erected by Severus in 203 on his return from his Parthian victories, in honour of himself and his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, whose names it bore.¹ The arch has reliefs recording the victories over the Parthians, and on the top of it at each side were originally statues of Caracalla and Geta, and in the centre a chariot in which stood a statue of Severus.² The chariot

¹ Geta's name has been erased from the inscription, this being done by Caracalla when he murdered him (Chap. IX, p. 301).

² Representations of it are found on coins.

was drawn by the four bronze horses which, originally brought from Corinth, first adorned an arch built by Nero, were transferred from thence by Trajan to his arch, and again transferred by Severus to his arch. They were removed by Constantine the Great to Constantinople in 328; thence they were carried off by the Venetians to Venice in 1204; from Venice they were carried off by Napoleon to Paris in 1797; and thence in 1815 were returned to Venice, where they now adorn St. Mark's cathedral, though as will be seen they really belong to Rome. They are of gilded bronze, and are among the finest ancient bronzes in existence.

Severus built the seventh and last of the imperial palaces on the Palatine hill. It stood at the south-east corner of the hill (where some of its ruins still remain), and absorbed a great part of Hadrian's palace which it adjoined and which was to a great extent destroyed in order to make room for it. It was of immense height, and not only extended over the south-eastern portion of the hill, but also jutted out over part of the valley between the Palatine and Cœlian hills, this portion being supported (like Caligula's palace) on lofty arched substructures. The whole height from the base of the hill to several stories above its summit must have been immense, and especially imposing when viewed from the slope of the Cœlian hill where the church of St. Gregory now stands. Little now remains of it except the ruins of a very spacious set of baths on the level of the top of the hill; these baths were richly decorated with marble linings and mosaics.

Adjoining this palace, and rising upwards from the foot of the hill, Severus also built his celebrated temple called the "Septizonium," a building of great splendour dedicated to the Sun and Moon, and named from its seven stories. Besides being a temple it included rooms for the priests of the worship for which it was built. Doubts have been expressed as to whether it could really have been seven stories high, but there is no improbability in this when we consider the immense height of the rest of the palace, reaching from the foot of the hill to several stories above its summit. This building shows that in regard to religion Severus chiefly adhered to that Syrian Sun-worship of which his wife Julia Domna was so ardent an adherent, and to which all of this family were devoted. The

whole of this dynasty, which furnished four emperors, was in fact an entirely non-Roman one. Part of the Septizonium existed as late as 1585, when Pope Sixtus V destroyed it in order to use its marble columns and other decorations for the adornment of St. Peter's.

But the buildings which Septimius Severus erected in Rome represented only a small part of his energies in this respect. He erected many more in his own province of North Africa, though owing to the devastation which that country has undergone in the course of seventeen centuries since his time only a few of these now remain. An Arch erected by him still exists at Thamugadi (Timgad), and another at Thugga, the latter being in especially good preservation; also at Thebessa a four-sided Arch erected by his wife Julia Domna in his memory, this Arch being of a superior type to the Arch of Severus in Rome, and of a kind of which no example now exists in Europe.¹

As regards literature and art no period is so barren as the reign of Septimius Severus. It is noticeable that the only great writers of his time are the prominent Christian writers, Tertullian and Origen, and that both of them belong, not to Italy, but to Africa.

(b) Matters concerning religion

It is in the reign of Septimius Severus that we are for the first time made to realize how far at this period the provinces of North Africa and Egypt were in advance of the provinces north of the Mediterranean in all matters of the intellect. In Egypt Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great, and inhabited by a Greek population who took pride in calling themselves "Macedonians," although it was considered the second city of the Roman empire, was only second by virtue of Rome being the capital. Alexandria was acknowledged as the first city of the empire in learning, and learned men of all countries congregated there to study in the various schools of philosophy. Similarly in North Africa, a province then crowded with rich and populous cities, its capital Carthage

¹ See Vol. II, Chap. XVIII, p. 81.

was scarcely less important in the same way. And from one or other of these two provinces (which together formed the great granary for the supply of corn to nearly all Europe) most of the chief leaders of thought at this period emanated. This had produced the result that Christianity had taken a much firmer hold south of the Mediterranean than in the countries north of that sea. Not only was the number of persons who had adopted that religion much greater, but also the men who were its leaders in North Africa and Egypt were much more intellectually gifted.

The two schools of thought represented by Alexandria and Carthage differed in an important respect; for while that of Alexandria was essentially Greek in spirit, that of Carthage was as essentially Roman. The former employed the Greek language, but the latter used Latin. And this difference of spirit between these two great schools of thought and learning reflected itself in the type of Christianity which each of them produced. Christianity in North Africa had a special tone of its own—severe, simple, earnest, and practical. And this tone subsequently became that of the Western Church, in contradistinction to that—less simple and more critical—which, emanating originally from Alexandria, became the distinctive feature of the Eastern Church. For Carthage, and not Rome, was the parent of Latin Christianity; while Alexandria was the parent of Greek Christianity.

These two schools of Christian thought both produced men whose names have been notable ever since. The well-known writer Tertullian at this time, fifty years later Cyprian, and two hundred years later Augustine, are the chief representatives of the type of Christianity which was produced by North Africa. Similarly Alexandria was at this time represented by Clement of Alexandria; and subsequently produced Origen, Athanasius, and Cyril.

Both of these important Churches of Egypt and North Africa have long since passed away, being overwhelmed by the Mahomedan invasion in the 7th century, but not until they had planted their knowledge and their spirit in the two portions of Christendom which they respectively inspired (afterwards represented by Rome and Constantinople), leaving to the world a permanent treasure in the writings of the celebrated

men they produced. It is indeed hard to realize that the modern Tunis and Algiers is the country of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, and that the modern Alexandria was once in learning the leading city of the world.

In the year 202 when the emperor Septimius Severus visited Egypt and North Africa Christianity in that region was in a highly flourishing condition. In all the numerous towns were large communities of Christians, and these numbered among them many of the well-born, the wealthy, and the cultured. At the head of the school of Christian philosophy in Alexandria was Clement of Alexandria, a man noted everywhere, and the still more celebrated Origen, "that brave, earnest, gentle soul," then a youth of eighteen, was a student there; while at Carthage Tertullian,¹ the first of the leading Christian writers to write in Latin, had just written his celebrated "Defence of Christianity," wherein he showed in powerful language the truth of that religion, pointed out how widely it had spread, and denounced the folly of the ancient religion of Rome. In it he says:—"We are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you—cities, castles, villages, assemblies, your very camps, your palace, your Senate, and your Forum. We leave you only your temples. We predominate in your armies; our numbers, in a single province, are greater."

Septimius Severus had no sympathy for the ancient religion of Rome; but neither had he any for Christianity, and he evidently considered that its extensive growth south of the Mediterranean demanded that it should be ruthlessly crushed. No sooner therefore had he returned to Rome than he issued in 203 an edict ordering that all persons who professed Christianity should be put to death; thus inaugurating the Fifth persecution. The edict was applicable to the whole empire, but since to the north of the Mediterranean the numbers who had survived the persecution carried out by Marcus Aurelius were few,² the chief severity of the Fifth persecution fell upon

¹ Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus was born at Carthage, his father being a Roman centurion. He is acknowledged as one of the great writers of all time.

² Irenæus, then Bishop of Lyons, is stated to have been among those martyred there in this persecution, about the year 203.

the Christians in the countries south of the Mediterranean.

Upon this edict being issued a terrible persecution began over the whole of the districts along the Mediterranean from Alexandria westwards to Mauretania, and lasted for eight years (203–211). In this Fifth persecution the number of those who perished in these two provinces Egypt and North Africa was immense, but while we read of priests being burnt and virgins shamefully tortured, we have no means of knowing how many persons were destroyed. In fact it was probably impossible for those in one province while suffering thus to ascertain how many perished in like manner in other provinces; but Tertullian's words (quoted below) show how immense the number was. Among those who suffered death at Alexandria was the father of Origen, Leonides, who was a professor of rhetoric there. He left a widow with seven children, of whom Origen was the eldest, who, besides having to remain in hiding, were plunged into the greatest poverty, as the property of Leonides was confiscated. At Alexandria also perished Eugenia, whose father held the high position of Proconsul of Egypt. She was martyred at Alexandria in 203, not even her exalted station having power to save her.

Tertullian when this persecution began addressed a letter to the Proconsul of North Africa indignantly protesting against such a crime, and saying:—"Thousands of both sexes, of every rank, will crowd to martyrdom, will exhaust your fires, and weary your swords. Carthage must be half depopulated; the principal persons in the city, even perhaps your own most intimate friends and kindred, must be sacrificed." The letter shows how numerous were those slain; for it produced no effect, and sacrificed they all were. Tertullian himself and Clement of Alexandria were considered by the Christians too valuable to the Church to be allowed to surrender themselves as martyrs, and they were made to go away and hide themselves in the desert to the south, which constantly afforded a refuge to prominent men in the North African Church, when such could be prevailed upon to accede to the view that their lives would be more valuable to the Church than their death. But, as Tertullian had predicted, many thousands perished. Of the incidents of this severe persecution in Egypt and North

Africa scarcely any definite information has survived ; five centuries afterwards the whole of this great North African Church was so completely destroyed by the Mahomedan conquest that nothing of it remained.

But we have just one record of this persecution under Septimius Severus. It relates to a little group of people who among many others suffered at Carthage in the year 203. It is the account of the martyrdom of Vivia Perpetua, a young Roman lady of good family, and her brother Securus, together with seven servants of their father's household, Jocundus, Artaxius, Quintus, two young converts, Secundulus and Saturninus, and two slaves, Revocatus and Felicitas. The whole account is written (except of course the final scene) by Vivia Perpetua herself. Regarding it Dean Milman says, "Of all the histories of martyrdom there is no other which is so unexaggerated in its tone and which abounds in such exquisite touches of nature."¹

Carthage, refounded by Augustus, had by this time grown in two hundred years into a most splendid city. From its long line of busy quays, extending for more than a mile along the sea-shore, the ground sloped gradually upwards to a low range of hills on which, in the centre of the city, stood the Theatre, the Odeon (or covered theatre), many fine Pagan temples, and other principal buildings, with in the centre the Byrsa, or castle hill, occupied by the palace of the Proconsul of North Africa. The city possessed various sets of Roman Baths, the largest being the Baths of Antoninus Pius, erected by that emperor in 145, and situated near the sea-shore. A little to the north-east of these Baths were the *Roman Stairs*,² a splendid flight of marble steps which ascended from the quay to the central square of the city, the Platea Nova ; and a short distance beyond these steps was the principal prison, the Carcer Castrensis. The magnificent Amphitheatre of Carthage, the largest in North Africa, was situated outside the city to the west, about half a mile from the castle hill. This great Amphitheatre was the pride of the inhabitants

¹ Milman, *History of Christianity*.

² The marble blocks of these remarkable stairs have been used for building the modern cathedral, but their foundations still remain.

of Carthage, and was decorated with great splendour.¹ Near it was the immense Circus, 770 yards long by 110 yards wide, its *spina* (round which the chariots raced) being 380 yards long.

Vivia Perpetua was about twenty-two years of age, married, and with a baby a few months old. Her family were wealthy, and she had only lately become a Christian. Her father and mother were living, and she had two brothers, of whom one was also a Christian, and suffered martyrdom with her. That she had good abilities is fully shown by her being able to write such a record. After relating how she and the others were seized, she says, "When we were in the hands of the persecutors my father, in his tender affection for me, strove earnestly to pervert me from the faith. But I said, 'My father, look at this pitcher; can we call it anything else but what it is?' He replied, 'Certainly not.' And I said, 'Nor can I call myself by any other name than that of a Christian.' In wrath at that word my father cast himself on me as if he would have torn out my eyes, but he only hurt me a little." Seeing that it would end in her death, and in grievous disgrace to their family, her father did his utmost, but at length gave up the effort for the time, and left her; and they were all dragged away and thrown into that terrible place a Roman prison, the *Carcer Castrensis*, Perpetua being separated from her baby, which was left behind. She says, "I was terrified, "for I had never before seen any such total darkness. O "miserable day, from the dreadful heat of the prisoners "crowded together,² and the insults of the soldiers! Moreover "I was torn with anxiety for my baby. Two of our deacons, "however, who ministered to us, by payment of money "obtained our removal for some hours in the day to a more "open part of the prison. There each of the captives had "space by themselves, and I was allowed to suckle my baby,

¹ This Amphitheatre remained in perfect preservation until the 16th century, and Edrisi, the geographer, who wrote in the 12th century, has described it as one of matchless splendour. Since the 16th century it has been broken up for building materials, and only a few portions of it now remain (see p. 299, footnote).

² This shows that there were many other such prisoners besides the little party belonging to the household of Vivia Perpetua's father.

“ who was wasting away with hunger. In my anxiety I addressed my mother and tried to console her, and commended my child to my brother ; and I began to despond at seeing them despond on my account. And for several days I suffered this anxiety regarding my baby. At last I prevailed with those who had charge of us to allow me to have it with me in the prison, and at once I regained my strength, and being relieved from my trouble about my baby the prison became to me like a palace.” Then she relates a dream which she had while they were in prison which showed that they were not to be released, but were all to suffer martyrdom ; “ So we understood that our passion was to be, and began to have no hope in this world.” Then she says,— “ After a few days when it was rumoured that we were to be examined my father came to the prison, wasted away with anxiety, to pervert me. And he said, ‘ Have compassion, O my daughter, on my grey hairs ; have compassion on thy father. If I have thus brought thee up to the flower of thine age, if I have loved thee beyond all thy brothers, do not expose me to this disgrace. Have regard to thy brothers, have regard to thy mother, and thy mother’s sister ; have regard to thy little son, who will not be able to live without thee. Lay aside thy purpose, and do not destroy us all.’ Thus spake my father, kissing my hands in his fondness, and throwing himself at my feet ; and in his tears he called me, not his daughter, but his queen. And I was grieved at heart for my father, and full of pain, because he alone of all my family would not be able to rejoice at my martyrdom. And I tried to console him, saying, ‘ In this trial we are not in our own power, but in that of God ; what God wills will take place.’ And he went away very sorrowful.” Then she relates how the next day, while they were having their meal, they were roughly seized, dragged along to the Forum, and there brought before the praetor, Hilarianus. “ It came to my turn to stand at the bar. And my father appeared there, carrying my child in his arms. And he drew me down from the step of the tribunal, and said in a beseeching tone, ‘ Have compassion on your child.’ And Hilarianus, the praetor, who then, in the place of the Proconsul Minucius Timinianus, lately dead, had received the power of the

“ sword, said to me, ‘ Spare the grey hairs of your father ;
 “ spare your child ; offer the sacrifice for the welfare of the
 “ emperor.’ And I replied, ‘ I do it not.’ Then Hilarianus
 “ said, ‘ Art thou a Christian ? ’ I answered, ‘ I am a Chris-
 “ tian.’ And as my father stood there still pressing me not
 “ to answer thus, Hilarianus ordered him to be thrust down
 “ and smitten with a rod. And I was full of pain that this
 “ should happen to my father, and I was as grieved for his
 “ sorrowful old age as if I had been smitten myself. Then
 “ Hilarianus passed sentence on us all, and condemned us to
 “ the wild beasts ; and we went back in cheerfulness to the
 “ prison.” Then she tells how she was deprived of her baby,
 which her father kept, refusing to send it to the prison ; how
 she induced a deacon to go to him begging for it, but he refused ;
 and of her grief thereat, both for her own sake and that of
 the child. “ And as the day of the games approached, when
 “ we were to suffer, my father entered the prison, worn out
 “ with affliction, and began to tear his beard, and to throw
 “ himself down with his face upon the ground, and to wish
 “ that he could die, and to speak words which would have
 “ moved the heart of any living creature. And I was pained
 “ to the heart for the sorrows of his old age.” Lastly she
 relates how in the prison the slave Felicitas gave birth to
 a child, how she comforted and helped her, and how they two
 prayed together. And when they were treated with great
 severity by the governor of the prison, Perpetua boldly
 remonstrated with him, speaking with such scorn of the
 meanness of the insults to which they were subjected that
 he was ashamed and desisted from them.

At length the day of the games arrived,¹ and they were taken
 out with the rest of the prisoners to die. Their prison, the
 Carcer Castrensis, being at the eastern side of Carthage, near
 the *Roman Stairs*, and the Amphitheatre being outside the
 city to the west, they had about a mile and a half to walk,
 the first half of the distance being through the most crowded
 part of the city. After they emerged from thence Perpetua
 sang psalms on the way, and continued doing so until they

¹ Apparently on the day before, when bidding adieu, Perpetua had
 given to her elder brother or her father the record she had written
 while in the prison.

reached the Amphitheatre. Their sufferings were grievous and prolonged. The men were torn by leopards and bears. Perpetua and Felicitas were stripped naked, hung up in nets, and gored by a furious cow. Released from this, Perpetua raised the fainting and mortally wounded Felicitas. Finally they were killed by the sword of a gladiator, Perpetua guiding the sword with her own hands to her throat. Her last words were to encourage her brother to remain firm to the end.¹

This vivid record, told in her own simple words, shows us something of what a well-born young Roman lady of this period could be like. Vivia Perpetua, brought up in a luxurious home, and shrinking as any girl would from the darkness of the prison, the heat, and the insults of the soldiers, but brave, tender, unselfish, and steadfast, with her inability to call herself what she was not, her trouble about her baby, her entire absence of self-pity, her anguish of compassion for the sorrow of her father, her matronly dignity and high spirit as she remonstrates with the governor at the insults heaped upon them, and her calm faithfulness unto death, is one of the most touching and noble characters which either that or any other age can show.²

It is strange to realize that none of those who suffered in these persecutions of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, displaying such noble steadfastness, had ever seen a written Bible,³ or

¹ The ruins of the Amphitheatre of Carthage in which Vivia Perpetua and her companions were martyred have within the last few years been excavated. The arena, some of the seats for spectators, the cells for wild beasts, and the passages below the arena are all now visible. A portion of the prison in which she and her companions were confined is also to be seen, a little to the north of the foot of the *Roman Stairs*. Near the ruins of the large church called the Basilica Majorum, built over the grave in which the mangled bodies of Vivia Perpetua and Felicitas were buried, was recently unearthed part of a broken stone tablet which bore parts of the names of Perpetua, Felicitas, Revocatus, and Saturninus.

² Vivia Perpetua is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 7th March.

³ What books should be considered inspired, and should form the New Testament, was not decided until nearly two hundred years later; those books also were in manuscript, were carefully treasured, and were not available to be generally seen; while none of them were in North Africa.

heard the preaching of an Apostle, and that all they had learnt of this new religion for which they died had been learnt from the oral teaching of those who handed down the message.

No wonder that with such examples before him a great writer of modern times who was not a Christian, stirred by all the pathos and beauty of this battle waged by weakness which, conquering by suffering, eventually won the day, called it "that epic poem of Christian martyrdom." But that victory was as yet far from won; many other persecutions lay still ahead, and many another noble life was to be laid down in the same manner before the victory so steadfastly and bravely fought for would be gained.

CHAPTER IX

REIGNS OF

CARACALLA, MACRINUS, ELAGABALUS, ALEXANDER
SEVERUS, MAXIMIN, GORDIAN I, GORDIAN II,
GORDIAN III, AND PHILIP THE ARABIAN

CARACALLA

211 — 217

(a) Matters other than religion

THE death of the emperor Septimius Severus was followed by a period of thirty-eight years during which the throne was occupied by a succession of incapable emperors under whom a serious weakening of the central authority took place.

Caracalla,¹ the elder of the two sons of Septimius Severus and Julia Domna, was twenty-four when he succeeded his father as emperor. He was a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant, without human affections, and showing much of the African in his nature. His portrait-bust shows a low type of head, and the African blood is apparent. Before he was twenty he tried to assassinate his father, and when the latter died at York was suspected of having made a second attempt and succeeded. Septimius Severus had left his two sons joint emperors. As a result Caracalla, soon after they had both returned from Britain to Rome, murdered Geta in the Palace, killing him in their mother's arms with the help of several soldiers, while Julia Domna in trying to protect him was herself wounded in the hand in the struggle, and covered with the blood of her younger son (27th Feb 212). Caracalla within the next twelve months butchered about 20,000 persons

¹ Plate XLVII. Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

of both sexes declared by him to have been adherents of Geta. The rest of his life was spent in the maddest acts of bloodshed, caused it was said by torment of conscience for the murder of his brother. About a year after that event he quitted Rome, to which he never returned, spending the remaining five years of his life chiefly in Egypt and Asia, plundering and committing atrocious crimes wherever he went. The most important act of his reign was the issue of an edict granting the name and privileges of Roman citizens to all the free inhabitants of the empire. This was done by Caracalla in order, by means of the tax levied on all who gained the honour, to raise money wherewith to satisfy the army, which he pampered in every way. At length in March 217, after reigning six years, his minister Macrinus had him assassinated during a journey from Edessa ¹ to Carrhae, and the world was relieved of a monster.

The chief building connected with Caracalla is his immense set of Baths, which even in their decay form the largest mass of ruins in Rome, and display more completely than any other example what these edifices were like. These Baths are the chief relic in Rome of the dynasty established by Septimius Severus, being begun by Caracalla, extended by Elagabalus, and completed by Alexander Severus. Their magnificence was unparalleled. More than a mile in circumference, and adorned with everything which could add beauty to their lofty halls and porticos, they included, besides the actual baths, sculpture-galleries, picture-galleries, reading-rooms, a footrace course, and arrangements for many other entertainments, the whole forming a gigantic public club-house, where for the payment of less than sixpence a man could spend the whole day surrounded by everything that could give pleasure to mind and body. The baths could accommodate 1600 bathers at once. In the centre was the cold water swimming bath,

¹ Edessa, about twenty miles beyond the Euphrates, was the capital of the little state of Osrhoëne, the most fertile part of Mesopotamia. Frequently conquered and relinquished by the Romans during a hundred years, Osrhoëne was through the treachery of Caracalla finally subdued and made a Roman colony in 216, Abgarus, the last king of Edessa, being sent in chains to Rome. The chief Roman garrison in Osrhoëne was at Nisibis.



[Broch.]

CARACALLA.

Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.



[Broch.]

PHILIP THE ARABIAN.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

the Frigidarium ; next to it was the Tepidarium, or warm bath, with at the corners four rooms for hot baths ; and beyond this the circular Sudatorium, or sweating-room, the roof of which was supported by bars of brass interwoven like the straps of a sandal, with a circular opening in the centre of the dome, and which was to the Baths of Caracalla what the Pantheon, before it was turned into a temple, was to the Baths of Agrippa.¹ Pavements ornamented with the finest mosaics, walls of Egyptian granite encrusted with the green marble of Numidia, a perpetual stream of warm water pouring into the granite and basalt basins through mouths of massive silver, and artistic decorations on all sides, made these Baths like the halls of an emperor's palace.² On either side of the Sudatorium were the women's Baths. To right and left of the Tepidarium were the sculpture-gallery, the picture-gallery, and the reading-rooms. On either side of the Frigidarium were anointing-rooms, shampooing-rooms, dressing-rooms, and eating-rooms. And extending the entire length of the building on either side was a lofty Peristyle, where athletic exercises were performed, while along the third side were extensive halls where philosophers declaimed and poets recited. Outside were beautiful gardens and the footrace course.

It is often imagined that these great Roman Baths, built at different times by Augustus, Nero, Titus, Caracalla, Diocletian, Constantine, and other emperors, were for use by the richer classes, their magnificence inducing that idea. But this was not the case. The nobles had their own smaller sets of Baths of a similar kind in their extensive palaces,³ and these great Baths built by the emperors were for the people ; each of them was in fact a People's Palace. And when we compare their size and general arrangements, their costly style of decoration, their libraries and art galleries, and the numerous

¹ Chap. I, p. 10.

² "The wall-linings, columns, and pavements of the Baths of Caracalla were one mass of gorgeous material ; the rich Numidian yellows, Phrygian purples, and deep yellows, reds, and browns of the Oriental alabaster forming striking contrasts with the whites of Luni, the red porphyries, green serpentines, and Egyptian granites." (Mary Winneals Porter, *What Rome was Built With*.)

³ See Vol. II, Chap. XVIII, pp. 82 and 96.

masterpieces of art adorning them, with the general character of any institutions of the nature of a People's Palace in the present day we obtain a measure of how far in advance even of the 20th century Rome was in its manner of providing for such a purpose.

These Baths of Caracalla were crowded with all the best works of art of the time, other than those already collected in the Villa of Hadrian ; and their ruins, like those of the latter, have formed a mine from whence an immense number of the choicest works of art now in the Museums of Rome and Naples have been obtained, having been preserved from destruction by being buried in the débris of the ruined halls. The principal of these works are the Farnese Bull, the Farnese Hercules, the colossal Flora, the Venus Callipyge, the Two Gladiators, and the Atreus and Thyeste, besides various beautiful mosaic pavements, and innumerable bronzes, cameos, bas-reliefs, and medallions. These Baths remained intact until the 6th century, when they were occupied by the Goths under Witigis, and in 546 were finally destroyed by Totila. In the 16th century Pope Paul III carried off all the remaining marble decorations for the adornment of the Farnese palace. The last of the pillars of the Peristyle to be removed was that which now supports the figure of Justice in the Piazza Sta Trinità in Florence. The urns of green basalt now in the Vatican museum, and the granite basins in the Piazza Farnese in Rome came from these Baths. The statue of Hercules (known as the Farnese Hercules) which stood in these Baths of Caracalla gives an example of the dispersion of all ancient fragments which has taken place at Rome ; for while the torso was found in these Baths, the head of the statue was discovered at the bottom of a well in Trastevere, and the legs at a farm ten miles from Rome.

(b) Matters concerning religion

The persecution carried out under the edict of Septimius Severus was not continued by Caracalla. It stopped on his succeeding to the throne, and the Christians had rest from persecution for a generation.

MACRINUS

217—218

After having Caracalla assassinated, the disloyal minister Macrinus procured his own election as emperor by the troops in Syria, though not without some reluctance on their part, as they despised his military talents and want of personal courage. The members of the Senate were indignant that a man of such low rank should dare to put himself into a position which they considered should only be held by some distinguished man of senatorial rank. Nevertheless they confirmed this election. The first act of Macrinus was to reduce the capable empress Julia Domna to a position of such humiliating dependence that she put an end to her life. At the same time he banished her equally capable sister, Julia Mæsa, from Antioch, where the court then was, and she returned to Emesa. Macrinus however very soon made himself unpopular with the army, with the result that the troops at Emesa proclaimed the young Elagabalus, grandson of Julia Mæsa, as emperor. His cause was taken up by other troops in Syria, and Macrinus marching against him was defeated in a battle outside Antioch and slain, after reigning only a year.

ELAGABALUS

218—222

The proper name of Elagabalus¹ was Bassianus Varius Avitus, son of Caracalla's first cousin Julia Soæmias. Julia Domna's sister, the ambitious Julia Mæsa, had been married to Marcus Avitus, by whom she had two daughters, Julia Soæmias, married to Varius Marcellus, and Julia Mammæa, married to Gessius Marcianus. Each of these daughters had an only son. The family came from Emesa, and thither on her banishment by Macrinus, Julia Mæsa retired, accompanied by her two daughters, both widows, and their two sons, Bassianus Varius Avitus and Alexander Severus. The former of these two grandsons of Julia Mæsa, though only about sixteen, was at Emesa, through her influence, appointed high priest of the Syrian sun-god Elagabalus,² and

¹ The form "Heliogabalus," often met with, was due to a subsequent misunderstanding of the Roman writers.

² Worshipped at Emesa under the form of a black conical stone which was said to have fallen from heaven.

took that name as his own. His exceedingly handsome appearance and splendid ceremonials, together with the assertion made by his grandmother Julia Mæsa that in reality Caracalla was his father, soon made him very popular with the troops in Syria, who shortly afterwards won for him the throne, as already related, and he was at once accepted by the Senate, though he was only seventeen.

Elagabalus, after spending about a year in Syria, reached Rome in 219. He entered the city in state, and his appearance amazed the Romans. He was dressed in his sacerdotal robes of silk and gold, on his head was a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were covered with costly gems, his eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with vermilion and white. The black conical stone, the emblem of the god Elagabalus, set with precious gems, was borne before him in a chariot drawn by six white horses richly caparisoned; and the streets of Rome through which the solemn procession passed were strewn with gold-dust.

Elagabalus thereupon proclaimed the Syrian sun-god the chief deity in Rome, and celebrated splendid ceremonies in honour of the new deity, at which ceremonies he himself danced in public as high priest. This offended the Romans; and they were soon also still more scandalized at the shameless profligacy of Elagabalus, whose enormities surpassed even those of Commodus, and shocked even a Roman public. In a short time his popularity with the troops began to decline, and they showed that they preferred his cousin Alexander Severus; whereupon Elagabalus made an attempt to get the latter assassinated, but it was frustrated by their grandmother Julia Mæsa. A second attempt of the same kind followed, which produced a mutiny among the troops, resulting in both Elagabalus and his mother Julia Soæmias being killed in the imperial palace on the Palatine hill on the 10th March, 222. Elagabalus, who thus died at the age of twenty-one after a reign of four years, notwithstanding his atrocious profligacy and fantastic proceedings had some remarkable ideas. His proposal to convert the whole Roman Empire to the worship of Mithras was the first attempt to make the religion of the empire homogeneous, and the first attempt towards monotheism.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS

222 — 235

(a) Matters other than religion

On the death of Elagabalus, his first cousin, Alexander Severus,¹ then seventeen, was proclaimed emperor by the Praetorian Guards, and accepted by the Senate. He had a good disposition, but was entirely under the dominion of his mother, Julia Mammæa,² who though she was a woman of many virtues, and surrounded her son with wise counsellors, had not the wit to see that a military empire could not be ruled satisfactorily by a woman's hand, and that her son would never be popular if thus kept under her control. Moreover she was powerless to cope with the unsatisfactory state of the army, which, owing to long licence under Caracalla, Macrinus, and Elagabalus, had developed a spirit of insubordination which was a national danger. A feeble attempt made by her son to reform the grave disorders in the Praetorian Guards roused them to fury, as a consequence of which Alexander Severus was forced to sacrifice the life of the celebrated Ulpian, their Prefect, his most able minister, and called "the friend of the laws and of the people." These troops also clamoured for the death of Dion Cassius, the historian, who in command of the legions in Pannonia had begun to introduce a reform in discipline. But in this case Alexander Severus stood firm, appointed Dion Cassius consul, but advised him to retire from Rome. Nevertheless, notwithstanding failure by Alexander Severus to cope with the insubordinate spirit in the army, the empire as a whole was well administered during his reign of thirteen years, and its prosperity maintained.

For the first ten years of his reign Alexander Severus remained almost entirely at Rome, inhabiting that final and magnificent addition to the Palace of the Caesars which had been built by Septimius Severus, and which had as its outlying portion the splendid temple, the "Septizonium," for the Syrian sun-worship to which all this family were devoted. A temperate government, improvements in the administration,

¹ Plate XLVIII. Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.

² Plate XLIX. Portrait-bust in the British Museum, London.

and a virtuous emperor made the people contented with a rule which was in strong contrast to the conditions which had been endured by them during forty-two years.

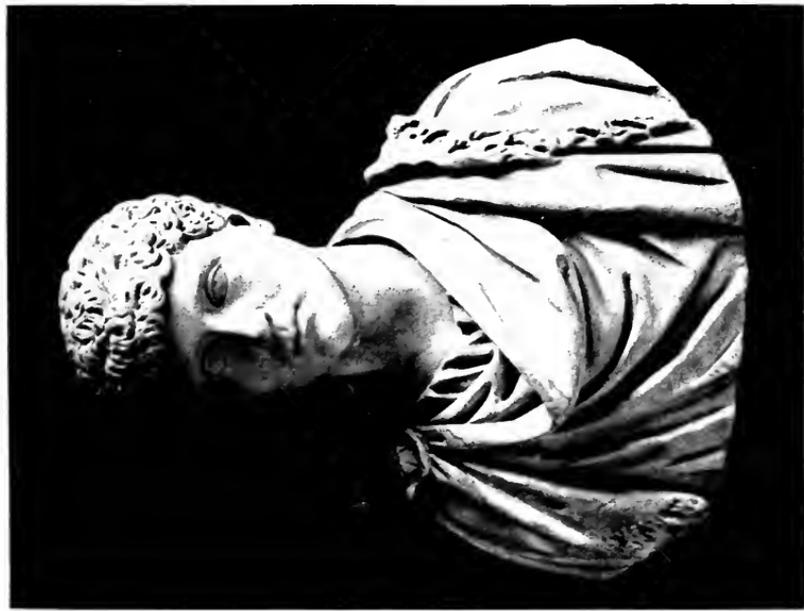
The chief work which Alexander Severus carried out during this time at Rome was the construction of yet another aqueduct to supply water to the city, the water for it being taken from the hills near Gabii, to the east of Rome. This, the *Aqua Alexandrina*, was the last aqueduct constructed, and brought the total number of the aqueducts of Rome up to eleven.¹ It has been calculated by experts that the supply of pure water thus given to Rome amounted to as much as 230 gallons per head of the population daily, though a more recent estimate reduces it to about 100 gallons per head. But even this lower estimate would show an amount of pure water supplied to the citizens of Rome in the time of the emperors equal to five times as much as is supplied in the present day to our modern cities by the most liberal municipalities.

At length after ten years' peaceful government in Rome, when Alexander Severus was twenty-seven he was called away in 232 to the eastern frontier to face the Persians, who, under Ardishir, or Artaxerxes, the founder of the new Sassanian empire² (which lasted for the next four centuries), had, six years before, overthrown the Parthian empire, killing its last monarch, Artabanus, and were now pressing the Roman frontier. Artaxerxes laid claim to all the dominions which had been ruled by Cyrus, and called upon the Romans to retire altogether from Asia and confine themselves to Europe. Alex-

¹ The eleven aqueducts were :—

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1. Appia | } | constructed in the time of the Republic. |
| 2. Anio Vetus | | |
| 3. Marcia | | |
| 4. Tepula | } | constructed by Augustus. |
| 5. Julia | | |
| 6. Virgo | | |
| 7. Alsietina | | |
| 8. Claudia | } | constructed by Claudius. |
| 9. Anio Novus | | |
| 10. Trajana, | | constructed by Trajan. |
| 11. Alexandrina, | | constructed by Alexander Severus. |

² The nominal capital of the Sassanian empire was Istakr, but its real metropolis was Ctesiphon.



[Broc.]

ALEXANDER SEVERUS.

Portrait-bust in the Vatican museum, Rome.



[Masse.]

JULIA MAMMÆA, MOTHER OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS.

Portrait-bust in the British Museum, London.

ander Severus proceeded to the east to take command in the war. There are conflicting accounts of what took place ; it would appear that the Roman army showed an unusual want of discipline, but there seems no doubt that they did eventually defeat the Persians, inflicting so much loss upon them that they retreated in disorder entirely out of Mesopotamia, and in 233 Alexander Severus returned to Rome and celebrated a triumph for his victory.

In 234 Alexander Severus had again to leave Rome and proceed to the Rhine frontier to oppose an incursion of the Allemanni. He was accompanied by his mother, and in the following year, chiefly in consequence of her presence, a mutiny among the troops on the Rhine, instigated by their leader Maximin, occurred, in which, on the 19th March 235, both Alexander Severus, then thirty years old, and his mother Julia Mammæa were killed.

(b) Matters concerning religion

Notwithstanding the general slaughter of Christians in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, by the time that Alexander Severus began to reign another generation had grown up, and there was again a considerable community of Christians at Rome ; while under his enlightened rule Christianity began to occupy a position such as it had never before attained.

Alexander Severus, though he was an adherent of the Syrian sun-worship, was extremely tolerant towards all religions. He paid honour equally to the gods of Rome, to the gods of Egypt,¹ to the Jewish religion, and to the Christian religion. In this respect he was quite unlike any other emperor who ever sat on the imperial throne. He placed in his own room statues of those whom he considered the great religious teachers of mankind, Orpheus, Abraham, Apollonius of Tyana, and Christ.

As a consequence of this attitude on the part of the emperor we find the Christian religion during this reign for the first time coming out, as it were, into the light of day, and find churches being built, and Bishops appearing with the leaders of other religions at the emperor's court. One of the churches still existing in Rome, the church of Sta Maria in Trastevere (though

¹ He enlarged the temples of Isis and Serapis.

largely restored in 1140), was originally erected at this time, being built in 222 by Bishop Calixtus.¹

MAXIMIN

235 — 238

On the death of Alexander Severus the legions on the Rhine proclaimed the successful traitor Maximin emperor, and the Senate had to acquiesce. Maximin, whose father was a Goth and his mother an Alan, was a barbarian shepherd of Thrace. He is said to have been over eight feet in height, and his enormous size and unusual strength had caused Septimius Severus to make him a soldier in the Roman army. Caracalla promoted him to be a centurion; and Alexander Severus very foolishly promoted him to the command of a legion. He was a mere brutal common soldier of the lowest type, and was jealous of all who were distinguished either by birth, accomplishments, or services to the State. He never visited Italy. His three years' reign was spent entirely in his camps on the Danube and the Rhine, where he eventually drove back the invasion of the Allemanni. His three years of power were marked by the most barbarous and incessant cruelty and oppression. At length in 238, universal indignation being aroused, a revolt against him took place which was supported by the Senate. Maximin marched with an army towards Italy, but whilst besieging Aquileia on the way he and his son were murdered by a body of the Praetorian Guards, and their heads sent to the Senate at Rome.

GORDIAN I AND GORDIAN II

238

When the revolt against Maximin took place, the people of the province of Africa forced their Proconsul, Marcus Antonius Gordianus (Gordian I)² to become emperor, and the choice was eagerly confirmed by the Senate. At last, after forty-five years under non-Roman emperors, the empire had a Roman,

¹ The roof is supported by twenty-two ancient columns of various lengths taken from Pagan temples, and the whole of the apse is a mass of early Christian mosaics.

² Plate L. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

and one of the best type, as emperor. He was descended on his father's side from the Gracchi, and on his mother's side from Trajan, while his wife was a granddaughter of Antoninus Pius. He was exceedingly wealthy, a man of high character and great accomplishments, and immensely and deservedly popular with the Romans. He had led a retired life at Rome during the reigns of Caracalla and Elagabalus, but was made by Alexander Severus Proconsul of Africa, and became as popular there as he was in Rome. On being elected emperor his son (Gordian II), who was no less distinguished for his sterling character and accomplishments, was associated with him in the office.

But while the Senate were rejoicing over this election the new emperor and his son were already dead. Most of the provinces had sided with the new emperors; but Capelianus, commanding in the adjacent province of Mauretania on behalf of Maximin, marched against the Gordians, and in the battle which took place both father and son were killed, to the great grief of the Romans, after reigning only one month.

GORDIAN III

238 — 244

On the death of Gordian I and Gordian II the Senate chose Maximus and Balbinus as joint emperors; but at their inauguration the popular clamour for a Gordian was so great that in compliance with it the Senate associated with them the young grandson of Gordian I and nephew of Gordian II, Antonius Gordianus Pius (Gordian III),¹ though he was only thirteen. But the Praetorian Guards, being determined not to have emperors who would be amenable to the Senate, forthwith murdered Maximus and Balbinus, leaving the boy Gordian III sole emperor. At first he was under the control of his mother, but after a time his tutor in rhetoric, Misiheus, persuaded him to throw off this control; and soon afterwards Misiheus, whose daughter Gordian married, was made the Prefect of the Praetorian Guards.

It gives us an insight into Roman methods in the manage-

¹ Plate LI. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

ment of the army to find Gordian III, shortly after he became emperor, as a punishment ¹ transferring the Third Legion for twenty-five years from Lambæsis in North Africa to Cologne on the Rhine. Military work on the Rhine was arduous and incessant; it was the work of a garrison lining the walls of the imperial fortress and ever in contact with formidable foes, while the surrounding districts were in the 3rd century poor and scantily populated, and very different from the rich and populous districts of North Africa, where moreover military work was exceedingly light. And as in this transfer to the Rhine frontier for twenty-five years the legion had to take with them their wives and families, no doubt the move was no light punishment.

In 242, when Gordian III was seventeen, the Persians invaded Mesopotamia and Syria, and advanced as far as Antioch. The young emperor, for the last time recorded in history, opened the doors of the temple of Janus, and marched in person to the East, accompanied by Misiheus, who proved an able general. In a short campaign the Persians were completely defeated, and by the year 244 were driven out of the Roman territories. Gordian then proposed to march upon their capital by way of the Euphrates, and started to do so. But on reaching the frontier and beginning to advance into the Persian dominions, a traitor, Philip the Arabian, poisoned Misiheus, and roused a mutiny in which Gordian III was killed, at the age of nineteen (March 244). A monument to his memory on the banks of the Euphrates, near where it is joined by the Aboras, marks the spot where this promising young emperor died.

PHILIP THE ARABIAN

244 — 249

In his early life Philip, an Arab by birth, was a robber by profession. Entering the Roman army, he had contrived by a mixture of boldness and artifice to rise to a position in which he was able to aspire to supplanting Misiheus. After having poisoned the latter he induced the young emperor to

¹ Possibly for having joined in the revolt against Gordian I.



[Bracc.]

GORDIAN I.
Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.



[Bracc.]

GORDIAN III.
Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.



give him the vacant office of Prefect of the Praetorian Guards. In this position he aimed still higher, and shortly after gaining it, first contrived to create an artificial scarcity of food in the camp, and then when this irritated the troops, attributed it to the incapacity of the young emperor, who was killed in the mutiny thereby aroused. Having thus managed to destroy both Gordian III and his general Misitheus, Philip succeeded in getting the army in Mesopotamia to proclaim him as emperor. And, strangely enough, the rest of the empire acquiesced in their choice, and no rival came forward to contest the throne with this unworthy occupant.

Philip the Arabian ¹ reigned for five years (244-249). He had an evil reputation, but very little is known of his reign except the one great event for which in 248 he came from the east to Rome, and which for the time threw all other matters into the shade. For in the year 248 "Great Rome" celebrated her thousandth birthday. And in proud glorification of her world-wide power magnificent ceremonies were everywhere held to honour this thousandth anniversary of the founding of the city of Rome.² In Syria, in Egypt, in Africa, in Spain, in Gaul, in Britain, on the Rhine, on the Danube, in Italy, in Greece, and in Asia Minor, all round the wide circle of Rome's dominion the time-honoured "Secular Games" were held in every city with unusual grandeur and numberless festivities to mark an occasion which was unique in the history of the world.

The "Secular Games," revived by Augustus, and supposed to be held every hundred years, had been celebrated by Claudius, by Domitian, and by Antoninus Pius. They were now celebrated, for the fourth time in 265 years, with the greatest splendour to mark this solemn anniversary. These time-honoured festivities were in every way calculated to impress the imagination. Occurring as they did at such long intervals, none of the spectators had seen them before, and none could expect to see them again. At Rome on these occasions the Campus Martius was illuminated with innumerable lamps, and resounded with music, slaves and non-Romans being excluded

¹ Plate LII (p. 302). Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

² The year Anno Urbis Conditae 1000.

from the ceremonies ; mystic sacrifices and sacred dances were performed during three successive nights by the banks of the Tiber ; and a band of twenty-seven youths and twenty-seven virgins, chosen from the noblest families of Rome and whose parents were both alive, sang religious hymns imploring the gods, according to the faith of the ancient oracles, to continue their favour, both to the present and to the coming generation, and still to maintain the power, the virtue, and the happiness of the Roman people.

It is possible that this solemn festival of Rome's glory may have induced men to desire to have a more worthy representative, and a Roman, upon the throne. At all events in the following year (249) the legions in Mœsia revolted from Philip the Arabian and chose their capable commander Decius as emperor. Decius marched into Italy, and a battle was fought between him and Philip near Verona, in which Philip was defeated and killed.

The death of Philip the Arabian brought to an end the series of weak or incapable emperors who for more than a generation had occupied the imperial throne. We must not, however, be led by this state of things into regarding the history of the court as that of the empire. The administration of the provinces still continued to be conducted, upon the "maxims of Augustus," by governors who as a rule were just and capable, and the people in the various provinces of this wide empire were scarcely affected at all by the vagaries of an Elagabalus, or the brutalities of a Maximin. The one and only real calamity to the people of the Roman Empire, at this and all times of its history, was war ; such war, that is, as took place upon an incursion of any of the barbarian tribes into a province. Civil Wars between rival claimants for the throne had little effect in this way ; a battle here or there between such claimants affected even the province in which it took place but little, and the remainder of the empire not at all. But an invasion of a province by the Parthians or the barbarous tribes of the north (ending in the death of most of the male inhabitants, the carrying off of the women and girls as prisoners, and the destruction or pillage of all valuable property), wrought more desolation and misery in a year than was suffered from any number of battles between rivals for the throne, or from

any amount of crimes or follies committed by vicious or incapable emperors at Rome.

Up to this time the only real calamities of this kind had been the five incursions of the Parthians, the Marcomanni, the Quadi, and the Allemanni in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, which had devastated the eastern frontier for four years, the lower Rhine province for a year, and the provinces of Noricum, Pannonia, and Rhætia for as long as fourteen years. Now, however, there was to ensue a period of sixteen years during which the Danube provinces, Rhætia, Gaul, Greece, Syria, and the northern part of Italy were all to suffer these calamities, and the central government for a time to be entirely set at naught by a crowd of usurpers.

CHAPTER X

REIGNS OF

DECIUS, GALLUS, ÆMILIANUS, VALERIAN,
GALLIENUS, CLAUDIUS II, AURELIAN, TACITUS,
PROBUS, CARUS, CARINUS, AND NUMERIAN

DECIUS

249 — 251

(a) Matters other than religion

THERE now began a period of thirty-five years during which the empire, though under capable emperors, experienced in turn the most extreme vicissitudes of fortune. During thirty years of this period, after beginning under auspices which seemed to revive the times of the Antonine emperors, it first suffered for fifteen years a series of the greatest disasters and then experienced for fifteen years a time of great glory.

DECIUS,¹ a Roman by birth, whose full name was Messius Quintus Trajanus Decius, was fifty years old when he became emperor. He was well known as an upright, capable, and deservedly popular commander, and on his accession there seemed every prospect of a long and prosperous reign under a just and able emperor.

His reign began with much splendour. Decius was strongly bent upon ruling in accordance with the best models of the past, and upon reviving the ancient virtues of the Roman character; and the grand celebration of the time-honoured national festival in the previous year had made all men ready to co-operate with this desire. As a part of his measures with

¹ No portrait-bust exists of any of the emperors from Decius to Numerian.

this object he magnified his office as Pontifex Maximus of the Pagan religion, took steps to infuse a higher tone among the priesthood, and carried out the duties of the office with dignity and wisdom. He also revived the long obsolete office of Censor of morals ; for which dignity the man most universally honoured on account of his general character was by custom elected by the whole empire. The man chosen for this high honour by the unanimous voice of the empire was Valerian, then commanding in Gaul. In all these endeavours Decius was ably assisted by his popular young son Herennius, then about twenty years old. But all these bright prospects were doomed to disappointment, for in less than three years the reign of Decius was suddenly cut short, both he and his son perishing together in a great disaster.

During the preceding twenty years the empire had had to meet attacks on both its northern and its eastern frontiers. Alexander Severus and Gordian III on the eastern frontier had driven back the Persians, and Maximin on the northern frontier had repulsed the Allemanni ; but there soon appeared a new and more formidable enemy. For there now begin the first contests of the Roman power with that race which was destined to become during all the next 150 years its principal foe, the reign of Decius witnessing the first invasion of the empire by the Goths.¹

In the reign of Alexander Severus the Goths had left their original home in the Ukraine in an immense host, moving slowly westwards. At length they had reached the Dneister, and after resting there for a time had ravaged the eastern part of Dacia, had then moved slowly southwards, and a large body of them had now crossed the Danube and invaded Mœsia. Decius sent orders to Gallus, the Roman commander on the lower Danube, to drive them back over the Danube ; and as Gallus was a good general and had a large force Decius did not anticipate that he would have any difficulty in doing so.

Decius himself was at this time occupied with another matter which was engaging most of his attention. The universal festivities throughout the empire in the previous year to celebrate the thousandth anniversary of Rome's glory had

¹ For list of invasions of barbarians and foreign wars from the time of Domitian to that of Constantine, see Appendices IV and V.

once again forced the Christians into prominence, through their abstention from the Pagan rites connected with that festival which had been celebrated in every city; and the festivities upon the accession of Decius, together with his various measures for increasing the dignity of the Pagan religion, had intensified this effect. Decius in his ardent desire to revive the ancient glories of Rome seems to have considered that this apotheosis of Rome's majesty would scarcely be complete without a general destruction of those who were commonly held to be foes to that majesty, the Christians. He therefore in the second year of his reign followed the example of Marcus Aurelius seventy years before, and issued an edict ordering a general slaughter of the Christians throughout the empire, and himself took an active part in organizing arrangements to ensure that these orders should be effectively carried out.¹

Meanwhile the invasion by the Goths had become so serious, and Gallus was so unsuccessful against them, that Decius was at length compelled to proceed in person to the Danube provinces to oppose them. The Goths under their king Cniva,² had defeated Gallus, and after ravaging the whole of Mœsia had begun to besiege Nicopolis. On the approach of Decius they withdrew towards Thrace, and being somewhat incautiously followed by him suddenly turned upon his army, inflicted upon him a defeat, and put his army to flight; after which, crossing the Balkans, they besieged and took Philippopolis in Thrace, massacring 100,000 of its inhabitants.

Decius, however, was too able a commander to be dismayed by a defeat which he recognized had been due to a surprise. Having restored the spirit of his army and gathered further reinforcements he again advanced against the Goths (who had begun to retire northwards laden with captives and plunder), sending orders to Gallus to attack them from one side while he attacked them from the other. The Goths having suffered severe losses in the siege of Philippopolis, and their line of retreat being threatened by the advance of the army under Gallus, offered to surrender all their captives and spoil if allowed to retire unmolested. Decius, however, naturally

¹ See pp. 319-321.

² Descended from the renowned Amala, the great hero of the Goths.

considered that this would not suffice to restore the prestige of Rome, and being determined to avenge the slaughter they had carried out in the Roman provinces, and to give them a decisive defeat, refused their offer, and prepared to attack them. The battle was fought in November 251. The Goths drew up in three lines; their first and second lines were destroyed in succession by the Romans, who then attacked the third line, which was covered by a morass. The Romans became entangled in the deep swamp, large numbers being drowned; and partly in consequence of this and partly owing to the failure of Gallus to properly support the emperor, the Roman army was totally defeated. Decius himself, his brave young son, Herennius, and almost the whole army, perished, even the emperor's body never being found. The place where this disastrous defeat took place is not known with certainty, but was evidently in the low-lying marshy country near the lower course of the Danube, and probably near Abricium.

Rome had not hitherto considered the Goths of any particular account; but this defeat gave Rome a shock greater even than that which was felt when, 242 years before, Varus and his legions were destroyed on the Rhine frontier in the reign of Augustus. The Goths retreated across the Danube, carrying their captives and spoil triumphantly with them, and having in this first struggle with Rome felt their own power.

(b) Matters concerning religion

By the beginning of the reign of Decius the Christians had had rest from persecution for more than a generation. During forty years since the reign of Septimius Severus they had almost forgotten what it was to be persecuted, and had in all cities grown accustomed to live unmolested in the midst of their Pagan neighbours. But now, after churches had everywhere been built, and while the existing generation of Christians supposed that the times of these terrible persecutions were over, and that they would never be tried as their fathers and grandfathers had been, they were to find that this was not so, that it had been merely a pause in a conflict which was now to be resumed more fiercely than ever, and that the terrible

things which they had heard old men and women speak of were now to come also upon themselves.

In this, the Sixth persecution, which began in 250, the storm which fell upon the Christians was the more terrible from the new difficulties and trials which this unexpectedness created. During the long immunity from persecution many persons had become Christians who were not prepared to endure such sufferings; also many families had become mixed, Christians and Pagans having intermarried; and these new conditions created numerous troubles over and above those experienced in former persecutions. Thus the Decian persecution was always afterwards spoken of as the most terrible of all, until it was itself surpassed by the persecution under Diocletian fifty years later.

It was a time of universal rejoicings throughout the whole empire. The accession of Decius, an emperor anxious to revive the ancient splendour of Rome, was being celebrated with great festivities in every city throughout Egypt, Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria. But soon a rumour spread through many of these countries that the new emperor contemplated a thorough extermination of that sect who seemed opposed to Rome's greatness, and at all events took no part in the festivities held to celebrate it. The rumour proved correct; the fiat went forth; Decius followed the example set by Marcus Aurelius; and soon in every city of the empire an imperial edict issued directing a thorough destruction of the Christians. Decius appointed special magistrates in every city to conduct a searching inquisition, directing them to summon all citizens before them, to require them to offer the accustomed sacrifices, and ordering that all who did not comply were to suffer tortures and death. Thereupon began again the dragging of Christians before the tribunals, the malignant enmity of "informers," the tortures of the amphitheatre, and all the former horrors. Terrible things happened, the most shameful cruelties,¹ and the most

¹ It was in this persecution that there took place the cruel martyrdom of St. Agatha, a young Roman girl of good family noted for her beauty, who, with the most atrocious tortures, was martyred at Catania in Sicily in 251. She is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 5th February.

widespread slaughter. Moreover Pagan officials, anxious to save those dear to them, offered bribes which all were not able to resist. Many also of those who had become Christians without being prepared to endure such things now "lapsed," for a time renouncing Christianity; and the problems regarding such "lapsi" created many difficulties and much additional tribulation.

In every city of the empire innumerable persons perished in this Sixth persecution under Decius, that emperor himself personally directing the fury of the persecution. A special feature of this Sixth persecution was the slaughter of the Bishops wherever they could be seized, though in some cases the Christians forced them to go away into concealment in deserts or mountains, feeling that their lives were too valuable to the cause to be thus sacrificed. But the large number of Bishops who died in this persecution gives some idea of the courage it needed to be a Bishop in those days. Three successive Bishops of Rome were martyred in four years at this time. It was in this persecution that Fabian, Bishop of Rome, was martyred. He had been Bishop of Rome for about fourteen years, and was the first martyr of the Decian persecution. He belonged to the very ancient Roman family of the Fabii, and was much loved and honoured at Rome. Fabian's tomb, with an epitaph written in Greek, is to be seen in the Catacomb of St. Calixtus on the Appian way, where his remains were buried.¹

Eventually Decius, while still energetically directing this persecution, was called away to confront the Goths, and fell in battle. But the persecution which he had inaugurated did not cease with his death, but continued through the reigns of Gallus and Æmilianus until the accession of Valerian in 253. In this Sixth persecution, besides Fabian, martyred in 250 under Decius, there also perished Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, martyred in 252 under Gallus, and Lucius I, Bishop of Rome, martyred in 253 under Æmilianus.² The celebrated Origen was thrown into prison and repeatedly tortured,

¹ St. Fabian is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 20th January.

² The tombs and epitaphs of these two martyred Bishops are, like Fabian's, also to be seen in the Catacomb of St. Calixtus.

in consequence of which sufferings he died at Tyre in 253 a few months after the persecution ceased, in the seventieth year of his age.

GALLUS

252—253

On Decius being killed in the battle in Nov. 251 the army on the Danube frontier elected Gallus, whose conduct at the battle had been such as to cause him to be strongly suspected of having aimed at this very result, regardless of the honour of the Roman arms. He placed Æmilianus in charge of Mœsia and Pannonia and proceeded to Rome, where he was accepted as emperor by the Senate. Soon afterwards the Goths again invaded the Danube provinces, but this time were defeated by Æmilianus, who pursued them beyond the Danube. Thereupon the troops proclaimed Æmilianus as emperor. Gallus advanced to Spoleto to contest the throne with him, but his troops, seeing that they were weaker than those of Æmilianus, murdered Gallus and his son, and Æmilianus was proclaimed emperor (May, 253).

ÆMILIANUS

253

Though Gallus had only reigned a year and five months his successor Æmilianus, who had proved himself an able commander, had a still shorter reign. Valerian, renowned throughout the empire for his various abilities, and at this time commanding the legions in Gaul, had been summoned by Gallus to his assistance, but arrived too late to save the latter. On his approach the troops of Æmilianus, awed by the superior strength of Valerian's army, repeated their former conduct, murdered Æmilianus after he had reigned only three months, and proclaimed Valerian emperor (Aug. 253).

VALERIAN

253—260

(a) Matters other than religion

VALERIAN was a Roman, of noble birth and high character. He had risen through the various grades of the public service by talents, wisdom, and qualities which commanded the respect alike of the army, the Senate, and the people. A few years before he had been chosen for the honourable office of Censor by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. He was sixty years of age when on the death of *Æmilianus* he was chosen emperor.

But the whole period of Valerian's seven years' reign was one uninterrupted series of the direst calamities. The Franks crossed the Rhine and spread devastation throughout the whole of Gaul; the *Allemanni* invaded *Noricum* and *Rhætia*, penetrated into Italy itself, and advanced as far as *Ravenna*; the *Goths* having created a fleet, crossed the *Black Sea*, ravaged in succession *Pontus* and *Bithynia*, and the coasts of *Mysia* and *Lydia*, destroying at *Ephesus* the magnificent Temple of "Diana of the *Ephesians*," one of the seven wonders of the world,¹ and then attacked and ravaged *Greece*; and lastly the *Persians*, under *Sapor I*, the son of *Artaxerxes*, conquered *Armenia*, defeated the Roman forces on the *Euphrates*, took *Antioch*, and devastated the whole of the eastern border of the empire.

Valerian did his best to meet the difficulties created by having to confront so many enemies at once, but his armies did not succeed in driving out the invaders, and province after province became devastated by war. He sent his son *Gallienus*, whom he had associated with himself on the throne, to *Gaul*, to oppose the *Franks*; but *Gallienus*, establishing himself at *Trèves*, gave himself up to pleasure, and though the legions in *Gaul* were ably led by their general *Postumus*, that country became during the whole reign the theatre of an indecisive contest. At length in 258 Valerian himself proceeded to the east to oppose *Sapor I*, while the Senate raised a mixed

¹ Notable in connection with the riot in the time of *St. Paul*.

force in Rome which advanced against the Allemanni and forced them to retire out of Italy. But in Greece the ravages of the Goths continued, and the resistance offered by the inhabitants involved that country in a general conflagration.

Meanwhile Valerian in the east had suffered a crushing disaster. Unfortunately he reposed confidence in a worthless minister, Macrianus, whom he had made Prefect of the Praetorian Guards; ¹ and this man now proved a traitor. Valerian, having retaken Antioch, crossed the Euphrates and encountered Sapor at Edessa, where a fierce battle took place. By the treachery of Macrianus the Roman army was entrapped in a mountainous defile where surrender was inevitable. An attempt to cut their way out was repulsed with great slaughter; whereupon Valerian in order to save the remnant of his army agreed to meet Sapor at a conference, was treacherously seized thereat, and was carried off a prisoner to Persia (260). The Persians then crossed the Euphrates, overran Syria and Cilicia, sacked and almost destroyed, first Antioch, and then Caesarea in Cappadocia, and were only checked by Odenathus of Palmyra, who thereby laid the foundations of his future greatness.

The noble and unfortunate emperor Valerian, carried off to Persia, was kept for five years in an ignominious captivity at Persepolis. He was treated with studied insolence by the Persian monarch, and it is related that he was exhibited to the people in chains, clad in the imperial purple, and that Sapor used the Roman emperor as a horseblock, putting his foot on his neck whenever he mounted his horse, in revenge for all the defeats that the Persians had suffered from Rome. At length after five years of this captivity Valerian died (265). The Persians in brutal mockery of imperial Rome preserved his skin, stuffed it with straw into the likeness of a human figure, painted it the imperial purple colour, and hung it up in the chief temple of Persepolis, where it was kept for many generations.

But the sufferings caused by these widespread disasters did not complete the troubles of the reign of Valerian. The

¹ Since the changes in the status of the appointment made by Septimius Severus the office of Prefect of the Praetorian Guards had become much more a civil appointment than a military one.

inevitable consequence of a state of war continuing year after year over so many provinces was a long and general famine. And this, as a further consequence, was followed by a furious outbreak of the plague, which for almost the whole fifteen years covered by the reigns of Valerian and his son Gallienus raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. Many towns were entirely depopulated, for some time 5000 persons died daily in Rome, half the population of Alexandria perished, and it has been estimated that from war, famine, and pestilence together there perished at this period one half of the entire population of Europe.

(b) Matters concerning religion

On the accession of Valerian the Decian persecution came to an end, and the Christians who had survived it had every reason to congratulate themselves on the empire having now passed under the sway of so just and generous an emperor. Eusebius states that never was any emperor more favourable to the Christians than was Valerian when he began his reign ; adding, " all his house was filled with the pious, and resembled a congregation of the faithful."

But about three years after Valerian began to reign he fell under the influence of Macrianus, the man who became his evil genius, and who eventually caused his destruction. This worthless traitor was the chief ruler of the Magi,¹ and Valerian soon made him his chief minister and Prefect of the Praetorian Guards. Having attained this position Macrianus used every artifice to induce Valerian to alter his attitude towards the Christians and take measures for their extermination. He was strongly assisted in this endeavour by the priests of the ancient religion of Rome, who persistently appealed to the patriotism and worked upon the superstition of the emperor, pointing to the serious disasters and calamities which were occurring, and declaring them to be signs of the wrath of the gods of Rome at the toleration which was being accorded to

¹ The priests of the Syrian sun-worship, which had gained so much importance under Septimius Severus, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus. Originally applied to the priests of the religion of Zoroaster, the term had come to be applied to the priests of any eastern religion.

Christianity. It was a period of innumerable public calamities, for to military defeats, famine, and pestilence were also added earthquakes, inundations, strange meteors, and other unusual portents; and every occurrence of the kind was interpreted by these advisers as plainly indicating the displeasure of the gods against the emperor for his toleration of the Christians.

At length in 257 Valerian yielded to this pressure, and following the counsel of Macrianus issued a severe edict ordering a general destruction of the Christians, thus inaugurating the Seventh persecution. But even this did not satisfy Macrianus, and this edict was followed in the next year by one still more stringent.

This persecution in the reign of Valerian was very thoroughly organized by Macrianus, and vigorously carried out in all the provinces of the empire. Five commissioners were ordered to sit in every town for the purpose, and the Proconsul of each province was ordered to visit all its towns and see that this religion was thoroughly stamped out. As a result of this very thorough organization the number of persons martyred all over the empire was immense,¹ only those Christians escaping who could find such hiding places as the catacombs at Rome or the deserts of North Africa. This persecution was also notable for the hideous tortures employed, the appalling scenes of the Decian persecution being surpassed in horror by those which took place, at the instigation of Macrianus, as chief of the Magi, in this persecution under Valerian. It was no wonder that the Christians considered the captivity of Valerian which shortly afterwards ensued and his sufferings at the hands of the Persians to be a direct punishment for the many horrible cruelties perpetrated under his authority.

Among the countless numbers who suffered in this Seventh persecution six names are specially notable, viz: Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, Stephen I, Bishop of Rome, Sixtus II, Bishop of Rome, Fructuosus, Bishop of Tarragona, Lawrence, a deacon at Rome, and Daria, one of the six Vestal Virgins,

¹ One memorial of this persecution is still to be seen at Cirta (now Constantine) in North Africa, where in the gorge of the Rhunel ravine near the city is an inscription carved on a rock in memory of those martyred there in the year 259 in this Seventh persecution.

the fact of one of the sacred Vestal Virgins becoming a Christian and a martyr being specially remarkable.¹

Step by step as, in the midst of all its terrible sufferings, the Christian Church went on making its way in the Roman world, we have one celebrated writer after another who shows us from time to time what its thoughts were. Counting from the death of the Apostle St. John at the end of the 1st century, we have in succession, Ignatius 14 years after that event, Justin Martyr 48 years after it, Irenæus 80 years after it, and Tertullian 100 years after it, each recording what Christians at those periods held. And now at another stage, 150 years after the death of St. John, we have another of these great Christian writers in Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, celebrated through all the ages since as the chief leader of the Christian Church in the 3rd century.

Thascius Cæcilius Cyprianus, born at Carthage about the year 200, was originally a teacher of rhetoric and philosophy, and noted for his ability, his wealth, and an agreeable disposition which made him highly popular in the society of Carthage. He was well born, and inherited large estates, including beautiful gardens by the shore of the Mediterranean which were his especial delight. When forty-six years old he became converted to Christianity by the preaching of Cæcilius, whose name he took at his baptism. Many of his writings remain, and in them he relates in a clear and forcible manner the arguments which were powerful enough to cause him to become a Christian. Two years after his conversion to Christianity the Bishop of Carthage died, and the people by universal acclamation insisted that Cyprian should be his successor. As a Bishop he became, by his noble disposition, his great abilities, his earnest zeal, and his strong force of character, not only a great leader of the North African Church,² but the most prominent man of his time in the whole Christian Church. On becoming a Christian he sold his beautiful gardens and all his estates and gave the money to the poor. He had always been a man of many friends, and these

¹ On the outbreak of the persecution she was accused by Macrianus of being a Christian, and acknowledged it; whereupon she was buried alive.

² In Cyprian's time the North African Church was so large that it could assemble in a conference as many as 600 Bishops.

friendships were not broken off by his change of religion, all men admiring him for his high-bred dignity and nobility of character.

In 250, two years after Cyprian became Bishop, the fiery test of the Decian persecution came upon the Christian Church. Cyprian himself relates how under this trial thousands "lapsed," even many of the Bishops and clergy. His letters show how great were the difficulties of the time, from the treachery of false adherents, the laxity of those who had fallen, and the pride of those who had remained firm. They also show how valuable was the combination of moderation and firmness which he evinced, and caused the Church as a whole to adopt. The Christian community in North Africa, feeling that his life was too valuable to be lost, forced him to go away into hiding during the Decian persecution; and from his retreat in the desert he guided the whole policy of the Church in the west of Europe as well as in North Africa. The Decian persecution was scarcely over when in 253 there came the great outbreak of plague which ravaged the entire western world and was specially virulent at Carthage. The usual panic ensued; the sick were deserted, the dying thrust out into the streets, and the dead left unburied. Cyprian returned to Carthage, called the surviving Christians together, and exhorted them to demonstrate the reality of their Christianity by showing love to their enemies and to those who had just been torturing them and subjecting to cruel deaths their nearest and dearest. He was nobly answered; the city was divided into districts of which individual Christians took charge; the sick were nursed, the dead were buried, and "confessors"¹ with the scars of their tortures still upon them were to be seen risking their lives in these acts of love to their enemies.

In 255 the action taken by Cyprian and the Church of North Africa in a matter relating to the rite of baptism appearing to Stephen, Bishop of Rome, to be wrong, the latter took upon himself to rebuke Cyprian, and to excommunicate him and his Church. This however only drew down on Stephen the most severe censures from all parts of the Church for his

¹ A person who had been tortured in the persecution, but had not died under the torture was styled a "confessor."

“unlawful arrogance” in attempting to dictate to another Bishop. His action raised a storm of indignation from the Bishops of the Churches in Asia Minor, many of them holding sees far more important than that of Rome. They declared that “in respect of the internal government and particular custom of each diocese there is no one in the Church of God who can be a Bishop of Bishops.” Firmilian, the Metropolitan¹ of Cappadocia, the most conspicuous man in the eastern part of the Church, as Cyprian was in the western, wrote to Stephen, “Thou hast excommunicated *thyself* ;” while in an open letter to the Church at large he even compared Stephen’s action to that of Judas. And Stephen, finding that the whole Church was against him, and that the only result of his action was to excommunicate himself, was silenced.

Six years of peace followed the Decian persecution, and then in 258 came the persecution under Valerian, in which both Cyprian and Stephen were martyred. When the persecution began Cyprian, feeling that his work was done, refused again to seek safety by retirement. He was arrested, and was treated with great respect by the Proconsul of North Africa ; on his refusing to sacrifice to the emperor the Proconsul reluctantly delivered the inevitable sentence of death, but on account of his respect for him would not allow him to be tortured, and ordered that he should be beheaded with the sword. He was removed at once to an adjacent field, and there on the 13th August 258, in the sight of a crowd of spectators, the sentence was carried out.²

¹ The Christian Church having by this time greatly extended, over countries lying so far apart as Egypt and Britain, Spain and Asia Minor, had recently widened its organization to accord with that extension, and had laid down in the “Apostolic Constitutions” (a work of this period) that “The Bishops of every nation should have regard to the first among them and account him their head, and attempt nothing outside what may concern their own particular dioceses without him ; and he should do nothing but by consent of the rest.” As this leading Bishop was usually that one who was Bishop of the metropolis of the province he became styled the *Metropolitan*. Later on this organization as regards the duties and status of Metropolitans was made more definite (see Chap. XV, p. 509).

² St. Cyprian is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 26th September.

Of the two Bishops of Rome who suffered martyrdom in this persecution under Valerian, Stephen I, who was Bishop of Rome when in 257 the persecution began, is chiefly notable on account of the above attempt by him to adopt an attitude of supremacy in the Church, an attempt which was promptly put down. On the outbreak of the persecution he was at once killed while sitting in his episcopal chair. Sixtus II, who succeeded him, was originally a Greek philosopher at Athens. He became converted to Christianity, and in 257, on the martyrdom of Stephen I, was chosen as their Bishop by the Church at Rome. Less than a year after becoming Bishop he was seized under the orders of the minister Macrianus, and refusing to sacrifice to the gods of Rome, was beheaded (258). He was the fifth Bishop that the much persecuted Church at Rome had seen martyred in seven years. The deacon Lawrence accompanied him to the place of execution, and was told by him that he himself would not survive many days, which proved to be the case.¹

Fructuosus, Bishop of Tarragona, who also perished in this persecution, was highly revered throughout all that part of Spain, even by those who were Pagans, on account of his noble and merciful character and charitable disposition. On the outbreak of the persecution he was seized while in bed, thrown into prison, and six days later, after being examined by the Proconsul, was burnt alive in the amphitheatre at Tarragona.

Lawrence, a deacon of the Church at Rome, immediately after the martyrdom of the Bishop, Sixtus II, received an order from Macrianus, the emperor's chief minister, to surrender to him the valuable treasures which Macrianus had heard that the Church at Rome possessed. Lawrence asked for three days in which to collect them, melted down such gold and silver vessels as were in his charge, gave the money obtained thereby to the poorest of the Christians, and on the third day presented a large body of them to Macrianus as being the true treasures of the Church. Macrianus was

¹ Stephen I and Sixtus II are both buried in the walls of the catacomb of St. Calixtus, with a marble slab and the word "Martyr" in Greek upon their tombstones, as in the case of their three predecessors, Fabian, Cornelius, and Lucius.

furious, and at once ordered him to be roasted alive on a grid-iron ; which sentence was carried out.¹

Many others were martyred in Rome through the personal malignity of Macrianus, who in every case put them to death by the most horrible tortures. Among the few of these whose names have survived were, Hippolytus, torn to pieces by wild horses, Demetrius, Sabinus, Ursinus, the actress Pelagia, and the girls Valeria, Vincentia, Crispina, Anatolia, and Victoria.²

GALLIENUS

260—268

(a) Matters other than religion

Upon Valerian being carried off a prisoner to Persia his son Gallienus assumed the throne as his representative. But though not without ability, Gallienus was luxurious and indolent, and for a long time neglected public affairs, even though the empire appeared to be breaking up. For while the Franks laid waste a large part of Gaul, and the Goths ravaged Greece, sacking Corinth, Athens, and Sparta, the captivity of the emperor Valerian raised up a host of usurpers, most of them lieutenants of Valerian who disdained to serve under his unworthy son. In the east, Macrianus, Odenathus, Cyriades, and Ballista ; in Illyricum and the Danube provinces, Aureolus, Regillianus, and Ingenuus ; in Gaul, Postumus, Lollianus, Marius, Tetricus, Victorinus, and his mother Victoria ; in Pontus, Saturninus ; in Isauria, Trebellianus ; in Thessaly, Piso ; in Achaia, Valens ; in Egypt, Æmilianus ; and in Africa, Celsus, all set up for the time independent kingdoms. Italy and the Senate adhered to Gallienus, the rest of these rulers being held to be in rebellion. One honourable exception was made in the case of Odenathus of Palmyra, who with his celebrated wife Zenobia established a kingdom which was deservedly acknowledged by Gallienus and the Senate.

Septimia Zenobia (whose Palmyrean name was Bath Zabbai), to whom Odenathus owed more than half his success, was the most distinguished woman of her time. Wealthy and of good

¹ St. Lawrence is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 10th August.

² All of these are recorded in the Ravenna mosaic (Appendix XII).

birth, she was as a girl admired by all, not only on account of her unusual beauty, but also for her remarkable character. The writer Pollio describes her dark beauty, commenting on her flashing black eyes and pearly teeth, and her attainments were on a par with her beauty. She spoke four languages, Syriac, Greek, Latin, and Coptic, read Homer and Plato, and caused an epitome of Oriental history to be drawn up for her own use. She was also a great rider, accustomed herself to endure fatigue, and was fond of taking part in the hunting of lions and panthers in the deserts surrounding Palmyra. At length this accomplished girl gave her hand to Odenathus, who from a private station had risen by the year 258, when Valerian marched against Sapor I, to a position of power in Palmyra. Zenobia took part with her husband both in war and in the chase, appearing on horseback in a military uniform, or marching on foot at the head of the troops, and the success of Odenathus was ascribed almost entirely to her prudent advice, courage, and fortitude. Together, after the defeat and captivity of Valerian, they twice gained splendid victories over the Persians, pursuing Sapor to the gates of Ctesiphon itself, and laying siege to that city; and eventually in 263 they overthrew the kingdom which the traitor Macrianus had set up in Syria, and reconquered all the provinces of the East, until they were supreme from Armenia to Arabia.

The Romans revered a ruler who had avenged their captive emperor, and Gallienus and the Senate gladly conferred on Odenathus the title of *Augustus*, with the position of a colleague of the Roman emperor; though Odenathus and Zenobia looked upon themselves as independent of Rome's authority. Soon afterwards, in 266, Odenathus was assassinated by his nephew Mæonius, after which Zenobia governed the whole of the East by herself, and increased her dominions by the conquest of Egypt.¹ She made her capital Palmyra (or Tadmor) the most splendid city in the East. Situated midway between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates, a fertile oasis in the midst of leagues of barren deserts, Palmyra had drawn to itself an immense trade and had gradually grown into a vast and beautiful city, adorned with a profusion of

¹ On becoming mistress of Egypt Zenobia declared that she was a descendant of Cleopatra, but this may be looked upon as a politic fiction.

temples and palaces whose ruins, extending for miles, still excite the wonder of travellers. The splendour of this city, a centre of commerce and the arts, was brought by Zenobia to its zenith, Palmyra thus reaching its highest pitch of magnificence only six years before its entire destruction. Though Zenobia had given her three sons a Roman education she did not, on her husband's death, allow any one of them to reign, retaining herself the throne and the diadem, with the title of "Empress of the East" (*Augusta*). Subsequently she associated the name of her eldest son, Wahballath, with her own, but placed her name before his on public inscriptions. She reigned over the whole of the East with the utmost ability for six years, until attacked by the emperor Aurelian.¹

After Gallienus had been reigning on behalf of his father for two years the Goths, having swept Greece almost bare, advanced in 262 upon Italy. Gallienus was roused by this menace at length to take the field against them. Whereupon the Goths, being divided amongst themselves, submitted without a battle, and agreed to a capitulation, in accordance with which half of them retired to their own country beyond the Danube, and the other half entered the Roman service. Having attained this result Gallienus returned to his luxurious and indolent life in Rome, where he was ready to show his ability in oratory, poetry, gardening, cooking, and anything except war and government. His empress, Cornelia Salonina, despised his frivolous mode of life, and was replaced in his affections by Pipa, the daughter of Attalus, the king of the Marcomanni, to whom Gallienus gave a large part of Pannonia.

In 268 Aureolus, who had set up a petty kingdom in Rhætia, was proclaimed emperor by the troops on the upper Danube, and crossing the Alps took Milan. Gallienus, roused from his dream of pleasure, advanced against him, defeated him on the banks of the Po, and drove him to take refuge in Milan, which city Gallienus then besieged. But in the midst of a night alarm of an attack on his camp he was mortally wounded by an unknown hand. Before dying he nominated Claudius, then commanding the legions at Pavia, as his successor. Milan was forthwith taken by Claudius, and Aureolus was executed.

¹ For the rest of Zenobia's history see pp. 336-337.

(b) Matters concerning religion

Gallienus on coming to the throne at once stopped the persecution of the Christians into which his father had been led by the artifices of Macrianus, and rescinded the persecuting edict. He restored the confiscated endowments of the churches, allowed the Bishops to return to their sees, and expressly granted to Christians liberty to practise their religion. Christianity thus became for the first time a "religio licita," or tolerated religion.

CLAUDIUS II

268 — 270

There now followed four capable emperors, who in fourteen years triumphed over the various foes within and without the State, re-established order and discipline, and blotted out the memory of fifteen years of disaster by their victories.

CLAUDIUS, born in Illyricum,¹ and promoted by Decius to a high command on account of his military talents, was brave, popular, and able, and at once began to reduce to order the confusion of the previous fifteen years. Immediately on becoming emperor he proceeded to restore the army to a state of discipline, pointing out to them the desolation of the provinces, the insolent triumph of the barbarians, and the disgrace of the Roman name. And his influence was such that he soon created a different tone in both the army and the government. Before, however, he had been more than a year on the throne he was again called away to meet an enemy in the field.

In 269 the Goths again appeared in greater numbers than ever. They sailed with an immense fleet into the Ægean Sea, and proceeded to ravage Macedonia. Claudius marched against them, defeated them in a decisive battle at Naissus in the Balkans, in which battle 50,000 of them were slain, and chased the survivors into the mountains, where they gradually perished during the winter of famine and pestilence. But the same pestilence was fatal to their conqueror, Claudius dying of it early in 270 at Sirmium. On his deathbed he nominated his most capable general, Aurelian, as his successor.

¹ The province of Illyricum corresponded roughly to the modern countries of Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, and Dalmatia.

AURELIAN

270—275

(a) Matters other than religion

AURELIAN, son of a peasant of Illyricum, had risen to be Claudius' most trusted general, and proved one of the ablest emperors Rome ever possessed. He completed what Claudius had begun, drove out the barbarians from the empire, subdued the domestic foes of the State, and restored the prosperity and dignity of the Roman empire. When he began his reign Gaul, Spain, Britain, Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor were all still in the hands of usurpers; when he ended it, after less than five years, he had brought all these countries again under the Roman dominion, besides driving out of the empire both the Goths and the Allemanni. His success was chiefly due to his unremitting attention to the discipline of the army; his punishments were terrible, but his uniform success in battle reconciled the troops to his severe discipline.

He first turned his arms against the Goths, a fresh host of whom had appeared on the death of Claudius. He marched against them and defeated them, and then when they sued for peace arranged, by a measure of real statesmanship, a permanent treaty with them, by which, withdrawing the frontier of the empire to its original boundary, the Danube, he amicably gave Dacia to be occupied by the Visigoths; and the latter dwelt there for more than sixty years afterwards in unbroken peace with Rome (270).¹

Aurelian next attacked the Allemanni, who had invaded Rhætia, crossed the Alps, and penetrated into Italy, laying waste that country as far south as Umbria. In three great battles they were defeated and almost exterminated by Aurelian (270).

Gaul, Spain, and Britain were at this time ruled nominally by Tetricus, who had succeeded Victoria, but they were in the

¹ Upon Dacia being given by Aurelian to the Visigoths the garrisons and Roman inhabitants were transported to the south of the Danube, and two new provinces were carved out of Mœsia, between Upper Mœsia and Lower Mœsia. These new provinces were called Dardania and Dacia Ripensis. The capital of Dardania was Sardica (Marquardt, Vol. I, 312).

throes of a civil war. Aurelian marched into Gaul, defeated the Franks, subdued Tetricus, and brought back the whole of these provinces to their allegiance to Rome (271).

Having ended the Gothic war, driven out the Allemanni, and recovered Gaul, Spain, and Britain, Aurelian next directed his attention to the east, and in 272 set out to attack Zenobia, the Empress of the East. Zenobia was not the sort of princess to tamely await such an attack in her capital, and her army, commanded by herself in person, met that of Aurelian at Antioch, where a great battle took place in which Zenobia was defeated. She collected a second army, and, again commanding in person, fought Aurelian a second time in a fiercely contested battle at Emesa, where she was again defeated. Zenobia then endeavoured to collect a third army, but finding it impossible, retired within the walls of Palmyra and prepared for a vigorous defence of the city. Aurelian besieged Palmyra, but for a long time was unable to take it, until at length the city began to suffer from famine. Zenobia had hopes of help from Sapor I, but he died just at this time. Finding this hope cut off, and famine making the defence of the city no longer possible, Zenobia mounted the fleetest of her riding camels and fled towards Persia; after a sixty-mile ride from Palmyra she had reached the Euphrates, and in a few moments more would have been in safety, when she was overtaken by a body of Aurelian's cavalry, by whom she was seized and brought back a captive. Thereupon Palmyra surrendered.

Aurelian treated Zenobia with much respect, granted lenient terms to the city, placed in it a Roman garrison, and set out for Rome, taking Zenobia with him as a prisoner to grace his triumph. He had already reached the Hellespont when he received news that Palmyra had revolted and massacred the Roman garrison. He at once turned back, and on reaching Palmyra massacred the whole of its inhabitants, and entirely destroyed this renowned capital of Zenobia's empire. Palmyra, suffering no gradual decay, fell at one step from the zenith of its splendour to a ruin (273).

Zenobia was conveyed to Rome, where in 274 Aurelian celebrated the most magnificent triumph which Rome had ever seen. Tetricus, the ruler of the west, and Zenobia, the queen of the east, preceded Aurelian's triumphal car, which

was drawn by four elephants and followed by a long train of captive Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Allemanni, Franks, Alans, Syrians, and Egyptians in a procession which took the whole day to reach the Capitol. Aurelian, however, treated both Tetricus and Zenobia well, and presented the latter with a villa at Tivoli, where she resided for the remainder of her life; her daughters married into noble Roman families, and her descendants continued to survive in Rome till the 5th century.

Disdaining to hold his power, in an empire which he had saved by his military ability, by any other title than that of the sword, Aurelian was detested by the Senate, and in the end of the year 274 a formidable conspiracy was formed by them against him. Its suppression cost him the lives of 7000 of his best soldiers, and exasperated by the ingratitude with which the Romans had thus rewarded his great services to the State he put to death a large number of the members of the Senate and of the noblest families in Rome. Having subdued this conspiracy Aurelian, early in 275, left Rome for the east to attack the Persians. But on his way thither he was assassinated near Byzantium by the principal officers of his army, owing to a forgery executed by his secretary, Menestheus, whom he had threatened with punishment, and who by this means caused these officers to believe that they had been condemned to death. Believing the traitor, they attacked the emperor, who fell by the hand of Mucapor, a general he had always loved and trusted (March, 275).

This tragic death of Aurelian had a remarkable result. The forgery was discovered a few hours afterwards; whereupon Menestheus was slain, and the army, being determined that none of those concerned in the death of their admired and deeply lamented emperor should reign over them, requested the Senate to elect an emperor. The Senate declined, and passed a decree that the election should rest with the army. The legions, however, persisted in their refusal; the offer was pressed and rejected at least three times; and it was not until six months had elapsed that the Senate at length gave way and elected one of themselves, Tacitus, who was seventy-five years old, to be emperor.

Aurelian's chief work in Rome was to encircle the city

with its present line of walls. The incursion of the Allemanni so far to the south as Umbria showed him the necessity of fortifying the capital, to protect it while the Roman armies might be occupied at a distance. Aurelian's wall, begun by him in 271 and completed by Probus in 280, was 12 miles in circuit, with fourteen gates; in some parts it is 60 feet high on the outside and 40 feet high on the inside; the greater part of it still remains.

(b) Matters concerning religion

Gallienus had in 260 stopped the persecution of Christians, restored the endowments of the churches, and granted to the Christians liberty to practise their religion. This gave them a ten years' rest from persecution. But Aurelian, in gratitude for his success in war, which he attributed to the favour of the gods of Rome, reversed this policy, and again published an edict ordering the destruction of Christians; thus inaugurating the Eighth persecution (270–275). Persecuted on many occasions in consequence of the defeat of Rome's arms, they were now persecuted in consequence of her victories.

Of the number who suffered in this Eighth persecution we have again no record left. Great numbers were martyred in the various cities of the empire, but all records of their names were of set purpose destroyed by the authorities in the subsequent persecution under Diocletian. Besides many whose tombstones are to be seen in the Catacombs,¹ the following also suffered at Rome in this Eighth persecution:—

Valentine, a priest, martyred at Rome in 270.²

Prisca, a young girl of a noble Roman family, martyred at Rome in 270. After being exposed to wild beasts in the Colosseum and suffering other tortures she was beheaded outside the Ostian gate.³

¹ See p. 363.

² Valentine is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 14th February.

³ Prisca is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 18th January. Great honour was paid in England in ancient times to her memory.

TACITUS

275 — 276

TACITUS¹ on his election being confirmed proceeded to join the army in Thrace, and thence marched against the Alans, who were ravaging Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Galatia. He was completely successful and delivered the Asiatic provinces from this invasion; but the hardships of campaigning were too much for a man of his age accustomed to an easy life at Rome, and after a reign of only six months he expired at Tyana in Cappadocia (April, 276). Thereupon his brother Florianus attempted to seize the throne. But Probus, commanding in the east, marched against him; whereupon Florianus was put to death by his own troops and Probus was declared emperor by the legions, the choice made by the army being joyfully ratified by the Senate.

PROBUS

276 — 282

(a) Matters other than religion

PROBUS, born in 232 at Sirmium, in Pannonia, entered the army at a very early age, and owing to his unusual ability was, against all rules, promoted by Valerian to be a tribune while still almost a boy. He was forty-four when he became emperor, and had served with distinction under Claudius and Aurelian in all parts of the empire.

Probus was another of the severe school of military commanders established by Claudius and Aurelian. As emperor he had a difficult task, for on the death of Aurelian enemies had re-arisen on every side. But Probus, in a short reign of six years, vanquished them one after another, and restored peace and order to every province of the empire. He drove the Allemanni out of Rhætia, compelled the Sarmatians to submit and relinquish their prisoners and booty, attacked and brought into subjection the Isaurians, and put down with vigour a formidable rebellion in Egypt. But his most arduous task was in Gaul, which province on the death of Aurelian had

¹ He claimed descent from the celebrated historian.

again been ravaged by the Franks and Allemanni. There Probus recovered a large number of cities which were oppressed by them, drove the invaders out of Gaul, and crossing the Rhine carried his victorious arms as far as the Elbe, until the German tribes, overawed by his name, sued for peace and relinquished all the captives and plunder which they had carried off from Gaul. He then reconstructed the great "Limes" between the Rhine and the Danube, building a stone wall instead of an earth rampart, and strengthening it with stone forts. He also carried out important measures of colonization, planting 100,000 Bastarnae in Thrace, a body of Franks on the Danube, and a body of Vandals in Britain.

Probus, though less cruel in his methods, was as rigid a disciplinarian as Aurelian, and it was one of his principles never to permit the troops to be idle; in pursuance of this policy he kept them when not engaged in war constantly employed in erecting bridges, improving the navigation of the Nile, planting vineyards, and executing many other useful works. But Probus was apt to exact such labours too harshly, and as on a very hot summer's day he was severely urging on the distasteful labour of draining the marshes of Sirmium, the troops suddenly broke into open mutiny and killed him, though they immediately afterwards repented of their violence (Aug. 282). Thereupon they elected Carus, the Prefect of the Praetorian Guards, as his successor.

(b) Matters concerning religion

The persecution of Christians had by this time become more or less chronic. But it was pursued intermittently, and had died away during the six months' interregnum after the death of Aurelian and during the reign of Tacitus. Probus, however, revived the persecution, and it was carried on with still greater rigour under his two successors, the cruel Carus and his still more cruel son Carinus, this being known as the Ninth persecution (278-285).

While the specially cruel and severe character of this Ninth persecution has been recorded, all records of the names of those martyred in it have, with very few exceptions, perished, being purposely destroyed by the authorities in the subsequent persecution under Diocletian. It was at this

time of chronic persecution during the reigns of Aurelian, Probus, Carus, and Carinus in the years 270–285 that the Christians at Rome made special use, to a much greater degree than hitherto, of the Catacombs as hiding places, all who were able to absent themselves from their ordinary avocations taking refuge there. And many of the brief pathetic notices of death as martyrs inscribed upon the tombs in the Catacombs relate to this time. Besides those recorded in this manner the following suffered martyrdom in this Ninth persecution :—

St. Cecilia, Valerian, and Tiburtius, martyred at Rome in 280 (under Probus).

St. Alban, martyred at Verulam in Britain in 283 (under Carinus).

St. Eutychianus, martyred at Rome in 283 (under Carinus).

St. Christina, martyred at Bolsena, near Rome, in 283 (under Carinus).

Cecilia belonged to the noble family of the Cæcili, descended from Cæcilia Tanaquil, the wife of King Tarquin. Many of her ancestors were celebrated generals in the time of the Republic. Her parents were Pagans, but Cecilia became a Christian when quite a child. At length she was betrothed to a rich young noble, Valerian. She soon converted her betrothed, and also his brother Tiburtius. Their works of mercy towards Christian families suffering under persecution caused them to be all three arrested and tortured, but the manner in which they bore their sufferings induced several officers under the Prefect to become Christians. They were then all three led out along the Appian way to a spot beyond the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and there Valerian and Tiburtius were killed, but the Prefect feeling a reverence for Cecilia would not order her to be publicly executed, and directed that she should die by suffocation in the *calidarium* of the small private bath of her house. This method, however, after being tried for a day and a night failed to cause her death. Thereupon an executioner was ordered to behead her ; he smote her neck three times with his sword, but only wounded her neck ; more than three strokes were not lawful, so, still breathing, she was left to die. She lingered for three days in great pain and then died. Her body was buried by Christian friends in the catacomb of St. Calixtus on the Appian way,

beside those of her betrothed and his brother. A church was afterwards built on the site of her house in Rome, which church still exists, together with the bath in which the attempt was made to suffocate her and in which she was eventually killed.¹ Her tombstone is still to be seen in the catacomb of St. Calixtus, but in the 9th century her remains were removed thence to this church, where they lie under the high altar, beneath a much admired marble statue representing her, with wounded neck, lying dead.

Alban was a young Roman officer, born in Britain and educated at Rome, who sheltered a Christian priest from his pursuers, and was by him converted and baptized; he then helped the priest to escape. Alban was seized, confessed himself to be a Christian, and was beheaded. His is the first recorded martyrdom in Britain.² St. Alban was afterwards adopted as the patron saint of England, and remained so until, in 1190, at the time of the Third Crusade, King Richard I caused St. George to be adopted.

Eutychianus was Bishop of Rome from 276 to 283. He remained unmolested, possibly in hiding in the Catacombs, during the reign of Probus and the short reign of Carus, but was martyred by the latter's son Carinus. His tomb, with its inscription in Greek, is to be seen in the catacomb of St. Calixtus at Rome.

Christina was the daughter of the governor of Bolsena. She was tortured by her father on his discovering that she was a Christian, and was eventually martyred at Bolsena in 283.

CARUS

282—283

CARUS was sixty years old when on the death of Probus he was elected emperor. Trained in the severe school of discipline and austerity which obtained in the armies of Aurelian and Probus, he was an able general, but in him austerity often degenerated into the utmost cruelty. On being elected by

¹ St. Cecilia is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 22nd November.

² St. Alban is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 17th June.

the army he made no pretence of requesting the approval of the Senate, but merely sent a letter coldly announcing to them that he had ascended the throne. He forthwith invested his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, with the rank of *Caesar*, sent Carinus to govern the western provinces, and taking Numerian with him set out to attack the Persians.

Varanes II (Bahram II), king of Persia,¹ not being anxious for a war with Rome, thereupon sent his ambassadors with overtures to the emperor, but without success. On this occasion an incident is related which shows both the severe simplicity which Claudius II and his successors had restored in the Roman army, and also the character of Carus. The Persian ambassadors, asking on their arrival for the emperor, were conducted to a soldier seated on the grass eating his supper, which only consisted of a piece of stale bacon and some hard peas. A coarse woollen garment, purple in colour, which he wore was the only sign that this was the emperor. Upon the ambassadors delivering their message Carus, taking the cap from his bald head, informed them that unless their master acknowledged the supremacy of Rome he would make Persia as bare of trees as his head was of hair.

Having thus declined the overtures for peace, Carus crossed the Euphrates, ravaged Mesopotamia, took Seleucia, crossed the Tigris, captured the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, and continued to drive the Persians before him. But in the midst of his victories he was during a storm struck dead by lightning, after reigning a little more than a year (Dec. 283).

CARINUS AND NUMERIAN

284 — 285

(a) Matters other than religion

Upon the death of Carus his two sons Carinus and Numerian were acknowledged as joint emperors. Carinus, cruel and dissolute, hastened to Rome, where he gave himself up to the vices and follies of an Elagabalus accompanied by the cruelties of a Domitian. Numerian, virtuous and beloved, but in feeble

¹ For Persian kings from 226 to 380, see Note E, p. 590.

health, acceded to the demands of the army for retirement from Persia, the troops being overcome with superstitious dread at the manner of the death of Carus. Retreating from the Tigris by very slow marches the army took eight months to reach the Bosphorus, and shortly after its arrival there Numerian was found dead in his tent, his death having been concealed for several days by Arrius Aper, the Prefect of the Praetorian Guards (Sept. 284). Aper was arrested under suspicion of being his murderer by the generals of the army, who then formed themselves into a tribunal, chose Diocletian, the commander of the guards of the palace, as the person most capable of avenging their beloved emperor, and summoned Aper before them. Diocletian ascended the tribunal, made a solemn affirmation of his own innocence of the murder, and then suddenly declared Aper to be the murderer of Numerian, and plunged his sword into his breast, giving him no time to assert anything in his defence. Whereupon the legions acclaimed Diocletian as emperor. A civil war ensued. Carinus marched against Diocletian, the two armies meeting at Margus, in Mœsia. The army of Diocletian was on the point of being overpowered when a tribune, to avenge the honour of his wife, killed Carinus, which terminated the struggle, and Diocletian was accepted by both sides as emperor (March, 285).

(b) Matters concerning religion

Notwithstanding all the terrible stress of persecution which the Church was at this time enduring it continued to extend its area, and now advanced into a country not subject to the Romans. The Roman Empire, when thirty years after this time it adopted Christianity, was not the first of the kingdoms of the world to accept Christianity as its national religion. That honour belongs to the small kingdom of Armenia, into which Christianity shortly before this time had spread, and which about the year 284 adopted it as its national religion, becoming the first Christian kingdom, 400 Bishops being consecrated, and churches being built in all the towns.

CHAPTER XI

DIOCLETIAN

285 — 305

(a) Matters other than religion

DIOCLETIAN¹ was born at Salona, on the coast of Dalmatia, in Illyricum. One of the most distinguished emperors, he was one of the humblest in origin; for both his parents were Illyrian slaves in the house of a Roman senator. As a youth (with the name of Docles) he became a soldier, and by his talents gradually rose, serving with distinction under the emperors Aurelian, Probus, and Carus, until at length (having changed his name first to Diocles and then to the more majestic Diocletianus), he became in turn governor of Moesia, consul, and lastly commander of the guards of the palace. He was only thirty-eight when on the death of Carinus he was unanimously elected emperor. In character and abilities he was wise and artful, rather than brilliant. Untiring in pursuit of his ends, possessing great application in business, hiding his real aims with profound dissimulation under an appearance of military frankness, cloaking self-interest under specious pretences of justice and the public welfare, an adept at mingling severity with mildness and economy with liberality, he easily dominated all the men around him. He was essentially a statesman rather than a soldier, always preferring to gain his objects by diplomacy, rather than by the open display of force, and, working slowly and artfully, never failed in the end to achieve his purpose.

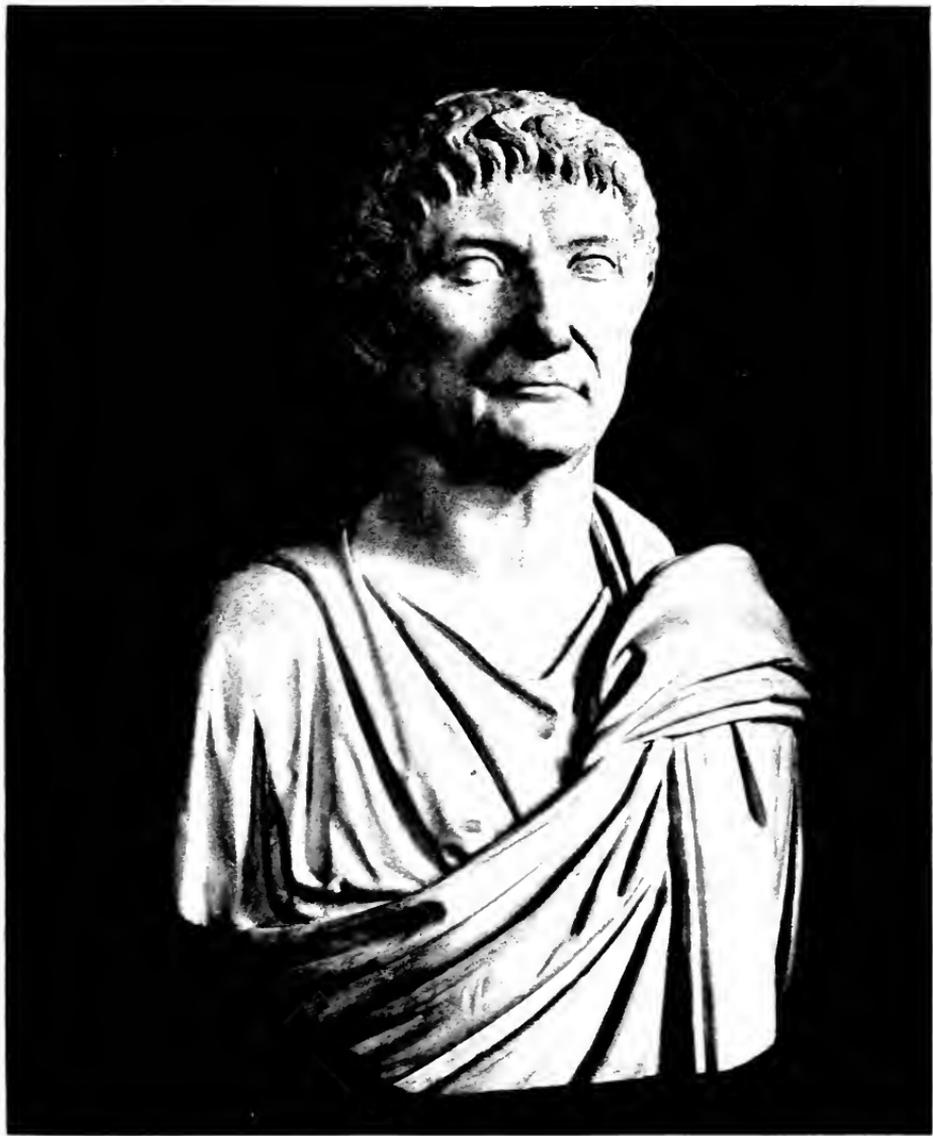
Diocletian made a sweeping change in the scheme of administration of the empire. Being of opinion that the task of defending and administering so vast an empire had now grown too great for one man, and also that security required that the

¹ Plate LIII. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

seat of authority should be closer to the frontiers of the empire, he in 286 (little more than a year after becoming emperor) associated with himself Maximian, giving him the same title of *Augustus*, with a position equal to his own, and delivering to his charge more particularly the western portion of the empire while he himself took the eastern portion. His choice of a colleague was typical of Diocletian's character and methods. Maximian, by birth a peasant of Sirmium, who, in a much longer course of service than Diocletian, had gradually risen in the army, unable to read, careless of laws, rustic in manners, and knowing no art but war, but brave, steadfast, and always ready to undertake the most arduous enterprises, was exactly fitted to execute any severe measures which Diocletian desired to carry out, and yet to disclaim. Insensible to pity, Maximian was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty or massacre which Diocletian might suggest; while after it was over the latter would appear in the rôle of mediator, would gently censure his colleague's severity, and obtain credit for a mildness which contrasted favourably with Maximian's cruelty. Maximian, rude and unlettered himself, had a profound respect for Diocletian's ability, and the two emperors maintained a firm friendship, in which Diocletian was the brain and Maximian the arm of the imperial power.

In 292, after seven years during which both emperors were arduously engaged in contests with usurpers and barbarians in various directions, all of whom (with one exception in the case of Britain) ¹ they subdued, Diocletian carried this subdivision of the imperial power still further, by giving to each of the *Augusti* a lieutenant with the title of *Caesar*. For his own lieutenant he chose Galerius, a brutal and illiterate shepherd of Dacia who had risen in the army, and who was in attainments, manners, and character another Maximian. Diocletian made Galerius divorce his wife, and gave him his own daughter Valeria in marriage. For Maximian's lieutenant Diocletian selected Constantius, commonly known as Constantius Chlorus (the sallow), from his pale complexion, who in like manner was made to divorce his wife Helena and marry Maximian's step-daughter Theodosia. Whereas Diocletian, Maximian, and Galerius were all of the humblest extraction,

¹ See below, p. 348.



DIOCLETIAN.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.



and in the case of the two latter by no means fitted for their exalted position, Constantius on the other hand was a thoroughly worthy selection, both by birth, attainments, and character. His father Eutropius was an important noble of Dardania, and his mother Claudia was a niece ¹ of the emperor Claudius II, and Constantius had distinguished himself by his able and temperate rule over Dardania. Constantius Chlorus has been a good deal overshadowed by his celebrated son, Constantine. In high-minded character, justice, and tolerant disposition he surpassed all his contemporaries.

By the above arrangement the power and responsibilities of empire were satisfactorily subdivided. While nominally the distribution of the government was into two portions under Diocletian and Maximian, each with a *Caesar* under him, practically the subdivision was into four portions, with a general supervision by Diocletian over his three colleagues, who all acknowledged him as supreme. The four portions were :—

- (i) Gaul, Britain, Spain and Mauretania,² ruled by Constantius, with capital at TRÈVES.
- (ii) Italy, Rhætia, Noricum, and North Africa, ruled by Maximian, with capital at MILAN.
- (iii) Pannonia, Mœsia, Illyricum, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, ruled by Galerius, with capital at SIRMIMUM, on the Save, not far from its junction with the Danube.
- (iv) Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, ruled by Diocletian himself, with capital at NICOMEDIA, on the eastern shore of the Bosphorus.

Thus, combined with a subdivision of the work of administration, there was a general advance of the ruling power nearer to the frontier in each portion of the empire. The two chief capitals, Milan and Nicomedia, were made by Diocletian splendid and prosperous cities, and soon surpassed all others in the empire except Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch.

The first task of Constantius Chlorus, ruling the western quarter of the empire, was to recover Britain. The defence of the coasts on both sides of the British Channel had in 286

¹ Daughter of Crispus, the elder brother of Claudius II.

² Later on Mauretania became part of the province of North Africa, for the different sections of which see Vol. II, p. 213.

been assigned by Maximian to Carausius, a Belgian. But in 287 Carausius had rebelled, with the assistance of the Saxons and other pirates had seized Britain, and after holding that country for six years had been succeeded by another usurper, Allectus. In 296 Constantius crossed the Channel with a considerable force, defeated and slew Allectus, and regained Britain.

In 297 both Maximian and Diocletian were engaged in active operations south of the Mediterranean. Maximian vanquished the Moorish tribes who had invaded the province of North Africa; and Diocletian defeated the rebellious races who had gained possession of Egypt, took Alexandria after a siege of eight months, massacring a large number of the inhabitants, and subdued Egypt. Diocletian then proceeded against Narses,¹ the Persian monarch, summoning Galerius to his assistance. But in a severe battle in Mesopotamia Galerius was totally defeated, and on his return to Antioch, where Diocletian had established himself, was received by the latter with the utmost indignation, Diocletian making Galerius follow his chariot on foot for a mile before the whole court as a sign of his disgrace.

However in 298 Galerius, being again sent against Narses, achieved a complete and decisive victory, surprising the Persians in the night, and massacring almost their whole army. Narses was himself wounded and escaped with difficulty, while several of his wives, his sisters, and children were taken prisoners. This defeat so broke the spirit of Narses that he sued for peace, and agreed to resign a large part of his dominions. Mesopotamia, together with five Persian districts beyond the Tigris, as far to the east as the mountainous district of Carduene, were ceded to the Roman Empire; Armenia was again made subject to Rome, its throne being restored to Tiridates, who had been Rome's faithful ally; and similarly the nomination of the kings of Iberia was also resigned by the Persian monarch to the emperors of Rome. The peace thus concluded gave tranquillity to the east for forty years.

The subdivision of the imperial power carried out by Diocletian much strengthened the empire. Under it the restoration effected by Claudius II, Aurelian, Tacitus, and Probus

¹ See Note E, p. 590.

was carried still further, the barbarian races were everywhere driven out, and the Roman Empire was restored to a pitch of prosperity and power not only equal to, but considered by historians generally to have even surpassed that which it had possessed under Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius.

But a still more important change was made by Diocletian in the position of the emperor with regard to the Senate. From this time forth the emperor becomes an autocrat, not merely in practice, but in theory. Hitherto, though the emperors might dictate what laws should be passed, those laws were enacted by the Senate; from henceforth they are made by the emperor alone, and he becomes the sole *legal* authority. Hitherto the emperors, though in the provinces adopting the rôle of monarchs, in Rome were accustomed to assume more or less the language and behaviour of the chief officer of the State. Diocletian, proceeding gradually and with much artifice, swept all this away. The titles of consul, censor, and tribune, having republican associations, were dropped, and those of "Dominus" (lord), "Basileus" (king), and "Imperator" (emperor) were assumed by Diocletian in their stead. Together with these titles Diocletian adopted the wearing of the diadem on the head,¹ an ornament which had always been detested by the Romans as being the insignia of royalty; he wore silken robes of the imperial purple colour; and instead of the familiar intercourse with fellow Romans which had been the custom of former emperors, he introduced numerous forms and ceremonies to surround with awe the sacred majesty of the emperor. Finally Diocletian's artful policy towards the Senate was completed by the permanent removal of the court from Rome. As long as the emperor had his official residence in Rome, and resided there when not occupied in the field, the Senate could scarcely be entirely ignored. But Diocletian never even visited Rome until he had been eighteen years on the throne, and by establishing his capital at Nicomedia gave the Senate its most vital wound. The emperor consulted with his ministers, and no longer with the Senate. The name of the Senate of Rome was still men-

¹ The imperial diadem was a plain broad gold fillet set with pearls, or other jewels; see Plate LV.

tioned with honour, and its members were flattered with honorary distinctions, but the assembly was suffered to sink into oblivion, and losing all connection with the imperial court and the actual constitution, became only a useless monument of antiquity.

The change which Diocletian had made in subdividing the imperial power not only strengthened the empire and improved its administration but also strengthened the throne against the machinations of would-be usurpers. His system of two *Augusti*, with two *Caesars* who in their turn should rise to the higher rank, was intended not only to subdivide work grown too great for one man, but also to protect the empire from those disastrous contests for the throne which it had so frequently experienced; for it would be an almost impossible task, either for an aspiring general to vanquish in succession four emperors, or for any one of the four to overcome in succession the other three, and the small hope of success in such enterprises would prevent their being undertaken. The armies were controlled by the four emperors, who were supposed to assist each other if required; while the imperial edicts were inscribed with their joint names, and were accepted in all the provinces as promulgated by their mutual counsels, and as representing the undivided authority of the throne.

One disadvantage (among many advantages) Diocletian's system had; and it is one which has often, somewhat thoughtlessly, been held sufficient to condemn it. It increased considerably the cost of the administration, both by the establishment of four imperial courts instead of one, and by the multiplication of many of the expenses of government. From this time forward we find constant complaints among the Roman writers of the increasing burden of taxation, which increased taxation was undoubtedly mainly due to the augmented expenses of the altered form of government. But it has failed to be recognized that the advantages which the inhabitants of the empire reaped in greatly increased prosperity, and in immunity from the atrocities, outrages, and devastation of their property by barbarian invaders which had previously been so frequent, were cheaply purchased by this heavier taxation, which after all was light compared with that which the people of the same countries now have to bear.

Nor can four courts be considered excessive for an extent of empire so immense, one in which at the present day three times that number have to be maintained.

Early in 303, having in eighteen years cleared the Roman dominions of their various enemies, entirely changed the form of government, and brought the empire to a condition of peace and prosperity greater than any which it had ever enjoyed, Diocletian came to Rome, meeting Maximian there, and together they celebrated a magnificent Roman triumph for their victories over so many enemies. It surpassed in grandeur even that of Aurelian; Britain, Africa, the Rhine, the Danube, the Nile, and Persia all contributed their trophies to the splendour of this triumph. It is notable as being the last Roman triumph ever celebrated by a Roman emperor.¹

Immediately after this triumph Diocletian returned to Nicomedia, and there, instigated chiefly by his barbarous son-in-law Galerius, he published his edict inaugurating that long and severe persecution of Christianity² which, through the issues it involved and its very unexpected conclusion, has become the best known act of his reign, obscuring and casting into the background those great measures of reform in the government which were carried out by him, though at the time they seemed all-important and this other matter of scarcely any importance at all.

In 304 Diocletian appears to have again visited Rome, remaining there for some months. But in 305, after reigning for twenty years, and while the persecution which he had inaugurated was still deluging the empire with the blood of another war than one against the barbarian enemies of Rome, Diocletian, who had done so many things which had never been done before, added yet one more by abdicating the throne. He was still only fifty-eight years old, but he was tired of the cares of royalty, and anxious to pass the remainder of his days in honourable repose. The ceremony of his abdication took place on the 1st May, 305, in a great plain three miles from Nicomedia, and was very impressive. The emperor, in the presence of the whole court, the troops, and a

¹ For the meaningless pageant carried out by the feeble Honorius in 404 was a mere imitation (Vol. II, Chap. XVII, p. 31).

² Pages 354-364.

vast concourse of the people, ascended a lofty throne wearing the diadem and clad in his imperial robes, delivered a sensible and dignified address to the assembled multitude, and then divested himself of the imperial insignia, entered a private chariot, and at once set out on his journey to Salona in Dalmatia, which he had chosen as his place of retirement. He did not take his wife Prisca with him, and she remained at Nicomedia with her daughter, the empress Valeria. On the same day at Milan Maximian, from whom Diocletian had exacted a promise when they were together at Rome two years before that he would descend from the throne whenever Diocletian did, very reluctantly made a similar resignation, retiring to his villa in Lucania, in southern Italy.

Their places as *Augusti* were taken by Galerius and Constantius, Galerius striving to obtain for himself, as son-in-law to Diocletian, an acknowledgement that he was to be superior to Constantius, in which attempt he failed. He succeeded however in getting his own ignorant and barbarous nephew Daza (afterwards called Maximin), and his incapable relative Severus, appointed by Diocletian as the two new *Caesars*, to the exclusion of Constantine, the capable and popular son of Constantius, whose practical right it was to succeed his father, but of whose popularity and attainments Galerius was bitterly jealous.

Diocletian's reign was in every way an epoch-making one; being notable for the end of the legal power of the Senate, for the last Roman triumph, for the last persecution of Christianity, for Rome ceasing to be the capital of the empire, for the subdivision of the imperial power, and for the first example of an emperor's abdication.

Diocletian passed the remaining eight years of his life as a private individual, content with his retreat, and occupied in building his great palace near Salona, tree-planting, and gardening. When, a few years after his abdication, his restless colleague Maximian tried to induce him to resume the throne Diocletian rejected the request with a smile of pity, and replied that if he could show to Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona the latter would not be inclined to urge him to abandon the substance of happiness for its shadow.

Diocletian's chief buildings were his immense set of public Baths at Rome and his magnificent palace at Spalatro, four miles from Salona. The Baths of Diocletian were begun by him during his visit to Rome in 303, and completed in 306. As many as 40,000 condemned Christians are said to have been made to assist in this work before being martyred. They were the most extensive set of Baths in Rome, being half as large again as the Baths of Caracalla, and covering nearly 100 acres. Amidst their ruins the large modern railway terminus of Rome is swallowed up as quite a small concern, and whole terraces of modern houses cover other parts of the site. One of the halls has been converted into the fine church of St. Maria degli Angeli, and the extensive National Museum of Antiquities occupies another large portion of the ruins.

Of all the palaces built at different times during 1200 years by the Roman emperors one only still exists, that built during the years 303-310 by Diocletian at Spalatro. It was of great size, and had some important architectural features, especially in its striking sea-front, which is still in excellent preservation. The modern town of Spalato now occupies this palace. Including the towers at the four corners, the eastern and western sides are 235 yards long, the northern and southern sides being 200 yards long. Four streets meeting in the centre divided the palace into four equal parts, the entrance to the principal apartments being a lofty gate still called by its original name of the Golden Gate. In the 7th century, when the Avars made one of their many incursions into Dalmatia, the ancient Roman town of Salona was completely destroyed by them; but the empty palace of Diocletian, four miles distant, afforded an asylum to the inhabitants, and so became the modern town of Spalato. The architecture of this palace is peculiar, more particularly in the fact that the supporting arches spring direct from the capitals of the massive Corinthian columns. This is the first known instance of that method, and thus it has been said by Professor Freeman, "All Gothic architecture was in embryo in the brain of Diocletian and his architect." As one of the principal buildings of this palace Diocletian erected his magnificent octagon mausoleum, which still exists.¹

¹ See Chap. XII, p. 379.

While everything about Diocletian is striking, his eight years' retirement is perhaps as much so as all the rest of his career. For when we reflect on what were the incidents of those eight years¹ Diocletian's attitude is remarkable indeed. He must have seen his celebrated subdivision of the empire into four parts overturned; have seen the colleague whom he had forced to abdicate with himself reassume the power, and then suffer defeat and banishment; have seen a man whom he had appointed as *Caesar* taken to Rome and put to death; have seen his own son-in-law and former lieutenant repulsed and brought to disaster; and have seen universal disorder and confusion introduced where he had with many long labours created order and good government. And yet he, who had been for twenty years the mainspring of the whole empire, and was not yet old,² watched from his great palace at Spalatro all this ruin of his life's work being wrought by men utterly inferior to himself in mental power, and all of them accustomed to regard with the profoundest respect his superior ability and to bow to his ascendancy, and never made any attempt to intervene and prevent such a result. It shows one of the most singular aspects of a character all of whose aspects were singular.³

(b) Matters concerning religion

In Diocletian's reign we come to the last and fiercest battle in that long 250 years' war which began in Nero's gardens in A.D. 65. We have seen how this contest between Paganism and Christianity increased in intensity as it approached the final struggle, the persecutions becoming ever fiercer and at shorter intervals; how every class fought in that "noble army of martyrs,"—bishops, philosophers, slaves, officers and soldiers of the Roman army, young boys and girls, noble ladies, and slave-girls; how their brave and steadfast deaths again and again drew others to embrace a religion which could produce such results; and how the object over which the mortal combat between these two opposing forces raged

¹ See Chapter XII, pp. 371–378.

² He was at any rate much younger than the still vigorously active Maximian.

³ Regarding Diocletian's death see Chap. XII, p. 378.

was nothing less than the maintenance or the overthrow of the entire religion, social customs, moral conditions, and favourite pleasures of the whole civilized world, a religion, customs, conditions, and pleasures to which that world had been accustomed for generations, and which it was fiercely determined should not be overthrown.

Countless numbers had fallen in the previous nine persecutions which had taken place in these 250 years. But we now come to the great Tenth persecution, from 303 to 312, which was so terrible from its exceeding severity, its long continuance, and its wide-spread area, that it was often afterwards called "*The persecution.*"

The Roman world had by this time reached the deliberate conclusion that it was a struggle to the death. At the first this religion had been looked upon merely with contempt as a "new superstition"; then as it became better known it had been regarded with hatred, as opposing a way of life to which mankind was wedded; and now at last it had come to be looked upon as formidably opposing the Roman power. In this there was of course an error; Christianity, while it subverted the religion and customs of the people, had nothing in it which tended to subvert the power of Rome; Christian soldiers and a Christian people involved no weakness to that power, as was to be strongly demonstrated during the century which was now beginning. But Rome failed to understand this, and supposed that any one who would not sacrifice to the emperor as a god was *ipso facto* an enemy to the power of Rome.

It is quite clear that this supreme effort to destroy Christianity expressed the united sentiment of the Roman world as a whole. The superstitious veneration for a religion bound up with the whole victorious career of Rome for over a thousand years, the detestation felt against that which would put an end to favourite vices and long-established customs which were greatly cherished, the self-interest of a numerous and powerful Pagan priesthood, and the animosity caused by the abstention of Christians from social and family gatherings, all combined to make this feeling a united one; and the emperor's persecuting edict merely followed the general sentiment of the people, while many incidents show that so long as that

sentiment lasted the emperor could not oppose it. In such matters a Roman emperor, autocrat though he might be, followed very closely the wishes of the mass of the people; and, seeking always popularity, he seldom failed to reflect in his measures the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of the empire. This persecution would neither have been begun, nor have continued so long, notwithstanding many changes of rulers, nor have been carried on with so much severity, nor have extended over so many diverse countries, had it not been in accord with the general sentiment of the inhabitants of the empire.

In this Tenth persecution some new methods were added to those used on previous occasions. In the earliest persecutions the idea had been simply the wholesale slaughter of those who professed this religion. Later on, when it was found that this did not result in stamping it out, a new method was put in force and the killing of the Bishops became the special aim, under the idea that if the leaders were destroyed the religion must die out. This having no better success, a further method was now added. The customs and mode of worship of the Christians were now well known, and taking into consideration how large a part of their worship consisted in the reading of their "Scriptures," and how carefully they treasured their manuscripts of the Gospels, their copies of the writings of celebrated "Fathers of the Church," and their documents called "legenda," i.e. the accounts of the deaths of martyrs, those who organized the persecution considered that a vital blow would be dealt at the religion if all its written records were swept away. All such records were therefore ordered to be destroyed. At the same time the orders for ensuring a strict carrying out of the edict by all in authority were made still more stringent, so that no governor who did not wish to lose his own life would think of showing leniency to Christians. Thus did imperial Rome now gather its whole force for a root and branch extirpation of this religion which so many efforts of previous emperors had failed to crush.

The persecution of Diocletian began after the Christians had had eighteen years of tranquillity, Diocletian for the first eighteen years of his reign treating them with tolerance. During this period the number of Christians had greatly

increased ; so much so that Eusebius says that at this period, " their ancient churches were not large enough to accommodate them, and therefore they erected more spacious churches in every city." Moreover Christians were now found in the very highest ranks of society and of the army ; Prisca, Diocletian's own wife, and Valeria, his only child, were both of them secretly Christians, as were also Sebastian, the captain of Diocletian's guards, the grand chamberlain, the treasurer, the librarian, and others of the principal officials of the imperial household. In all the larger cities there was more than one church, and in Rome there were over forty churches at the time when Diocletian's persecution began. And though Galerius, Diocletian's lieutenant and son-in-law, was a most bitter enemy of Christianity, the other three emperors, Diocletian, Maximian, and Constantius, were all tolerant towards it ; and it was not until the time of the great Roman triumph in the eighteenth year of Diocletian's reign that this attitude became changed.

At length in February 303 Diocletian was persuaded by those inimical to Christianity, headed by Galerius, that it was imperative that this religion which was permeating all ranks should once for all be thoroughly stamped out. And so began the most wide-spread slaughter on account of religion that the world has ever seen. First there issued an edict directing the seizure of all ecclesiastics, upon whom every possible method of torture was directed to be employed to force them to renounce Christianity, and the prisons promptly became filled with a crowd of bishops, priests, deacons, and readers. This was quickly followed by another edict extending the previous orders to the whole body of Christian people, and declaring Diocletian's intention of entirely abolishing the Christian name. The heaviest penalties were imposed upon any one who should dare to protect a Christian, and the persecution was at once begun with the utmost rigour, the Christian officials of the imperial palace at Nicomedia being among the earliest victims.¹ The persecution was carried

¹ They were most cruelly tortured, and, it is stated, in the presence of Diocletian himself. The trembling empresses Prisca and Valeria freed themselves from the accusation of being Christians by agreeing to sacrifice to the gods of Rome.

out all over the Roman empire, and lasted (in most parts of that empire) for no less than ten years. And no one among the Christians who saw the beginning of this persecution, the exceeding fierceness with which it was carried on, and the deep hatred for themselves and their religion which they saw manifested by all around them, could have dreamt how strangely all this would end only ten years later.

The celebrated edict was issued in the name of all four emperors. It was promulgated at Diocletian's capital of Nicomedia, where it was affixed to the door of the principal church. It commanded that all who would not sacrifice to the gods of Rome were to be tortured until they did so or died; that since the obstinacy of Christians under torture was well-known the governors were to invent new and more poignant torments¹; that all property of Christians was to be confiscated; that all churches were to be razed to the ground; and that all sacred books and Christian writings of every kind were to be diligently searched for and burnt. It is to this last feature of the Tenth persecution that the dearth of definite records regarding the first 300 years of Christianity is due. When every book or document had to be laboriously copied by hand the copies of each were necessarily few. By this time the copies of the Gospels and other writings of the Apostles were fairly numerous, so that entire destruction in their case was impossible; but it was far otherwise as regards the valuable writings of leading Bishops who had taken a prominent part in all the life of the Christian Church during the eventful 200 years through which it had passed since the death of the last of the Apostles, the accounts of what had taken place during that period, and the "legenda," or authenticated records of the martyrdoms of prominent Christians. Only a few copies, sometimes only one, existed of such writings, and as a result of the vigorous search which was carried out most of these were destroyed.

It is curious to notice that this word "legend" has come to mean the exact opposite to its original significance. Whereas

¹ In the cruelty of positively ordering the governors to invent new and more horrible tortures the hand of the ferocious and brutal Galerius was plainly seen. The emperor Constantine afterwards characterized the edict as "traced as if with a sword's point dipped in blood."

it now means an account for which there is no solid historical basis, it originally meant just the reverse. Feeling how important to the life of Christianity were the words, acts, and manner of death of those martyred, the early Church ordered these to be read in the churches on the anniversary of the martyrdom; and conscious of how necessary it was that these records should be thoroughly reliable, not only forbade therein any stories of doubtful origin, but obtained from the public notaries at considerable cost copies of the official trial of the martyr, adding thereto the evidence of those who had been eye-witnesses of his death. And only records thus carefully verified and attested were permitted as "legenda" (meaning, "to be read"). These "legenda," of each of which there was as a rule only one copy, were the special treasure of the Christian community in the city where the martyr had lived; and nearly all these were destroyed in the Diocletian persecution. When that persecution was over efforts were made to re-write the story of each martyrdom from memory; but the authenticity of the official record of the trial, the vivid evidence of eye-witnesses, the local colour and naturalness, were all irretrievably lost; and thus in place of the former record there grew up that literature which we now call "legend," the old name still surviving, though that which it implied had utterly passed away. But though words and acts had become "legendary," the fact of the martyrdom remained.

Upon the edict being put up at day-break of the 23rd February 303 on the door of the principal church of Nicomedia¹ a young Roman soldier, or petty officer,² who was a Christian, filled with indignation at such an edict, and realizing all the abominable things which would be done under it, pulled down the hateful document and tore it to pieces. He was forthwith arrested, and put to death. A similar action, with a similar result, was performed by the boy Pancras at Rome on the edict being put up there in the Forum.³

¹ The principal church of Nicomedia was a particularly magnificent building, standing on a height in the midst of the city in full view of the imperial palace.

² St. George, see pp. 360-361.

³ The still existing church in Rome to the memory of St. Pancras was erected in A.D. 500.

Any attempt to describe a persecution which extended from Britain on the west to Armenia on the east, and from the Rhine to the deserts of Africa, would be impossible. Of the number who perished there is necessarily no record, but we may judge of it from the fact that wherever throughout Europe we come across the names of martyrs who died in the ages of persecution in three cases out of four we find the person suffered in this Tenth persecution. As regards their circumstances we have necessarily to depend almost wholly upon tradition, and to sift reliable tradition from that which is unreliable. The great Ravenna mosaic¹ (an absolutely reliable memorial) records the names of a few of the most notable of them; and the burial-places in the Catacombs supply the names of many more.²

As St. George is the patron saint of England it may be well

¹ See Vol. II, Chap. XXII, pp. 277-280, and Appendix XII.

² The Prayerbook of the Church of England commemorates a few of those martyred in this persecution, namely:—

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| St. George. | A Roman petty officer. Martyred at Nicomedia. Commemorated on the 23rd April. |
| St. Vincent. | A deacon, 20 years old. Martyred at Saragossa in Spain. Commemorated on the 22nd January. |
| St. Crispin
St. Crispinian | Two brothers who were missionaries. Martyred at Soissons in Gaul. Commemorated on the 25th October. |
| St. Blasius. | |
| St. Lucian. | A priest. Martyred at Beauvais in Gaul. Commemorated on the 8th January. |
| St. Lucia. | A girl of sixteen. Martyred at Syracuse in Sicily. Commemorated on the 13th December. |
| St. Faith. | A girl of eleven. One of the martyrs at Agen in Gaul. Commemorated on the 6th October. |
| St. Agnes. | A girl of fifteen. Martyred at Rome. Commemorated on the 21st January. |
| St. Margaret. | The daughter of a Pagan priest. Martyred at Antioch. Commemorated on the 20th July. |
| St. Catherine. | A young Roman lady. Martyred in Egypt. Commemorated on the 25th November. |

That places so far apart as Bithynia, Spain, Gaul, Armenia, Sicily, Rome, Antioch, and Egypt should all be represented in this short list merely of those whom the Church of England commemorates, shows how widespread the persecution was.

to mention what is known of his history; especially as the Eastern Church, with its naturally fuller knowledge concerning him, gives his name such exceptional honour.¹ He was the young Roman petty officer who tore down the imperial edict from the door of the principal church at Nicomedia in indignation at its cruelty. The only other facts known about him are that he was born at Diospolis about 280, that he entered the army when he was about seventeen, and was twenty-three when this episode occurred, that his parents were Christians, and that his father was also in the army under Diocletian. This is all that is known of him historically. The legendary history of him has to do with the slaying of a dragon and the rescue of a captive maiden who had been delivered over to the dragon to be devoured. It may easily be an allegory.² Christian maidens in these persecutions were constantly delivered over to more terrible dragons than any ever painted in the pictures relating to St. George. His action in regard to the edict may have been an endeavour to save one such maiden in whom he was interested; or the allegory may refer to some other act of deliverance performed by him before this event of the edict.

The Eastern Church honours him more than all other martyrs, and styles him "The Great Martyr." There must be some special reason for this, though it is now lost. The emperor Constantine built a church to his memory only ten years after the persecution ceased; ³ showing that those who were St. George's contemporaries felt that there was something about him specially worthy of commemoration. For the great emperor Constantine, with all the cares of a world upon him, was not likely to single out for special honour a mere subordinate Roman officer unless there had been something done by him which was highly exceptional, and which all then

¹ Gibbon's malicious statement that the man whom the English chose for their patron saint was quite another person, who lived fifty years later and bore the vilest character (see Chap. XIV, p. 479), has since been often refuted.

² I find that this is exactly what it is held to be by the society of "Les Petits Bollandistes" as the result of their researches.

³ See Chap. XIII, p. 432.

knew.¹ Long may England continue to show her choice of a patron saint to be appropriate by standing forth pre-eminent among Christian nations for the characteristics embodied in the allegorical history of St. George, the passionately determined champion of the weak and the oppressed.

St. Sebastian's circumstances and death were very different from those of St. George. He was born at Narbonne, in Gaul, and held an exalted position as captain of the imperial body-guard, and Diocletian was strongly attached to him. Young, handsome, rich, and popular, Sebastian was a favourite with the whole court. He was secretly a Christian, and at the beginning of the persecution was able through his position to protect many who were in danger. At length in 304 he was in consequence accused to the emperor (who was then at Rome, Sebastian as usual being in attendance upon him) of being a Christian, and on being questioned by Diocletian acknowledged the fact. We are told that Diocletian strove to save him, but found this impossible; he therefore ordered that he was to be shot with arrows in the garden of the imperial palace. The retired locality chosen, the absence of any mention of torture, and the manner of death ordered (instead of the usual beheading with a sword), as well as the result, seem to show that Diocletian still intended to save him. For notwithstanding the numerous pictures of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian this was not the manner of his death. He was bound to a tree and shot with arrows, but he was not killed. We are told that being left wounded, bound to the tree in the garden of the palace, he was at night removed by Christian friends to a place of safety, and nursed until he recovered; that then, refusing to remain longer in concealment, he went to the palace, and presenting himself before Diocletian urged the cause of the Christians; and that finding his arguments of no avail he was led warmly to reproach the emperor on account of all the horrible cruelties which were being inflicted; whereupon Diocletian became

¹ It is strange to realize that Constantine, who was present in attendance upon Diocletian at Nicomedia when the persecution began, may very probably himself have seen St. George put to death. At any rate, from his position at the court at the time, he must have had full personal knowledge of the case.

enraged, and ordered the guards to remove him, and he was by them beaten to death with clubs outside the palace.¹

The persecution continued to be virulently carried on throughout the years 303, 304, and 305, and Diocletian's abdication in the latter year caused no cessation in it, though by that time immense numbers had been slaughtered all over the empire. In all countries the authorities seemed inspired by the ferocious spirit of its chief author, Galerius, manifesting a ruthless determination once for all to extirpate this religion. So that the Christians began to see that their only chance was to seek for inaccessible hiding places, either in desert retreats, or in the Catacombs.²

The vast labyrinth of subterranean galleries known as the Catacombs extend to an enormous length; for though never reaching more than three miles from Rome their total length is estimated to be more than 350 miles. They average 8 feet in height and from 3 to 5 feet in width, and contain six or seven millions of niches, excavated in the sandstone walls, where the Christian dead are buried, each niche containing a body, and being closed with a slab bearing the name of the person buried there, with the letters "M" or "Mar" in the case of those who had been martyred.³ At intervals these galleries open out into wide chambers, with shafts for light and air opening into the garden above, these chambers containing similar niches, and being used for religious assemblies in times of persecution. Begun in apostolic times, these catacombs were used by the Christians at Rome throughout the first

¹ Another notable martyr who perished at the same time, with many others, at Saragossa in Spain was St. Vincent, a deacon. He was subjected to terrible tortures by the Proconsul Dacianus as an example to the rest, after which his body was thrown into the sea near the cape which bears his name. The acts of his martyrdom were publicly read in the North African churches in the 4th century in the lifetime of St. Augustine.

² For the remaining stages of the persecution see Chapter XII.

³ The Catacomb called after St. Sebastian, in which he was buried, has in it an inscription saying that 174,000 martyred persons are buried in that catacomb. It was the one chiefly used in the Tenth persecution, and even if only the majority of this number died in that persecution, this gives some idea of the number of persons who perished in Rome alone under Diocletian's edict.

three centuries of Christianity, but were so used more particularly during the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth persecutions, and were called *cœmeterium* (sleeping place), a new name of Christian origin. There were some forty of these different *cœmeteria*, and originally they all belonged to private families, being dug in the gardens or lands of wealthy Christians. Hence most of the different catacombs have the names of those who were their original owners. At first the work of making these catacombs was done openly, and their entrances were not concealed; but in the 3rd century when persecutions became so frequent, the entrances to them were hidden, and made as difficult as possible. Since not only were the entrances difficult to find, but also the galleries themselves narrow and forming a confusing labyrinth to all except the initiated, they were secure places of refuge. Here in these "dens and caves of the earth" all Christians whose avocations permitted it now took refuge; here the Christians met for their religious worship; and here as the long persecution continued they buried their martyred friends and dear ones and inscribed a few touching words over the rough tombs in which they laid them.

The 3rd century is almost always considered as a period showing a general decline of the empire, but it may be doubted whether this is not too sweeping, and too much inspired by the opinions of those Roman writers who looked at the empire solely from the point of view of the city of Rome. Even with regard to the occupants of the throne, the emperors Septimius Severus, Decius, Valerian, Claudius II, Aurelian, and Probus fell little below the best emperors who had preceded them, while the emperor Diocletian surpassed all who had preceded him except Augustus.

But it is with regard to the empire as a whole, rather than to the character and abilities of individual emperors, that the view in question appears in particular too sweeping. Kingdoms and empires have their fluctuations as truly as do human beings. And although during the thirty-eight years 211-249 a succession of seven weak or vicious emperors occupied the

throne, the general administration of the empire appears to have been as little affected as it was when similar conditions occurred in the 1st century during the thirty-one years covered by the reigns of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Certainly when in the middle of the 3rd century the Roman Empire celebrated with the utmost pride and magnificence its thousandth birthday, and in the following year obtained as its ruler an emperor (Decius) who was the equal of nearly all who had preceded him, there was no feeling on the part of any one that the empire had up to that time in any way declined.

There then followed a period of fifteen years of great disasters and confusion (253-268), though even during this period large portions of the empire, such as the provinces of North Africa, Britain, Spain, and Egypt were untouched by these disasters. This period was succeeded by one of fifteen years (268-283), during which four emperors, Claudius II., Aurelian, Tacitus, and Probus, brought back the empire to its former state, the very name of "Restorers of the Empire" given to these emperors showing that the disastrous effects of the preceding fifteen years had been retrieved, while a fifth emperor, Carus, gained great glory to the empire by his victories over Persia and capture of the Persian capital. And this was succeeded by the twenty years' reign of an emperor (Diocletian) who, we are distinctly told, brought the prosperity of the empire to an even higher level than it had enjoyed in the 2nd century.

Moreover there are also other facts which tend to demonstrate that the empire in the 3rd century showed no signs of decay. First, we have the buildings erected at Rome during the years 202-211 by Septimius Severus, his Arch, the Septizonium, his reconstruction of the Temple of Vesta, and his palace. Secondly, the magnificent set of Baths erected at Rome during the years 211-235 by Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus surpassed anything of the kind previously built, and appear alone sufficient to maintain the credit of the 3rd century in this respect. Thirdly, throughout North Africa are a greater number of remains of triumphal arches, amphitheatres, temples, Baths, and other fine buildings erected in the 3rd century than exist anywhere else, Rome itself not excepted. Again, many parts of the empire which

in the 2nd century had been to a great extent covered with forest, and where towns had been few, were in the 3rd century becoming cleared of forest, and more thickly covered with towns, while the towns were also increasing in size and importance. Britain and Gaul in the West, and Asia Minor and Syria in the East were showing everywhere signs of increased prosperity; and North Africa, untouched by any of the disasters during the years 253-268, and the centre of an immense trade in corn, was prospering exceedingly. In the case of Gaul especially it is to the 3rd century that historians have attributed great strides forward; while in both Britain and Gaul the evidence of the coins found has been considered to show that the 3rd century witnessed a great advance in both these countries.

A general view over the whole empire at the end of the 3rd century shows in fact that, while there had been fluctuations, there was far from being any decline, that the disasters of fifteen years had been thoroughly retrieved, that the empire as a whole was in a condition at least fully equal to that which it had enjoyed in the 2nd century, and was steadily advancing to that higher degree of power, prosperity, and civilization which was destined to be seen in the 4th century.

NOTE C.

For the period from Commodus to Diocletian (180–284) the chief authorities are :—

The Augustan History. A general history beginning from the reign of the emperor Hadrian. Compiled by various writers whose names are not known.

Dion Cassius. His writings supply information regarding the reigns of Commodus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus (see Note B, p. 272).

Herodian. Very little is known of Herodian. He wrote, in Greek, a history beginning at the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180, at which time he was a very young man. He professes to relate only what he himself saw or heard or experienced in the course of public service. His history ends at the accession of Gordian III in 238.

Eutropius. Wrote in the 4th century an abridgement of Roman history (see Note D, Chap. XVI, p. 589).

Zosimus. Wrote in the 5th century a history covering the period from 180 to 410 (see Note D, Chap. XVI, p. 588).

CHAPTER XII

JOINT EMPERORS 305 — 314

{	CONSTANTIUS	GALERIUS	}	305-307.
	SEVERUS	MAXIMIN		
{	MAXIMIAN	GALERIUS	}	307-310.
	CONSTANTINE	LICINIUS		
	MAXENTIUS	MAXIMIN		
{	CONSTANTINE	LICINIUS	}	310-312.
	MAXENTIUS	MAXIMIN		
	CONSTANTINE	AND LICINIUS		312-314.

(a) Matters other than religion

DIOCLETIAN'S abdication was ere long followed by intermittent struggles between rival emperors, which, though they affected the people at large but little, kept the empire in a state of unrest for seven years (307-314). That the northern tribes during these seven years made only one insignificant attempt to invade the Roman dominions, which was promptly repelled, shows that the power of the empire was fully maintained notwithstanding this struggle between rival emperors.

Upon the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian and the appointment of two new Caesars, Galerius, though disappointed in his endeavour to make himself supreme, managed, through the subserviency to him of his nephew Maximin and his nominee Severus, practically to govern three-fourths of the empire. And as the health of Constantius Chlorus had long been failing, Galerius looked forward to soon becoming through the latter's death the sole master of the whole empire. Meanwhile Constantius took steps to call to his side his

capable son Constantine and withdraw him from the dangerous power of Galerius.

Constantine, whose full name was Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus,¹ the son of Constantius' first wife Helena,² forcibly divorced in 292, was born in 274 at Naissus (Nissa), in that part of Mœsia called at this time Dacia Ripensis. He was eighteen when his mother was divorced and his father became *Caesar* of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, but he was not allowed to accompany the latter, being detained at the court of Diocletian at Nicomedia, probably as a pledge for his father's loyalty.³ During the next thirteen years (292–305) Constantine served with such distinction under Diocletian and Galerius in the wars in Egypt and Persia that he rapidly rose to high rank. In 297, when he was twenty-three, he married a girl named Minervina, of whom nothing is known except that she was of lowly birth. Eusebius, describing Constantine as he saw him just at this time, when Constantine accompanied the emperor Diocletian as the army passed through Syria on its way to the campaign in Egypt, says:—"He stood at the right hand of the emperor, and commanded the admiration of all who beheld him by the indications he gave even then of royal greatness. For no one was his equal in grace and handsome appearance, or in strength and height of stature. He was even more notable for his mental qualities, being endowed with a sound judgement and having received a liberal education."⁴ He had taken Apollo as his tutelary deity, and those who wished to flatter him pretended to see in him a likeness to the usual representations of Apollo as a

¹ For his ancestry, see p. 347.

² See p. 346. Helena was of obscure origin. She was a native of Drepanum (near Nicomedia), a town which Constantine afterwards called after her Helenopolis, and is said to have been the daughter of an innkeeper. As Gibbon justly remarks (with reference to doubts cast on the point), Diocletian by insisting on her divorce acknowledged her marriage. It took place about the year 273.

³ Thus several favourite tales regarding Constantine have to be abandoned. His mother Helena was *not* the daughter of a British king; she was *not* a Christian until after her son became emperor, and consequently no such influence drew Constantine towards Christianity; and Constantine was *not* born and brought up in Britain, but, as noted, was born and brought up at Naissus in Mœsia.

⁴ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, i, xix.

type of manly beauty and symmetry. His commanding figure, courage, skill in all military exercises, and agreeable disposition, made him immensely popular with the army, and excited the bitter jealousy of Galerius, who both in the Persian war, and at other times, again and again exposed him to exceptional dangers in the hope that he would lose his life.¹

In 298 Minervina bore Constantine a son, to whom he gave the name of Crispus, after his own great-grandfather, the brother of the emperor Claudius II.² Five years later Constantine, then in attendance upon Diocletian, saw at Nicomedia the beginning of the terrible persecution at the instigation of Galerius, and being of a tolerant disposition was revolted by the cruelties he witnessed without any power to oppose them. In 305 his father became one of the two *Augusti*, and wrote for him to join him in Gaul. But Galerius for some time would not give the necessary permission, and it was only after repeated letters from his colleague Constantius that Galerius at length reluctantly gave Constantine permission to depart to join his father. Constantine, knowing that Galerius intended that he should never reach Gaul, defeated these designs by the extraordinary speed of his journey, and leaving Nicomedia at night, posted³ in an incredibly short time through Thrace, Mœsia, Pannonia, Northern Italy, and Gaul, and reached Gessoriacum (Boulogne) in safety, after a ride of 2400 miles, just as his father was embarking thence for Britain, whither Constantine accompanied him.

In the following year (306) Constantius Chlorus died at York; whereupon the legions in Britain at once proclaimed his son Constantine, then thirty-two years old, not as *Caesar*, but as *Augustus*. Galerius, after first threatening to burn the messenger who brought the news, considered it prudent to

¹ Among other methods, Galerius by sneers at his courage induced him to engage in single combat, at one time with a Sarmatian Goth, and at another with a large lion.

² Chap. XI, p. 347 (footnote).

³ The Roman service of posts was maintained with great efficiency. Along all the main roads, as previously noted, were post-houses at each of which were kept a number of horses, and in some cases even carriages and litters, and by this means couriers and officers in the service of the State could travel with great rapidity from end to end of the empire.

swallow his rage, and acknowledged Constantine as one of the four emperors, but giving him only the title of *Caesar* and conferring that of *Augustus* upon Severus.

Soon afterwards the Franks invaded Gaul, capturing and ravaging the capital, Trèves ; but Constantine rapidly crossed the channel from Britain, defeated them in two battles with great slaughter, and caused the two kings of the Franks, Ascarich and Merogais, with a large number of their warriors, to be torn to pieces by wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Trèves.¹ He then added to the defences of the Rhine frontier, increased the troops guarding it, and kept a fleet patrolling the river ; which measures successfully kept the Franks in check for a time.

The vices and incapacity of Maxentius, the son of the emperor Maximian, had prevented his being chosen as *Caesar* when Diocletian abdicated. When, however, Galerius exalted Severus to the higher rank of *Augustus*, Maxentius raised a revolt against the latter, and gained the assistance of his father Maximian by persuading him to reassume the throne. Maximian marched against Severus, took him prisoner at Ravenna, brought him to Rome, and put him to death (Feb. 307). Maximian then made an alliance with Constantine, met him in Gaul, and persuaded him to divorce the lowly-born Minervina (whose only son, Crispus, was by this time nine years old), and to marry his youngest daughter Fausta,² the marriage being celebrated with much magnificence at Arles. Galerius attempted to avenge the death of Severus, but on entering Italy was repulsed by Maximian and Maxentius and forced to retreat to his own portion of the empire, where he raised his friend Licinius to the rank of *Augustus* in place of the dead Severus, giving him the provinces of Illyricum and Pannonia. There were thus now six emperors ; in the west Maximian, Constantine, and Maxentius, and in the east Galerius, Licinius, and Maximin.

In 308 Maxentius revolted against his father Maximian (to whose abilities their joint success had been entirely due), and banished him from Italy. The aged emperor took refuge

¹ The remains of this amphitheatre still exist.

² The half-sister of Constantine's step-mother Theodosia (Chap. XI, p. 346).

first in Illyricum, but Galerius soon compelled him to retire from thence, and Maximian then sought an asylum with Constantine at Trèves. The latter treated him with respect ; but in 309 while Constantine was absent from Trèves, engaged in repelling the Franks, who had again crossed the Rhine, the restless Maximian attempted to seize his throne. Constantine's rapid return forced Maximian to fly ; he retired to Marseilles, pursued by Constantine, and on the citizens delivering him up rather than stand a siege, was compelled by Constantine to resign the purple. Maximian then laid a plot to assassinate Constantine in his bed in the palace at Trèves. But Fausta, who had feigned to enter the plot in order to save her husband, informed Constantine of it ; upon which the latter is said to have placed a slave in his bed, and seized Maximian red-handed as he plunged his sword into the sleeping man. Thereupon Maximian was made to commit suicide (Feb. 310). He had repeatedly shown himself to be a danger to any settled government, and his death, upon this second attempt against Constantine's life, was, under the circumstances of that age, a practical necessity ; ¹ while it is evident that even his daughter was of the same opinion. It must be remembered that Constantine was at this time a Pagan, and governed by Pagan views on such subjects. In forgiving Maximian's first ungrateful attempt to destroy him he behaved with greater leniency than for example Diocletian, Trajan, or any other emperor of Pagan times would have done. Constantine was not a man subject to outbursts of passion, and it is certain that he would not have put his wife's father to death had any other course been open to him.

‡: Meanwhile Galerius had become attacked by a horrible disease,² from which he suffered such continual torment that in 310 it forced him to abdicate ; and in May of the following year he died. As he was the chief author of the cruel persecution of Christians, which was still proceeding, mankind saw in his horrible death a just punishment for all the torture and misery which he had wrought upon so many innocent persons.

¹ Even Gibbon admits this, saying that Maximian deserved his fate. *Decline and Fall*, xiv. 121.

² It was said that, like Herod, he was "eaten of worms."

And he himself in the last few months of his life appears to have entertained a similar view ; for he tried, though ineffectually, to stop the persecution. This death of Galerius left remaining four emperors, in the west Constantine and Maxentius, and in the east Licinius and Maximin.

The brutal Maxentius, who had established himself at Rome,¹ and whose vices and general worthlessness made him totally unfit to govern, had by his ungrateful treatment of his father gained the sole rule of Italy and North Africa. His incapacity, profligacy, and cruelty were beyond bounds, and these two provinces groaned under his tyranny. It is universally admitted, even by the Pagan writers, that the deliverance of Italy and North Africa from this detested tyrant would alone have justified Constantine's invasion of Italy.

In 312 Maxentius proceeded to claim sovereignty over the whole of the West, and began to collect troops to invade Gaul. Constantine did not wait to be attacked. Maxentius had about 200,000 men, while Constantine, obliged to leave strong forces to guard his frontiers in Britain and on the Rhine, could not muster half that number. But the superior discipline of his troops, and their confidence in their leader, did much to compensate for this disparity in numbers. Sending a fleet from Gaul and Britain round into the Mediterranean to attack some of the ports in Italy and create a diversion in the enemy's rear,² Constantine assembled an army of about 80,000 men at Vienne, in the valley of the Rhone, for the invasion of Italy.

Having completed the various arrangements for conveying so large an army across the Alps, and for the government of Gaul during his absence, Constantine, leaving his wife

¹ Maxentius constructed outside Rome, on the Appian Way, the Circus of Maxentius, which has in recent years been excavated, and shows the general arrangement of such race-courses. The shape is an oval, with high gates at each of the sides. Down the centre of the course ran the *spina*, adorned with statues, and having a goal at each end. On each side of the principal entrance are the barriers from which the chariots started, performing the circuit of the course seven times. The spectators sat on ten tiers of seats, able to accommodate in this case about 18,000 persons.

² This is probably the first time in war that a fleet was used in this way.

Fausta ¹ at Vienne, about the 1st July, 312, set his army in motion to cross the Alps by the Mont Cenis pass. It was a tremendous undertaking upon which he was embarking. He knew that Maxentius had four armies which he would have to beat in succession, the first of them to be encountered immediately upon emerging from the further side of the pass. Constantine was now thirty-eight; as a young man he had been in battles against the Egyptians and the Persians, and later on had in northern Gaul commanded armies against the Franks; but he had never yet fought against Roman legions and Roman generals, and it remained to be seen what success he would have in such an encounter. Moreover even supposing he were victorious successively over the four armies of Maxentius, and gained Italy, beyond that country there were two other emperors, Licinius and Maximin, the former a noted commander in war. And though for a time he might make friends with Licinius, sooner or later he would be certain to have to meet him in battle. Constantine well knew that Diocletian, upon whose personal staff he had served for thirteen years, had had, as a principal object of his division of the empire between four emperors, the intention of making it an almost impossible task for any one of the four to overcome the other three in succession. Yet here was one of them about to attempt that very task; and with an army less than half the numerical strength of that which he was to meet in Italy. Truly, as Constantine rode out of the gate of Vienne at the head of his army, he must have wondered much what was to be the end of the momentous enterprise upon which he was starting, and must have possessed a more than usually fearless heart to have been able to face with courage all that lay before him.

The next four months saw a remarkable succession of victories. The difficulties of transporting an army of 80,000 men, including a force of cavalry, across the Alps were barely at an end when, just before emerging from the mountains, Constantine found himself opposed at Susa, in the valley of the Dora, by the troops of Maxentius, and had to fight the first of his battles in Italy, which he won. Thence he ad-

¹ Fausta had as yet no children. She and Constantine were married for nine years before the first of their children was born.

vanced to Turin, where he fought a second battle, and won that also. On this latter occasion Constantine, weak in cavalry, won the battle by drawing up his infantry in two lines with a wide space between them and ordering the front line to receive the formidable charge of the enemy's cavalry, and, opening their ranks, to allow the hostile squadrons to pass through them, and then, making the line face about, enclosed the cavalry as in a square, and destroyed them. It was a dangerous manœuvre, and one which, on the one hand, the commander would not have attempted unless his troops were trained to the very highest pitch, and which, on the other hand, the troops would have failed in attempting to carry out unless they had had the utmost confidence in their commander.

Proceeding onwards, Constantine took Milan, rested his army there for two or three days, and then advanced towards Verona, where a large army under the Prefect Rufus Pompeianus awaited him in a strong position covered by the river Adige. A third, severely contested, battle was fought outside Verona on the 1st September, in which Constantine, greatly outnumbered, had dangerously to extend his front so as to avoid being outflanked, and could only compensate for this by throwing himself into the fight at one point of danger after another, inspiring the troops by his personal bravery.¹ The battle continued into the night, and it was only when morning dawned that the victory was assured. Both sides sustained heavy losses, Pompeianus being amongst the slain.

Upon winning the battle of Verona Constantine turned southwards, and after a difficult march of fifty-five days,² during which he had first to cross the river Po and then to traverse the Apennines, arrived on the 27th October in sight of Rome, where Maxentius with a fourth army, which included the Praetorian Guards and greatly outnumbered that of Constantine, awaited him outside the city. The final battle between them was fought at Saxa Rubra, near the Milvian

¹ After the battle the commanders of his legions begged him not again so dangerously to risk a life which was so valuable.

² Regarding the episode which occurred on this march a few days before the army reached the vicinity of Rome, and which had so great an effect upon Constantine, see p. 384.

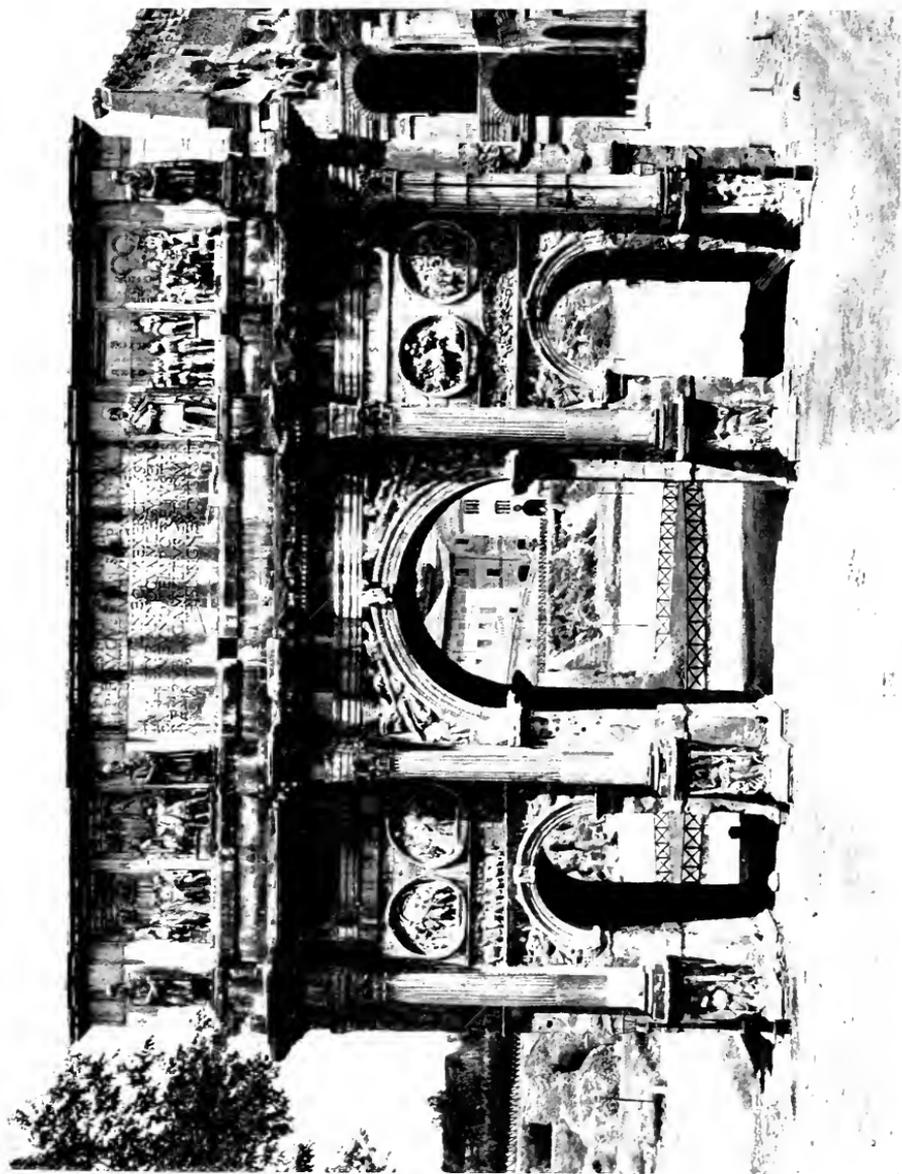
bridge over the Tiber, nine miles from Rome, and is one of the decisive battles of the world. Constantine drew up his much smaller army with great skill, and then, conspicuous alike to friend and foe in gilded armour and jewelled helmet, placed himself at the head of his small force of cavalry and led them in person in a brilliant charge which in its furious onset overthrew the more numerous cavalry force of Maxentius, and practically decided the fortune of the day. Notwithstanding the firm stand of the Praetorian Guards, more than half of whom were slain, the rest of Maxentius' disheartened army gave way before that of Constantine and was driven into the Tiber, Maxentius himself being drowned (28th Oct. 312). And Constantine entered Rome as conqueror of the whole of the West, and to a large extent in a dominant position even as regards the East also, for Licinius feared him and was ready to be his humble ally, while Maximin's incapacity rendered him of no account.

On gaining this victory Constantine published an edict declaring the persecution of Christians at an end and adopting Christianity as the religion of the State,¹ abolished the Praetorian Guards (whose pride and insubordination had been increased under the vicious rule of Maxentius), put to death the two sons of Maxentius,² celebrated numerous games and festivities in honour of his victory, and erected his memorial Arch,³ which still stands as the monument both of his victory and of the important edict which accompanied it, adorning it

¹ See pp. 385-386. Practically this was carried out in three successive steps—the edict published in October 312, that published at Milan in March 313, and that published after Constantine became virtually supreme over the whole empire in 314.

² Gibbon justly remarks that the chief adherents of Maxentius must have expected to share his fate, as those of Constantine would have done had the battle had an opposite result; and also states that when the Roman people clamoured for a greater number of victims Constantine firmly refused to comply. Zosimus, the bitter enemy of Constantine, admits that only a very few of the friends of Maxentius were put to death.

³ Plate LIV. The Arch of Constantine is the last of all the triumphal arches erected by the emperors. Henceforth (in regard to works other than those of public utility) the building energies of emperors were directed, no longer to the erection of triumphal arches and columns, but to the erection of splendid churches.



[Brook.

ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, ROME.

with bas-reliefs which by an act of vandalism he took from the arch of Trajan.¹

As regards the Christians in Rome, Constantine treated their leader, the Bishop of Rome, Melchiades,² with courtesy, as the head of the small community of Christians whom he found still surviving there, but though often declared to have done so, he did not at this time (nor for many years afterwards), personally embrace Christianity. The very inscription which he placed upon his Arch is alone sufficient to prove this, containing as it does a reference to "the Deity" in terms which may equally apply to Apollo, combined with Pagan emblems such as the winged "Victories." Nor must we fall into a second anachronism by supposing that the Church in Rome at this time occupied a position of importance in the Christian Church such as would command any special consideration from Constantine, or that its Bishop held such a position therein that Constantine could treat with him regarding important matters concerning the change in the State religion which he contemplated. The Churches of Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, owing to their number, learning, wealth, and enlightenment, constituted at this time the important part of the Church, and during Constantine's lifetime these Churches altogether looked down upon the comparatively recent, rude, and unlearned Churches of the West; nor had any of the Churches of the West, including that at Rome, up to this time produced a single prominent man in the Christian Church, whereas many such had been produced by the Churches of Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa.³

Meanwhile Constantine had requested Licinius to meet him at Milan to cement an alliance between them. After remaining about three months at Rome he departed to Milan, where he met Licinius, and there in March 313 the latter was married to Constantine's half-sister Constantia. At the same time a second edict for the protection of Christianity, called the "Edict of Milan,"⁴ was published in the joint

¹ See Chap. VI, p. 218.

² Melchiades was not succeeded by Sylvester I until 314.

³ Nevertheless it was from a Church in the West that Constantine subsequently took his chief ecclesiastical adviser, Hosius, Bishop of Cordova.

⁴ See p. 385.

names of Constantine and Licinius, confirming in greater detail that issued by Constantine at Rome. This Edict of Milan became the Magna Carta of Christianity.

From Milan, in the midst of the magnificent marriage festivities of Constantia, both Constantine and Licinius were suddenly called away to repel attacks upon their dominions, Constantine to the Rhine, to repel another invasion of the Franks, whom he defeated in a few weeks, inflicting great loss upon them and driving the survivors back over the river, and Licinius to the east to meet an attack upon his dominions made by Maximin. During the absence of Licinius, Maximin, starting from Antioch in January, and hastening by forced marches through Asia Minor, had crossed the Hellespont, and captured Byzantium, seizing there and imprisoning Diocletian's wife, the empress Prisca, and her daughter, the empress Valeria. Licinius upon receiving while at Milan news of this invasion, travelled rapidly eastwards, joined his army in Mœsia, and in May 313 defeated Maximin in a battle fought in Thrace. Maximin, whose cowardice and incapacity were the chief causes of his defeat, fled from the battle so hurriedly that he covered the 180 miles to Nicomedia, including the crossing of the Bosphorus, in twenty-four hours. Thence, taking his wife and children with him, he fled to Cappadocia. Licinius entered Nicomedia, proclaimed the Edict of Milan there (in the city which had ten years before seen the proclamation of Diocletian's edict for the persecution), and continued his advance eastwards; and on his forcing the passes of the Taurus Maximin poisoned himself at Tarsus (Aug. 313). Licinius, almost as vicious and cruel a tyrant as Galerius and Maximin, continuing his march, entered Antioch without opposition, and put to death by torture all Maximin's chief ministers, and also put to death Maximin's wife and his two young children, a boy of eight and a girl of seven. The death of Maximin left Constantine and Licinius the only two surviving emperors, the former supreme in the west and the latter in the east.

Almost simultaneously with the issue of the Edict of Milan, like the passing away of some venerable monument of another age, the emperor Diocletian breathed his last at Spalatro, being said to have committed suicide, the reason assigned

being the cruel treatment of his wife and daughter by Maximin, and the latter's scornful refusal of the request made by Diocletian on their behalf (page 380). His life had maintained its character for striking events to the very end. For in the last six months of his life he saw the long persecution which he had inaugurated terminate in a manner which revolutionized a world. He was buried in the mausoleum which he had built as a portion of his vast palace. His mausoleum is now the cathedral of the modern town of Spalato, a strange commentary on his determination to blot out the very name of Christianity.

The alliance between Constantine and Licinius only lasted a year. Licinius, though he had feared to resist Constantine while at Milan, was not in sympathy with Christianity, and secretly girded against the measures regarding it to which he was forced for political reasons to attach his name. Early in 314 he found a pretext for a rupture of the alliance by taking up the cause of Bassianus, brother-in-law of Constantine¹ (against whom Bassianus had conspired), and in May 314 prepared for war. As before, Constantine did not wait to be attacked. The task before him was sufficiently formidable; for Licinius was no foe such as Maxentius had been, and though vicious, cruel, and tyrannical, was the ablest general of the day next to Constantine himself. But Constantine in all his campaigns had one advantage over his various opponents, viz. the devotion with which he inspired his troops; and this, together with his own talents in war, was the main cause of his uninterrupted success. Taking the initiative, he marched into Illyricum, and on the 8th October, 314, the two armies, neither of them large, but led by the two most capable commanders of the time, met at Cibalae, in Pannonia. Constantine had 20,000 men, Licinius nearly 40,000. The battle lasted all day, both sides fighting with the utmost determination, until at length Constantine, by his own personal valour, defeated the enemy's left wing, which decided the battle. Licinius lost nearly 20,000 men killed, and all his baggage, but he retreated in good order towards Thrace. Constantine followed him, and a second

¹ He was also a brother-in-law of Licinius, having married Constantia's younger sister, Anastasia.

battle between them was fought in November at Mardia in Thrace, in which Constantine was again victorious; and Licinius surrendered. Constantine might if he had chosen have taken the whole empire; he, however, preferred to permit the husband of his favourite sister to retain Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, contenting himself with taking from Licinius the six provinces forming the European portion of his dominions, and requiring him to conform to his leadership in all things. Licinius little deserved this leniency, for only two months later upon the wife and daughter of Diocletian, the empresses Prisca and Valeria, falling into his hands he put them both to death.

Diocletian's only child, the empress Valeria, had a singularly unhappy life. Secretly a Christian, she was in 292, at the age of eighteen, forced by her father to marry the brutal and illiterate shepherd of Dacia, Galerius, whom Diocletian had chosen as his lieutenant, and who was the most bitter enemy of her religion. After having during ten years been a faithful and exemplary wife to the coarse and ferocious Galerius, acting as a mother to his illegitimate son Candidianus, whom (having no children of her own) she adopted, on the outbreak of the persecution in 303, she was forced through fear of her life to renounce Christianity. She had then for eight years to be an unwilling spectator of her brutal husband's atrocious cruelties towards the Christians (with whom she secretly sympathized), the last of those years being made hideous by his fury under the torment of a loathsome disease. Two years after his death, when Valeria was thirty-eight, she was captured, at the taking of Byzantium, by the still more brutal Maximin, who thereupon, attracted by her beauty and coveting her possessions, proposed to divorce his wife and marry Valeria. On her refusal he revenged himself by traducing her reputation, put to death her most devoted friends and servants, confiscated her estates, and condemned her and her mother, the empress Prisca, to exile in a remote village in the desert of Syria, her father Diocletian's request that she might be allowed to join him at Salona being scornfully refused by Maximin. A few months later she and her mother heard of Diocletian's death, followed not long afterwards by the news of the defeat and death of their oppressor Maximin.

Thereupon she and her mother were set at liberty by Licinius, and proceeded to his court at Antioch. There Licinius at first treated Valeria's adopted son Candidianus, who was then twenty, with kindness; but after a short time the suspicious disposition of Licinius caused him to put Candidianus to death, upon which the two unfortunate empresses fled from the court. They remained in hiding for about fifteen months suffering various privations, but were eventually seized at Thessalonica, where under Licinius' orders Valeria, then forty, was ruthlessly put to death, together with her mother Prisca, their bodies being thrown into the sea. Truly the only child of an emperor who ruled the whole world might have expected to have a happier existence.

By the defeat of Licinius, which left Constantine in possession of fourteen provinces out of eighteen,¹ and Licinius with only the rule of four, and in an entirely subordinate position, Constantine became virtually omnipotent over the whole empire, Licinius being required to conform to all edicts promulgated by him. Nor had this rapid rise of Constantine to unlimited power in only nine years from the time that he had joined his father in Britain been due to fortuitous accidents, such as had to a large extent brought about the somewhat similar career of success of Augustus. Constantine's advancement had throughout been won by his own unusual abilities in war and by qualities of character which had made him admired and trusted by all those whom he commanded. Beginning at the age of eighteen as a subordinate officer in the army of Diocletian, he had at the age of forty become supreme over the whole of Europe and North Africa, and virtually supreme over the whole empire.

(b) Matters concerning religion

When in 305 the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian and the appointment of two fresh emperors in their place

¹ The fourteen provinces of Augustus' time had since grown to eighteen by the addition successively of Britain, Mauretania, Thrace, and Mesopotamia. Dacia, added by Trajan, had been given up by Aurelian.

caused a general change of rulers in most of the provinces of the empire, it might have been expected that a relaxation of the persecution inaugurated by the emperors who had abdicated would ensue. But it was not so. In the new group of four emperors Galerius, the unrelenting enemy of Christianity, took the lead, and throughout three of the four sections of the empire his will was law; while even in the fourth section Constantius, though in character temperate and disinclined to persecution, could not go so far as to repudiate an edict which he himself had signed together with the other three emperors. He, however, did his best to restrain the fury of the populace against Christians and to protect them as far as possible, and the number of martyrdoms in Britain, Gaul, and Spain was far less than elsewhere.¹ But in the other three sections of the empire the furious destruction of Christians was pursued with even greater violence now that Galerius had there become supreme.

Year after year the terrible persecution went on; and in each community of Christians one after another was laid in a martyr's grave by the sorrowing and weary-hearted survivors, who saw no prospect before them but complete extermination of themselves and their religion. Emperor succeeded emperor; rulers over provinces altered; even Galerius himself at length made an ineffectual attempt to stop the persecution, and then died; *Caesars* and *Augusti* changed, but still the persecution continued. It was a case of the general sentiment of the Roman world.

In the extreme west, however, there began after a time to be a respite. There Constantine had succeeded his father, and inheriting the latter's tolerant disposition, and not having joined in signing any edict against the Christians, felt in no way bound to persecute them, while his political antagonism to Galerius made it natural for him to adopt an opposite policy to that upon which Galerius was so strongly bent.

¹ That nevertheless a considerable number did take place even in the portion of the empire ruled by Constantius is shown by the fact that whereas the Prayerbook of the Church of England only commemorates a very few out of all the martyrs in this persecution, yet out of only eleven thus commemorated five (or nearly one half) were martyred in Gaul or Spain (see Chap. XI, p. 360, footnote).

So that in Britain, Gaul, and Spain the persecution slackened. But in the rest of the empire there was no respite. The contemporary writers Lactantius and Eusebius give terrible pictures of the sufferings endured.¹

“They were scourged till the bones were laid bare ; they were racked ; they had molten lead poured over them ; the flesh was pinched out of their bodies with iron pincers ; it was scraped off in long furrows with toothed iron scrapers ; they were burnt at slow fires, were cast to wild beasts, beheaded, drowned. Wild beasts, and dogs, and birds scattered the human limbs in all directions, and the whole city was spread with the entrails and bones of men ; so that it was dreadful even to those who before had been most hostile to us. These latter did not, however, lament the fate of those against whom these things were done, but the nuisance to themselves, and the shame caused to human nature.”²

At the same time the destruction of churches, confiscation of property, and burning of cherished records continued unceasingly ; and it seemed as though there could never come an end until, as Diocletian had said, the Christian name should be entirely stamped out.

In the last year of the persecution there perished at Chalcedon on the coast of Bithynia one who after the persecution was over became in the eastern portion of the Church the most honoured of all the martyrs next to St. George, viz. St. Euphemia, martyred in 311, under the emperor Licinius. She was an unmarried and beautiful young Greek lady belonging to Chalcedon. All the details of her martyrdom are known with perfect certainty, as on her day about forty years afterwards they were described in a sermon (still extant) preached by Asterius, Bishop of Amasea, in Pontus. Becoming known to be a Christian she was seized, shamefully beaten, struck on the mouth with a wooden mallet, dragged before the governor, and tortured. She was then thrown to the lions in the amphitheatre of Chalcedon, and when they failed to harm her was transfixed by a soldier with a sword. She was so highly honoured that the name of Euphemia, Virgin and Martyr, received the title of Great. And within 100 years

¹ Lactantius in the time of Diocletian was a professor of rhetoric at Nicomedia ; Eusebius in the time of Constantine was Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine.

² Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine*, chap. ix.

after her death churches dedicated to her memory were built in places as far apart as Constantinople, Rome, Alexandria, Milan, and Carthage ; showing that the circumstances of her death were widely known to those who lived at the time.

At length, in the tenth year of the persecution, Constantine, to forestall the attack upon him being prepared by Maxentius, advanced to oppose the latter. And in each district which he conquered on his way the persecution ceased ; so that though Constantine was not a Christian, yet the toleration which he accorded to Christianity caused the war between him and Maxentius to assume the appearance of one between Christianity and Paganism. Crossing the Alps, and penetrating further and further into Italy, gaining victory after victory, Constantine's army rolled slowly southwards, advancing towards the final battle outside Rome on which hung so great an issue for Paganism, and Christianity, and the whole Roman world.

While on this march, a few days before the two armies met, Constantine saw in the sky in broad daylight a luminous cross, with above it the Greek words *En touto nika* (In this sign conquer) ; and his troops are reported to have seen it also.¹ This amazing object in the sky, though it did not cause Constantine's conversion to Christianity, as the ecclesiastical writers afterwards asserted,² produced so powerful an effect upon him that he caused the famous standard called the *Labarum*³ to be made, consisting of a cross and the Greek

¹ Lactantius writing in 314, and Nazarius (a Pagan) writing in 321, together put the matter practically beyond any doubt ; while Eusebius states that Constantine subsequently himself related this episode to him, and attested it by a solemn oath (Eusebius, *Vita Const.* i, 28, 29, 30).

² The ecclesiastical writers almost universally ascribe Constantine's conversion to this event ; but historians are unanimous that he did not personally embrace Christianity until much later in his life.

³ The celebrated *Labarum*, or Standard of the Cross, subsequently bore also the two initial letters of Christ's name. In the war with Licinius in 323 this consecrated banner had a great effect, inspiring Constantine's troops with an invincible enthusiasm and producing constancy and dismay in those of Licinius. Subsequently Christian emperors in all their battles displayed this standard. Its safety was entrusted to a permanent guard of fifty picked men, who received high honours. After the emperors ceased to lead their armies in person the *Labarum* was kept as a venerated relic in the Imperial palace at Constantinople.

words which he had seen, which standard was carried at the head of his army as it advanced against that of Maxentius, and he resolved if he gained the victory to establish Christianity instead of Paganism as the religion of the State.

A few days later the battle at the Milvian bridge was fought, and Constantine entered Rome victorious, and thereupon published his edict proclaiming the persecution at an end and adopting Christianity as the religion of the State. The Baths of Diocletian remain as the monument of the beginning of the great persecution; the Arch of Constantine stands as the monument of its unexpected ending. There followed, in March 313, a further edict in greater detail called the "Edict of Milan," laying down, in the joint names of the two emperors of the East and West, the absolute freedom of Christianity, ordering that all churches, lands, or other property which had been taken from Christians were to be restored, that compensation was to be given out of the public funds to rebuild churches or make good confiscated property, and exacting from governors of provinces the strictest obedience in regard to this restitution, and requiring them to see that it was carried out thoroughly and without any delay.¹

Constantine's Edict of Milan has scarcely received its just credit. It is generally spoken of as the edict by which Christianity was adopted as the religion of the Roman Empire. But though this was its result, chiefly in consequence of the manner in which Constantine carried out the principles it laid down (while withdrawing all State support from Paganism), the edict itself did not enunciate any such statement,

¹ The exact terms of this celebrated Edict of Milan were as follows:—

- (i) All men are granted freedom to follow whatever religion they choose.
- (ii) The Christians are not to be persecuted, but given full liberty to follow the observances of their religion.
- (iii) Their places of worship are to be restored to them.
- (iv) If any one has bought such buildings, or received them as a gift, they shall restore them at once to the Christians, and are to receive compensation from the public treasury.
- (v) The utmost diligence is to be observed in carrying out these orders thoroughly and with promptness.
- (vi) The terms of this edict are to be published everywhere, so that all may know its provisions.

but simply promulgated a principle of universal toleration in matters of religion, its first clause being, "all men are granted freedom to follow whatever religion they choose." Constantine thus reversed the policy which had been so disastrously adopted by Marcus Aurelius,¹ and returned to that principle of toleration in matters of religion which had, up to the time of Marcus Aurelius, been a fundamental principle of the Roman Empire. Constantine's edict re-asserted this principle, at the same time laying down a rule of toleration more complete than had been promulgated before.² The farsightedness of his policy will be realized when we reflect that after the Roman Empire passed away this principle of toleration laid down by Constantine did not become the rule in Europe (either in Roman Catholic or in Protestant countries) until no less than fourteen centuries afterwards.

Constantine during his subsequent reign fairly carried out the principle he had laid down, refraining from persecution of Paganism. There were however certain exceptions to this; he destroyed the temple of Venus on Mount Lebanon, owing to the infamous and notorious immorality of those who resorted to it; and for the same reason he took similar action at Heliopolis, putting down the licentious worship there. But these were cases in which his action will everywhere be considered justified, and with the exception of such cases Constantine adhered to his principle as regards Paganism. Late in his life he failed to be equally consistent as regards Arianism after he adopted that form of belief, employing the power of the State to suppress unfairly the opposite party.

Upon the cessation of the long persecution the Roman world, we are told, "went mad for a time." Prisons and mines released their victims; forth from catacombs and other hiding places came bands of those who had taken refuge there; troops of Christians were seen hastening to the ruined churches; and the streets were crowded with processions of Christians of all ages singing hymns of thanksgiving.

A year later, after becoming by the defeat of Licinius in 314 virtually supreme over the whole empire, Constantine

¹ Chap. VII, p. 268.

² Constantine characteristically asserted his reason for this action to be to propitiate "whatever heavenly Deity exists."

issued a further edict to all, of both East and West, in which he exhorted them to embrace the Christian religion, but desired that it should be adopted by persuasion only. He did not forcibly suppress the Pagan religion, but withdrew from it all State support, and discontinued the various sacrifices hitherto celebrated at the expense of the State. And Paganism rapidly dwindled away.

In this acceptance of Christianity by the Roman world we have brought before us a remarkable phenomenon, one which has passed unnoticed by the historians who have dealt with this change in religion. For there is much more to be seen in this exaltation of Christianity over Paganism than the mere personal will of one man, even though that man was the all-powerful emperor of Rome. Roman emperors in all large questions affecting the social and religious life of the people were exceedingly, and even astonishingly, careful to make their edicts accord with the general prevailing sentiment; and to Constantine it was specially important at that moment to do so, in order to establish firmly his newly acquired position. Just as not even the power of Diocletian could have caused so long and severe a persecution as resulted from his edict in 303 had not that edict been in accord with the general sentiment of mankind, so also, and in much greater degree, not even the power of Constantine could have brought about the general acceptance of Christianity ten years later had this not also been in accord with the general sentiment of mankind. It is quite plain that in both cases, both in the vehement effort to destroy Christianity and in the adoption of a directly opposite course, each of these two emperors in publishing his edict simply followed what he knew to be the prevailing sentiment of the empire, adopting that course which he felt would be popular and so would strengthen his position. Moreover so far as Constantine is concerned this was notably the case; ¹ we find historians unanimously asserting that Constantine's action was taken,

¹ Except as regards the inhabitants of the city of Rome, for whose opinion Constantine, with his wide outlook over the whole empire, cared nothing (see Chap. XIII, p. 414).

not from any personal religious predilections of his own, but entirely from motives of policy.¹

But if so this shows much. For it shows (and this is the part of the matter which has not received notice from historians) that, whereas nothing could have been more virulent than the general hatred towards Christianity felt at the time when Diocletian's edict was published, the unexpected ending of his strenuous effort to destroy that religion was brought about, not from any personal feelings on Constantine's part, but because the general sentiment of mankind had become reversed. Moreover this victory of Christianity would never have remained permanent unless this had been the case.

This then is the remarkable phenomenon brought before us, one truly marvellous. Religion is the one subject on which rapid reversals of sentiment, embracing vast masses of mankind simultaneously, *never* take place. The successors of Mahomed were so well aware of this fact that they deliberately adopted the policy of disseminating Mahomedanism by the power of the sword, as the only means by which it could be rapidly, and widely, spread. And yet in the case under notice we have a change of sentiment so widespread as to embrace the whole of the Roman Empire, and so complete as to be a direct reversal of that which had prevailed only ten years before. It is the greatest and most rapid reversal of sentiment in regard to religion which the world has ever seen, and unique in history.

As to the cause which produced this total revolution in the mental attitude of mankind, that is tolerably evident—*viz.* the martyrdoms. There is simply no other cause to be found. It was the sight, all over Europe, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, in city after city, in every country, and in every class of society, of example after example of this steadfast endurance of tortures and death that worked the final result. It was this which made a dozen fresh converts spring up as the result of each martyr's death; it was this which gradually

¹ No reason such as that he "was attracted to Christianity by its monotheism and unity," or any other reason of that kind, can have prompted his action. It was undoubtedly deliberately taken because he knew it would be popular. In fact, situated as he was at the time, he would not have dared to take such a step had he not known that it would be so.

turned the most bitter hatred into reverence and affection ; it was this which in ten years reversed the entire sentiment of mankind.

And so the long battle of 250 years was ended. The contest between absolute power and absolute weakness had terminated in the victory of the latter. Nor was that greatest struggle which the world has ever seen any bloodless campaign. The battlefield had been all Europe, and its soil had been drenched with the blood of thousands of its bravest and noblest sons and daughters. The slaughter had been all on one side ; yet in the end the side which freely poured forth its blood, and fought without using sword or spear, had won.

As one thinks of the long contest,—as one thinks of what the power of Rome was like when the first battle took place on that terrible night in June under Nero ; as one thinks of all the subsequent battles under Domitian, and Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius, and Severus, and Decius, and Valerian, and Aurelian, and Carus, and Diocletian ; as one thinks of all the torments so bravely borne, not only by men and boys, but even with greater bravery by women and girls ; as one thinks of the firm confidence displayed by those who never saw the final victory gained by their steadfast courage,—one feels the majesty of this conflict, and the solemn grandeur of the victory when at last the same city of Rome which had seen the beginning of that conflict, and had witnessed so many of these noble deaths, saw an emperor as powerful as Nero proclaiming the once despised faith as the established religion of the Roman world.¹

¹ It is the fashion in the present day to belittle and slur over the persecutions of the Christians in the period from Nero to Constantine, a recent work dealing with the history of this period even going so far in this direction as to sum up the whole of these persecutions in a single sentence stating that the Christians “suffered during this period some slight and irregular repression.” No doubt this tendency is in part due to the exaggerated legendary character of much of the literature on the subject ; and for that we have to thank the persecution of Diocletian (see Chap. XI, p. 359). But to minimize is as unhistorical as to exaggerate. In the foregoing pages the endeavour has been to avoid all that is merely legendary while retaining all that is historical, and so to give a true picture of the case.

Nevertheless Paganism must not be misjudged. It was mistaken in its view that Christianity was a danger to the empire; and it was mistaken in the methods to which it resorted in order to put this new religion down. But while this was the case, we must not, because those methods revolt us by their cruelty, do injustice to the Pagan emperors who ordered these persecutions, or to the Roman governors who carried them out. First, the method of force, and torture, was the only one then known. Secondly, our feeling of horror at such cruelties is purely modern, and one which it was impossible that a population accustomed to the sights of the amphitheatre could feel. Thirdly, quite as great cruelties were committed, after Paganism had long passed away, in the persecutions of Christians and of Jews carried out by Christians during the Middle Ages, and with far less excuse than the Pagan emperors had. And fourthly, the Roman governors in carrying out these persecutions were simply administering the law; while during these persecutions there are numerous examples of Roman governors striving to the utmost of their power, not to evade the law, but to save Christians from compelling them to enforce it.

These considerations will enable us to do justice to the Pagan emperors and the governors under them in regard to the ten terrible persecutions carried out during the 250 years between the reign of Nero and that of Constantine.

PART III

Zenith of the Roman Empire

A.D. 314-395

CHAPTER XIII

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

314 — 337

FROM the time that in 314 Constantine the Great ¹ became supreme over fourteen provinces, and virtually supreme over the remaining four, there begins the period of the zenith of the Roman empire, which now made its last and greatest step forward. Founded and consolidated by Augustus, gradually increased in power and prosperity by Tiberius and Vespasian in the 1st century, and brought to a still higher point by Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius in the 2nd century, that empire after being weakened by a series of incapable emperors had in the 3rd century suffered fifteen years of disaster, humiliation, and confusion during the time of Valerian and his son Gallienus, had then been brought back again to order and dignity by Claudius II, Aurelian, Tacitus, and Probus, and under Diocletian had been raised to a condition of power and prosperity even surpassing that of the best of the times which had preceded. It was now during the 4th century to take a longer step forward than ever before, reaching under Constantine, Valentinian, Gratian, and Theodosius the highest point to which it ever attained.

As ruler over all Europe and North Africa Constantine showed no relaxation of his activity. His exertions during the preceding three years,—collecting a large army in Gaul, bringing 80,000 men across the Alps, fighting four pitched battles against the armies of Maxentius in three months, publishing the Edict of Milan, and finally marching an army to the East and fighting two more pitched battles against

¹ Plate LV. Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

Licinius, all in less than three years,—were enough to tax the energy of any man; but they did not exhaust that of Constantine. He was perpetually on the move, inspecting the frontier defences, exercising the troops, and visiting the various countries under his rule to enquire into their administration. Instead of occupying permanently either of his three capitals, he resided during the period 314–323 successively¹ at Trèves, Milan, Sirmium, Aquileia, Thessalonica, and Naissus (where his mother lived, and where he had been brought up as a boy), and at most of these cities inaugurated the construction of fine buildings, including several churches.² He increased commerce by measures to protect trade, and began a thorough reform of the administration on more enlightened principles. The results of this unbounded energy were soon apparent in the improved condition of the people of the many countries under his rule.

Moreover there were now seen the first effects of the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the State. There was witnessed a legislation conceived in an entirely new spirit. A long succession of edicts appeared, in the joint names of Constantine and Licinius, reforming the laws by more humane statutes regarding slaves, accused persons, widows, children, and others upon whom the harsh laws of Pagan times had pressed with great cruelty. Edict after edict poured forth, abolishing the cruel punishment of crucifixion, forbidding judges to inflict death unless the witnesses against the accused

¹ This constant change of residences must have entailed a good deal of hardship upon Fausta, with a young and constantly increasing family of small children, all her six children being born during the years 316–323.

² It was at this time (314) that in Palestine was built the fine new church at Tyre (the earliest church of which we have any account), some portions of which still remain. Eusebius gives a glowing description of it. In front it had a large portico and beyond this an *atrium*, from which three doors, covered with reliefs in bronze, led into the nave and side aisles. Above the side aisles were galleries, and the wooden balustrades of these were finely carved. The roof, supported by granite columns, was of cedar from Lebanon, and the height of the arch in front of the apse (which still remains) is eighty feet. The altar was surrounded with carved wooden railings, while the portions of the pavement which remain are of many-coloured marbles.



Brogi.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

Portrait-bust in the Uffizi gallery, Florence.

He wears, over his fair hair, the diadem, first adopted by his predecessor Diocletian. The Christian emperors reverted to the custom of the emperors of the 1st century of being clean-shaven.



are unanimous, prohibiting infanticide and the exposure of children, making the private estate of the emperor liable for the maintenance of all children whose fathers were shown to be unable to support them,¹ protecting women from insult during judicial proceedings, abolishing the special taxes heretofore levied upon childless persons of both sexes, protecting widows from oppression and illtreatment, abolishing the unlimited right of divorce, prohibiting the gladiatorial combats,² forbidding masters to torture their slaves, forbidding families of slaves to be separated, giving facilities for the emancipation of slaves, forbidding debtors to be tortured, ordering that prisoners were no longer to be confined in the dark and horrible dungeons hitherto used, but to be allowed light and air, and not to be chained unless necessary for security, forbidding governors to keep prisoners untried and commanding all despatch to be used to bring them to trial, prohibiting the imprisonment of persons without their first being examined, and many other laws of a similar character ; together also with edicts adopting Sunday into the public life of the empire by forbidding "on that venerable day" any civil act and any other work than pressing labours of farming, ordering that Christian soldiers are on Sunday to have leave from the parade of the rest of the troops in order that they may attend the churches, forbidding private Pagan ceremonies, and laying down that all Pagan ceremonies are to be performed in the open day and in the recognized temples.

It may be realized what an immense change these alterations in the laws, with the other results of Constantine's energy, made in the condition of the people of the Roman Empire, lifting them into a higher plane of civilization. The prosperity of the empire as a whole, brought by Diocletian to so high a pitch, had been but little affected by the battles between Maximian and Severus in 307, Constantine and Maxentius in 312, and Constantine and Licinius in 314, more

¹ Constantine issued this law in 315 from Naissus, his birth-place, accompanied by a command that it was to be placarded in a conspicuous position in every city. One likes to think that his mother Helena, who was with him there, may have instigated it.

² By a special privilege the city of Rome was exempted from this law.

especially since these battles were confined to Italy and the Danube provinces. And these various measures of Constantine now advanced its condition far beyond that attained under Diocletian. With the result that even the highly esteemed state of happiness and prosperity in the times of the Antonine emperors was entirely cast into the shade by that which now supervened.

Referring to these measures, and their lasting effect upon the world, Dean Stanley has said as follows :—

“ Every one of these steps was a gain to the Roman Empire and to mankind, such as not even the Antonines had ventured to attempt, and of these benefits none has been altogether lost. Undoubtedly, if Constantine is to be judged by the place which he occupies amongst the benefactors of humanity,¹ he would rank, not amongst the secondary characters of history, but amongst the very first.”²

It is in the reign of Constantine that we at last see the Roman Empire rising to the full height of the proper imperial spirit,³ and find the head of the State no longer, as in the 1st century, looking upon the empire as to be governed for the benefit of the capital, and no longer, as even in the 2nd century, looking upon it as a matter of Rome and its dependencies, the welfare of the latter considered, but the city of Rome and its glory still the foremost consideration. In this reign of Constantine we see a higher stage reached, one which at length justified the Roman Empire as worthy of the rule over so vast a dominion. That rule could never be fully justified so long as there was inequality, the outlying portions of the empire being looked upon as inferior in any way to the capital. But now at last we see the head of the State looking upon all portions of the empire alike, governing in the spirit of “ the empire for the empire,” and raising the whole of that great empire of Rome to a higher plane by his wide and equal outlook and his enlightened laws for the whole of its inhabitants, and able to take into his consideration even the prisoners and

¹ But surely that is just the very test by which every great ruler ought to be entirely judged. In any case, however, this verdict places Constantine “ amongst the very first of all the benefactors of humanity.”

² Dean Stanley, *Essay on Constantine*.

³ Chap. I, p. 18, and Chap. VI, p. 209.

slaves, whom no former emperor had considered worth a thought. Moreover, the high imperial ideal which dignifies the emperors of the period 314-395, shows that Constantine planted a similar spirit in his successors.¹ Thus at last after three hundred years from the death of Augustus do we see the Roman Empire for the first time rising to this true imperial spirit, and in doing so bringing mankind at large, not in this city or in that, but everywhere, to an enlightened and civilized condition such as it had never before attained.

It has previously been remarked that the leading characteristic of the Roman race was its extraordinary power of administering successfully a vast empire composed of many widely different races. Its remarkable ability in this respect had in the reign of Augustus been immortalized in Virgil's words conveying the great command:—

“Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.”²

And from the time of Augustus onwards this characteristic had been consistently demonstrated by a long succession of emperors, until in the time of Constantine and his successors in the 4th century this deservedly renowned characteristic of the Roman race received its fullest demonstration.

Once only in all the centuries since then has any other race demonstrated a similar power. The greatness of England is never so apparent as when we observe the manner in which she has grappled in her Indian empire with problems of government similar to those which confronted the Roman Empire, and study the results of that action in regard to a population of three hundred millions of people of widely different nationalities, results which may truly be called magnificent, and which we may safely say (upon ample evidence) that no other European race could have produced. And when we reflect that this great empire of India is only one portion of England's empire, and that in other portions of it she has been confronted with problems of a totally diverse character, and has met

¹ Besides the case of Constantine himself, this high ideal of their duty as emperors is exemplified also in Valentinian I, Gratian, and Theodosius I (Chaps. XV and XVI). And even Constantius (Chap. XIV), with all his faults in other directions, shows that he had imbibed much of this spirit.

² “Thou, Roman, remember to rule the nations imperially.”

them in an entirely different way, we may justly say that great as was the ability of the Roman race for ruling a wide empire, it has been surpassed by the ability in that respect which has been manifested by the British race.

In the first year of his reign Constantine was called upon to deal with a dispute in religious matters ; and although this was an entirely new sphere to him, he showed by the way in which he dealt with the question the first sign of that same wisdom in this respect of which eleven years later he gave still stronger proof at Nicæa. The greatest schism in the early Church was that of the Donatists, raised in North Africa during the ages of persecution. It was not a dispute upon any doctrinal question, but upon matters of Church discipline. The rigid, enthusiastic spirit so common among the Christians of North Africa impelled many of them into harsh and exaggerated methods and illiberal judgments of their fellow Christians in times of persecution, and this eventually created an extended schism. At length upon Christianity becoming a religion recognized by the State the Donatists appealed to Constantine to decide between them and their opponents. Constantine referred the matter to a council of twenty Bishops, who decided against the Donatists. But the latter, always a turbulent sect, refused to accept the decision, and again appealed to Constantine. Thereupon Constantine assembled in 314 as many Bishops as he could gather from the countries of the West to a Council at Arles, in southern Gaul, at which 200 Bishops were present.¹ This Council again decided against the Donatists. The latter, being, like all sectarians, determined only to accept a decision which was in favour of their side in the dispute, then appealed to Constantine to decide the question himself. Constantine, with much patience, himself heard the whole case again, and came to the same decision as the two councils of Bishops had done. But the Donatists refused to accept this decision also ; after which

¹ Together with Bishops from places in Gaul, Spain, Italy, and North Africa, three British Bishops were present at this Council and signed the proceedings, viz. Eborius, Bishop of York, Restitutus, Bishop of London, and Adelphius, Bishop of Carleon-on-Usk. Regarding origin of the British Church, which here first comes prominently into notice, see Chap. VII, p. 262 (footnote).

refusal Constantine issued several edicts for their punishment. The sect continued to exist in North Africa, condemned by all the rest of the Church, but holding that the true Church existed only in their own communion. It continued in North Africa down to the time of St. Augustine in the 5th century, always showing much turbulence, and creating much discord. In the same year that this Council took place at Arles, Trèves, the capital of the western section of the empire, was made by Constantine a bishopric, its first Bishop being Agriculus of Antioch.

In 315 Constantine's son Crispus attained the age of seventeen, whereupon Constantine invested him with the rank of *Caesar*, and despatched him to Trèves to govern Gaul. Italy was to Constantine but a secondary province; in his eyes Gaul was the principal province of the empire, being far more important than Italy both from a military and a political point of view. In Gaul Crispus in no long time gained much credit in various encounters with the barbarian races on the Rhine frontier. In the following year (316) when Crispus was eighteen, the first of Fausta's children was born, a boy, to whom was given the name of Constantine.

After Constantine had been for eight years occupied in the various administrative labours which have earned for him so much honour as a benefactor to mankind he in 322 had once more for a short time to turn to the labours of war. In that year the Sarmatians of Lake Mæotis¹ made an incursion into Illyricum; whereupon Constantine took the field against them, and in a short but stubbornly fought campaign decisively defeated them, and forced them to an ignominious retreat and the surrender of all the prisoners and spoil which they had taken. This however did not satisfy Constantine's indignation at their having dared to invade the Roman Empire. He repaired Trajan's bridge over the Danube, and followed them into Dacia, penetrating into the most difficult parts of the country and inflicting a severe vengeance, until they abjectly implored his forgiveness. He then consented to make peace on condition that they should supply the Roman army permanently with 40,000 men, by which he gained a valuable fresh recruiting ground, while the Sarmatian Goths,

¹ The Sarmatians were sometimes called Sarmatian Goths.

after they had thus felt his power, remained always strongly attached to Constantine and his house.

A common view put forward by non-military historians has systematically condemned the Roman emperors of this period, and in particular Constantine, for taking into the Roman army large numbers of men of the northern races, either from within or without the borders of the empire, and has even declared this action to have been one of the causes of the eventual destruction of that empire.¹ The idea is altogether erroneous. A great empire must for the reason previously noted,² include in its army men from all races with fighting instincts which become absorbed into the empire, and also must recruit its army from the best fighting material it can obtain, and cannot afford to enlist inferior fighting material merely to gratify the vanity of those who do not evince soldierly qualities.³ And so long as its military arrangements are conducted with judgement and discretion such an empire can boldly obtain some of that fighting material from warlike races beyond its frontier without any danger, and with much advantage.⁴

In the following year (323) Licinius, cruel and tyrannical, girding at the subordinate position assigned to him, still personally in sympathy with Paganism,⁵ and secretly resenting the changes in the laws which he was forced by Constantine from time to time to promulgate in their joint names, resolved again to try the fortune of war. Quitting his capital of Nico-

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, II, xvii, 324-325. Gibbon's statements in this respect, primarily enunciated in order to aim yet another blow at Constantine, have been followed by all other writers, thus creating a theory which has become time-honoured.

² Chap. VI, p. 214.

³ The Roman contemporary writers, on whose authority Gibbon relies in putting forward the view in question, belonged to just this class, and naturally were loud in their condemnation of a military policy which offended their vanity. But, as noted, a great empire, with formidable foes to meet from time to time in battle, cannot afford to weaken its military strength in order to gratify vanity of this kind. And Constantine and his successors rightly disregarded these clamours.

⁴ In India some of our best fighting troops, e.g. the Pathans and the Gurkhas, to a man come from beyond the frontier of the British empire.

⁵ He surreptitiously persecuted Christians in various ways,

media, and crossing the Bosphorus, he encountered Constantine on the 3rd July, 323, at Hadrianople, the latter bringing into the field 130,000, and Licinius 160,000 men. Licinius drew up his forces behind the river Tonzus and awaited Constantine's attack. Constantine, having collected materials and made a bridge over the river, took 5000 picked men under his own personal command and marched up the river to a ford of which he had heard. There, concealed by a wooded hill, he crossed the river with this force, returned by the opposite bank, and falling suddenly upon the enemy's right flank drove them back, and seized a position covering the bridge he had made, by which the rest of his army then crossed. A severe battle ensued in which Constantine was wounded, but he defeated Licinius, who, after suffering a loss of 34,000 men, retreated to Byzantium, which city Constantine then besieged; and upon his capable eldest son Crispus, by this time twenty-five, defeating the fleet of Licinius in the Hellespont the latter retreated across the Bosphorus into Bithynia. There he collected another army, but was in September 323 totally defeated by Constantine at Chrysopolis; by which victory the rule of Licinius over the four provinces which he had been allowed to retain in 314 came to an end. Constantia interceded with her brother for her husband's life, and Licinius was pardoned,¹ resigned the purple, and was given a place of residence at Thessalonica. There, however, in the following year he entered into a conspiracy against Constantine, and by a decree of the Senate was sentenced to death and executed in the same city where he had cruelly put to death the wife and daughter of Diocletian, even his wife Constantia showing no resentment at his death.

Constantine has been accused by some writers of having been guilty of the basest treachery towards Licinius in this matter, it being declared that after granting Licinius his life he caused him to be put to death on a false charge. But later authorities consider it unlikely, especially in view of Constantine's character, that after sparing Licinius in the heat of victory he should, a year afterwards, have murdered him in cold blood, or that in that case Constantia, at whose re-

¹ This being the second time that Constantine had forgiven his attempts against him.

quest Constantine had granted Licinius' life, should have shown no resentment for his death, and are of opinion that Licinius, whose vicious and intriguing character is well-known, and whose many cruelties rendered him undeserving of any further mercy, must have provoked his fate by some such conspiracy as was alleged, even though the evidence proving his guilt upon which the Senate passed its decree has not been preserved. This seems more logical than the earlier theory, which imputed to Constantine treacherous conduct at variance with all the rest of his history.¹

The final victory over Licinius closed Constantine's military career. After many previous achievements against the Persians, the Franks, and other barbarians, he had in eleven years fought eight pitched battles, not against untrained barbarians, but against Roman legions equal to his own troops in discipline and training, and led by Rome's most experienced commanders, and had in each of these battles been victorious, most of his victories being won, against superior numbers, by his own personal bravery and skill as a commander in war; and through this long series of victories he had now become, actually as well as virtually, the sole ruler of the entire Roman world.

Constantine the Great, after the defeat of Licinius reigned as sole emperor for fourteen years. The degree of military strength to which he gradually brought the empire kept the

¹ The suggestion that Constantine, though he had given Licinius his life, nevertheless deprived him of it "soon afterwards" on a false charge, comes, of course, from Gibbon, whom other historians have followed. Gibbon is here distinctly disingenuous. Upon the bare fact that while there was a decree of the Senate for the execution of Licinius, there was no record of the evidence which convinced the Senate of Licinius' guilt, he puts forward the suggestion against Constantine which on his authority other writers have followed as if it were a fact. To assist his point he even speaks of Licinius' death having followed "soon" after his life was granted, suppressing the fact that it was a year afterwards. Moreover one, at all events, of the contemporary writers, Sozomen, asserts positively that Licinius *had* entered into such a conspiracy, and consequently that the charge was not a false one.

barbarian tribes from attempting any attacks; ¹ while his temperate exercise of authority, and a general policy on his part far more enlightened than any which the inhabitants of the Roman Empire had hitherto experienced, made his rule so generally approved that universal tranquillity prevailed, giving him leisure to inaugurate and perfect those great administrative measures which have gained him even more lasting renown than that due to his long succession of unwonted military achievements. Diocletian had found the task of administering so vast an empire too great for one man; Constantine did not find it so, even though carrying out far-reaching changes greatly surpassing any which Diocletian had made.

His first care was of course the army. Well knowing, by his experience of thirty years during which he had frequently met them in battle, how increasingly strong the northern races were becoming, and that the higher the standard of civilization within the empire grew the greater became the necessity of protecting that civilization from the masses of barbarian enemies ever ready to wreck it, he recognized that unremitting attention must be given to maintaining and even increasing the empire's military power. The same degree of strength which had sufficed in former generations would not now serve to protect the empire from the foes who pressed with such weight upon its northern frontier, not only because these latter had become so much more numerous, but also for two other reasons. First, the barbarian races in their many contests with the Roman army during the preceding 150 years had learnt many methods in war from their Roman opponents, making them much more formidable in battle than they had been when first encountered in the time of Marcus Aurelius. And secondly, the Franks,² the Allemanni, the Vandals, and other northern races had since been reinforced by the Goths, a nation of warriors, more brave, more skilled in war, and in every way more formidable than such races as the Dacians,

¹ Except on one occasion when an invasion of Mœsia by the Goths was promptly defeated.

² The Franks were the same tribe whom the Romans earlier in their history had known as the Chatti, the tribe so prominent in many of the earlier wars of the Romans, especially in the reign of Tiberius.

the Marcomanni, and the Quadi who had formed the chief opponents of the Roman army in the times of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. And these Goths during the seventy years since their victory over the emperor Decius had often tested their strength against the trained legions of Rome, and had several times triumphed over them; while their numbers were ever being increased as fresh tribes of them migrated westwards from Scythia.

Seeing clearly therefore how necessary it was, if the civilization of Rome was not to be wrecked by these powerful foes, to pay increasing attention to military efficiency, Constantine sought in every way to improve the fighting power of the army. He increased its numbers, bringing its total strength up to 580,000 men.¹ He added to the number of forts and fortified camps along the frontier until these forts reached the immense total of 583. And he established a fleet of war vessels which constantly patrolled the Rhine and the Danube. By these measures, by insisting on the strictest discipline, and by maintaining a high standard of training, Constantine brought the Roman Empire to a pitch of military strength such as it had never before possessed. The army which could twice over inflict crushing defeats upon the Franks, which could fight such a campaign as that of 322 against the Sarmatians, defeating them in Illyricum, following them into Dacia, and in that difficult country rapidly bringing them to entire subjection, and which could so completely crush the formidable invasion made by the Goths in 332,² was infinitely superior to the armies which had striven (often so ineffectually) against the Persians, the Marcomanni, and the Quadi in the time of Marcus Aurelius, and even to the troops led by Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, and Diocletian. Nor was this all; towards the end of his reign Constantine carried out a sweeping change³ in the entire organization of the Roman army which fully doubled the fighting power it had possessed in 322.

Few men have possessed unusual abilities in so many directions as Constantine the Great; but the one characteristic in him which overshadows all others is far-sightedness. And

¹ Instead of the 370,000 men which was its total strength in Trajan's time.

² Page 429.

³ Page 427.

during the fourteen years that he reigned as sole emperor he carried into effect six principal achievements, all of them so far-sighted in character that every one of them still continues in operation, notwithstanding all the changes in the conditions of Europe which have since taken place. These six principal achievements (mentioning them in chronological order) were :—

- (i) The elevation of the whole standard of civilization and enlightenment of mankind to a higher plane.
- (ii) The settlement of the future relations between Church and State.
- (iii) The assembly of the First General Council of the Church, thereby bringing about a decision for all time on a fundamental point vital to the permanence of the Christian religion.
- (iv) The founding of Constantinople as the capital of the empire.
- (v) The separation of the civil, military, and ecclesiastical functions of government.
- (vi) The organization of the army on new principles.

Regarding the first of these achievements, some of the ways in which this great change was effected have already been mentioned, together with the comment on them made by a high authority,¹ and fresh edicts with the same object were continually being promulgated. No one who studies the legislative enactments of Constantine can fail to be struck by the immense advance on the part of *the State* which followed at once the change in the professed religion of the people. The whole standard of public morality as expressed in these laws has the appearance of being on an altogether higher plane than it had occupied even under the best emperors of former times. This new legislation, in entirely abolishing many cruel laws of the Pagan epoch, in making others more humane, and in giving much-needed protection to the weakest and most oppressed classes, such as women, children, slaves, and prisoners, taught the whole community a higher level of sentiment in this respect. Nor was this great change confined to Constantine's lifetime, this more humane kind of legislation being continued by his successors. And its effect was

¹ Pages 394-396.

to make the whole standard of civilization and public morality from this time forth so superior to any the Roman people had known under even the best of the Pagan emperors that the difference can only be compared to that between light and darkness.¹

The second of Constantine's principal achievements related to a question which presented great difficulties, the position being an entirely new one. The acceptance of Christianity as the religion professed by the State was but the beginning of a vast piece of work. First, and before all else, arose the question of what were henceforth to be the relations of the State and the Church. It was a difficult problem, made all the more difficult by the fact that hitherto the emperor had been the head and High Priest of the State religion; and it is a proof of Constantine's statesmanlike wisdom that it was solved by him on such sound lines. He adopted the principle that the Church must scrupulously "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and that the State must as scrupulously abstain from interference in spiritual concerns. And it was due to his acting during all the earlier part of his reign on this principle that so immense a change was carried out with so little friction. But besides this primary point there were an infinite number of secondary questions of many kinds involved in such a fundamental change which pressed at once for settlement. Consequently we find numerous instructions issued by Constantine to the provinces, either in the east or west, dealing with many matters in which religion and civil duties intermingled, instructions which all show much common-sense and breadth of view. In this portion of the work Constantine showed his wisdom by taking, as his adviser in all matters relating to the establishment of Christianity as the State religion, Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, the leading Bishop at that time in the Christian Church, and universally revered for his character, sound sense, and long experience; and it was undoubtedly largely owing to the wise advice of Hosius that this great change in religion was so smoothly accomplished.

¹ As to the effect in only forty years, see Chap. XIV, pp. 479-480; while as to the effect in eighty years, see Chap. XVI, pp. 581-584.

The third of these six principal achievements also had reference to religion. Finding that a widespread controversy, originated by Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was tearing the Christian Church asunder, Constantine set himself to bring it to an end. At first, not understanding, with his limited knowledge of Christianity, the nature of the dissension, he addressed a letter to the disputants, treating the controversy as a mere difference about words, and urging all to peace and unity. But when further knowledge showed him that the question was not of this unimportant character, but concerned a point of vital importance to the Christian religion, Constantine with his usual long-sighted sagacity summoned in 325 a general council of the Bishops (the Church by representation) to determine the point, fixing Nicæa, in Bithynia, as the place for its meeting; thus assembling the *First General Council*. Constantine in summoning this Council did not limit it even to the Roman Empire, but with a wide breadth of view invited also Bishops from Armenia, Persia, and even from among the Goths,¹ to attend it. This General Council being the first, and its decision having had a lasting effect, it is more necessary to consider fully its action than is the case with subsequent General Councils.

The Council met early in July 325 at Nicæa, situated at the head of the long, tranquil, inland lake called the Ascanian Lake, the city being built somewhat after the same plan as Antioch,² and being surrounded by sloping hills covered with chestnut woods. The Council destined to be of such transcendent importance in the history of the Church was held in the principal basilica of Nicæa, and was attended by 318 Bishops.³ They were accompanied by a number of priests and deacons, making up the number of the whole assemblage to about 2000. Excepting only Britain and Illyricum, all the eighteen provinces of the empire were repre-

¹ Many of the Goths had been converted to Christianity by Christian captives carried back by them in their raids on the Roman Empire during the time of Valerian and his successors, and a Church had been organized among the Goths.

² Chap. III, p. 116-117.

³ Some modern authorities put the number at about 300. The point is immaterial, the material point being that all parts of the empire were represented.

sented, the council being composed of Bishops from Italy, Spain, Sicily, Gaul, Rhætia, Noricum, Mœsia, North Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Cyprus, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, Armenia, the Crimea, and four from among the Goths beyond the Danube. Not a few of these Bishops bore the scars of mutilations which they had suffered in the recent persecution, one of them limping from having been ham-strung, and two of them having had the right eye dug out with a sword and the empty socket seared with a red-hot iron. It is noticeable that neither Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, the imperial city, nor Theognis, Bishop of Nicæa itself, though they were both present, was chosen to preside, but Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, the most revered Bishop of the time. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea,¹ who was present, gives a minute description of the scene, as well as of Constantine's appearance, dress, and behaviour. When all were seated the main door was thrown open and Constantine entered, accompanied by some members of the court, but without any armed guard, and advanced slowly up the hall to the gold chair which had been placed for him at the upper end, where he stood and prepared to address the unique assembly he had called together. It will be interesting to take a look for a moment at the man who in twenty years had conquered the whole world; to stand, as it were, within the door of this old hall in Nicæa on that 6th July, 325, and see what Constantine—the man who by his own abilities had won the hard-fought battles of Turin, Verona, Saxa Rubra, Cibalæ, and Hadrianople—looked like as he stood there about to open the first council of the whole Church which had ever taken place.

The young and handsome soldier whom we saw standing on Diocletian's right hand twenty-eight years before had now at the age of fifty-one grown into a most noble-looking man. The chief characteristic of his face was his large and well-opened eyes, which flashed with an unusual brightness when he was excited. Instead of the close-cut hair and beard of

¹ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, has to be distinguished at this period from Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, the latter a man of greater importance as Bishop of the imperial capital, Nicomedia.

preceding emperors he wore his auburn-coloured¹ hair long but carefully arranged, and was clean-shaven. He was tall and well proportioned, and Eusebius says on this occasion wore a robe of purple, embroidered all over with gold and coloured flowers and sparkling with gems, and on his head a light helmet, encircled by the jewelled diadem. With his embroidered robes and flashing jewels in the midst of the white-robed assembly of Bishops he presented a splendid appearance,² a fitting embodiment of the power and majesty of the Roman Empire.³

Constantine, having opened the proceedings with a short and dignified speech in Latin, which was translated sentence by sentence into Greek, then left the assembled Bishops to decide the question at issue, remaining present, however, to listen to the proceedings. Arius⁴ was repeatedly heard in defence of his opinions, the chief speakers on the other side being Marcellus, Bishop of Ancyra, and Athanasius, archdeacon of Alexandria (then about thirty years old), who was allowed to speak on behalf of his Bishop, Alexander, who was present but too infirm to speak; though Athanasius, not being a Bishop,

¹ It is curious to speculate whether the great Roman emperor Constantine, the greatest of all the Roman emperors, may not himself have had Gothic blood in his veins. His auburn hair raises a suspicion that it may have been so. Helena, a native of a province often ravaged by the Goths, may easily have been half a Goth. But we know too little about her origin and circumstances to base any theory thereon.

² Eusebius says, "like the appearance of an angel"; the Byzantine ideal of an angel being a figure expressing power and majesty, attired in the hues of the rainbow, and adorned with jewels.

³ Gibbon has sneered at Constantine for showing Eastern effeminacy in wearing such robes. But Constantine was doing nothing more than in our day, for instance, a King of England does when he opens Parliament. And Constantine was opening a parliament, a most important one, and gathered, not from one country, but from almost the whole known world.

⁴ Arius was a native of Libya. He had previously joined the schism of Meletius, had abandoned it, had again taken to it, and then had again returned to the Church, and been given a parish in Alexandria. He was exceedingly eloquent, clever, and plausible, and very subtle in his arguments. As one means of popularizing his opinions he composed songs on all kinds of subjects, adapted to popular tunes, introducing here and there into these songs a sentence upon the nature of God which embodied his peculiar opinions.

had no vote. Briefly the controversy was this. Arius maintained that Christ was a created being, and not equal to God the Father. He did not go so far as to say that Christ was simply a man; but he argued that, though higher than the angels, He was a created being, and that there was a time, though infinitely remote, when He did not exist. The view put forward by Arius, containing as it did a doctrine easier to grasp than the mystery of the Holy Trinity, commended itself to the illiterate and all those incapable, through lack of study of their religion, of understanding what such a theory involved. On the other hand those who opposed Arius pointed out that his view was inconsistent with the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the Divinity of Christ, and that while Arius was at liberty to hold what opinions he chose, he was not at liberty to teach that this was the Christian religion. It was to determine which of these two views was the true Christian religion that the Council was assembled.

After hearing all that could be advanced on either side the Council proceeded to give its decision. The manner in which this was arrived at was a remarkable one. At first sight it might be supposed that the course adopted by such a Council would be to settle by argument which of the two views appeared to the majority of the Council to be the true one, guided by all passages in the Gospels bearing on the subject. It is the method which would commend itself to every ordinary court or council. Instead of this, however, the Council proceeded on quite different lines, and based its decision on another foundation than that of individual opinions on a deep theological question. The Bishops were not asked to be theologians; each was simply asked to reply to a plain question of fact, viz. whether or not the belief put forward by Arius was that which had been held in the diocese of such Bishop "*from the first*" (i.e. from the time of the Apostles), or whether it was something new.

It is quite unknown how such a method came to be adopted, or at whose suggestion; but we can see at once how infinitely superior for the purpose it was to the ordinary one. It is obvious that decisions on such momentous subjects, likely to affect large masses of mankind for many generations, require to possess absolute certainty of correctness. Mankind needs

to feel certain that the decision, whichever way it be, gives the true answer to the debated question. The individual opinions of a certain number of Bishops assembled in Council that a certain doctrine approved itself to them as representing the true meaning of the various passages in the Gospels bearing on the subject would be very far from having this certainty. Subsequent ages, coming as they might suppose to fuller knowledge, would consider it quite right to set such a decision aside as of no value. On the other hand the duly authenticated fact that a certain doctrine had been held undeviatingly "always, everywhere, and by all" from the time when the Apostles preached was practically absolute proof that it was the religion taught by them, and therefore the true one; while the fact that a doctrine was now propounded for the first time, and contradicted that which had been held from the first, was sufficient, in view of the circumstances, to prove that it was not the true one.

The decision was given with overwhelming authority; the whole number of Bishops except four (in the end reduced to two ¹) gave their verdict that the doctrine put forward by Arius was *not* that which had been held in their dioceses from the first, but on the contrary was opposed to it; whereupon Arius' doctrine was declared by the General Council to be a "heresy", i.e. not the Christian religion. And since the Apostles' Creed did not touch the point (as was shown by its being subscribed to by Arius himself), the well-known Nicene Creed (or Creed of Nicæa) was drawn up, to prevent the Arian doctrine from ever again being supposed to be the Christian religion,² and as a *shield* to protect all unlettered or partially instructed persons in the future against non-Christian, but pretended Christian, teaching on the central doctrine of Christianity. The value to mankind which this creed has proved is beyond estimation. It gave mankind a firm standpoint when again and again in the centuries that followed arose others who like Arius propounded views which militated

¹ From the borders of the Libyan desert.

² This it does in particular by the words, "not created, being of one substance with the Father." Round the Greek word which after much argument was chosen by the Council, *homo-ousion* (of one substance), a long and severe conflict raged for two centuries afterwards.

against the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the Divinity of Christ. But it was only after seven generations had fought in its defence that all Europe was finally won over to reject all deviations from the faith defined in the venerable creed of Nicæa.

“The creed drawn up at Nicæa is still recited in its original tongue by the peasants of Greece. Its recitation is still the culminating point of the service of the Church of Russia. The great bell of the Kremlin tower sounds during the whole time that its words are chanted. It is repeated aloud in the presence of the assembled people by the Czar at his coronation. It is worked in pearls on the robes of the highest dignitaries of Moscow.”¹

In this creed is used the word “Catholic,”² a name which from this time onwards becomes an important one in the history of all the succeeding centuries. It was the name adopted to denote those who adhere to what has been held “from the first,” in opposition to all innovations, whether that of Arius, or others which made their appearance in subsequent centuries.³

The above shows what the Council of Nicæa did in regard to the question upon which it was assembled.⁴ But to see how far-reaching was the effect of Constantine’s action it is necessary to glance at what took place subsequently with reference to this doctrine. For though the views of Arius and his party were thus declared not to be the Christian religion, Arianism spread largely during the next two centuries, when it showed how fundamentally it was opposed to many of the chief points of the Christian religion.⁵ Eventually, however, after a conflict lasting through seven generations, it was finally vanquished in the 6th century. Had

¹ Dean Stanley, *Lectures on the Eastern Church*.

² In the words, “I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

³ It has to be carefully distinguished from “Roman Catholic,” a name adopted in modern times to denote that body among the Catholics who adhere to the Pope of Rome, and first used at the Council of Trent in the 16th century. It is therefore illiterate to use the word “Catholic” as synonymous with “Roman Catholic.”

⁴ The Council also gave decisions on a number of secondary matters. These will be found detailed in Appendix VI.

⁵ It was seen to overturn belief in the sinfulness of sin, the value of the Atonement, the love of God to man, the exaltation of man’s humanity in Christ, and many other chief doctrines of Christianity.

it survived universally nothing that could be called Christianity would have existed in Europe by the time the 19th century was born.

Constantine had been twice married. By his first wife Minervina he had one son, Crispus; and by his second wife Fausta he had now three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, and three daughters, Constantia, Constantina, and Helena. His three half-brothers, Julius Constantius, Dalmatius, and Hannibalianus, were without ambition and took no part in public affairs. His three half-sisters were Constantia, the widow of Licinius, Anastasia, the widow of Bassianus, and Eutropia, married to a distinguished senator, Nepotianus.¹

Crispus, Constantine's eldest son, possessed conspicuous abilities. To the reputation he had gained in Gaul he had greatly added by the able assistance he had given to his father during the campaign against Licinius in 323, and was highly popular with the army. Being now twenty-seven, and perhaps seeing some reason to fear that in time intrigues might cause his young half-brothers to supplant him in his rightful position of Constantine's successor (especially as one of them, Constantius, was in this year 325 given at the age of eight the rank of *Caesar* and the nominal rule of Crispus' own province of Gaul), Crispus now requested that his father would raise him from the rank of *Caesar* to that of *Augustus*. But such intrigues had already begun. For doubts had been instilled into Constantine's mind regarding his eldest son's loyalty; and upon the latter making this request, Constantine, whether justly or unjustly, was induced to believe that here was a fresh proof of the charge. As a result he refused the request, and kept his eldest son almost in the position of a prisoner at his court.

Early in 326 Constantine left Nicomedia, and after visiting Naissus, Sirmium, Aquileia, and Milan, arrived at the beginning of July, at Rome, accompanied by Crispus (still under sus-

¹ It is curious that Constantine's father Constantius had by his first wife, Helena, one son (Constantine), and by his second wife, Theodosia, three sons and three daughters, and that this was exactly repeated in Constantine's case, he having by his first wife, Minervina, one son (Crispus), and by his second wife, Fausta, three sons and three daughters.

picion), and also Fausta with her six young children, and took up his residence in the ancient Palace of the Caesars on the Palatine hill. In Rome Constantine was regarded with much hatred, that city still remaining the stronghold of Paganism, and largely imbued with all those sentiments which had caused the promulgation of Diocletian's edict of persecution.¹ Moreover its inhabitants not only resented Constantine's establishment of Christianity as the State religion, but also still more the loss of many advantages which they were about to sustain through the removal of the capital of the empire to "New Rome" (see below), for the building of which city Constantine had already begun to make arrangements. A few days after his arrival at Rome occurred one of the most popular of the pageants connected with the history of the Romans, the procession on the anniversary of the battle of Lake Regillus (in B.C. 496) of the Knights of the Equestrian Order, clad in purple and crowned with olive, to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. It was assumed as a matter of course that the emperor would be present on such an occasion. But Constantine, looking on the whole matter with contempt, not only refused to appear, but also, as from the Palatine he saw the procession pass through the Forum below, made one of the sarcastic sayings for which he was noted, in derision of the festival. The Romans were furious, raging against "the scorner of the gods," and a courtier with some trepidation announced that they were throwing stones at the statue of the emperor, an action which was tantamount to open rebellion, and which former emperors would have considered a serious matter. But Constantine's power, resting on a far wider basis than popularity with the inhabitants of the city of Rome, was much too firmly established for him to care about such ebullitions of temper on their part, and he merely remarked with a smile, "It is surprising, but I do not feel hurt."

During this visit to Rome in 326 Constantine confirmed an important gift which he had made several years before to the Bishop of Rome, Sylvester I (who had succeeded Melchisedes),² viz. the gift to him of the large palace which once had belonged to the wealthy family of the Laterani, but had

¹ See Chap. XI, p. 355.

² Chap. XII, p. 377.

been confiscated by Nero when Plautius Lateranus, the head of the family, was put to death by him for being concerned in the conspiracy of Calpurnius Piso in A.D. 65.¹ The Lateran palace had ever since belonged to the emperors, and had been given by Maximian to his daughter Fausta, becoming her usual residence before her marriage to Constantine, and known as the "Domus Faustae." This palace had been presented by Constantine and Fausta to the Bishop of Rome with a view to the largest hall being converted into a church and the rest of the palace into his residence; Constantine had given funds for the purpose, and the church was now completed. This church received the name of the *Basilica Constantiniana*, after its founder,² and in after times grew into great importance, becoming (as it still is) the principal church in Rome.³ But the legend that Constantine was at the same time baptized by Sylvester I is a pious, but unhistorical, fiction,⁴ Constantine not being baptized until shortly before his death, eleven years later, when he was baptized at Nicomedia by Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia. The Lateran palace became the residence of the Popes for nearly 1000 years, and almost all the memorable events relating to the private lives of the Popes during the Middle Ages happened within its walls. Both the palace and the church were almost entirely destroyed by fire in 1308, after which the church was rebuilt.⁵

But all at once there came into this prosperous life, *tragedy*. Tragedy so dark and terrible that its gloom never afterwards passed away. The life which through twenty years had swept on from success to success received a blow which must for the time have made all these triumphs worthless to him upon whom the blow fell; a wound the chief bitterness of

¹ Chap. IV, p. 146.

² Now known as the Lateran, or more correctly, "San Giovanni in Laterano," and styled in an inscription over the principal façade, "The mother and head of all churches of the city and of the world."

³ "In the Lateran is the true Pontifical throne, on the platform of which are written the words, *Haec est papalis sedes et pontificalis*" (A. P. Stanley, *Christian Institutions*).

⁴ In order to perpetuate this pious fable it has in recent years been carved in an inscription on the base of the Egyptian obelisk standing outside the Lateran.

⁵ It was again burnt in 1360, and again rebuilt.

which in the retrospect was that it had been his own hand that had dealt it.

From the days of Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and Domitian the gloomy Palace of the Caesars on the Palatine hill had in the course of 300 years been the scene of many terrible deeds ; the shadow of dire reminiscences lay ever upon its walls, and around it there brooded an atmosphere of tragedy which even to the last was to be maintained. For now, just when it was occupied by a Roman emperor for the last time before ceasing for ever to be the chief imperial palace of the empire, there occurred, during this visit of the imperial family to Rome, the dark domestic catastrophe which forms the one great shadow on Constantine's life, throwing its gloom over all his remaining years,—his putting to death his eldest son Crispus, then twenty-eight, the latter's step-mother, the empress Fausta, then thirty-six, and Licinianus, the twelve-year-old son of Constantine's sister Constantia—a series of events which according to the writers of the time revived in the imperial palace at Rome the ancient Greek tragedy of Hippolytus and Phaedra.

The secret history of this terrible episode in the imperial family was kept with such unusual success from the knowledge of all but those concerned that neither then nor since has it ever transpired. All that is known is that, in consequence of some discovery that Constantine made, his eldest son Crispus was conveyed from Rome to the castle of Pola in Istria and there executed, that Constantia's young son Licinianus was at the same time executed in Nicomedia, and that the empress Fausta soon afterwards died in the palace at Rome, it being stated that she was put to death by being suffocated in a hot bath. And that thereupon Constantine left Rome and never again entered that city, while a permanent gloom settled upon him for the remaining eleven years of his life.¹ At the time when Fausta was thus put to death the eldest of her six children was only ten years old, and the youngest, Helena, only three years old.

Two theories have been held regarding this tragedy. The writers of the time declared that Constantine discovered a criminal intrigue between Crispus and his step-mother Fausta,

¹ Though he was still only fifty-two, he never married again.

that Crispus' cousin, the boy Licinianus, was in some way mixed up in it, and that this was the cause of Constantine's deed, one which ever after, it was declared, tormented him with remorse. Later writers have considered the true story to be that the empress Fausta, anxious to remove Crispus in order that one of her sons should succeed to the throne, reported to Constantine a conspiracy against him on the part of his son Crispus and his nephew Licinianus ;¹ that the emperor, already made suspicious by his son's demand for the title of *Augustus*, suspicions which were increased by the attitude of the Romans, was induced to believe the accusation, and ordered the execution of Crispus and Licinianus ; that the empress-mother Helena then appeared on the scene, full of indignation at the death of her grandson, denounced the empress Fausta, and brought evidence to show that the accusation had been false ; and that Constantine, wrought upon by the wrathful upbraidings of his mother and by remorse for the death of his favourite son, ordered the execution of his wife.

This latter version of the matter seems more probable. The historian Niebuhr, however, considers that there can be no doubt that Crispus was guilty of the conspiracy. He says : —“ I do not see how it can be proved that Crispus was innocent. He had demanded the title of *Augustus*, which his father had refused. That a father should put his son to death is certainly repulsive to our feelings, but it is rash and inconsiderate to assert that Crispus was innocent. It is to me highly probable that Constantine himself was quite convinced of his son's guilt.” If so, then any such accusation made by Fausta was true, and known by Constantine to be so ; which leaves the putting to death of Fausta as great an enigma as ever, if it is the fact that she did not die a natural death. And as we strive to pierce the obscurity which surrounds this dire event in Constantine's life, and feel that whether it was the favourite son or the wife of nineteen years who was put to death through a misapprehension the matter was equally terrible, this episode rises to the very summit of the solemnity of the ancient Greek tragedy, filling us with

¹ Licinianus, like Crispus, had been given the title of *Caesar*, by Constantine ; as had also Fausta's two elder sons, Constantine and Constantius, then ten and nine years old.

an immense pity, both for the innocent victim, or victims, and for the great emperor the splendour of whose reign was clouded by a tragedy which darkened all his remaining years with the gloom of such appalling reminiscences.

Helena, Constantine's mother, was a woman of strong character and considerable mental capacity, qualities which she transmitted to her son.¹ Divorced for political reasons after nineteen years of married life with Constantius, she had continued to live for thirty-five years much respected at Naissus, where most of her married life had also been spent, and Constantine on the death of his father had made over his young half-brothers and sisters to be brought up by her, and had eventually given her the title of *Augusta*. She had, at some time subsequent to the Edict of Milan in 313, adopted the new religion with fervour, and shortly after the domestic tragedy in 326 she set out, though then about seventy-five years old, on a visit to Palestine, to investigate the holy places for all traces to be discovered relating to the life and death of Christ. It was an age in which superstition was beginning to be born. Eusebius relates how about this time Constantine's sister, the empress Constantia, wrote to him requesting him to obtain for her two paintings, of which she had heard, representing Christ and the Virgin Mary; he says that he obtained them, and finding they had no claim to be what they pretended, destroyed them, and wrote to Constantia telling her they were worthless, and warning her against the danger of superstition.

Helena proceeded to Jerusalem, where the emperor Hadrian's city, *Ælia Capitolina*, had risen on the ruins of that destroyed by Titus, and where up to this time no such investigations had been made, the later city having almost obliterated the traces of the Jewish city. There with much energy Helena conducted a long and vigorous search, and claimed to have discovered the site of Calvary and of the Holy Sepulchre; and upon her reporting this to Constantine he ordered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to be built,²

¹ See also Chap. XIV, pp. 463-464.

² He instructed the Prefect of the province to procure the most costly materials, to collect the most skilled artificers, and supply all necessary funds, and directed that the ceiling should be of gold. The church was completed and dedicated in 335 (see p. 441).

which remained for a thousand years afterwards the most venerated place in Christendom, while its possession became in the Middle Ages the chief object of the Crusades. At the same time Helena inaugurated the construction at Bethlehem of the Church of the Nativity, part of which still remains, forming the nave of the present church of that name at Bethlehem. She also claimed to have discovered the True Cross, two of the nails used at the Crucifixion, and the marble steps of Pilate's palace. The two nails she sent to Constantine, one of them fashioned by her orders so as to be worn round the inside of his helmet, and the other made to form the two sides of a bit for his horse's bridle.¹ The former of these two gifts Constantine apparently caused to be inserted inside his crown.²

One half of the True Cross Helena deposited in the custody of the Bishop of Jerusalem. The other half of the Cross and the steps of Pilate's palace Helena brought back with her, and at her death soon afterwards they were conveyed, accompanying her funeral, in solemn state to Rome, where the flight of marble steps were placed in a chapel³ constructed for their reception in a part of the Lateran palace, where they still remain. For the reception of the portion of the Cross was built the still existing and much venerated church in Rome called Sta. Croce in Gerusalemme.⁴ This church was constructed in a hall of the Sessorium Palace, which had become Helena's palace in Rome.⁵ Very soon after her return from Palestine Helena died at Naissus. Constantine ordered a magnificent funeral, which proceeded slowly stage by stage from Naissus to Rome, Helena having wished to be buried in the city hallowed by the deaths of so many renowned martyrs. There her remains were laid in a splendidly carved porphyry

¹ The former ornament being intended by her to guard his head from harm, and the latter one to symbolize the restraint of passion.

² See Vol. II, Chap. XXIV, pp. 428-429.

³ The chapel of the Scala Santa (Holy Steps), which, with the private chapel of the Popes, the Sancta Sanctorum, at the top of the steps, is the only part of the old Lateran palace now remaining.

⁴ It does not now contain any portion of this relic.

⁵ This palace was built by the father of the emperor Elagabalus, Varius Marcellus. Traces of it still exist.

sarcophagus, placed in an octagonal tomb which was afterwards converted into a church. ¹

Constantine's half-sister, the empress Constantia, whose husband and only son had both been put to death by Constantine, died while the imposing funeral procession of Helena was still slowly wending its way from Naissus to Rome. She cherished no resentment against Constantine, summoned him to her when she was dying, and pleaded the cause of two of the Bishops who after the Council of Nicæa had been exiled; and Constantine, touched with sorrow for all the misfortunes which he had brought upon his favourite sister, promised to comply with her request, and did so, reinstating the Bishop of Nicomedia and the Bishop of Nicæa for whom his sister had pleaded. Constantia's body was carried to Rome, and there buried in a mausoleum constructed by Constantine's orders,² being placed in a magnificent porphyry sarcophagus, which, like that of her step-mother Helena, is now in the Vatican museum.

No act of Constantine's more fully shows his far-sightedness than the fourth of his principal achievements, one which for the remaining ten years of his life engaged his chief attention, the founding of a new capital for the empire. Almost from the time that he became the sole emperor he had had it in his mind to make this change. Not only would a new Rome mark in visible form the radical change in the whole policy of government which he had inaugurated, but also neither Nicomedia, Milan, nor Rome satisfied his soldier's eye, none of them occupying a strong enough position, and the experience of 100 years having shown the need of the proximity of the emperor to the chief point of danger, the Danube frontier.

For the site of this new capital Constantine chose the promontory which was partially occupied by the ancient town of Byzantium, on the western shore of the Bosphorus;³ and

¹ The still existing small octagonal church of S.S. Pietro e Marcellino at Pigna Pignattara. The sarcophagus (removed from the tomb in 1153) is now in the Vatican museum at Rome.

² Now the church of Sta. Costanza. It possesses remarkable mosaics of the 4th century.

³ The promontory being bounded on the south by the Sea of Marmora, on the east by the Bosphorus, and on the north by the arm of the sea, seven miles long, called the Golden Horn. See plan, Appendix VII.

there he founded the city which he called "New Rome," but which later ages called after himself Constantinopolis (the city of Constantine). In doing so he founded a city so situated that it was able to form for eight hundred years the bulwark of Europe, and one which has been felt throughout all ages to surpass all others in strength, strategical value, and political and commercial importance. Again and again has the strength of its position caused the most powerful attacks upon it to end in failure. It remained secure while the whole of the western half of the Roman Empire was overrun by the northern nations and destroyed. It successfully withstood attack after attack when the eastern half of that empire was similarly invaded by the Mahomedans. And it remained for centuries the safe asylum of the remnant of Roman civilization when everywhere else—east, west, north, and south—that civilization had been overwhelmed by a flood of barbarism, keeping safe the seed from which a new civilization was in the fulness of time to be born.

This city was with an elaborate ceremonial solemnly inaugurated by Constantine on the 11th May, 330. It had been built with extraordinary rapidity in the three years 327–330.¹ The ceremony of inauguration was performed exclusively by Christian ecclesiastics, no Pagan ceremonies were permitted, and it was expressly laid down that no Pagan temple was ever to be erected within its walls,—all marking the new departure in religion.

In the new capital the eastern end of the promontory was occupied by the imperial Palace, with nearly all the most important buildings of the city collected outside it;² and to enrich these Constantine took from various cities of Greece their most sacred masterpieces of art. Outside the wall of the Palace lay the Forum, 400 yards long and 150 yards wide, called by the new name of the Augusteum (or Augustaiion), signifying "the imperial place." Along that side of the Augusteum towards the Palace were three principal buildings,

¹ The hasty construction of the city resulted in a very early decay of a number of the buildings, many of which had before a century was over to be rebuilt.

² See, in so far as the buildings outside the palace are concerned, Appendix XIX (Vol. II).

the Senate-house, the Bishop's palace, and the Baths, the latter called the Baths of Zeuxippus, after the architect whom Constantine employed. These Baths were on a magnificent scale, and were adorned by Constantine with some of the most celebrated statues of Greek art, taken from the Pagan temples whose use had now largely passed away, including even statues which had for ages been worshipped, such as the *Athene* of Lyndus, the *Amphitrite* of Rhodes, and the *Zeus* of Dodona. On the other side of the Augusteum Constantine erected a lofty column of porphyry, 120 feet in height, and placed upon it the celebrated statue of *Apollo*, by Phydias, brought from Athens, and by the addition of a sceptre in one hand and the orb of the world in the other made to represent Constantine.¹ Near this column, on the spot where his tent had been pitched during the siege of Byzantium in 323, Constantine placed the *Milion*, the golden milestone from which all distances in the empire were measured; it stood under a roof supported by pillars, with on either side of it statues of Constantine and his mother the empress Helena.

Beyond the Augusteum (instead of an amphitheatre for gladiatorial combats) Constantine erected the Hippodrome, for chariot-races. In length and breadth it was nearly the same size as the Augusteum, and on its *spina* was placed the most remarkable possession of the new city, the very ancient Column of Delphi, consisting of three twisted serpents in brass their heads supporting a gold tripod. This column and tripod had been dedicated to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi by the Greeks in B.C. 479, in thanksgiving for their victory over the Persians, and from this tripod for nearly eight hundred years the Delphic oracles had been uttered.² On the *spina* of the Hippodrome, on either side of the Delphic tripod, were also placed the Egyptian Obelisk and the Brazen

¹ The lower part of this celebrated column still remains standing in Constantinople, degraded by the name of the Burnt Pillar.

² This column still remains standing in Constantinople, though no longer crowned with its golden tripod. It will be seen that it is now nearly 2400 years old.

Column.¹ Immediately to the north of the Hippodrome Constantine built the cathedral, which he dedicated to the Divine Wisdom (Sta. Sophia), beyond this the Hospital, and beyond the latter the church dedicated by him to Sta. Irene (Peace). He also built a third church, situated in the city, dedicated to Sta. Homonoia (Unity of Spirit).²

The imperial Palace covered a large part of the site of the ancient town of Byzantium. With its courts, porticoes, and gardens it occupied almost all the eastern end of the promontory, its gardens extending down to the sea ; but in the time of Constantine only part of this area was occupied, further buildings being gradually added by later emperors. On the ceiling of the principal hall of the Palace in Constantine's time was a large cross entirely formed of precious stones, and over the principal gateway a design in mosaic representing Constantine holding the *Labarum*, and treading upon a dragon, representing Paganism.³

But the most splendid building which Constantine erected in his new city was his church dedicated to the Twelve Apostles, but which became called in particular his church, *Ecclesia Constantiniana*. It was situated in the centre of the city, nearly a mile and three-quarters north-west of the cathedral of St. Sophia.⁴ Eusebius describes it as "enormously high, yet it had all its walls covered with marble, its roof inside being overlaid with gold, and outside covered with gilded brass." In addition to these public buildings Constantine had also ordered to be constructed many private dwellings, ready for the population of the new city, including palaces for wealthy nobles, shops for traders, and ranges of dwellings for the humbler classes of the inhabitants.

The walls of Constantinople have always been one of its

¹ Though the massive walls of the Hippodrome have long since disappeared, the three chief ornaments of its *spina*, the Delphic Column, the Egyptian Obelisk, and the Brazen Column still stand. The open space around them is still called by the Turks the *Atmeidan* (the place of horses), in dim memory of its ancient use.

² See p. 445 (footnote).

³ The plan in Appendix XIX, while showing the general position of the buildings outside the Palace, shows those inside the Palace they were after their reconstruction in the time of Justinian.

⁴ The great Mosque of Mohammed II now stands on its site.

special features. Added to by successive emperors, they at length consisted of four adjacent lines drawn across the promontory on the land side for about four miles, with innumerable towers and castles, and at each end a strong citadel.¹ To each portion of the walls was attached the number of the legion charged with its defence, such as "Deuteron," "Triton," "Pempton," "Hebdomon," etc. These walls still remain, their various portions being still known by these names. No less remarkable was the system of enormous reservoirs, capable of containing sufficient water to supply a million men for four months, constructed by Constantine and his successors Valentinian I,² and Theodosius I, and supplied by aqueducts one of which was 120 miles long. These reservoirs also still remain; while the principal streets of the city still follow the lines of those laid out by Constantine. The name of "New Rome" given to the city by him is still used in the official language of the Eastern Church; while it also survives in the eastern languages, wherein the Sultan of Turkey is known as the Sultan of "Roum"; and the name appears again in "Roumania." The Turkish name for the city, "Istamboul," is a Turkish corruption of the three Greek words, εἰς τὴν πόλιν³ (*The city*), showing how it was for centuries recognized throughout the east as pre-eminently *the city*, even where others such as Antioch, Alexandria, and Nicomedia were known. By the Goths it was called Miklagard (*The Great City*). The device of the city was the Greek emblem of the crescent and star; it became the insignia of the Varangian (Anglo-Dane) Body-guard of the emperor, formed in the 11th century. This device was continued by the Turks when they captured the city 1123 years after its foundation, and has become the device of the Turkish empire.

Above all else did this new capital of the empire excel in beauty, surpassing Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Nicomedia, Milan, Carthage and all other existing cities of the empire in that respect. Like Rome, it was built on seven hills, but these

¹ The immense tower which joins the land walls to the sea walls is a solid mass of marble.

² The aqueduct constructed in the reign of Valentinian I, and called after the name of his brother Valens, still exists.

³ Eis teen polin.

were so situated as to give a much finer effect. Looking at it from the Golden Horn, low slopes covered with fine buildings descended in a gentle curve to the water's edge ; and behind these the city rose tier above tier on its seven hills, each a little higher than that in front of it, up to the most western ridge of all, beyond which were the walls which bounded the city on the land side ; the whole forming with its masses of trees and numerous gardens, and with the sea washing it on three sides, a superb panorama of beauty such as no other city which had till then ever been seen could produce, and which even up to the present day remains unrivalled.

The ceremony of inauguration was followed by games and races in the Hippodrome and other festivities which lasted forty days. There followed for Constantine long and heavy labours in connection with the necessary arrangements for making the new city the capital of the empire. In fact so immense an operation as the transfer of the entire machinery of the central government of so vast an empire from the old Rome in Italy to the new Rome on the Bosphorus occupied even Constantine for the greater part of the next five years. To attract population to the new city Constantine, besides providing many with dwellings according to their rank¹ gave great privileges, especially to the middle classes, and the city speedily attracted a numerous population ; while so rapidly did it increase that in about two generations it surpassed Rome, both in wealth and number of inhabitants.

Constantine was essentially a founder ; and whatever he inaugurated was constructed upon strong and permanent

¹ As illustrating some of Constantine's methods, a story of the time declared that the emperor while building the city had sent twelve nobles of Rome on an embassy to Persia, and when after a year they returned and made their report to him at Constantinople, he entertained them at dinner, and during the banquet asked them how soon they proposed starting to rejoin their families in Rome. On their reply that they did not propose rejoining their families in Rome for some weeks, the emperor said : " You will find yourselves there this evening." Each was thereupon conducted to a fine palace in New Rome, built in imitation of his palace in Old Rome, found the rooms filled with his furniture, and was received by his own family and servants, all having been transported thither during the year the embassy had been in Persia by the emperor, who had prepared for them this surprise.

foundations. It had been so in the case of his other four principal achievements, and it was no less so in the case of the fifth, the creation of an entirely new political system by the separation of the civil, military, and religious functions, a change which he carried out as soon as his new city was completed. In all civilized countries these three functions are now kept separate, but up to Constantine's time they had always been bound up together. This important and far-sighted change, which gave to the whole political system a different structure and increased administrative strength, not only brought new life to the Roman Empire, but also introduced a political system which still endures among all the nations of modern Europe.

In this new constitution Constantine (leaving the Church to be governed by the organization which he found already existing) entirely reorganized both the civil and the military administration, completely separating them. As regards the civil administration he placed each of the four "Prefectures"¹ under a Prefect relieved of all military functions, and divided each prefecture into several "Dioceses," and each diocese into a number of "Provinces." In the four Prefectures there were in all 18 "dioceses" and 116 "provinces." Both dioceses² and provinces were ruled by officers having, like the four Prefects, no military functions, while the term "province" henceforward denoted a much smaller tract of country than hitherto had been known by that name; for example, Britain (hitherto a province), became a diocese consisting of five provinces. Obviously each officer by having a smaller charge could attend better to its administration. In this new constitution the administration of justice was made much more perfect than heretofore, while stringent provisions were laid down to prevent corruption among the judges. Naturally these improvements in the civil administration, by giving each officer a smaller area to administer, inevitably increased the cost of administration, and consequently the amount to be levied in taxation; but Constantine, though thus forced somewhat to increase

¹ Those territories which under Diocletian's constitution had each been ruled by one of the four emperors.

² It will be seen that each "diocese" practically represented a modern country.

taxation, enabled the people to bear it by the increased prosperity which his other measures created. The system of taxation was remodelled, various unjust irregularities in its incidence were abolished, and the land tax was made the chief source of revenue.¹

Lastly, having thus separated the civil and military functions, Constantine carried out the sixth of his principal achievements by organizing the army on entirely new principles which have been adopted in the armies of all civilized countries ever since. The empire was divided into eight military commands, each placed under an officer styled a "*Magister militum*." Under these eight superior officers were thirty-five general officers' commands, the officers holding these being styled "*Duces*." The imperial guards (15,000 strong) were placed under a "*Count of the Domestics*."² The command of the cavalry was separated from that of the infantry. And the management of the arsenals and commissariat was made an entirely separate department. All this was quite new, and by it Constantine's military organization approached much more closely to that of modern armies, while it was far in advance of anything of which the Romans had hitherto dreamt. But the most important change of all was that which Constantine made in regard to the legions. While retaining the old name he reduced the size of the legion from 6000 to 1500 men. Henceforward therefore a legion approximated to what would now be styled a regiment, and became a much more manageable unit, less cumbrous, and altogether better adapted to the style of tactics which Constantine was accustomed to employ than

¹ In connection with this reorganization of the civil administration of the empire Constantine transferred the capital of the second division of North Africa from Lambæsis, where it had been located for nearly three centuries, to Cirta, giving the latter city the new name Constantine, which it still bears.

² The Guards were (as from the earliest times) composed chiefly of Teutons, but included also Romans. Previously called the *Protectors*, they were from this time onwards called the *Domestics*. A large portion of them were charged with guarding the various imperial residences throughout the empire. A special section of them, forming a *corps d'élite*, was composed largely of officers' sons and young members of noble families, and formed a training school for officers. Ammianus Marcellinus, the historian, served for some time in this corps.

those which obtained in the days of Trajan and Hadrian.

These changes made by Constantine in the military organization have been universally condemned by historians, they having followed Gibbon who strongly denounces them, and especially the reduction in the size of the legion, Gibbon even going the length of suggesting that this latter change was prompted by a desire to gratify vanity, by giving the emperor the glory of commanding 132 legions instead of 33.¹ It shows small knowledge of great soldiers to imagine that such a reason could actuate such a man. Men who are capable of commanding thousands of other men, of winning their self-sacrificing devotion, and of leading them to success in battle after battle, are not the kind of men to feel vain of commanding 132 legions of 1500 men instead of 33 legions of 6000 men. The same authority has declared that by thus subdividing the military commands Constantine strengthened himself against the chance of revolutions at the cost of weakening the empire by making the army less powerful in war.² The argument is one which could only emanate from such a source, the actual effect of these changes being exactly the reverse. By organizing the higher commands of the army in the manner detailed, by separating the cavalry from the infantry, by establishing a distinct department for the arsenals and commissariat, and above all by making the legion consist of 1500 men instead of 6000, and thus making it a more mobile body, better suited to the altered tactics of the time, Constantine immensely increased the power of the army as a fighting machine. It may also be remarked that the great master of war Constantine, who had spent many years of his life in meeting in battle the Persians, the Franks, and other northern races, and had then fought eight pitched battles against Roman troops, was likely to be a better judge of the organization best fitted for the tactics he usually employed in battle than those who, without ever having seen a shot fired in anger, have criticized in the two ways mentioned an organization which more than doubled the fighting power of the Roman army.

By the above improvement in the organization of the army, together with the other military arrangements previously

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, II, xvii, 322 (Edition 1862).

² *Ibid.*

mentioned,¹ Constantine gave the empire a military strength at least four times as great as it had possessed in the days of Trajan and Hadrian. And the generalship which he displayed at the battles of Turin, Verona, Saxa Rubra, Cibalae, and Hadrianople, combined with the military genius evinced in this reorganization of the army on new principles so lasting that they have ever since been followed in all armies, shows Constantine to have been by far the greatest commander in war of all the Roman emperors.

In 332 Constantine, now fifty-eight years old, was called upon to put this fighting machine which he had perfected to the test of war. The Goths had for sixty years abstained from attacking the Roman power. In that time, being constantly reinforced by fresh tribes from Scythia, they had increased greatly in numbers, while a new generation had grown up anxious to measure its strength against the Romans in the field. Their king at this time was the haughty Araric, who was in full sympathy with this feeling on the part of his nation, and confident that the immense host that he commanded could defeat any army the Romans could bring against him. Under his command the Goths, full of audacity in their numbers and strength, crossed the Danube and proceeded to devastate Mœsia. But they quickly received a severe lesson. Constantine promptly sent an army against them; and so well did he know the efficiency of the officers and troops that he had trained, that he did not even take command himself. The result completely justified action which might have been thought somewhat venturesome. In a single battle Araric's host was completely crushed, with great slaughter, and driven back in flight across the Danube. Never had the Goths received so prompt and decisive a defeat.

In 334 the Sarmatians, finding themselves unable any longer to oppose their neighbours the Vandals, implored to be taken within the empire. Constantine acceded to their request, and the Sarmatians, to the number of 300,000, crossed the Danube, and were given by Constantine vacant lands in Italy, Pannonia, Thrace, and Macedonia, which increased their feeling of loyalty towards him and his descendants.

One realizes something of the extraordinary capacity for

¹ Page 404.



ruling which the Roman emperors possessed as one thinks of Constantine from his palace at Constantinople at one and the same time controlling affairs in Britain and Spain, watching over the efficiency of his fleet on the Rhine, issuing orders regarding the forts on the Tigris, removing the government of a portion of North Africa from far away Lambœsis to Cirta, and directing the movements of a force despatched by him to oppose the Goths in the neighbourhood of the Danube. And all this in days when neither railways nor telegraphs existed, and when therefore to communicate with these widespread portions of the empire must have taken considerable time however perfect was the service of posts.

But Constantine was by no means solely occupied in military affairs and civil administration. He was a warm patron of literature,¹ wrote his own autobiography (which unfortunately has perished), and took special interest in poetry, on which subject he carried on a correspondence with Optatian, the leading poet of the day. In regard to Art he had no such opportunities. The Romans, unable themselves to produce works of art, relied in this respect upon the Greeks; and Greek art, after declining steadily for five hundred years, had come to an end. Even a hundred years before Greece was conquered by Rome the decline in Greek art had begun;² and ever since that conquest (concluded in B.C. 146) Greek art had been steadily deteriorating, until by the time of Diocletian it was practically extinct. In regard to the punishment of crime Constantine was said to err by being too lenient, and, Eusebius says, "drew some blame on his administration on this account." He was very austere with regard to morals, promulgating severe edicts against immorality, as well as for the protection of women from insult. He laboured unceasingly to advance the civilization and progress of the empire, and its material prosperity had never been so great as in the latter years of his

¹ The chief literary men of his time were the writers Lactantius and Eumenius, the poet Optatian, and the historians Eusebius and Ammianus Marcellinus.

² The zenith of Greek art was from B.C. 480 to B.C. 250, to which period belong the celebrated sculptors Phidias, Myron, Praxiteles, Scopas, and Lysippus, and the painters Zeuxis and Apelles.

reign. His reputation spread far beyond the limits of the Roman Empire, and envoys from many far distant countries were seen in the courts of the imperial palace at Constantinople, Eusebius mentioning seeing there on one occasion envoys from India, Nubia, and Ethiopia. During the contests over the religious question in the latter years of his reign¹ Constantine frequently wrote letters with his own hand to the principal disputants, endeavouring to bring them to peace. He was fond of carrying a spear, such as he had often used in earnest in the battles of his youth, but now ornamented with gold; and during one of the heated and acrimonious contests in his presence between the religious parties, in order to enforce a lesson in moderation, he marked out with this spear on the pavement of the palace the length and breadth of a grave, and said to the most bitter of the disputants, "Though thou couldst obtain the whole world, thou wilt possess at last no more than this little space which I have marked out,—if, indeed, even that be thine."

Besides the churches of the Lateran and Sta. Croce at Rome, and the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, Constantine erected various other notable churches at important cities. At Rome he built the great church of St. Peter, erecting it upon the ground which had formed the Circus of Nero (where Nero's terrible evening entertainment had taken place) and over the tomb which Anencletus had erected to mark the grave of St. Peter.² This celebrated church, like most of those constructed by Constantine and his successors, was built in the form of a *basilica* (or hall of justice) of Roman times. It had an immense nave, a chancel adorned with mosaics, double aisles, and a pent roof. This church became in subsequent centuries the most venerated church in Christendom, gathering round it in the course of 1200 years innumerable historical associations, until by an act of the utmost vandalism it was destroyed in the beginning of the 16th century by Pope Julius II in order to erect on its site the present St. Peter's.³

At Rome Constantine also built three other churches which

¹ Pages 439–440.

² Chap. V, p. 195.

³ The pavement of the original church is still to be seen forming that of the crypt of the present church, and lying eleven feet below the floor of the latter.

still exist, though they have been rebuilt, dedicated respectively to the memory of St. Lawrence,¹ St. Sebastian,² and St. Agnes, all three churches being erected over the places where these martyrs had been buried. Agnes was a Christian girl belonging to a middle-class family in Rome whose beauty at the age of fifteen, during the Diocletian persecution in 304, attracted the governor Sempronius. Resisting his overtures with scorn, she was subjected to many cruelties, and finally was martyred in the vaults of the Circus of Domitian.³

At Antioch, the leading see in Christendom, then called "the City of God," Constantine built an enormous church, which on account of the splendour of its mosaics and other decorations was called "the Golden Church." He also built finely adorned churches at Bethlehem, at Mamre, at Tyre, at Nicomedia, and at Heliopolis in Phenicia. But the most notable church erected by Constantine was that built by him at Thessalonica about the year 314 to the memory of St. George, which still exists. It is a circular church with a dome,⁴ and entirely decorated inside with pictures in mosaic. Specially remarkable are the eight pictures in the dome, in which are represented "palaces resembling those painted on the walls of Pompeii, columns ornamented with precious stones, pavilions closed by purple curtains waving in the wind and upheld by rods and rings, arcades without number, friezes decorated with dolphins, birds, and palm trees, and modillions supporting cornices of azure and emerald."⁵ Still more notable however from a historical point of view are the mosaic pictures of saints, no saint of a later time than that of Constantine being represented.

¹ Chap. X, p. 330.

² Chap. XI, p. 362.

³ "As neither temptation nor the fear of death could prevail with Agnes, Sempronius thought of other means to vanquish her resistance; he ordered her to be carried by force to a place of infamy, and exposed to the most degrading outrages. The soldiers who dragged her thither stripped her of her garments; but her long and abundant hair became like a veil." Eventually she was martyred in one of the vaults of the Circus by being stabbed in the throat (*Jameson's Sacred Art*). Hymns in her honour existed in all countries in 384.

⁴ "The ancient church of St. George belongs to the class of circular buildings called *tholi*, most of which are supposed to have been erected in the early part of the 4th century" (Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, II, 47).

⁵ Texier and Pullan, *Byzantine Architecture*, p. 136.

The erection of the four churches built by Constantine to the memory of martyrs (namely St. Lawrence, St. Sebastian, St. George, and St. Agnes) is significant. For we are here concerned, not with legends evolved in subsequent ages, but with the age itself in which those in question actually lived. When Constantine was erecting at Rome his church to the memory of St. Lawrence ¹ the latter had been martyred only about sixty years before ; there must have been persons still living in Rome who had seen him die and could testify to the manner of his death ; and Constantine would not have built a church to his memory unless fully satisfied by careful enquiry that the manner of St. Lawrence's death was such as to justify his memory being thus honoured. Still more significant is the erection of the church to the memory of St. Sebastian. ² For Sebastian must have been well known to Constantine himself ; they had both been on the staff of Diocletian together, Sebastian being the commander of the bodyguard ; and Constantine (then a Pagan) must have been thoroughly cognizant of all the circumstances of Sebastian's martyrdom. Still stronger is the case as regards St. George. Constantine in thus honouring the latter was not acting upon information received from others ; for as he was in attendance upon Diocletian at Nicomedia when St. George was martyred, he must, from his position at the time, have known all about the case, even if he did not (as is probable) himself see St. George put to death. Moreover while Sebastian was an officer of high rank, and a companion of Constantine's, St. George was only a very subordinate officer or non-commissioned officer ; and the great emperor Constantine would not have been in the least likely to erect the magnificent church which he built at Thessalonica, only about twelve years after the event, in memory of a young soldier of such a subordinate position in the army unless he was aware from his own knowledge that such an honour was specially deserved.

¹ The church to the memory of St. Lawrence was erected on the Via Tibertina about three-quarters of a mile from the city, over the catacomb of St. Cyriaca, in which St. Lawrence's body was buried.

² The church to the memory of St. Sebastian was erected on the Appian way about a mile and a half from the city, over the catacomb in which his body was buried.

But most significant of all is the erection of the fourth of these churches, that to the memory of St. Agnes.¹ St. Lawrence was a deacon of the Church, and his martyrdom had been a public spectacle; St. Sebastian was an officer of high rank; and even St. George was a soldier; but St. Agnes was only a poor and little known girl, whose martyrdom had been carried out in an infamous den hidden from the public eye. It is evident that Constantine in thus honouring her memory was honouring one the circumstances of whose martyrdom *were well known to him and to all others round him*. For the ruler of the whole Roman Empire would not have erected a church to the memory of an almost unknown girl (not of any exalted station) who had been put to death in Rome eleven or twelve years before, unless the circumstances of her death, well known to him, were such as to justify this special honour being done to her memory.

Constantine, owing to the various positions he had held during the years 303-312, had had opportunities which were unique as regards personal knowledge of the cases of a very large number of those who were martyred during the persecution of Diocletian. Owing to his having been on the staff of Diocletian at Nicomedia at the time of the promulgation of the edict which began the persecution, his having then continued a trusted staff officer of Diocletian during all the first two years of the persecution, when it was most virulent, his having after Diocletian's abdication remained at the court of Galerius (the chief persecutor) for the next nine months, and finally his having become ruler of the western division of the empire, Constantine had seen the whole course of the persecution in both east and west, and had done so while occupying positions in which information regarding

¹ Two churches were at different times built to the memory of St. Agnes in Rome. That built by Constantine was erected over the catacomb in which her body was buried, on the Via Nomentana, about a mile from the city. The other church to her memory (built long afterwards) stands inside the city on the site of her martyrdom, being erected over the side-vaults of the Circus of Domitian, the place of evil reputation to which she was consigned, and in which she was killed. Part of these vaults form the crypt of the present church, and have been made into a chapel in memory of the cruel and shameful sufferings endured there by her.

it necessarily came before him in one form or another almost daily. Constantine had thus when he built these churches a wider knowledge of the events of the Diocletian persecution than any other man then living. Seeing then that he possessed this extended knowledge, the churches which he erected show much. Had he built many churches to the memory of persons who died in the persecution, the case would have been different, but he apparently considered this a special honour only to be accorded to the few. Though he built many churches, four only were erected by him to the memory of martyrs; ¹ and of these, only three were in memory of persons who had been martyred in his own life-time. Thus Constantine, who had witnessed, as a tolerant Pagan spectator, the whole of the ten years' persecution under Diocletian's edict, and from his official position had had opportunities of knowing more about its occurrences than any other man then living, considered the three martyrs in that persecution who above all others deserved special honour to be, St. George, martyred at Nicomedia, and St. Sebastian and St. Agnes, martyred at Rome.

By the construction of the above churches, by the adoption of the *Labarum*, or Standard of the Cross, as the standard of the Roman armies, and by placing the same sign on the Roman coinage, Constantine gave ocular demonstration to the world that the empire had adopted Christianity. The city of Rome, however, remained a hotbed of Paganism, and continued so for the next two generations, Paganism continuing to survive in Rome long after it was completely extinct everywhere else throughout the empire, its last dying relics lingering there even into the next century.

Constantine also built at Rome a huge set of Baths, and a splendid Basilica near the Forum. The Baths covered a large part of the Quirinal hill, ² but in the Middle Ages were

¹ All other churches built by him were erected to the memory of Apostles, or in honour of the Holy Cross or the Holy Sepulchre.

² They covered the ground now occupied by the Royal palace (the Quirinal), the Piazza del Quirinale, the Rospigliosi palace, and the Colonna gardens. In the Rospigliosi palace are to be seen various ancient sculptures and portions of mosaics which once adorned the Baths of Constantine; and in the Colonna gardens is a large block of marble, weighing about 30 tons, which also belonged to these Baths.

destroyed, or absorbed by buildings and gardens of the Colonna family. One beautiful work of art however which appertained to them is still preserved, viz. the two colossal marble groups of the *Horse Tamers*, which Constantine placed on either side of the principal entrance of his Baths, and which now adorn the Piazza del Quirinale (formerly Monte Cavallo). The Latin inscriptions on them state that one is the work of Phidias and the other of Praxiteles. These inscriptions are, however, believed to have been carved by Constantine when placing these marble groups at the entrance to his Baths, and it is considered that these statues are more probably copies made by the Greek sculptor Lysippus of originals by his predecessors, Phidias and Praxiteles. They were presented to the emperor Nero by Tiridates, king of Armenia.¹ They have never been buried or concealed from view, and for centuries the piazza in which they stand received its name (Monte Cavallo) from them.²

Constantine's Basilica was situated to the east of the Forum of Vespasian. It had been begun by Maxentius, but was completed, and extended to twice the size, by Constantine. It had three immense halls, the centre one 333 feet long by 84 feet wide, with aisles 60 feet wide, and a transept crossing this 227 feet long, with aisles 80 feet wide. The height of the vaulting was 112 feet. Portions of this Basilica still remain, and the vast span of the arches has served as a model to many modern architects, as for instance to Michelangelo in the case of the present church of St. Peter's, where the vaulting of the nave is of the same span as these arches of the Basilica of Constantine.

But perhaps the most interesting memorial of Constantine in Rome is the huge Egyptian obelisk of red granite which now stands outside the Lateran, whither it was brought in the 16th century from its original position in the Circus Maximus. Apart from its connection with Constantine it is

¹ See Chap. IV, p. 147.

² The depth of ignorance which supervened in the Middle Ages is demonstrated by the fact that it was then imagined that the names Phidias and Praxiteles in these inscriptions referred to philosophers who in the imperial times had, it was supposed, been honoured by the erection of these monuments in recognition of their wisdom.

interesting in itself, being the largest obelisk in existence,¹ and being 3512 years old, having been erected by King Thothmes III in B.C. 1597 in front of the Temple of the Sun at Thebes. Constantine removed it from thence in order to set it up in Rome, and brought it down the Nile to Alexandria; but he died before getting it further, and it was eventually transported to Rome by his son Constantius, and set up in the Circus Maximus.

This obelisk, so interesting in itself, is still more so on account of what it reveals as regards Constantine, a matter which has passed entirely unnoticed. For Constantine's reasons for undertaking the immense task of removing this particular obelisk all the way from Thebes to Rome were evidently mainly due to its special connection with Apollo. Yet this action was taken years after his proclamation of Christianity as the State religion of the empire, and even quite towards the latter end of his life.

The contemporary historian Ammianus Marcellinus begins his remarks about this obelisk by stating authoritatively that the reason why Augustus, who had removed two smaller obelisks² from Egypt to Rome, had not ventured to remove this one was not, as was ordinarily declared, that he was alarmed at the greatness of such a task, but that his reason was that this obelisk was specially dedicated to the Sun-god, and was the chief ornament of his temple, and therefore that it would be a sacrilegious act to remove it. Marcellinus then goes on to say:—

“ But Constantine, differing with that opinion (i.e. that of Augustus), and thinking rightly that he should not be offering any insult to religion if he removed a splendid work from some other temple to dedicate it to the gods of Rome, which is the temple of the whole world, had it lowered from its erect position and laid on the ground, letting it lie there for a short time while he prepared arrangements for its removal. And when it had been brought down the Nile, and landed at Alexandria, he caused a ship of a size hitherto unexampled, requiring three hundred rowers to propel it, to be built to receive it.”

¹ It is 105 ft. high (or with the pedestal 153 ft.), and weighs about 600 tons.

² In height 78 ft. and 72 ft. respectively.

After stating that Constantine's death before this ship was ready caused delay for a time, Marcellinus then describes how the obelisk was at length put on board, conveyed across the Mediterranean, brought up the Tiber to Rome, and erected in the Circus Maximus. He then goes on to give some of the principal words engraved on this obelisk as detailed in the work of the Greek writer Hermapion. And here we have revealed to us very forcibly the reason which caused Constantine to be so anxious to convey this particular obelisk to Rome, even though such a task involved exceptional difficulties.

In the first line we have:—"The Sun to Ramestes the King. I have given to thee to reign with joy over the whole earth; to thee whom the Sun and Apollo love; to thee the mighty truth-loving son of Heron, the god-born ruler of the habitable earth, whom the Sun has chosen above all men, the valiant, warlike king Ramestes, under whose power, by his valour and might, the whole world is placed."

In the second line:—"The mighty Apollo, who takes his stand upon truth, the lord of the diadem, he who has honoured Egypt by becoming its master."

In the third line:—"The mighty Apollo, the all-brilliant son of the Sun, whom the Sun chose above all others, and to whom the valiant Mars gave gifts. Thou whose good fortune abideth for ever; thou whom Ammon loves; thou who hast filled the temple of the Phœnix with good things; thou to whom the gods have given long life. Apollo, the mighty son of Heron; ¹ Ramestes, the King of the world, who has defended Egypt, having subdued the foreign enemy; whom the Sun loves; to whom the gods have given long life, the master of the world, the immortal Ramestes."

In the fifth line:—"I the Sun, the god, the master of Heaven, have given to Ramestes the king might and authority over all; whom Apollo, the truth-lover, the master of time, . . . hath chosen above all others by reason of his courage."

Every word in this laudation of Ramestes could be applied

¹ Here the king is even identified with Apollo.

with even greater propriety to Constantine.¹ And it is easy to see how Constantine, who had from his youth believed himself under the special protection of Apollo, and had often been flattered by being identified with Apollo, would appropriate the expressions of favour in these inscriptions to himself, and, exactly in the same way as he about this same time erected in Constantinople a long-venerated Greek statue of Apollo and by giving it a sceptre and an orb made it represent himself, would take pleasure in erecting at Rome an obelisk the inscriptions on which could be taken as applying to him who from his earliest years had been under the special favour of Apollo, and to whom such words as "under whose power, by his valour and might, the whole world is placed," were more applicable than to any other before him.

The whole matter is highly interesting, in view of the time in Constantine's life when the removal of this obelisk from the temple of the sun-god in Thebes took place, owing to the strong light it throws upon the general character of Constantine's attitude of mind in regard to religion even up to so late a period in his life.²

About the year 334 Constantine became warmly engaged in the controversy between the Arians and the Catholics. In accordance with his sister Constantia's dying request he had recalled Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia³ (who had been banished owing to his adopting the views of Arius), and ere long Eusebius gained a strong influence with the emperor; with the result that at the latter end of his life Constantine, whose views on religion had always (not unnaturally) been rather vague, practically adopted the Arian opinions. He sent for Arius to court, gave him an opportunity of explaining his views to him, accepted his explanation as satisfactory,

¹ "I have given to thee to reign over the whole earth"—"The valiant, war-like King, under whose power, by his valour and might, the whole world is placed"—"The lord of the diadem, he who has honoured Egypt by becoming its master"—"To whom the valiant Mars gave gifts"—"Thou whose good fortune abideth for ever"—"The King of the world, who has defended Egypt, having subdued the foreign enemy"—"The master of the world"—"Whom Apollo . . . hath chosen above all others by reason of his courage."

² See pp. 444 and 445 (footnote).

³ See p. 408 (footnote).

and sent orders to Athanasius, who on the death of Bishop Alexander had become Bishop of Alexandria, to receive Arius back into the Church, threatening if he did not do so to banish him. Athanasius, however, too clear-sighted to be satisfied with the explanation which had satisfied the emperor, firmly refused; and Constantine, always just, even under provocation, refrained from carrying out his threat. A long struggle, carried on by the Arians with the most acrimonious bitterness, took place during the years 334–336 between the Arian party, assisted by the emperor, and the Catholics. Throughout this struggle, although Constantine's authority was exerted to favour the Arians and to force the Catholics to submit, his endeavours to be just, even to religious opponents, are frequently apparent, as also his sincere, even though mistaken, efforts to bring the two parties to peace. Eventually the Arians succeeded in inducing the emperor to banish, both Eustathius, the Pope of Antioch,¹ and Athanasius, the Pope of Alexandria, the latter being banished to Trèves; but notwithstanding great pressure brought to bear upon Constantine by the Arians, he would not deprive Athanasius of his see, and on the latter reaching Trèves he was treated with honour by Constantine's eldest son Constantine, who had been given the rule of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. Finally, in 336 Arius, on the very day of his triumph, and about an hour after issuing from the imperial Palace at Constantinople, where he had obtained an order from the emperor to the Bishop of Constantinople to receive him into communion, suddenly fell down dead in the Augusteum. The Catholics declared it a judgment from heaven; the Arians that it was due to poison.

In 335 Constantine celebrated with much solemnity the thirtieth year of his reign as an emperor, a longer period than any other emperor had reigned since Augustus. The chief feature of this celebration was made by him the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, by this

¹ This title, in Latin "Papa" (Holy Father), and in Greek "Patriarch" (Chief Father) had begun to be applied to the two principal Metropolitan Bishops, the Bishops of Antioch and Alexandria. We find it used in the decisions of the Council of Nicæa (see Appendix VI).

time completed, which church he had endeavoured to make in every way the most magnificent building in the empire. The emperor himself was present at its consecration, together with an immense concourse of Bishops from all parts of the empire, Constantine placing the imperial service of posts at their disposal for their journeys to and from Jerusalem. The Sepulchre itself, adorned with costly marbles and precious stones, had been surrounded under Constantine's orders by a colonnade, the church being placed at one side of this colonnade. This dedication of the church of the Holy Sepulchre was the last important act of Constantine's reign.

In 337 Sapor II of Persia,¹ then twenty-seven years old, asserted a claim to the five districts east of the Tigris taken from Persia by Diocletian.² Constantine was preparing to march in person against him when he was taken ill. After a short trial of the warm baths at Helenopolis,³ which only increased his illness, he had himself carried in a litter to his palace in Nicomedia, where he summoned to him Eusebius, the Bishop of Nicomedia, and was baptized by him.⁴ And a few days later Constantine the Great, who had made the greatest change in the Roman Empire since the beginning of its history, expired at Nicomedia on the 22nd May, 337, at the age of sixty-three.

His body, robed in the imperial purple and crowned with the diadem, was placed in a coffin of gold, borne by the Imperial Guards to the seashore, conveyed in a funeral barge across the Bosphorus, and carried to the imperial Palace in Constantinople. There in the principal hall, on a high platform of many steps, which was covered with purple cloth, ornamented with the imperial insignia, and surrounded with burning candles in golden candlesticks, the dead emperor lay in state, with the jewelled cross which he had placed in the centre of the ceiling shining above him like that which he had seen in the sky as

¹ Grandson of Narses. He reigned for seventy years; see Note E, p. 590.

² Chap. XI, p. 348.

³ Called after his mother Helena, and situated near Nicomedia.

⁴ Though preached against by the Bishops, this practice of persons deferring their baptism until they were dying, making it a sort of final absolution, was very common at that time.

he marched to fight Maxentius. Thence after a day or two there issued from the Palace, and passed through the streets of Constantinople, a more splendid funeral than had ever before been seen. The procession was headed by his son Constantius, who was followed by all the chief officers of the State and of the army; behind them was carried the coffin, borne by the Imperial Guards, and followed by detachments from the various legions at the capital. In accordance with his own orders the dead emperor was buried in his great church of the Twelve Apostles. In this church he had placed twelve tombs, six on each side, in honour of the Apostles, with another in the centre for himself; and there he was laid, "with many tears from the assembled multitude."¹ While as if to mark how his life had its part in both the old and the new religions, at the same time that he was being buried with Christian rites in Constantinople, in Rome the members of the Senate were decreeing to him the usual honour of deification, and ordering incense to be burnt before his statue; the last emperor to be thus honoured by the Pagan world.

The character of Constantine has not received justice, either from non-Christian or Christian writers. This is owing to the fact that he has always been estimated, by both parties, almost entirely from the religious point of view, i.e. with reference to his establishment of Christianity. The Pagan writers, animated by a strong hatred for the man who abolished Paganism, have traduced him in every transaction of his career; while the Christian contemporary writers have extolled him with the utmost extravagance solely on account of his action in regard to Christianity.

But Constantine has (for the same reason) fared no better at the hands of modern writers. The historian Gibbon, anxious in his enmity against Christianity to disparage as much as possible the man who established that religion, has found plenty of material for his purpose in the writings of the Pagan writers of the 4th and 5th centuries, and quoting them as his authorities has scarcely related a single action of Constantine's life in a manner fair to the latter, even when

¹ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, iv, 71.

forced to praise him doing so in terms which are equal to a condemnation. As a part of this systematic endeavour to disparage him, Gibbon, after first damning with faint praise Constantine's character in the earlier part of his career, has enunciated a theory¹ that on becoming sole master of the Roman world Constantine degenerated into a "cruel and dissolute tyrant,"² pointing in support of this theory to the execution of Maximian in 310, to that of Licinius in 324, and to the domestic tragedy in 326. The times were stern and harsh, and conduct not to be judged by the standard of our times without doing the gravest injustice. The three episodes mentioned have been fully dealt with in their place,³ so that here it will suffice to remark that the testimony is universal that Constantine was from first to last exceptionally free from all tendency to tyrannize, that on becoming sole master of the Roman world he was conspicuously so, and that the fact that his reign was so undisturbed by revolutionary attempts has been held to be due to this very cause.

But while the above is the case with regard to non-Christian modern writers, neither has Constantine received justice from the Christian modern writers. The latter, looking at him chiefly in regard to the religious point, appear to have expected that the man who established Christianity should be capable of being judged by the highest standard, and adopting the term "conversion to Christianity" in regard to him in connection with his victory over Maxentius, and ignoring the fact that he remained for many years in a transition state, and was only baptized as a Christian many years afterwards, seem to have expected him at one bound to become incapable

¹ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II, 346-348 (Edition 1862).

² Gibbon here makes use of the word "dissolute" apparently in a deceptive manner, since he makes no attempt to show any immorality on Constantine's part, and on the preceding page had said of Constantine, "From his earliest years to a very advanced season of life he preserved the vigour of his constitution by a strict adherence to the domestic virtues of chastity and temperance." But in both places his language is somewhat disingenuous. There are no accusations against Constantine on the score of immorality, even from the Pagan writers.

³ Chap. XII, p. 372; and Chap. XIII, pp. 401 and 416.

of any act falling short, or seeming to fall short, of that high standard ; while the fact of his eventually becoming an Arian Christian creates a further ground of disappointment on their part. Moreover these writers, awed by the great name of Gibbon, have felt bound to accept his estimate of various actions of Constantine's life, and so to believe that the latter fell short of the standard by which they judge him even to a greater extent than he did.

Before considering Constantine from that point of view from which it is here maintained that he should be judged, let us first look at him in regard to this matter of religion. In the first place it seems generally forgotten that for nearly forty years he was a Pagan, and during that time must be judged in comparison with other Pagans around him. It seems also forgotten that when he determined to make Christianity the religion of the State, and set himself vigorously to establish that religion, he was still not personally a Christian, though he had to a large extent given up Paganism, and that for a long time afterwards (even though building churches, attending a Church Council, and doing all he could to advance Christianity) he remained for many years only half a Christian ; while even to the end his Christianity was probably always of a somewhat vague type. And in the second place his general attitude towards religion must be borne in mind. Now one very marked feature in Constantine, which shows itself both in his Pagan period and in his Christian period, is that he was throughout life intensely superstitious. During all the years that he was a Pagan he was convinced that he was under the special favour of Apollo.¹ And in the chief episode of his life connected with religion (the episode popularly called his "conversion"), the same characteristic shows itself. It is

¹ His strange action, even quite towards the end of his life, in setting up in the Forum of Constantinople a well-known and long-worshipped statue of Apollo, and by the addition of an orb and sceptre converting it into a statue of himself, tends to show that much of his original feeling in this respect still clung to him, and demonstrates the more or less indefinite character of his Christianity, at all events until the last three or four years of his life ; and his action in regard to the Theban obelisk shows the same. The Christians of those ages looked upon the Pagan gods as devils ; nor can we imagine a Cyprian, an Athanasius, or an Ambrose acting in this manner.

quite unnecessary to debate, as so many writers have done, whether he really saw what he imagined he saw as he marched against Maxentius. Whether having determined upon a certain course from political motives he was predisposed to see such a sign, or whether it was a genuine vision, matters not. What is certain is that the strongest feeling in Constantine throughout his life afterwards was that (like Cyrus) he was a divinely appointed instrument chosen to set up and maintain Christianity; and this conviction was the main-spring of all his actions in regard to that religion, quite irrespective of his own personal religious belief, whatever that may have been.¹

Nor is it to be wondered at if Constantine's Christianity was of a somewhat vague type. Occupied with long and strenuous military operations in campaign after campaign, burdened with countless labours relating to the affairs of a whole world, and in matters of religion more concerned with advancing the cause of Christianity than with studying theological questions, he was not the kind of man to become all which modern Christian writers seem to have expected of him; while he was just the kind of man to see little difference between the Catholic faith and the Arian belief, and to adopt the latter (as the more easily understood of the two) when it was urged upon him by one having influence with him. Instead of expecting that the man who established Christianity should have become a sort of St. Louis, the wonder should rather be that Constantine grew into being so good a Christian as he did. While for about twenty years from the time of his victory over Maxentius his personal religion might apparently be described as Paganism overlaid with Christianity of a vague type,² from the time that about three years before

¹ His words in publishing the Edict of Milan, stating the reason for his action to be to propitiate "whatever Deity exists," throw light upon his own personal mental attitude even the year after his supposed "conversion."

² One curious outcome of this which may be called his transition period is to be seen in the equivocal dedications which he gave to the churches that he built in Constantinople, Sta. Sophia (the Divine Wisdom), Sta. Irene (Peace), and Sta. Homonoia (Unity of Spirit), none of these being names of persons, but all of them somewhat equivocal names of abstract ideas.

his death he came under the influence of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, a change is apparent. We hear no more of actions wherein he identified himself with Apollo, or suggested that he was the favoured of Apollo; he displays eagerness to make the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem as glorious, and its consecration as notable, as possible; and he throws himself into the controversy between the Arians and the Catholics almost with the ardour of a new convert.

By some he has been condemned as being "ruthless," upon the grounds put forward in support of that view by Gibbon.¹ But this is to make the fatal error of judging a character in history by the standard of another age to that in which the person lived.² If the term ruthless as applied to Constantine has any meaning it must mean ruthless as compared with other rulers of his age. Is it, then, the case that Constantine was ruthless as compared with his contemporaries; as compared, e.g. with his predecessor Diocletian, with the latter's colleague Maximian, with Galerius, with Maxentius, with Licinius, or with Maximin? The question has only to be asked for the charge at once to fall dead. Moreover of the three instances cited by Gibbon in support of it, one, the execution of Maximian in 310, took place while Constantine was still a Pagan, and the other two, the execution of Licinius in 324 and the domestic tragedy in 326, took place while Constantine was in the transition period between Paganism and Christianity. And if plotting against the life of a king or emperor is to be held as a just ground for execution (a theory which has been acted upon right down to modern times) then Constantine must, in all the three cases, be absolved from the charge on this ground alone.

His abilities, and power to grasp and administer the affairs of a whole world (a task which even Diocletian had found beyond his powers) surpassed those of all the emperors who had preceded him. As a commander in war he surpassed Trajan, as can be seen by looking at his eight pitched battles, and noting that he was victorious in these battles over troops

¹ Page 443.

² See Chap. VII, p. 267 (footnote).

as well-trained as his own and led by Roman commanders, whereas Trajan's battles were fought against untrained barbarians. As an administrator he surpassed Augustus, for he reorganized the entire administration, originated principles so sound that they have lasted down to the present day, and passed laws able to raise the whole empire to a higher plane and to confer permanent benefits upon mankind. Had he been only the equal of Trajan in war and of Augustus in peace he would still have surpassed them both, by reason of his capacity in both fields of action.

To turn now to that point of view from which alone a just estimate of Constantine is to be obtained. Instead of looking at him principally from the point of view of religion, as has so generally been done, let him be looked at *as a man*; and in order to avoid all questions arising from his establishment of Christianity, let him be compared even while still a Pagan with those who were his equals and rivals during the first thirty-eight years of his life. Fearless, resolute, just, sagacious, tolerant, large-minded, temperate and moral in his life, surpassing even Trajan as a general and even Augustus as an administrator, and acknowledged as "among the very first of all the benefactors of mankind,"¹ he, with more truth than Marcus Aurelius (who was certainly not a benefactor of mankind) may rightly be held as "the best man that the Pagan world ever produced."² Compare him in character with those with whom his lot was cast during those thirty-eight years,—Diocletian, Galerius, his father-in-law Maximian, his brother-in-law Maxentius, his brother-in-law Licinius, Severus, and Maximin,—all of them noted for monstrous cruelties and most of them for monstrous immorality; in comparison with them he appears like a being of another sphere. Or compare him in abilities and achievements with the most able emperors who had preceded him,—Augustus, Tiberius, Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Aurelian, Diocletian; he stands a head and shoulders above them all, not one of them, even Augustus, being like Constantine pre-eminent alike in the domain of a commander

¹ Page 396 (footnote).

² Chap. VII, p. 247.

in war and a far-sighted administrator in peace. Never has Constantine been looked at in this manner, and it is only when thus looked at that he stands out in his true colours. The picture drawn of him by a historian anxious to disparage him as much as possible owing to the religious question involved in his establishment of Christianity has been copied by all others; and as a result Constantine, who did many other things besides establishing Christianity, has not been estimated as he deserves.

Constantine in fact chiefly deserves honour for deeds which he alone showed power to perform. His establishment of Christianity, though it had far-reaching effects upon the world, does not, so far as proof of his ability is concerned, represent his greatest achievement. It was one which might have been effected by any capable emperor,—by Augustus, by Trajan, by Antoninus Pius, or by Diocletian. The same also might be said regarding his great deeds in war, his reorganization of the entire civil administration of the empire, and his assembly of the first General Council of the Church. But Constantine's other achievements were such as no other emperor displays ability to produce; those deeds of a far-sighted wisdom able to conceive and carry out ideas based on sound principles and entirely new to the world. In this category are his settlement of the future relations between Church and State, his innovation of separating the three chief functions of government,¹ his innovation as to the principles upon which an army should be organized,² his founding of such a city as Constantinople,³ and, above all, his lifting the whole Roman world to a higher plane of civilization and enlightenment,⁴ all of them achievements of which no emperor before him had dreamt, and which have demonstrated

¹ The civil, the military, and the ecclesiastical.

² The subdivision of the entire territory into definite general's commands, the separation of the cavalry from the infantry, the reduction of the infantry unit to a more suitable size, and the establishment of a distinct department for arsenals and commissariat.

³ Diocletian, though seeking for sites for new capitals, had passed Byzantium by; Constantine saw its great future possibilities.

⁴ Chiefly through his numerous and radical changes in the Roman laws.

their soundness by the length of time that they have endured.

It is on this ground (and entirely apart from his action in regard to Christianity) that Constantine merits much greater honour than has ever been accorded to him. Subsequent generations gave Constantine the title of Great with more justice than they were aware. He was the greatest general the Roman world ever produced; he raised the Roman Empire to the highest point it ever attained; he was an administrator so far-sighted that he could found institutions capable of lasting sixteen hundred years. And these things make him the greatest of all the Roman emperors.

CHAPTER XIV

REIGNS OF

CONSTANTINE II, CONSTANTIUS, CONSTANS,
JULIAN, AND JOVIAN

CONSTANTINE II, CONSTANTIUS, AND CONSTANS

337—350

HAD Crispus survived it is possible that Constantine the Great might have left him the whole empire, and even had he not done so Crispus, popular and capable, would very soon have taken it; but the emperor's three sons by Fausta were cast in a different mould, and he evidently considered that none of them were capable of so vast a charge. He therefore left to the eldest, Constantine II, then twenty-one, the rule of Gaul, Britain, Spain, and Mauretania, to the second, Constantius, then twenty, that of Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and part of Asia Minor, and to the third, Constans, then only seventeen, that of Italy, Rhætia, Noricum, North Africa, Pannonia, and Illyricum; while to his nephews, Delmatius and Hannibalianus¹ (the sons of his half-brother Delmatius), he gave, to the elder Mœsia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, and to the younger Pontus and Cappadocia.

But this arrangement had a very short duration. The army declared at once that they would suffer none to reign over them but the sons of their lamented emperor, and forthwith carried out, either with or without the consent of Con-

¹ See genealogical table of the family of Constantius Chlorus, Appendix VIII. Hannibalianus had been married to Constantine's daughter Constantina.

stantius (who alone of the three brothers was present at the capital), a promiscuous massacre in which the two half-brothers of Constantine the Great,¹ Hannibalianus and Julius Constantius, the two sons of his deceased half-brother Delmatius, and the three sons of Hannibalianus were slain. It is possible that the troops may have known that the half-brothers of the late emperor and their sons were planning to oust the sons of Constantine, and so to create a civil war. But however that may be, of all the nephews of the late emperor they only spared the half-brothers Gallus and Julian, the two sons of Julius Constantius, then respectively twelve and six years old. Historians are unable to decide how far Constantius was responsible for this massacre, but it is usually considered that while he did not participate in it, his youth and inexperience were easily prevailed over to extract his consent to it. In any case he had no force at his disposal with which to resist the determined will of the army not to permit any of the collateral branch who were grown up to survive.

This ruthless slaughter of seven members of the imperial family, while it was far surpassed by various massacres during Pagan times, shows that the age had as yet by no means wholly emerged from the traditions of the Pagan epoch, and that twenty-four years of Christianity as the State religion had still left among the majority of the Romans much of that disregard for human life which had for generations been common among them. Nor was it to be expected that it should be otherwise. A large part, perhaps half, of the population were still Pagans, and even among the remainder the lessons of Christianity had in twenty-four years only been very partially assimilated. We have in fact to realize that in such a matter as the working of Christianity the life even of a generation is a mere span. It was to take many generations before the lessons of Christianity regarding the sacredness of human life would so permeate the whole population as to render such acts impossible.

Constantine II and Constans were at the time of this episode

¹ It is probable that the half-brothers of Constantine the Great were not looked upon by his sons quite in the light of uncles. Moreover they had shown disaffection to Constantine on several occasions.

absent in their respective dominions, but in May 338 the three brothers met in Pannonia, and at a personal interview arranged that they should be joint-emperors, Constantine II (with a certain pre-eminence of rank) taking the west (with Milan as his capital), Constantius the east (with Antioch as his capital), and Constans the centre. Although this arrangement gave to Constans the coveted possession of Constantinople, Constantius seems to have acceded to this from a feeling that his duty called him to the eastern frontier, where for a long time he must be occupied in defending the empire from the Persians.¹

In 339 Constans gained a victory on the Danube over the Sarmatians, which made him less inclined to brook any interference from his eldest brother. In 340, however, Constantine II, who had from the first claimed a sort of authority over Constans, took steps to enforce it, and suddenly assembling an army advanced as far as Aquileia. Constans, who was at Naissus, upon hearing of this attack sent forward a body of troops to oppose it, intending to follow with the rest of his forces; but the first body waylaid Constantine II on his march, and the latter falling into an ambuscade was killed.

Meanwhile Constantius was occupied on the eastern frontier, opposing the Persians. Sapor II was an able general, and so formidable an invasion required to be met by the entire military strength of the empire, as Constantine the Great had been preparing to do. But Constantius had to meet this invasion with only one-third of the forces of the empire, and since he himself was without any military ability it is not to be wondered at that the war lagged on year after year without any decisive result, both parties avoiding a general engagement. Nevertheless Constantius, though displaying no military genius, successfully carried on a defensive warfare, in the course of which he organized a body of mailed cavalry after the Persian model, increased the fleet on the Tigris, and built various fortresses, and though Sapor brought large forces into the field he was unable to conquer Mesopotamia, while in 344 his camp at Hileia was attacked and taken by Constantius, Sapor himself being forced to fly, and the heir

¹ See Chap. XIII, p. 441.

to his throne being captured and put to death. Throughout these operations in Mesopotamia the fortified cities played a prominent part, offering a stout resistance to Sapor, especially Nisibis, the great stronghold of the Roman power on the eastern frontier. This strongly fortified city successfully withstood three memorable sieges in the years 338, 346, and 350, Sapor being thrice repulsed with ignominy after suffering heavy losses; and in the latter year, after his third failure, he abandoned this war, which had lasted thirteen years, and made peace.

The youngest of the three brothers, Constans, had by the death of Constantine II become, at the age of twenty, ruler over the two western prefectures.¹ Young though he was, he administered this wide dominion satisfactorily, and the West remained during this period peacefully governed and undisturbed by any untoward events. Moreover Constans was at first vigorous and energetic, travelling incessantly, and making himself a terror to the barbarians. In 341 and 342 he drove back an incursion of the Franks, and forced them to make peace. And in January 343, disregarding the dangers of crossing the Channel in winter, he proceeded to Britain, and drove back the Scots and Picts who had made an incursion into the northern part of the Roman territory. But on his return from Britain Constans, taking up his residence in Rome, gave himself up to a luxurious life, and gradually fell under the dominion of favourites whose actions by degrees undermined his popularity.

In 349, however, Constans displayed a resolute energy in connection with the exiled Pope of Alexandria, Athanasius. The latter on the death of Constantine the Great had been permitted to return from Trèves to his see of Alexandria by Constantine II, who in giving the permission expressed a deep sense of the innocence and noble character of his honoured guest. After the death of Constantine II the Arian party persuaded Constantius (who in the intervals of the Persian war found time to turn his attention to Church matters, and was completely under the influence of the Arians), again to force Athanasius to quit Alexandria, and the latter removed for several years to Rome, the Arians still endeavouring to

¹ Chap. XI, p. 347.

get him deprived of his see. His cause was espoused by Constans, who at last in 349 wrote to his brother Constantius a short and peremptory letter, stating that unless he consented to the immediate restoration of Athanasius, he himself with a fleet and army would seat the primate of Egypt on his episcopal throne. This produced the desired effect; Constantius, not inclined to enter on a war to please the Arians, gave way; and Athanasius returned to his see joyfully welcomed by the people of Alexandria.

During these thirteen years (337-350), though both Constantius and Constans were without ability, the empire at large, with the exception of the eastern frontier, continued in the state of prosperity in which it had been left by Constantine the Great. The sound system of government which he had established continued to be administered by efficient officers, and though the inglorious Persian war desolated Mesopotamia and the districts on the Tigris, the rest of the empire was unaffected by this conflict and only heard of it as taking place at a distance.

At length, early in 350, Constans, while pursuing, near Autun in Gaul, his favourite amusement of hunting, was suddenly assailed by a party of troops who had been enticed from their allegiance by Magnentius, an ambitious soldier of barbarian extraction who now raised a revolt in Gaul. Constans, taken entirely unawares, and attacked suddenly in a forest unaccompanied by any escort of troops, and not able to get back to Autun, fled southwards hoping to reach Spain, but was overtaken near the Pyrenees by the troops of Magnentius and slain. Thereupon his cousin Nepotian,¹ who with his mother, the princess Eutropia,² was living in Rome, fired with indignation at the throne of the West being usurped by a treacherous barbarian, seized the power in Rome, and was saluted as *Augustus* by the Romans. But within a month a force in the pay of the tyrant Magnentius arrived at Rome, overpowered the troops of Nepotian, and put to death Nepotian, his mother Eutropia, and all the chief persons in Rome who had given their adherence to him.

¹ See Appendix VIII.

² Named after her great-grandfather, the father of Constantius Chlorus (Chap. XI, p. 347).

CONSTANTIUS

350—361

The course of events had thus caused the rule of the whole empire to devolve upon the one of the three sons of Constantine the Great who is said to have been his father's favourite son.

The character of Constantius has not been justly depicted in history. For while on the one side he has, as was to be expected, received plentiful abuse from the opponents of Christianity,¹ on the other side he has been almost as unjustly treated by Church writers, both of his own and subsequent times, owing to his bigoted Arianism and his rigorous persecution of the Catholics.

Constantius would seem to have deserved his father's preference, for though his abilities were only moderate, yet he undoubtedly possessed certain solid attributes commanding respect, for we are specially told that one of his characteristics was an indefinable quality which produced a feeling in his presence of an awe-inspiring majesty. He had (as we know from Ammianus Marcellinus and other contemporary writers), a high ideal of his duty to the Roman empire, as a trust committed to him by his father, together with a firm conviction that he was the chosen of God to be the representative of the dynasty of Constantius Chlorus, and that as the holder of such a trust he was solemnly bound to do his best for that empire, and to sacrifice his own personal interests or inclinations whenever they clashed with this sacred obligation. He consistently adhered throughout life to this principle. He was no soldier, and hated war; yet for the good of the empire he gave up the possession of Constantinople and the imperial palace to his younger brother, and setting out for the eastern frontier steadfastly conducted there in person for twelve years the long and wearisome war with the Persians in defence of the empire. And not only did he prominently display the same characteristic during the last two years of his life,² but on other occasions also he frequently took the field when he would much have preferred to have remained occupied in the more congenial task of eradicating the Catholic faith. His

¹ In particular by Gibbon, whose picture of Constantius is most unfair.

² See pp. 470 and 473.

duty of safeguarding the empire involved a similar obligation imposed upon him of safeguarding the religion which had been adopted by that empire, and hence the one main interest of Constantius' life became that of providing for the welfare of the Christian Church and the maintenance of its doctrine, as he understood it.

Nor were Constantius' faults without some amount of excuse. From the time that he was sixteen he had been brought up as an Arian and had been surrounded by the leading men holding that belief, and to him, consequently, the Catholic faith was anathema, while religious toleration was entirely alien to the sentiments of that Arian party to which he belonged. Unfortunately, together with these characteristics Constantius possessed two others which produced dire results. Naturally inclined to lean upon others, he was easily led by unscrupulous ministers; and he also possessed an intensely suspicious nature, causing him on the mere whisper of treason to take lives ruthlessly, while, unlike his father in this respect, his reserved and unsympathetic nature prevented his having any warm adherents, leaving him the prey of a band of counsellors who were actuated only by self-interest. Nevertheless Constantius' exalted view of his imperial duty, his refusal ever to allow his personal inclinations to interfere with that object, his steadfastness and singleness of aim as regards religion, his temperance and purity of life, and the qualities which made men feel an awe-inspiring majesty in his presence, command our respect, however much we may condemn his putting to death many innocent men who aroused his suspicions, and his intolerant persecution of the Catholic Church.

Though the death of Constans had left Constantius at the age of thirty-three the only survivor of the sons of Constantine the Great, he had still to overcome the tyrannical usurper Magnentius, who by the financial assistance of Marcellinus, Count of the sacred largesses,¹ had been enabled to gain the adherence of the troops of the West. Moreover Constantius had also to meet another foe raised up against him by his sister Constantina, the widow of the slain Hannibalianus.²

¹ The title borne by the chief financial minister of the emperor.

² Page 451.

The princess Constantina, before the death of her father Constantine the Great, had persuaded him on her being married to her cousin Hannibalianus to grant her the title of *Augusta*. On the death of her brother Constans, Constantina, in revenge against Constantius for the slaughter in 337 of her husband and the loss to herself thereby of the position to which as his wife she would have succeeded under her father's will, with her own hands placed the diadem of the two western prefectures on the head of the old and experienced general Vetrico, who, universally beloved, had long administered with success the provinces of Pannonia and Illyricum. Vetrico was greatly attached to the house of Constantine, but having now to choose between the brother and sister chose the side of the latter, and was saluted as emperor by the troops in Illyricum.

On receiving the news of the death of Constans, the revolt of Magnentius, and the action of the princess Constantina, Constantius placed the conduct of affairs in the East in charge of his cousin Gallus, by this time twenty-five years old,¹ and marched with an army towards Europe. Vetrico consented to meet him at Sardica in Dardania, and there Constantius (who showed both bravery and dignity in this action) addressed the troops of both armies, upon which even the troops of Vetrico saluted Constantius as their lawful emperor, and Vetrico willingly withdrew into an honoured retirement at Prusa (Dec. 350). At the same time Constantius raised Gallus to the rank of *Caesar*, formally investing him with the rule of the eastern prefecture; and to satisfy his sister Constantina's ambitious spirit he married her to her cousin Gallus (5th March, 351).

Constantius then gathered his forces for the inevitable battle with the usurper Magnentius, who was advancing with a powerful army from Gaul. After several indecisive engagements between them in Pannonia a hard-fought battle took

¹ After the murder of their father Julius Constantius in the massacre in 337, the two boys, Gallus and Julian, had been carried off to Nicomedia, and in 344 had been transferred to the lonely imperial castle of Macellum, in Cappadocia. They had been given a careful education, but kept almost like prisoners, none of their friends being allowed to visit them.

place on the 28th September, 351, at Mursa, near the junction of the Drave with the Danube. The want of military ability in Constantius is exemplified by his waiting to be attacked though he had more than double his enemy's force, and by the position he took up, with the Danube close in his rear and the Drave on his right, a position in which defeat would have meant destruction. However he had 80,000 men to Magnentius' 36,000, while this disparity was further increased just before the battle by the desertion to him of Silvanus with the greater part of the cavalry of Magnentius. But, notwithstanding this loss, the infantry of the latter fought with the most stubborn bravery, and the battle continued to rage far into the night. Towards the end of the day Magnentius' right wing, simultaneously attacked in front by Constantius' infantry and in flank by his strong force of cavalry, gave way. Magnentius fled, but his Gaulish legions under Marcellinus continued the battle, and refusing to retire were almost all slain or drowned in the Drave. The losses in this, the most severely fought battle of the time, were prodigious. Constantius out of his 80,000 men lost 30,000; while the loss in the army of Magnentius reached the enormous proportion of two-thirds of the whole force, Magnentius out of his 36,000 men losing 24,000, this being chiefly due to the brave steadfastness of his Gaulish legions.

Magnentius fled to Aquileia, where he remained during the winter, hoping that Italy would remain loyal to him. But the cruelties carried out at the time when Nepotian and his mother Eutropia were put to death had alienated the people; the cities displayed the banners of Constantius; and in the spring of 352, upon Constantius advancing across the Julian Alps Magnentius fled to Gaul. Constantius, always slow in his movements, advancing through Italy at length reached Milan, where he remained for the winter, and in the spring of 353 crossed the Alps by the Mont Cenis pass; whereupon Magnentius, seeing his cause hopeless, committed suicide at Lyons. In the same year Constantius, now thirty-six, whose first wife, his cousin Galla,¹ had died in 350, married Aurelia Eusebia, whose father was Prefect of Macedonia.

Meanwhile in the east Gallus at his capital of Antioch was

¹ Daughter of Julius Constantius and Galla.

showing himself both incapable and tyrannical. Raised from a prison to a throne, he possessed none of the qualities of a ruler, while he was by turns sour in temper, morose, and violent. Nor was his wife Constantina of a character to mitigate this disposition. Whether truly or not, she is described by the writers of the time as driven by an insatiable thirst for human blood, constantly urging her husband to acts of cruelty and murder. As soon, therefore, as the suppression of the revolt of Magnentius left Constantius free to turn his attention again to the East he directed a selected officer of high rank and noted ability, Domitian, to proceed to Antioch, empowering him with a special commission to report to him regarding the general charges of cruelty and injustice in the administration of Gallus. But on arriving at Antioch and beginning to make these enquiries Domitian was arrested by Gallus; and upon Montius, the quæstor of the imperial palace, interfering to protect Domitian, and calling upon all civil and military officers to defend the representative of the emperor, both Domitian and Montius were seized, their legs were tied together, and after being dragged through the streets of the city by the mob their mangled and lifeless bodies were thrown into the Orontes.

After such an outrage the only possible chance for Gallus was to try the fortune of war. But Gallus was a compound of violence and weakness; and on receiving a peremptory order summoning him to Milan (at which city Constantius took up his residence), to answer to the emperor in person for the deed, he set forth on this journey, accompanied by his wife Constantina. The latter died before they reached Constantinople, and on arriving at Pœtovio, in Pannonia, Gallus was arrested, taken to the castle of Pola, and there, after an examination conducted by his personal enemy Eusebius, the emperor's chamberlain, the results of which convinced Constantius that his own safety was incompatible with his cousin's life, was executed (Dec. 354).

Constantius by no abilities of his own, but well served by officers trained under Constantine the Great (of whom Vetranio was a type), had by the final defeat of Magnentius firmly

established his power throughout the whole empire, and for the remaining nine years of his life ruled without a rival. Suspicious and bigoted, he was entirely under the influence of a crowd of officials, the Arian party in particular establishing a complete dominion over him. Religion, and matters connected with religion, became almost the sole affairs dealt with by the State; Arianism, the form of belief held by Constantius, his wife Eusebia, and his entire court, became the fashionable religion, and the emperor now proceeded to sustain it with the whole force of the government. The persecutions and banishments of Catholic bishops to force them to submit, and the various other measures from time to time invented to crush the Catholic religion, became the prominent political feature of the time, occupying all the attention of Constantius and his ministers. Promises, flatteries, threats, and military force were in turn brought to bear upon the Bishops, who if they refused to comply were exiled, and their sees filled by Arians. In no long time in all the ecclesiastical dioceses not only were the Bishops Arians, but that party held all the churches and were in a considerable majority, the Catholics becoming a despised and persecuted minority. For a long time two leading Bishops in the west held out, Hosius, Bishop of Cordova,¹ and Liberius, Bishop of Rome.² After resisting every kind of pressure they were at length imprisoned, and then banished. At last Hosius, now 100 years old, gave way, and signed the Arian creed. A few months later Liberius did the same, and the triumph of Arianism was complete. "The world," says Jerome,³ "groaned, and was astonished to find itself Arian."

One prominent man remained facing a world in defence

¹ It was against the laws of the Church for a Bishop ever to be "translated" from one see to another, and when once a man became a Bishop he remained always the occupant of that see.

² The important church of Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome was originally erected by Liberius, and is often called the Liberian Basilica. No part of this original church now remains, but the church was rebuilt eighty years later, and of this later church, built in 432, the nave, the marble columns, and the mosaics on the chancel arch still remain.

³ St. Jerome was at this time a young man of about twenty-five.

of the Catholic religion, Athanasius, Pope ¹ of Alexandria. Irrespective altogether of his lifelong fight in this cause, Athanasius, when Constantine the Great had passed away, was the one man in the Roman empire who stood out superior to all others in abilities and character. For forty-six years he held the see of Alexandria, and during the whole of that time maintained a perpetual combat, resisting all the efforts of an Arian world to silence him. In the midst of an unceasing storm of persecution, ever brave, patient, wise, steadfast, and self-sacrificing, he displayed all the qualities of a noble-hearted man, and won the admiration of all who looked on at this conflict. Five times over he was expelled from his see, and nearly half his life was passed in exile. At length Constantius resolved to deprive him not only of his see, but of his life, and a force of 5000 men was sent to surround the cathedral of Alexandria and seize him; a scene of tumult and bloodshed followed, but in the midst of the confusion Athanasius was carried away by the people and hidden in the desert of the Thebaid, far to the south. Thence by his exhortations and writings he kept up the fainting spirits of the depressed and persecuted Catholics, it being due to this solitary brave leader that the Catholic faith survived.

This steadfast defence of the true faith by one Bishop alone throughout the world passed in after times into a proverb, *Athanasius contra mundum*.² While all Christians naturally hate strife, yet in an army at war with formidable foes those soldiers who will not fight are apt to be as bad for the cause as those foes themselves. At such times there are always those who shrink from the conflict, and in order to purchase an undeserved peace will compromise in matters concerning the Church's faith, practice, or constitution. But on the other hand there have always been those ready to bear all the odium and suffering of such a conflict, and to proclaim "a truceless war" so long as the attack upon the Church's faith, practice, or constitution continues. When such spirits fail to arise it is a proof of deadness in religion; and when the Church fails to be attacked it is a proof that she is making

¹ As already mentioned, this title was at this time applied to the Bishops of Antioch and Alexandria.

² "Athanasius against the world."

friends with the world. Never at any other time in the Church's history was the minority in defence of the true faith reduced so low as at this period, when it was represented by a single Bishop. And the forty years' fight which Athanasius waged, ending at length (though long after his death), in victory, has ever since caused his name to be held in highest honour.¹

In this day of its triumph during the reign of Constantius Arianism seemed anxious to show how bitter and rancorous a spirit that form of belief engendered. While adopting the Christian name, the Arians brought scorn upon that religion by their language and conduct towards their opponents, to stigmatize whom the whole vocabulary of vituperation was brought into use, while the most harsh and vindictive methods were employed to force them to conform to the dominant belief. Nevertheless, since it was the object of the leaders of Arianism to make the difference between that form of belief and the Catholic faith look as small as possible, causing them to use language in their sermons and creeds which was ambiguous and might be taken in an orthodox sense, there were everywhere pious people who (either too illiterate to understand such questions, or by temperament disinclined to give attention to them) might attend the services in an Arian church, hear the sermons, and recite the Arian creeds without receiving any harm. "The ears of the people, uninjured by the subtle heresy, were purer than the lips of the preachers."

At this period the Church, notwithstanding all the difficulties of its conflict with Arianism, continued to extend its area. About the middle of Constantius' reign the kingdom of Georgia adopted Christianity, and soon afterwards the kingdom of Abyssinia did the same, the latter kingdom sending to Athanasius at Alexandria for a Bishop. And the Church of Abyssinia to this day still acknowledges the see of Alexandria as its parent Church, and has more than once in recent times given practical demonstration of the fact.

Constantius being of so abnormally suspicious a disposition,

¹ Regarding the creed called by the name of St. Athanasius, because it enunciates the faith of which he was so brave a defender for more than forty years, see Vol. II, Chap. XXIV.

it was not to be expected that the conduct of Gallus would fail to bring many others under the emperor's suspicion as possibly nourishing treasonable intentions against him, and especially the half-brother of Gallus, Julian, now twenty-three years old. In 351, upon Gallus being made *Caesar*, Julian had been released from his confinement at Maccellum, and had since resided at Nicomedia, Pergamum, Ephesus, and other places in Asia Minor, secretly digging deeply into the mysteries of occult science. He was now, early in 355, escorted under a strong guard to Milan, and there kept a prisoner for several months, in continual dread of a similar death to that which he saw almost daily inflicted upon all who were suspected of having been adherents of Gallus, or who for any cause were obnoxious to the band of advisers who surrounded Constantius. And this would probably have been his fate had not the empress Eusebia exerted her influence on his behalf.

Eusebia, the second wife of Constantius, was the only person among those around the latter whose character it is a pleasure to contemplate. Beautiful, accomplished, and high-minded in character, Eusebia, although an Arian in belief, constantly opposed the bitter persecuting policy of the Arian advisers who surrounded Constantius, and by her moderation and gentleness exercised a counterbalancing influence over the mind of her husband. Seeing plainly that Julian was entirely innocent, either of any complicity in the proceedings of Gallus, or of any desire to aim at the throne, she now interceded for him with Constantius; thereupon Julian was admitted to the emperor's presence, pleaded his cause with dignity and sincerity, was heard favourably, and was released from his confinement and allowed to reside at Athens. It was the one place where above all others he desired to live, Julian being both by temperament and training a philosopher, deeply interested in all questions regarding the Greek philosophies, and in every way the exact opposite, in character, abilities, and disposition, to his half-brother Gallus.

It is frequently said that a child's character and natural abilities will in most cases depend more upon those of his mother than of his father, and certainly the theory is remarkably borne out at least three times over in successive genera-

tions of the family of Constantius Chlorus,¹ if not even four times over. For while we know nothing regarding the character and abilities of Eutropius, the father of Constantius Chlorus, we at all events know that his mother came of a family notable in this respect.²

But looking at the next two generations we have the theory forcibly demonstrated three several times over.³ Helena's son by Constantius Chlorus was the great Constantine; whereas Theodosia's three sons by Constantius Chlorus were all of them without any abilities or strength of character, even though they had a man like Constantius Chlorus as their father. Again, in the next generation Minervina's son by Constantine the Great was Crispus, who in his short life showed himself in every way strong in character and of exceptional ability; whereas the three sons of Fausta by Constantine were all of them wanting in that respect, even though they had such a man as Constantine the Great as their father. And yet again in this same generation of the family we have another scarcely less striking instance; for while Galla's son by Julius Constantius was the weak and incapable Gallus, Basilina's son by Julius Constantius was Julian, a man full of ability and strength of character, even though his father was quite without such qualities.⁴

Julian, born six years after the death of Crispus, was (except the latter) the only one of the descendants of Constantius Chlorus entitled by abilities and character to succeed the great Constantine. He possessed qualities which in any line in life would have raised him to eminence; for, in a life which only lasted thirty-two years, he showed ability in war, great intellectual attainments, untiring devotion to duty, and a high moral character. In the temperament which he inherited, in the appeal that the finest poetry which has ever been written

¹ See genealogical table of the family of Constantius Chlorus, Appendix VIII.

² Chap. XI, p. 347.

³ It is curious in this connection to note that the Greek idea on the contrary (as we may see in the writings of Æschylus) was that the father was the sole parent.

⁴ Another no less striking instance occurred a little later in the case of the two sons and the daughter of Theodosius the Great (Vol. II, Chap. XVII, p. 57).

made to him, in his fervent effort to revive a glorious past, in his sorrowful failure to stir others to his own enthusiasm, and in the manner of his death, his history is full of pathos. A thoughtful, imaginative, and lovable child, whose mother Basilina died shortly after his birth, Julian inherited her ardent love for Homer and the Greek poets, felt as a boy (he tells us) a strange elevation of the soul in watching the sun, worshipped the stars and "understood their thoughts," and was thrilled through and through by the very word *Hellas*¹ when he pronounced it. And as he grew older he became devoted to secret enquiries into the Greek philosophies, gradually developing a strong admiration for the doctrines of Plato. To such a nature the bitter and rancorous spirit displayed around him by the Arians in their religious disputes with their opponents caused disgust, filling him with contempt for a religion of which he only saw such aspects, and making him turn with increasing ardour to the ancient religion of Greece and the calm spirit of the Greek philosophies. And when at the age of twenty he became his own master he in secret adopted Platonism and Theurgy (or occult science), was secretly initiated at Ephesus into the mysteries of the latter science, and subsequently at Athens into the mysteries of Eleusis, from which time he became permeated with the greatest enthusiasm for the worship of the gods of Greece.

But in view of the mental atmosphere which pervaded the court of Constantius it was obvious that Julian, who from the age of six had been an object of suspicion and dislike on account of his birth and the possibility of his becoming a rival to the throne, would be mad to create a second cause for enmity against himself on the score of religion, especially in a court which was a hot-bed of fanaticism. He therefore wisely kept his opinions to himself. But he was secretly delighted at being allowed to take up his residence at Athens, where he forthwith plunged still deeper into those occult studies to which his temperament drew him, though necessarily keeping this absolutely secret from all except the leaders of the Theurgists, and in public still from time to time attending the worship of the Christian Church.

But Julian was not permitted to remain long enjoying

¹ Greece.

the congenial society of Athens. On both the western and the eastern frontiers troubles were arising which demanded the presence of the emperor, and Constantius felt the need of a coadjutor who should proceed to deal with the disturbances in Gaul while he himself went once more to the East. In this dilemma the empress Eusebia showed how she possessed, in addition to her other qualities of character, insight and wisdom. She persuaded Constantius to give the rank of *Caesar* to Julian and send him to reduce Gaul to order, first arranging that Julian should be married to his cousin Helena, Constantius' sister. The event proved Eusebia's wisdom, though at the time nothing could have seemed more unlikely than that the student and philosopher Julian should turn out a successful general. Accordingly, in November 355, Julian, after being six months at Athens, was summoned to Milan, where he was married to his cousin Helena, invested with rank of *Caesar*, and despatched across the Alps to govern Gaul.

The task before him was truly a formidable one. Constantius, as a part of his operations against Magnentius, had, it is said,¹ actually invited the Franks and Allemanni into Gaul, inciting them to cross the Rhine, bestowing presents upon them, and giving them a grant of all territories which they might conquer from Magnentius. In any case these barbarians had taken firm root in the northern part of Gaul; Cologne, Trèves, Worms, Strassburg, and some forty other flourishing cities had been pillaged by them; while they not only occupied the whole of the districts lying along the Rhine to a distance of about forty miles from the left bank of that river, but in frequent raids in search of plunder devastated the whole of the northern part of Gaul. Constantius felt the absolute necessity of putting an end to this state of things by expelling these barbarians from Gaul. But the latter having taken root there in the manner they had done it was an operation more suited to one with the military qualities of a Trajan than to one with the proclivities of a Marcus Aurelius.

Julian, more conversant with books than with men, and

¹ There is some doubt whether this was not an invention on the part of Julian and his friends in after years.

profoundly ignorant of everything concerning war, felt this as much as any one. Endeavouring to master some of the rudiments of the science of war, and contemplating the undertaking which lay before him, he exclaimed with a sigh, "O Plato, Plato, what a task for a philosopher!" Nevertheless he set himself vigorously, with his usual application, to learn something of the arts of war and government, establishing himself during the winter at Vienne, and taking as his instructor Sallust, an officer of long experience and much wisdom.

The events of the next four years in Gaul show to what a high pitch of strength and efficiency Constantine the Great had brought the Roman army; for though Julian had evidently much tact, courage, and common sense, yet he, an inexperienced youth, totally ignorant of all the details of the art of war, and more than usually unfitted by both temperament and training for such a matter as fighting battles, can have done little more than give the inspiration, leaving the actual operations to be carried out by the military commanders. In the first year's campaign (356) Julian merely occupied the position of the emperor's representative, but in 357 Constantius gave him the supreme command over all the troops in Gaul, sending him at the same time several experienced generals.

The series of successes which the Roman army in Gaul gained during these four years, 356-359, was truly remarkable. For notwithstanding that the Franks and Allemanni were in secure possession of so many strong cities, Julian's forces in the course of four years not only drove them entirely out of Gaul, but made three successful expeditions into the interior of Germany. All of these battles were soldiers' battles, the victories not being due to any special tactics employed, but to the strength and endurance of the troops; this was particularly the case in a hard-fought battle at Strassburg against 35,000 Allemanni in August 357, fought by the Romans after a long, hot march of eight hours, in which battle, after the cavalry, commanded by Julian in person, had been routed, the victory was won by the stubborn endurance of the Roman infantry, who at length defeated the Allemanni with a loss of 6000 men left dead in the field, including their king, besides many more who were drowned in the Rhine. Throughout

these campaigns on the Rhine Julian's great difficulty was with regard to supplies, a difficulty, however, which he overcame by constructing a new fleet, and re-establishing the regular transport of corn from Britain, that country being at this time accustomed regularly to supply corn to the districts of northern Gaul.

These successes in Gaul made Julian's name renowned throughout the empire. Nor was Julian content only with having freed Gaul from the barbarians. Displaying a ceaseless energy, he rebuilt cities which had suffered from their ravages, lightened the people's burdens by attention to the methods of taxation, largely reduced the land-tax, displaced many corrupt officials, and diffused general prosperity throughout Gaul. These actions gave much offence to the band of corrupt ministers who surrounded Constantius, and Ammianus tells us that they persistently poured into the emperor's ear a constant stream of calumnies against Julian. But Constantius remained obstinately deaf to these calumnies, and loyally supported Julian; a course of action on Constantius' part which can only have been due to the influence of the empress Eusebia.

In May 357, while Julian was occupied in his second campaign, Constantius paid a short visit to Rome, where he admired the grandeur of the Capitol, the vastness of the Baths of Titus, Caracalla, Diocletian, and Constantine, the beauty of the many works of art collected therein, the solemn simplicity of the Pantheon, the massive strength of the Colosseum, the marvellous collection of art in the Villa of Hadrian, the architecture of the Temple of Venus and Rome and of Hadrian's mausoleum, and above all the splendour of the Forum of Trajan, which had so impressed his father Constantine. During the month that he stayed in Rome he arranged for the conveyance from Alexandria of the obelisk which his father had brought down the Nile from Thebes, and it was now brought to Rome and set up in the Circus Maximus.

Constantius was called away from Rome owing to incursions of the Suevi in Rhætia and of the Quadi on the Danube, assisted by that part of the Sarmatians who had not become settled within the empire in 334 in the time of Constantine. After a short and successful expedition against the Suevi he

removed his court from Milan to Sirmium, and soon defeated both the Sarmatians and the Quadi. In 358 he followed this up by crossing the Danube, penetrated into their country, and caused both these tribes to submit and sue for peace. Thus by the year 359, (the fourth year of the operations in Gaul) the whole of the northern frontier had been thoroughly pacified. Unfortunately, both for Constantius and Julian, the empress Eusebia, who had been so firm a friend to Julian and so wise an adviser to Constantius in all his actions towards the latter, died in this year 359.

Constantius had now to turn his attention to the East. In 359 the Persian war was renewed by Sapor II, who crossed the Tigris and laid siege to Amida. This city heroically sustained a fierce siege for seventy-three days, but at length on the 6th October was captured.¹ Sapor, however, in gaining the city, though its garrison only numbered 6000 men had lost 30,000 of his best troops, which made him unable to attempt any further operations; therefore, after slaughtering most of the inhabitants, and placing a garrison in the captured city, he retired again to his own dominions.

The fall of Amida, and the preparations that Sapor was making to renew the war in the spring, made Constantius rightly feel that the forces on the Tigris must be increased. Thereupon the band of ignoble ministers who had long been inimical to Julian, and had from the first opposed his elevation to the rank of *Caesar*, saw their opportunity, and insinuating that the fame of Julian was tending to make him dangerous to the throne, persuaded Constantius that the best course was to disarm him, and to obtain the necessary increase to the army in the east by ordering the flower of Julian's troops from Gaul to the Persian frontier.²

Accordingly in January 360, while Julian was at his winter

¹ Ammianus Marcellinus was himself one of the besieged, and has given a graphic account of this heroic defence of Amida.

² Julian here felt severely the loss of the assistance of the empress Eusebia. This band of ministers, whom Ammianus calls "the buffoons of the palace," added satire to their other arguments, calling Julian "a loquacious Greek," "a soldier who had studied war in the academies of Athens," "a hairy savage," and "an ape invested with the purple" (Ammianus Marcellinus, xvii, 11).

quarters in the city which he called his "beloved Lutetia" (Paris),¹ there arrived a tribune bearing an order that four entire legions, the best in the army of Gaul, together with 300 picked men from each of the remaining legions, should set out at once for the Persian frontier. But upon Julian's regretfully publishing this distasteful order to the troops they resolved to decline to obey it, and to raise Julian himself to the throne. When the above force was assembled at Paris, ready to depart for the east, the troops at midnight surrounded the place of the *Caesar*, and regardless of the serious consequences pronounced the irrevocable words, "Julian Augustus."² In vain did Julian repeatedly refuse the honour; the troops assured him that "if he wished to live, he must consent to reign"; whereupon Julian acquiesced. Nevertheless he wished to save the empire from civil war, as well as to preserve his own character from a charge of ingratitude and treachery. He therefore made the troops promise that if Constantius consented to divide the empire they would remain satisfied; he then wrote to Constantius informing him of what had taken place, signing himself still as *Caesar*, but respectfully requesting a division of the empire and confirmation of his title as *Augustus*.

Constantius when these proposals reached him was at Caesarea, on his way from Sirmium to the eastern frontier. He had to decide whether he should march forthwith against Julian, or against the Persians. Following the principle by which he was uniformly guided, he decided that the need of the empire must have precedence over his personal quarrel, and proceeded on his journey to Edessa, after despatching a peremptory letter to Julian, bidding him resign the rank which mutinous troops had conferred upon him. This letter

¹ About this time Julian's favourite city began to be called "Lutetia Parisiorum." Previously confined to the island in the Seine, the city under Julian spread over the ground on the southern bank of the river, possessing Baths, an amphitheatre, an imperial palace, and many fine houses, and was practically founded by him.

² The greater part of the palace in which this event took place still remains, including its fine central hall; it is now called the Palais des Thermes, and forms part of the Cluny Museum. This palace was built by Julian himself about the year 358, as his residence when in Paris. It is the most ancient building in Paris.

merely aroused to a still greater degree the enthusiasm of the troops in Gaul for Julian. The latter again wrote endeavouring to come to some understanding with his cousin, but though letters continued to pass between them throughout the summer of 360 there was no real chance of a settlement. Julian meanwhile, to keep his troops from inaction, conducted a three months' expedition against the tribes on the lower Rhine, after which he retired into winter quarters at Vienne, where during the winter his wife Helena died.

While these negotiations had been taking place, Sapor in the spring of 360 had again taken the field, but he only succeeded in capturing two unimportant towns, Singara and Bezabde, the latter situated on a sandy island in the Tigris. Constantius, by this time forty-three, arrived on the Tigris soon afterwards, but he was unsuccessful in his attempts to recover Bezabde, and was compelled by the rainy season to retire to Antioch for the winter, where, early in the year 361, he married his young third wife, Faustina.

In the spring of 361 Julian was convinced that there was no alternative but civil war, and also that his only chance lay in taking the initiative. Keeping his plans secret, he assembled his army at Basle, under a feint of intended operations against the Allemanni, and in July suddenly threw off the mask and made a rapid dash for Illyricum, his ultimate objective being the Pass of Succi, in the mountains to the west of Thrace, through which pass the main road from Constantinople to the West ran.¹ His plan was bold and original. He divided his army into three portions, which he ordered to march by different routes and to unite in the neighbourhood of Sirmium; one body (under Jovinus) he directed to march through northern Italy; the second body (under Nevitta) was to make its way through the Rætian Alps; the third body, a picked force of 3000 men, Julian commanded himself, and with them plunged into the Black Forest, and for many days was lost to the world. After overcoming countless difficulties in its passage through an utterly unknown country, crossing mountains, traversing morasses, swimming

¹ The great main road to the West ran from Constantinople, through Hadrianople, Philippopolis, the Succi Pass, Sardica, Naissus, Sirmium, Siscia, Aquileia, Verona, to Milan, about 1360 miles (see Map C).

rivers, and enduring many hardships, the force under Julian's personal command at length emerged east of Regina Castra, and seizing the fleet maintained on the Danube, sailed down that river 700 miles in eleven days, and disembarked at Bononia in the vicinity of Sirmium. The latter city being summoned at night to open its gates to "the Emperor" did so, discovering too late its mistake, and Julian had gained the capital of Illyricum while Constantius at Edessa supposed him to be still on the Rhine. Julian's plan has been admired owing to its originality and its success; but had he been opposed by an emperor having military ability a watch would have been kept on his movements, the separated portions of his army would have been taken in detail and in turn destroyed, and not one of his three bands would have reached Sirmium.

Julian only remained a few days at Sirmium, and then, being joined by the other two portions of his army, he marched on towards Thrace, gained possession of the Succi Pass (about 395 miles from Sirmium),¹ and leaving Nevitta to hold it, retired himself to Naissus, where he remained during October and part of November, awaiting events. During this halt at Naissus Julian showed the worst side of his character. Having now thrown off the mask which he had so long worn, he poured forth addresses and manifestoes to city after city of the empire, announcing himself in grandiloquent language as a restorer of the ancient worship, and justifying his action in assuming the purple. But he need not have added to these manifestoes scurrilous lampoons and scandalous calumnies in the worst possible taste vilifying Constantius, to whose favour he had owed all his advancement. This side of Julian's character had hitherto been hidden; it was however from this time forth constantly demonstrated. Meanwhile he began to feel himself in a dangerous position, for the troops at Sirmium, Aquileia, and other places in his rear were making demonstrations in favour of Constantius, and Julian had even to send Jovinus back to seize and hold Aquileia.

During this summer of 361 Constantius had had a difficult task. Moving in the spring from Antioch to Edessa, as the

¹ For distances by the main road from Gaul in the West to Mesopotamia in the East, see Appendix IX.

most central position from whence to watch the whole frontier and be in readiness to concentrate his troops on whatever part of it should be attacked by Sapor, but at the same time greatly disturbed in mind by the correspondence with Julian, the demands put forward by the latter, and the news from time to time received from Gaul, Constantius showed a fine spirit. True to the guiding principle of his life, though feeling that his safety demanded his forthwith marching for the West to deal with his rebellious cousin, he would not withdraw troops from the defence of Rome's territory while it was threatened by a powerful enemy, and abandon the cities of Mesopotamia to a similar fate to that which had befallen Amida two years before, even to secure the safety of his own throne. He remained, therefore, week after week watching for Sapor's expected attack, and week after week growing more and more anxious regarding the events occurring in Gaul.¹

But Sapor's plans had been upset. Arriving on the Tigris for the invasion of the Roman territory, the auspices (consulted by him according to custom) positively forbade the crossing of that river; whereupon Sapor, after hovering about the bank of the Tigris for some time, retreated again to Ctesiphon. Just when Constantius learned of Sapor's retreat he received the alarming intelligence of Julian's having suddenly appeared at Sirmium, captured that city, and taken possession of the Succi Pass. Constantius, always dilatory in war, did not act as promptly as his father would have done; nevertheless, being now relieved from the Persian menace, he assembled his army at Hierapolis,² harangued the troops, and was received by them with enthusiasm, after which he gave the order to march for Thrace, proceeded himself to Antioch to settle his young wife there and arrange for the government of the eastern provinces, and then followed his army. He was however thrown into the greatest disturbance of mind by Julian's formidable attack upon his throne, a

¹ One item in the news which reached him was the noble conduct of the brave and faithful Prefect of Gaul, Nebridius, who in the midst of the excited troops clamouring for Julian as emperor, raised his solitary voice for Constantius, remaining faithful to the latter even though his hand was struck off by a sword and his life in such danger that he was only saved by Julian throwing his purple robe over him.

² Halfway between Carrhae and Antioch.

feeling which was daily still further increased by the scandalous calumnies upon his character poured forth by the latter from Naissus, and though he endeavoured to conceal his mental distress by speaking of the expedition against Julian as a hunting party, all this preyed seriously upon him. On arrival at Tarsus he caught a slight fever, and this, combined with the agitation of mind he was suffering, a day or two later caused his death.¹ He died at Mopsuene, twelve miles west of Tarsus, on the 3rd November, 361, at the age of forty-four. Constantius to the last had done his best for the empire, for by his death at that moment it was saved from civil war.

Throughout his life it was a cause of much grief to Constantius that he had no children, which he viewed as a divine punishment for his share, small or great, in the massacre of his relatives in 337. He left a young widow, Faustina, who shortly after his death gave birth to a daughter, Constantia Postuma.

The reign of Constantius has been treated by historians too much from the religious point of view put forward by the ecclesiastical writers of the time. Although religious matters absorbed almost entire attention during Constantius' eleven years' reign, owing to his lending himself to become a tool in the hands of the Arian party for the suppression of the Catholic faith, it must not be supposed that the prosperity of the empire was affected by the religious contest. That contest affected individual Bishops grievously, while it was also in every way harmful to the Church and to the cause of Christianity, bringing the Church into contempt, and making many turn in disgust from a religion whose nominal adherents could act in such a manner as the Arians did towards their persecuted opponents. But this did not affect the prosperity of the empire or the general standard of civilization, which continued at the high level to which they had been raised by Constantine the Great. The higher standard of civilization and public

¹ Gibbon and other writers say that Constantius' illness was perhaps also due to the fatigues of the journey. But Constantius inherited in a marked degree the strong constitution and exceptional ability to endure hardships which was a characteristic of his family, and was also in the prime of life.

morality to which the empire had now become accustomed made it impossible for even a Constantius to act as a weak emperor under similar domination would have acted 100 years before ;¹ thus showing how radical a change had been wrought by the adoption of Christianity and by the legislative measures which had flowed therefrom.

The four generations of the house of Constantius Chlorus, from whatever point we may regard them and however much weight we may give to defects and shortcomings, must be held to have been truly a remarkable family for those times. They occupied the imperial throne for fifty years, and we have but to compare them with the emperors of the previous fifty years to recognize how great is the contrast which they present ; while it was owing to the initiative given by this family that the 4th century so notably surpassed all previous centuries. Constantius Chlorus, the wise, upright, and temperate ruler over a quarter of the empire ; Constantine the Great, the unequalled commander in war and far-sighted administrator in peace ; Constantius, the holder of a solemn trust, conscientiously endeavouring to carry out that trust faithfully, even however mistaken in his religious views ; and lastly, Julian, the brilliant and original genius who during the short time he was emperor became the cynosure of all eyes, together furnish a record such as no other family which had occupied the throne could match. The change wrought by this family affected the whole century, and consisted not only in the introduction of their high ideal of duty as emperors, an ideal copied by their successors, but also in their making customary an altered moral tone in the imperial family, a tone which is in marked contrast to that of all the other families who during three centuries had held the imperial throne. This cannot have been entirely due to Christianity, for the founder of the family, Constantius Chlorus, was a Pagan, and yet to him was undoubtedly due a large share of the characteristics displayed by his descendants.

¹ For instance, as even an emperor like Valerian acted just a hundred years earlier when he fell under the domination of the Magian priesthood (Chap. X, pp. 325-326).

JULIAN

361 — 363

On the death of Constantius Julian was universally hailed as emperor. He forthwith advanced to Constantinople, which city he entered on the 11th December; and for the rest of his short life he became the central point upon which the attention of all men was exclusively fixed, the historians of the time being apparently unable to regard anything else but Julian and his singular deeds. He began his reign by an act of unpardonable cruelty in putting to death various partisans of Constantius, and above all, Ursulus, the imperial treasurer in Gaul, who had greatly assisted Julian when *Caesar*, and whose only fault was that he was loyal to Constantius and obnoxious to the troops.

The distinguishing feature of Julian's short reign is his strenuous effort to re-establish the Pagan religion, to which he turned all his attention. He is known in history as "Julian the Apostate," but this name seems scarcely a fair one. The Christians naturally looked upon his action with horror and indignation, and Christian writers throughout all ages have cast unlimited abuse upon his name, and given him the designation by which he is always known. But a historian must be fair, and justice to Julian seems to require that his conduct in this matter should be looked at in another light. It is true no doubt that he was brought up nominally as a Christian, but he was strongly attracted to the Greek philosophies from his earliest years, and as soon as he was of an age to think out such matters for himself he secretly adopted the ancient religion, and from the moment that at the age of twenty he was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries he enthusiastically consecrated his life to the service of the ancient gods of Greece, though for ten years after that event he was obliged to keep this to himself, and outwardly to conform to Christianity. To call such a man an apostate does not seem fair; he was in reality a Pagan from the beginning.

Julian's Paganism was of the ancient Greek, rather than the Roman, type. He fasted on particular days in honour of Mercury, Pan, Isis, or Hecate, and his friend Libanius

declares that these fasts prepared him for being honoured by familiar visits from the celestial powers, that he lived perpetually in converse with them, and that from this frequent and familiar intercourse with the gods he was able to distinguish the voice of Minerva from that of Jupiter, and Hercules from Apollo.

But more remarkable than his religious views was his power of work. As an author, a general, a ruler, a magistrate, and a high priest he appeared able to get through as much work in each of these capacities in a day as would have taken any other man a week. He tired out relays of ministers and secretaries, and then while they reposed devoted himself to study. The *Misopôgôn*, the *Caesars*,¹ his elaborate work against the Christian religion, and several of his orations, were all written during the nights of the two winters that he spent at Constantinople and Antioch.² Looking at the books that he wrote, at the numerous and varied labours he undertook for the restoration of the Pagan religion, and at the fact that for many months he was engaged on a campaign in Persia, it seems almost impossible to realize that he accomplished all this in a reign of less than a year and a half.³

Julian⁴ on becoming emperor at the age of thirty-one forthwith set himself vigorously to carry out that which was the passion of his life, and which he intended to be the chief aim of his government, the restoration of the ancient religion, but with certain additions and modifications, to make

¹ The *Caesars* is a satirical fable, in execrable taste, in which Julian sought to bespatter with abuse his uncle Constantine and the Christian religion, and to exaggerate the virtues of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and other Pagan emperors in comparison. Regarding the *Misopôgôn*, see p. 482.

² The *Misopôgôn*, the pamphlet on the *Caesars*; and more than 800 of Julian's letters are still extant.

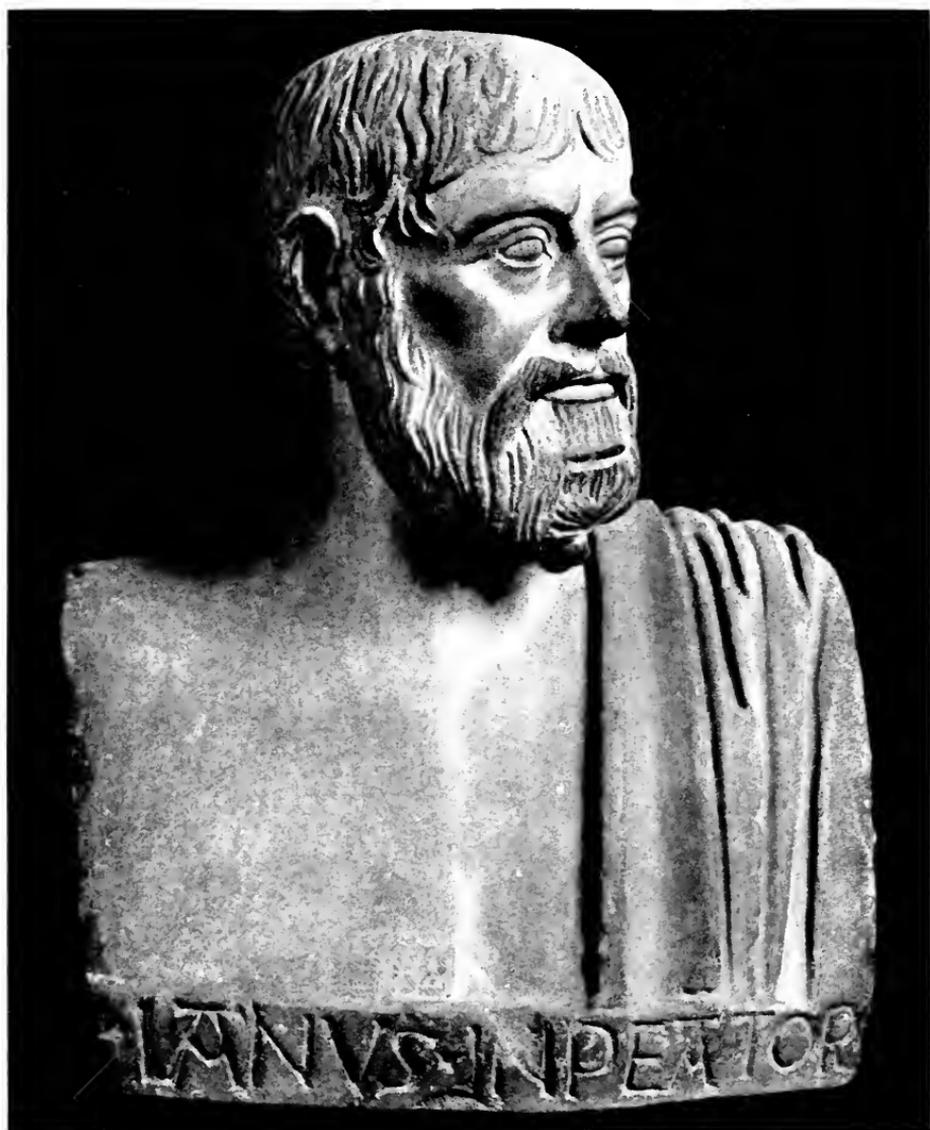
³ During the winter at Constantinople Julian founded the great library, the *Basilike*. Among its treasures is mentioned a complete copy of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* written in gold letters upon the intestines, 120 feet long, of a serpent.

⁴ Plate LVI. Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome. This portrait-bust of Julian is the last likeness which we possess of any Roman emperor, except the statue of Heraclius in the 7th century.

it a stronger rival to Christianity. The religion which Julian tried to force upon the empire was a mosaic of philosophy, ancient Paganism, and Mithraism, moulded together to compose, as he thought, a religion which would be more formidable to Christianity than the old Paganism pure and simple. At the very outset Julian's conduct supplied a plain demonstration of the superior level to which the Roman Empire had been raised. For we are told that Julian was "too enlightened," notwithstanding all his deep hatred of Christianity, to enter upon one of the old persecutions of Christians; thus showing the change which had come over the empire.

Instead, therefore, of issuing any edict of persecution, Julian adopted other measures which he anticipated would be no less effectual. Withdrawing all State support from the Christian religion, he caused the Pagan temples to be reopened, re-endowed them, celebrated the worship of the gods with great splendour, sent magnificent presents to the chief places of devotion in the empire, and allotted money for the repair and decoration of ancient temples which had fallen into decay. He offered copious rewards to Christians who would return to the ancient religion, including even pardon to criminals condemned to death. Erasing the monogram of Christ from the military standards, he interwove into these the symbols of Paganism, so that the troops in saluting the emperor should seem to offer worship to the gods. He wrote at great length against Christianity, ridiculing it with biting satire, and harassing its adherents with legal prosecutions. He refused to call Christians by that name, considering it too great an honour, and substituted the less honourable one of "Galilacans," describing them as a sect of fanatics. He expelled all Christian teachers from the schools, and dismissed all Christian attendants from his service, all Christian soldiers from the bodyguard, and most of the Christian civil governors. And though Julian himself would not openly persecute, the Pagan governors whom he appointed were guilty of much cruel tyranny towards Christians, even so far as torturing some to death.

Cordially hating and despising all Christians, Julian reserved a special hatred for Athanasius, whom he spoke of as "that criminal Athanasius," writing to the governor of Egypt that



JULIAN.

BROGI.

Portrait-bust in the Capitol museum, Rome.

The last portrait-bust of any of the emperors that has been found. He wears a beard to mark the fact that he is not a Christian.

“ he must be persecuted.”¹ In December 361, a little more than a month after Julian became emperor, while Athanasius was still in banishment, a severe riot occurred at Alexandria. In that city, upon Athanasius being banished by Constantius, an obscure person of vile character named George of Cappadocia, who had been a meat contractor and had embraced Arianism, had been installed by Constantius in the see of Athanasius. The indignant people had expelled him, but the civil and military authorities of the city had after a violent struggle reinstated him, thereby enabling him to gratify his revenge upon the people. In consequence of his crimes towards the latter Julian on becoming emperor ordered him to be imprisoned; whereupon the populace broke open the prison and tore George of Cappadocia in pieces.² Two months after this tumult Athanasius returned to his see, welcomed by the acclamations of the people; whereupon Julian wrote to him a most insulting letter, saying that he was surprised that a repeatedly condemned criminal like himself should have presumed to usurp the see of Alexandria without his permission, and Athanasius had once again to fly from Alexandria to a place of refuge in the desert.

But all Julian's efforts to revive Paganism fell perfectly flat. Though only fifty years had elapsed since the Edict of Milan, and only forty years since Constantine's final edict on the subject in 323 (an interval not longer than the pause between the persecution of Septimius Severus and that of Decius)³ the temples remained empty notwithstanding the splendid ceremonials organized, few except criminals accepted the offered bribes, and Julian had himself at length to acknowledge that Paganism was practically dead. The condition to which it had fallen in the eyes of the people is illustrated by an episode related by Julian himself. It took place at that

¹ It is possible that Julian had heard of the speech in which Athanasius summed up the whole matter of the attempt to revive Paganism in four words, “It will soon pass.”

² This is the person who Gibbon sneeringly declared had been made by the English their patron saint. It is evident that Gibbon was unaware of the now well-known church of St. George at Thessalonica, which had been built by Constantine more than a generation earlier to the memory of the real St. George. (See Chap. XIII, p. 432.)

³ Chap. X, p. 319.

celebrated Temple of Apollo in the Grove of Daphne, near Antioch, which had been the most renowned place of Pagan worship in the East.¹ Julian while at Antioch proceeded to this temple on the day of a great festival to honour the worship of Apollo by the presence of the emperor and his court. But instead of the crowds of worshippers and the splendid ceremonial which he had hoped to find there, he found, he says, only one poor old priest, with no better sacrifice than a single goose, which the priest had himself provided.

The failure of all Julian's efforts to revive Paganism is scarcely to be accounted for on the grounds to which it is generally attributed. Ecclesiastical writers have accepted the failure as due to the whole population having become Christians. Undoubtedly if in the present day a similar attempt were made the whole proceeding would be laughed to scorn. But that it should have been so at a time when many were still living who had themselves been Pagans argues a greater change than is to be accounted for merely by a general adoption of Christianity. For in that age, as in every other age, only a minority of the population can have been governed by religious convictions, especially when the inducements to comply with the emperor's wishes were so great. So that we must look for a more general cause. And this is to be found, not in religious convictions which can only have influenced a portion of the population, but in the superior degree of enlightenment to which the whole population had by this time advanced. This made a return to Paganism seem to the people almost like a return to barbarism.

Another extraordinary enterprise which Julian undertook with a view to oppose Christianity was his attempt to restore the Jews to Palestine and rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem; the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the Jews being looked upon then, as now, as evidence of the truth of Christianity, which evidence Julian accordingly set himself to destroy. He commissioned his friend Alypius of Antioch to rebuild the Temple, and summoned the Jews from all parts of the empire to return to Jerusalem and assist in the work. The Jews responded to this invitation with the utmost enthusiasm, and flocked to Jerusalem in crowds from all the

¹ Chap. III, p. 116.

provinces of the empire. Vast quantities of materials were collected, and numbers of skilled workmen provided; at the inauguration ceremony the wealthiest Jewish men and women proudly took part in the work, wielding spades and pickaxes of gold and silver; everything was combined to make the emperor's attempt a success. Nevertheless it failed completely, and in the most strange manner. What actually happened cannot be stated with certainty, but in addition to an earthquake which destroyed some of the buildings, a whirlwind which scattered the materials, and lightning which killed the workmen, Ammianus Marcellinus, a contemporary and a Pagan, says:—"Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged with vigour and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire, breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time inaccessible to the scorched and half-burnt workmen; and the fire continuing in this manner, obstinately and resolutely bent, as it would seem, on driving them away, the undertaking was abandoned."¹ Whatever took place the fact is certain that something which was unusual, and which could not be coped with by all the power of the emperor, occurred, and forced him after many efforts to abandon the attempt.

In addition to his desire to revive Paganism, Julian was also full of ambition to rival the deeds of Alexander the Great and crush Persia. He would show that whereas Constantius had been for years feebly contending against Persia, he would overthrow that empire in a single campaign. Bent on this project, he left Constantinople in the spring of 362 with a large army to invade Persia; but not reaching Antioch until July he was persuaded, since the rainy season would soon begin, to allow the army to rest there, and to enter on his invasion of Persia in the following spring. He remained at Antioch for the winter, and that city being the head-quarters of the Christian Church he found there ample opportunities for demonstrating his detestation of Christianity. The Christians in Antioch (the "Crown of the East" as Ammianus

¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii, 1. Ammianus was not, however, an eye-witness, though he was living at the time, and apparently knew Alypius.

calls it) had an equal detestation for an emperor who, not content with seeking in every way to crush their religion, poured biting contempt upon it. At the same time the Pagan community, gay and pleasure-loving, felt wrath against an emperor who though a Pagan was a Puritan in morals, never entered a theatre, and preached to them a reform of Paganism instead of reviving its pageants and voluptuous delights. The result was that at night the streets of the city resounded with insolent songs deriding the laws, the religion, the conduct, and even the *beard* of the emperor, whose great predecessor Constantine had been clean-shaven. Julian retorted by composing a bitter satire upon the effeminate manners of the inhabitants of Antioch, under the title of "the Enemy of the Beard." This was nailed up at the gate of the palace, and the *Misopôgôn* remains to bear witness to the wit, the hatred, and the undignified behaviour of the emperor Julian.

On the 5th March, 363, Julian, having had the whole winter to perfect his military arrangements, set out from Antioch for the invasion of Persia.¹ His army was about 65,000 strong, was accompanied by a fleet of 1100 ships² on the Euphrates, conveying supplies, and is stated to have been the finest and best-equipped army that any emperor had ever led against Persia. But it lacked one thing, a knowledge of the art of war on the part of the commander. Marching from Antioch through Berœa (the modern Aleppo) and Hierapolis, Julian crossed the Euphrates, and advanced to Carrhae. There he made the same mistake that he had done when advancing from Gaul to gain Illyricum, though he may on this occasion have been forced into this course owing to difficulties in regard to supplies. In any case he did not this time enjoy the same good fortune. He divided his army in two portions, sending 30,000 men under his relative Procopius to proceed viâ Nisibis across the Tigris to Corduene, and thence down the left bank of that river towards Ctesiphon, while he himself with the remaining 35,000 men followed the line of the Euphrates. The two portions of the army were to unite in the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon, which they were then to attack. The plan depended in great measure on the assistance of the king of Armenia. The route allotted to Procopius led near the

¹ See Map C.

² Including fifty war-ships.

borders of Armenia, and Julian hoped that the king of Armenia would detach a large force to join that of Procopius. But Armenia was a Christian country, the oldest in the world,¹ and the king of Armenia had no intention of assisting such an enemy of that religion as Julian. He therefore sent some troops to join Procopius as a blind, but caused them after a time to desert, while he persistently threw obstacles in the way of Procopius which effectually delayed his march.

The portion of the army under Julian's own command was at first successful. Proceeding from Carrhae southwards viâ Callicinum to the Euphrates, Julian reached Circesium, the frontier of the Roman dominions, about a month after leaving Antioch. From thence, still following the Euphrates, and advancing over ground which had been traversed by Cyrus 763 years before, Julian took in succession Anatha, Perisabor, and Maiozamalcha, and turning along the course of the Naharmalcha (the canal uniting the waters of the Euphrates with those of the Tigris) for some distance, halted and cleared out the disused canal of Trajan, by which means he brought his fleet into the Tigris above, instead of below, the city of Ctesiphon. He then by a night-attack captured the left bank of the Tigris, fighting a battle which lasted twelve hours with part of the Persian forces, who were defeated, and fled in confusion into the city.

But Julian having now reached Ctesiphon, looked in vain for any sign of the approach of the rest of the army under Procopius and the expected contingent from Armenia; while Ctesiphon, with its immense fortifications, surrounded by the waters of the Tigris and impassable morasses, and occupied by a force as numerous as his own, was quite impregnable, and too large even to be besieged by such a force as Julian commanded. For some days he remained irresolute, and then summoned a council of war, at which his generals told him, what was self-evident, that Ctesiphon could not be besieged by an army of only 35,000 men. Nor could he advance up the Tigris to meet Procopius, as that river was not navigable for his fleet (carrying his supplies) for any long distance. So that unless he was willing to retire again by the way he had come, and to abandon his long cherished scheme of an invasion of

¹ Chap. X, p. 344.

Persia, his fleet must be sacrificed.¹ Yet he dared not remain indefinitely outside Ctesiphon, lest he should be caught in that position by Sapor, who was preparing to advance from the centre of Persia to resist this invasion, and a battle with whom must have formed part of Julian's calculations from the time when he first decided on an invasion of Persia. Throughout the campaign in fact Julian's entire want of any real knowledge of the military art, and his unceasing personal bravery are equally apparent.

Dreams of emulating Alexander the Great, and (leaving Ctesiphon ignored behind him) of marching on an extended career of conquest, fighting Sapor perhaps in the historic plains of Arbela, and penetrating even to India, mingled in Julian's mind with ideas of drawing the Persians to quit their impregnable walls, and inducing them to fight in the open by an advance into the interior of the country. Accordingly, after waiting for some days longer hoping unavailingly for the arrival of Procopius, Julian, to the consternation of his troops, set fire to the whole of his fine fleet, destroyed all his supplies except sufficient for twenty days (the country into which he was about to advance being rich and highly cultivated), and about the 1st June, leaving Ctesiphon behind him, set out eastwards into a perfectly unknown country.

Meanwhile Sapor II (called in Persia "The Great King") had not been idle. On learning of Julian's advance down the Euphrates he had despatched orders far and wide throughout his empire, even to the satraps of his most distant provinces on the borders of India and Scythia, gathering together the whole army of Persia. By degrees he had assembled an immense host, including light cavalry, heavy mailed cavalry, archers, a great train of elephants, countless numbers of foot soldiers, and all the most distinguished nobles of his empire, and at length, accompanied by his own chosen bodyguard, the *Immortals* (numbering 10,000 men), set out to crush the Roman army and prevent any from surviving to recross the Tigris. No record exists of the total number of this vast host, but by the most moderate computation it must have out-

¹ He could not send his fleet back up the Euphrates, as to propel the boats upstream against the current would have withdrawn a large number of men from his force, and he could not spare a single man.

numbered Julian's army by at least ten to one. Sapor had also issued orders to the inhabitants of the highly cultivated lands of Assyria that if the Romans approached they were to destroy their crops, drive off their cattle, and take refuge in the fortified towns.

For some days the Roman army advanced through a rich and fertile country without experiencing any difficulties, or seeing any enemy, except here and there a few mounted men who merely watched from a distance and seldom ventured on even a skirmish with the advanced guards. But as the army penetrated further the inhabitants everywhere drove off their cattle, set fire to their crops, and turned the land into a burning desert, and Julian was soon reduced to the supplies he carried with him. False guides also led the army out of its proper route, and into by-ways which led nowhere, and at length Julian, finding his supplies rapidly diminishing, was compelled on the 16th June reluctantly to give the orders for a retreat back to the Tigris.

No sooner, however, did the army begin, on the 17th June, to march back towards the west than behind it to the east clouds of dust were seen in the distance, which the Romans hoped were merely caused by the approach of some friendly Arabs. At evening the army halted, fortified their camp as usual for the night, and at dawn found themselves surrounded by the Persian army, fresh portions of which kept coming up. Then followed a retreat memorable in the history of the Roman army. Sapor's clouds of the active Persian light cavalry enveloped the Romans in front, rear, and on both flanks; his heavy mailed cavalry from time to time conducted charges upon the columns on their march; his archers sent showers of arrows into their closed up ranks; and his formidable train of elephants, each carrying a small turret in which were five or six javelin-men, moved like miniature castles about the battle-field. But Julian's army possessed something more powerful than all these things, viz. the noble endurance and splendid discipline of the Roman legions, who had many times seen battles won solely by their qualities in this respect, and never demonstrated those qualities for which they had long been renowned more conspicuously than they did on this occasion. A better example of the power possessed by such a body of

infantry was never shown than was now given by these Roman legions, before whom, ere the retreat ended, mailed cavalry, trains of elephants, and overwhelming numbers, were all alike destined to have to acknowledge a power greater on the field of battle than was possessed by all Sapor's imposing array.

Julian's troops, exhausted by a heat more intense than any to which they were accustomed, half-famishing from the scarcity of supplies, and surrounded by a swarm of active enemies who attacked them both by day and night, steadily beat off the powerful attacks of the Persian army, for eleven days fighting their way back step by step towards the Tigris. Julian was ubiquitous, now rushing back to assist the sorely-assailed rear-guard, now galloping forward to direct the advanced-guard, and encouraging all by his presence and his undaunted bravery. At last on the evening of the tenth day as they approached their camp he was mortally wounded by a javelin from one of the enemy's elephant turrets. He was carried into a tent, manifestly dying, but even in his last moments he continued to encourage those who stood in grief around him,¹ addressing an oration to them in which he urged them not to weep for one who in a few moments would be united with the stars—those stars to whose whispered thoughts he had listened as a boy, and which now looked down upon him in his last moments. He had seen during the last six months of his life that his hope of reviving Paganism had failed, and that not even all his efforts could resuscitate that religion. And whether the dying speech which has been recorded of him, "O Galilæan, thou hast conquered," was or was not actually spoken by him, it is certain that in his mind he acknowledged the fact, and even if he did not say these words, the report that he did so must have originated in the general attitude of his mind as known to those about him. He died at midnight on the day he was wounded, at the age of thirty-two (26th June, 363).²

¹ One of those who stood there was the veteran general Sallust, who had been Julian's instructor in things military at Vienne, when Julian first arrived in Gaul seven years before. Valentinian, soon afterwards himself to be emperor, was also present.

² With the death of Julian the house of Constantius Chlorus came to an end.

JOVIAN

363—364

Upon Julian's death the principal officers of the army hastily collected in the darkness of the night, and first elected the veteran general Sallust to the imperial throne, but upon his declining it on the score of his age, they elected Jovian, the captain of Julian's bodyguard, and son of the brave general Varronianus, to be emperor. Though Julian was greatly beloved by his army, how little they sympathised with his religious views is shown by the fact that the officer whom they elected to succeed him was a Christian. This election having been hurriedly made during the night, as soon as it was dawn the army continued its march, carrying with it the body of Julian, embalmed according to his own directions. The force was attacked with redoubled fury by the Persians, who had quickly learnt of the death of Julian, and were elated at it; but the Roman army again and again repulsed them, and after marching and fighting throughout a long summer's day of great heat, arrived in the evening at Sumera, on the Tigris. Thence, still attacked by the Persians, the army marched in four days to Dura, higher up the left bank of the Tigris; and there Sapor offered terms of peace.

The terms offered were better than in the circumstances the Romans might have expected. The army was in a desperate position; nearly a quarter of the whole force had perished; the survivors were surrounded by the Persians in overwhelming numbers; the supplies were exhausted; the fleet had been destroyed; and even if boats could be obtained, any attempt to cross the Tigris while attacked by the Persians meant annihilation. It shows how admirable was the discipline and efficiency of the Roman troops that even when the force was in this desperate plight Sapor did not venture to drive it to extremities. Though when starting upon the campaign with his great host he had cherished dreams of expelling the Romans entirely from Asia, he did not now demand even the cession of Mesopotamia. Jovian gave up four of the five districts beyond the Tigris which had been taken from Persia by Diocletian, and agreed to surrender

Nisibis (which for generations had formed the stronghold of the Romans on the eastern frontier), and to accept in exchange Amida, captured by Sapor four years before, removing the population of Nisibis to Amida. There was great tribulation over the surrender of Nisibis, and Jovian has been severely denounced by historians, both past and present, for relinquishing it. But it has been overlooked that Sapor was in a position to dictate his own terms, and that he was determined to have the city from which he had three times been repulsed, and which had cost him so much in both money and men in his attempts to take it.¹ It was not Jovian, but Julian, who lost Nisibis. Moreover although at the time a great outcry was raised over the surrender of Nisibis, it seems doubtful whether Amida, together with Dara (the fortress afterwards built a few miles west of Nisibis), did not give the Romans a stronger position.

Historians (whether carried away by the word retreat, or governed by the outcries of contemporary writers, who in all ages give vent to these sort of strictures upon an army on such occasions) have one and all, from Gibbon to the present day, written of this retreat of the Roman army from Persia as a disastrous defeat showing how the Romans had declined in military qualities, and as an affair reflecting the greatest dishonour upon the Roman arms. So far from being so, this retreat from Persia in June 363 is one of the finest things that army ever did.² Attacked continuously for fifteen successive days by overwhelming numbers both on their march by day and in their bivouacks by night, opposed by the most formidable army of that age (the highly trained and splendidly equipped army of Persia), exhausted by the unaccustomed heat of Persia in June, suffering heavy losses day after day, having to endure the depression always induced among troops by the mere fact of retreating, cut off from the

¹ Page 469.

² It has not been realized that a retreat is not necessarily a dishonour. One has only to mention as an instance the retreat to Corunna under Sir John Moore in the Peninsular War, one of the most glorious deeds of the British army. And this retreat from Persia was finer than Corunna, by reason of the greater masses of the enemy, and the greater strain on the troops.

hope of reaching safety in their own territory by an impassable river the means of crossing which had been destroyed, half famished, and losing their commander during the retreat, this Roman army not only refused to be beaten, or to be cowed by the dismal conditions in which it was placed, but also in the end attained a result in which all the honour remained on its side instead of on that of its opponents. Evidently the most admirable discipline was maintained, or the force would have been annihilated ; and that discipline was maintained, not merely for one day of battle, but for fifteen successive days. We know also how difficult an operation it is even in our times both to fight when on the march and protect the baggage and supplies while driving back a superior force which surrounds the army on all sides ; it may be imagined therefore how infinitely more difficult such an operation was when all had to be done by hand-to-hand fighting. Nothing but the most splendid discipline could have achieved such a result. Had Julian's troops once broken their ranks under the pressure of the mass of enemies opposed to them, and become panic-stricken (as men under such conditions are certain to do unless thoroughly disciplined), not a man of the whole force would have survived to reach the Tigris.¹ Morning by morning these Roman legions, notwithstanding the losses suffered during the night attacks made by the Persians, closed up their ranks, and again marched forwards, steadily beating back the fierce attacks made upon their columns, and, as we know by what happened afterwards, inflicting the severest losses upon their opponents. Heavily overmatched as it was, and fighting under the most disadvantageous conditions, this Roman army of Julian's repulsed every attack, saved itself from the annihilation to be expected, never lost its baggage, resolutely forced its way to its objective the Tigris, and produced such an effect upon the enemy that in the end *it was he, and not they, who made overtures for peace.*

And when we turn to examine how this surprising result came about we discover that it was because in those fifteen days of arduous fighting Sapor had lost nearly all his most faithful nobles, a very large proportion of his bravest troops,

¹ The political result would have been that Sapor would have taken Mesopotamia, and perhaps much more of Rome's eastern dominions.

the greater part of his cherished bodyguard *the Immortals*, and the whole of his highly-prized train of battle elephants,¹ that he, cast down at these great losses, upon the army reaching Dura sent an embassy to Jovian with proposals for peace, and was ready to accept far lighter terms than could have been expected. That is no defeat. On the contrary it is a result in which all the honour remained on the side of the Roman army; and this their opponents, the Persian army, must have felt, who with everything in their favour had failed to destroy Julian's army, as Sapor had sworn to do when a month earlier he had started upon the campaign. The Roman army had been brought into the false position in which it was entangled in Persia through the bad generalship of Julian, but in extricating itself therefrom it covered itself with glory. It is not when all goes well, but when all is most gloomy and defeat and disaster appear imminent, that discipline shines out. Therefore it is in a retreat that the quality of the troops can best be seen. And never was any retreat a more severe test than this one; and never did any army show a finer example under the test.²

¹ An elephant being, unlike a horse, a naturally timid animal, becomes panic-stricken in a battle, and in that state is a formidable danger to the troops on its own side. Only highly-trained elephants which have been gradually accustomed to warfare can therefore be used in a battle; which accounts for Sapor prizing his battle elephants so highly, and being so cast down at their loss.

² In estimating the courage, discipline, training, or other qualities of an army or body of troops in a particular epoch or episode in history the writings of contemporary authorities are of little value, except to give information as to the circumstances under which the troops fought. The contemporary writer may have been ignorant of war, or inspired by bias, or not present on the occasion. Nor even if conversant with war, unbiased, and present on the occasion will it suffice for the purpose. No man, even if present, can give an account of a battle, still less of a campaign, sufficiently reliable for this purpose; his account will be vivid regarding the incidents which took place in his vicinity, vague or inaccurate regarding other, perhaps much more important, portions of the action which he did not see; and it is a well-known fact that two officers, both present in a battle, will give diametrically opposite accounts of it. The only sound guide as to the efficiency, courage, discipline, and training of an army at a particular epoch, or of the troops who took part in a particular episode, is to look, not at what contemporary writers may have said on the subject, but at *what that army or those troops accomplished*.

This splendid example of what discipline can do is a lesson for all time. And it is one which should be taken to heart by all would-be army reformers. To get together large numbers of men and imagine that by teaching them certain military exercises you have created an army is a mischievous delusion tending to national disaster. To teach a man to shoot is very necessary; but far more necessary is it to teach him to obey, and to trust his comrades also to obey. And until this is learnt (and it takes much longer than to learn to shoot or to ride) an army, though it may look imposing enough upon a parade-ground, is of no use for the operations of war.

The terms noted having been agreed to by Jovian, the army crossed the Tigris in boats supplied by Sapor, and marched 200 miles through an almost desert country to Nisibis, being joined by the belated force under Procopius about half way at Thilsaphata. Upon arrival at Nisibis Jovian surrendered that city to the officer deputed by Sapor to receive charge of it, and arranged for the removal of its indignant inhabitants to Amida;¹ after which Jovian proceeded to Antioch, while the army slowly marched in fifteen days to Tarsus, led by Procopius, and conveying with it the body of Julian.² But it was strange, as on this funeral march the army carried the body of the emperor who had been so great a foe to Christianity, to see again displayed at the head of the legions the standard of the Cross, the *Labarum* of Constantine. On reaching Tarsus Julian's body was buried there; and over his grave by the bank of the Cydnus, in the "no mean city" which had been the home of the Apostle St. Paul, was erected a stately tomb to the memory of the emperor who had striven so hard, and with such whole-hearted devotion,

¹ Many openly expressed the hope that Jovian, now that the danger was past and the army once more at Nisibis, would evade the agreement to surrender that city. But Jovian was too honourable to do this, and Nisibis was surrendered. Amida was situated to the north of Nisibis, on the upper waters of the Tigris.

² Everything about Julian is original. One would have expected that with his strong views as to reviving the past he would have ordered his body to be burnt and his ashes placed either in the mausoleum of Hadrian at Rome or in some temple in Greece; yet he orders his body to be embalmed and buried.

to restore the ancient religion, and had so pathetically and signally failed.

Jovian on becoming emperor at once annulled all Julian's measures for the suppression of Christianity, and matters in regard to religion returned to their former state, Jovian at the same time issuing an edict of toleration laying down that any of his subjects who wished to practise the Pagan religion were to have perfect freedom to do so unmolested.

Jovian had a special admiration for Athanasius, and the latter, now seventy years old, issuing from his retreat upon Julian's death, at the emperor's invitation visited him at Antioch before proceeding once more to occupy his see of Alexandria. After paying the emperor a short visit, Athanasius returned to Alexandria, from whence he continued for ten years longer to guide with undiminished vigour the whole policy of the Catholic Church, the brave and noble-minded Pope of Alexandria, who had fought so long in defence of the Catholic faith, being acknowledged throughout Christendom as the leading Bishop of the Church during the rest of his life.

Jovian only reigned eight months. After remaining a short time at Antioch he set out for Constantinople, but at Dadastana, a small town between Ancyra and Nicæa, after partaking of a heavy supper he retired to rest, and was found next morning dead in his bed, either owing to indigestion or from the fumes of a charcoal fire. Neither then nor since has it been considered likely that his death was due to poison (17th Feb. 364).

CHAPTER XV

REIGNS OF

VALENTINIAN I AND GRATIAN

VALENTINIAN I

364 — 375

UPON Jovian's death at Dadastana the chief civil and military officers of the empire assembled at Nicæa, and after some discussion elected as emperor Valentinian,¹ the capable commander of the Roman armies in Gaul and Britain, at this time forty-four years old. His father, Count Gratian, a native of Pannonia, had risen by the most honourable qualities from a humble station to be the commander of the legions in Britain, after which he had retired to Cibalæ, in Pannonia, where Valentinian was born.² In choosing Valentinian as emperor the officers made a good selection. Tall, handsome, with steel-blue eyes and a majestic presence, every inch a soldier, a renowned commander in war, a successful administrator, immaculate in his private life, and a born king of men, Valentinian was in every way fitted to be a worthy successor of Constantine the Great. During Julian's reign he had risked disgrace by his outspoken contempt for the Pagan religion, but Julian overlooked this on account of Valentinian's great value as a general, and the latter during the recent trying test of the campaign in Persia, in which he took part, had added still further to his reputation.

As emperor Valentinian I proved eminently the kind of man that the empire at that time needed. Strong in character,

¹ As previously noted, portrait-busts fail us after that of Julian.

² Regarding the countries to which the various emperors from Trajan to Theodosius belonged, see Appendix X.

resolute, untiring in his labours for the good of the empire, a general so careful and sagacious in war that it seemed impossible to defeat him, an implacable enemy, a stern and inflexible lover of justice, and a sworn foe to all effeminacy and profligacy, Valentinian I was terrible to the foreign enemies of Rome, and scarcely less terrible within the empire to the luxurious and depraved inhabitants of the towns, whose vices he detested and punished with a rod of iron. On the other hand he knew not mercy, promptly consigning to death (though not to torture) all who transgressed, and liable to burst into paroxysms of rage against those who oppressed others, or whom he detected in manœuvres to deceive him. The unmanly inhabitants of the towns hated as much as they feared him, and subsequently Pagan writers traduced his character as much as possible, by enlarging upon his cruelty; ¹ but all who admired true manliness, and had the welfare of the empire at heart, honoured him for qualities which taught the enemies of Rome that not a foot of Roman soil was to be encroached upon, or an inhabitant of Roman territory harmed, without prompt and severe punishment ensuing, and taught the Romans themselves that none who were not just, upright, and clean in life might expect any mercy at his hands. And so great blessings in a ruler are strength and justice that Valentinian was coupled with Trajan as one of the best emperors that Rome ever possessed.

Valentinian governed the empire with vigour and ability for twelve years, and his reign was marked by a considerable strengthening of the empire, both externally and internally. He only made one mistake, and that was made out of a feeling of compassion for a brother whose weakness appealed to his own strong character. His brother Valens, eight years younger than Valentinian, was in every way his opposite, being wanting in abilities and contemptible in character. Nevertheless Valentinian seems to have felt it a sort of family duty to advance him to at all events a nominal equality with himself

¹ They declared, whether truly or not it is impossible to say, that he kept in the imperial palace at Trèves two pet bears, whom he called "Golden Darling" and "Innocence," and employed them as his executioners. But the story does not seem borne out by the rest of Valentinian's character.

(and this even though they were of different religious beliefs, Valentinian being a Catholic and Valens an Arian), and one month after becoming emperor he associated Valens with himself, giving him most of the eastern portion of the empire while he himself kept the two western prefectures and also Pannonia and Illyricum. But Valens, feeling his own incapacity, leant upon him for everything, and, says Ammianus Marcellinus, "attended to the wishes of his brother as if he had been his orderly," and Valentinian really governed the whole empire.

This exaltation of Valens was, however, a fatal error. Insignificant and mean in appearance, "bandy-legged, with a slight cast in his eye, and somewhat pot-bellied," a compound of cruelty and timidity, without any particle of ability, small-minded, avaricious, suspicious, and excessively tenacious of his dignity, Valens represented, both outwardly and inwardly, littleness of soul. This was a type of man which, though common enough in modern days, was seldom seen in a high position in those times, when such men if accident forced them into eminence soon perished. But Valens, unfortunately, had an opportunity of furnishing an example of how terribly disastrous to others such men can be if placed in power. No doubt Valentinian thought that the defects in Valens would not matter, since he could provide the qualities which Valens so palpably lacked. But when Valentinian was dead, and the small-souled and incapable Valens was left to act on his own responsibility, he soon showed what damage a man of such a character can do.

The portion of the empire which Valentinian had made his own special charge extended from Scotland to Greece, and from the Rhine and Danube to the desert of Africa. Valentinian fixed his capital at Milan,¹ the capital of the second prefecture, though he resided almost more often at Trèves (Augusta Trevirorum), the capital of the first prefecture, situated on the right bank of the Moselle. Trèves at that time rivalled Rome as a centre of civilized and cultured life. And while there remains little in existence of the Milan of those days,²

¹ Valens lived chiefly at Antioch.

² Except the church of St. Ambrose, which was the cathedral of Milan up to the 15th century.

in the case of Trèves it is the reverse, there being still left at that city finer Roman remains than at any other city north of the Alps.¹ The amphitheatre in which Constantine made the captive Frank kings fight with Libyan lions ; ² the Basilica built by Valentinian I, and forming the hall of justice of the emperors ; ³ the massive walls of the imperial Palace, in which Constantine the Great, Constantine II, Valentinian I, and Gratian all for long periods resided, the latter for almost the whole eight years of his reign ; ⁴ another Basilica, begun by Valentinian I, and finished by his son Gratian ; ⁵ and above all the huge Porta Nigra, a fortress gateway of three stories, 118 ft. long, 70 ft. wide, and 95 ft. high,⁶ built by Valentinian I, are all still in existence, together with remains of the ancient Baths, and of the Roman bridge of eight arches over the Moselle.

Valens, suspicious and incapable, soon contrived to provoke a serious revolt against himself. Julian's relative Procopius,

¹ It has been called by Professor Freeman "Rome beyond the Alps."

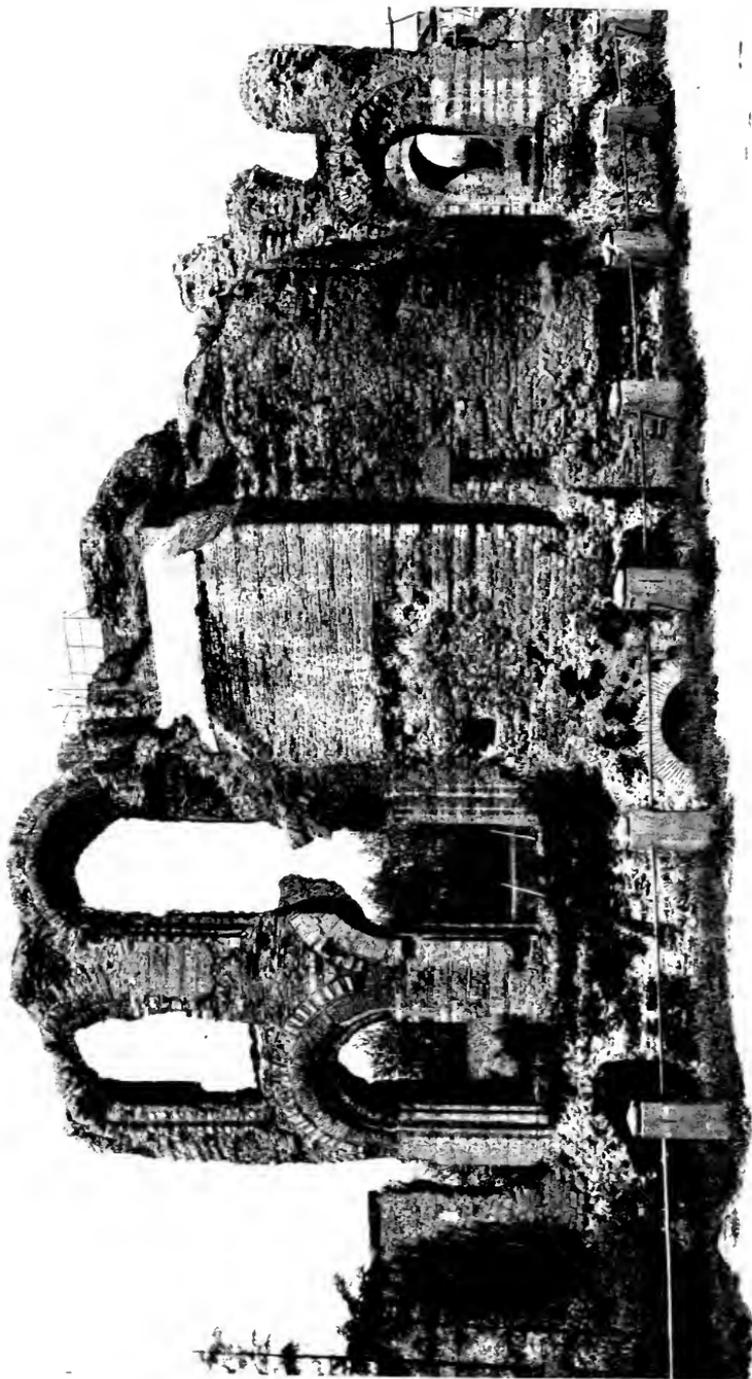
² Chap. XII, p. 371. This amphitheatre, which has a diameter of 76 yards, though much overgrown with vegetation, is still to be seen, including the dens for wild beasts and the chambers for the gladiators. It accommodated 8000 persons, being thus about half the size of that at Verona.

³ This Basilica is 225 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 98 feet high. It is now a Protestant Church.

⁴ Plate LVII. The Palace is now a picturesque group of ruins, part of which is 65 feet high. The ruins contain a hall with three apses, formerly lighted by two rows of arched windows, and heated by channels for hot air which are still to be seen. On either side of this hall were two towers, one of which remains and commands a fine view of the city.

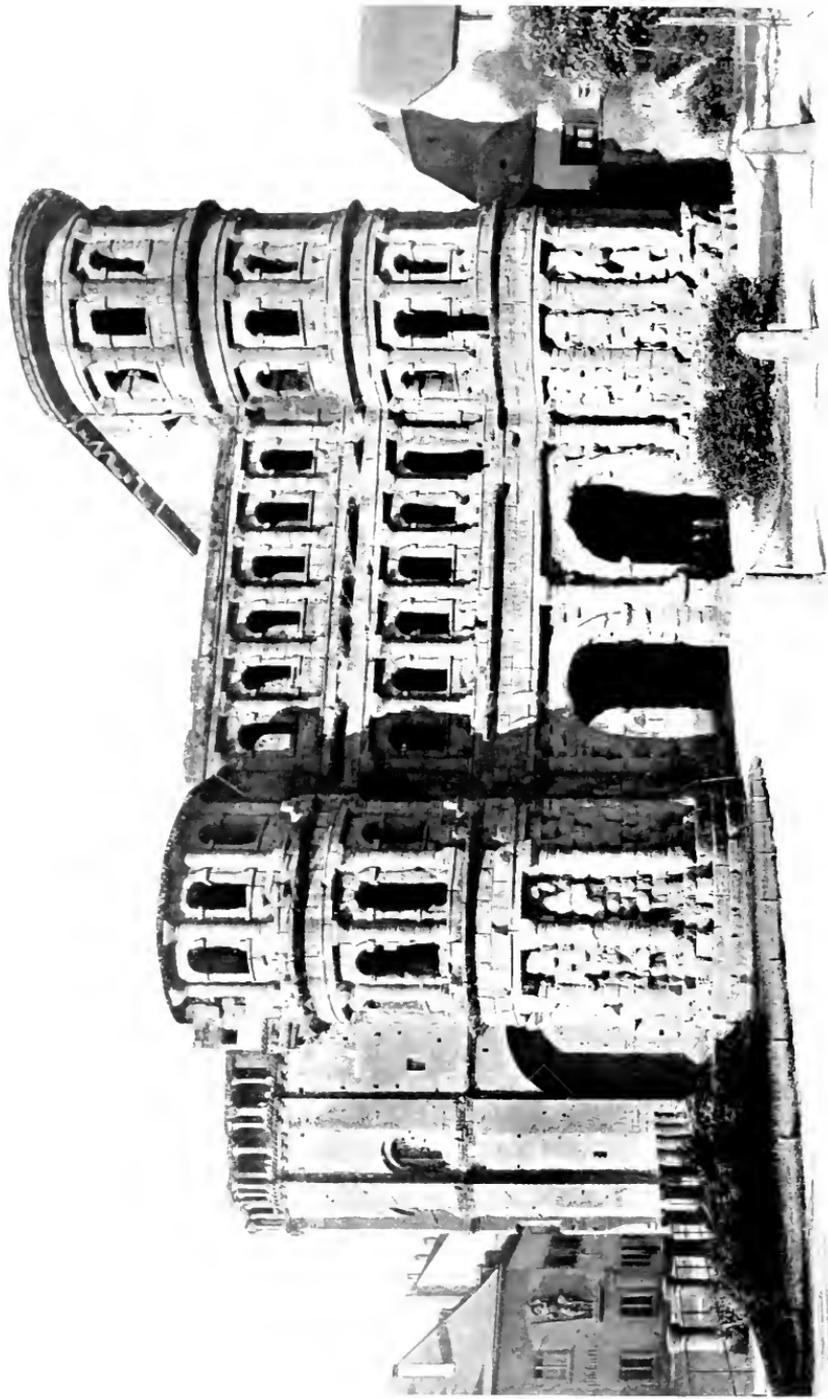
⁵ This Basilica is now the Roman Catholic cathedral. It was restored after being partly destroyed by the Franks in the 6th century, and again partly destroyed by the Normans in the 11th century. The work of the different periods is clearly distinguishable on the exterior ; that of Valentinian's period consists of red sandstone.

⁶ Plate LVIII. The Porta Nigra, with its towers, is in thoroughly good preservation. It has two gateways, 23 feet in height. It is built of huge blocks of lias sandstone (now blackened with age), fastened with iron bands, and without any mortar. It is on the line of the ancient walls, a portion of which on one side of the gate has been uncovered. Its Roman name was Porta Martis (the gate of Mars) ; its modern name of Porta Nigra (the black gate) is owing to its dark appearance as the result of age.



RUINS OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE AT TRÈVES.
The palace occupied by Constantine the Great, Valentinian I, and Gratian.





[FRUIT.

THE PORTA NIGRA AT TRIER.

Built by Valentinian I. Its proper name is the Gate of Mars, its present name being due to the blackening of its stones by age.

after burying the body of Julian at Tarsus, had retired to his estates in Cappadocia. Valens, convinced that one related to Julian must be dangerous, tried to seize him. Procopius escaped, remained for some months in hiding in the Crimea, and, upon Valens departing from Constantinople for Syria, proceeded to that city, raised the standard of revolt, and obtaining many adherents soon gained the whole of Bithynia. After a time, however, the veteran Sallust marched against him, and Procopius, deserted by his followers, was eventually betrayed, and put to death (May 366). His death was followed by a long series of executions of those considered to be implicated, whereby Valens, timid and cruel, sought to assure his own safety. During the years 367-369, Valens took part in the campaign against the Goths ;¹ after which he retired to Antioch, occupying himself chiefly in ejecting Catholic bishops from their sees, and in conducting a crusade against all who practised the arts of magic, of which arts he had a most superstitious terror.

Valentinian's reputation in war, and the high state of efficiency to which he had brought the portion of the army commanded by him, had been the chief reason for his being elected emperor. And during his twelve years' reign the Roman army was called upon to demonstrate the high quality of its training in four different theatres of war,—on the Rhine, in Britain, on the Danube, and in Africa.

The first of these campaigns took place on the Rhine, Valentinian having been only a year on the throne when he was forced to chastise the Allemanni. The latter in 365 crossed the Rhine and made a serious raid into Gaul, retreating again with captives and spoil before Valentinian, who was at Milan, could get across the Alps.² The emperor proceeded to Paris, reaching there in October, and made preparations to inflict a severe punishment upon the Allemanni as soon as the winter was over. During this journey to Paris Valentinian gave an example of the spirit in which he ruled the empire. While on this journey he received news of the revolt of Procopius against his brother Valens. "The report gave no details—

¹ Page 501.

² It was after this experience that Valentinian made Trèves his principal residence.

he did not know whether Valens were alive or dead. But with that strong sense of imperial duty which dignifies the characters of the 4th century emperors, he subordinated utterly his personal interest to the common weal. 'Procopius is but my brother's enemy and my own,' he repeated to himself; 'the Allemanni are the foes of the Roman world.'¹ He therefore proceeded to Paris, and prepared for a campaign against these foes. Early in 366 he despatched a large army from Paris against the Allemanni under the general Jovinus. Three successive victories followed, one at Scarpona, one on the Moselle, and a third at Châlons-sur-Marne; in the last, at which Valentinian was himself present, the Allemanni were completely crushed for the time, losing 6000 killed, including their king.

It is in the reign of Valentinian I that we first hear prominently of the Saxons.² This numerous tribe, who were originally situated in a small territory near the mouth of the Elbe, being by nature a nautical race left land attacks upon Gaul to the Franks and the Allemanni, and made the coasts of Gaul their particular sphere of action. Their boats drawing little water they could ascend as much as a hundred miles up the larger rivers, so that the area of their raids was very wide. And during the reign of Valentinian their depredations, hitherto confined to the coasts of Gaul, began to be extended also to the coasts of Britain. Valentinian curbed these operations of the Saxons by appointing an officer, with a strong fleet, called the "Count of the Saxon Shore," stationed at Augustodorum on the coast of Armorica (Brittany), who was charged with protecting the coasts on both sides of the British Channel from the raids of the Saxons. This considerably curtailed the operations of the latter, as they feared to venture up the rivers lest they should be caught in a trap by the Count of the Saxon Shore seizing the mouth of the river. At the same time a system of coast defence was organized for Britain, consisting of about nine forts (each garrisoned by about 500 men), placed along the coast of Britain from the Wash to the Isle of Wight.

¹ *The Cambridge Medieval History*, I, 222.

² The only former occasion in which we hear of the Saxon pirates is when they assisted Carausius to usurp power in Britain in the reign of Diocletian, see Chap. XI, p. 348.

The province of Britain, since the time when in 307 Constantine had been proclaimed emperor at York, had made an immense advance. In no province of the empire had the great change brought about during the 4th century by the more enlightened legislation inaugurated by Constantine produced such great effects as in Britain. Undisturbed by any of the contests which other provinces had witnessed (Italy and Illyricum during the first fourteen years of the century, Gaul and Illyricum in the time of the emperor Constantius), and experiencing, first the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the State, and then one after another so many ameliorations in the laws and in the general character of the administration, Britain had in fifty years advanced by leaps and bounds in civilization and prosperity. Not only did the number of towns in Britain greatly increase at this period, but also in those already existing new and more important public buildings were everywhere erected. At the same time the establishment of Christianity caused many churches to be built, the remains of many of which have in recent years been found in different parts of England, all dating from the 4th century.

A still greater proof, however, of the prosperity of Britain at this time is afforded by the numerous country-houses of noblemen, surrounded by large estates, many of these country-houses being as large and luxurious as those in Gaul.¹ The remains of many of these, including their beautiful tessellated pavements, have been found, and all show evidences of being erected at this period. As wealthy men do not quit the towns and take up their residence in the country except in districts which are thoroughly settled, these country-houses afford evidence of the high state of civilization at this time reached by Britain. They specially abound in Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Lincolnshire, showing that these localities had been more cleared of forest than other counties. Besides these country-houses the remains of many farms belonging to this period have also been found. And as towns and country residences spread over the country, so also at the same time did the solidly constructed Roman

¹ Regarding mosaic picture of a nobleman's country-house in the 4th century, see Vol. II, Chap. XVIII, p. 82.

roads; those roads which in after centuries remained the only undestroyed works of Roman times in Britain. The thorough Romanization of the indigenous population of Britain which had by this time taken place (to a far greater degree than was until recently supposed), is shown by the fact that Roman hypocausts and stuccoed walls have been largely found even in humble villages and in the houses of the poor.¹ It is also mentioned by Eumenius that in the time of Valentinian I and his son Gratian skilled artisans were more numerous in Britain than even in Gaul, for which reason many were brought from thence to erect public buildings in Gaul, even so far south as Autun. So great also was the prosperity of Britain at this time that during the reigns of Julian, Valentinian I, and Gratian large quantities of corn were regularly exported from that country to feed the troops on the Rhine (see below).

In the year 367 both the northern and southern parts of this prosperous province were thrown into much confusion by an incursion of the Scots and Picts in the north² and a raid of the Saxons upon the coast in the south occurring simultaneously, Fullofaudes, the Roman general in Britain, and Nectaridus, the Count of the Saxon Shore, being both killed. Thereupon Valentinian, who was just recovering from a serious illness, despatched to Britain his best general, Theodosius (belonging to a Roman family settled in Spain), with a large force of troops. Theodosius landed in Kent in the spring of 368, and was completely successful, both in the south and in the north. He first defeated and suppressed the Saxon pirates, and then in a brilliant campaign during the year 369 not only swept the Scots and Picts entirely out of the whole country south of the Wall of Severus, but drove them far to the north, forcing them right back into the northern part of Scotland, and established a new province in the conquered

¹ *The Romanization of Britain*, by Professor F. Haverfield, p. 36. He also mentions how even in the case of the small and remote village of Din Lligwy on the northern coast of Anglesea were found hundreds upon hundreds of fragments of Roman pottery, Roman glass, and Roman coins, showing that even in the humblest villages this thorough Romanization of the people had taken place.

² It is said that the Scots and Picts had managed to pass the Wall of Severus through the treachery of the border militia, the *Areani*,

territory (roughly the southern half of Scotland), this new province being called by him Valentia, which by its name perpetuated the glory of the reign of Valentinian I. After this victory Valentinian re-established the British Mint (which had been closed by Constantine), and gave to London, at which port 800 vessels were employed in the export of corn, the title of Londinium Augusta.¹

The Goths during more than thirty years from the time of their crushing defeat by Constantine the Great in 332² had made no further attempt against the Roman power. During this period their powerful king Hermanric had extended his dominions all over the wide forest-covered region from the Dneister to the Baltic, and was paramount over the greater part of Germany and Scythia. In 366, thinking they saw an opportunity through the incapable character of Valens, 30,000 Goths crossed the Lower Danube and penetrated into Thrace. But, chiefly owing to the skilful way in which the Roman forts were arranged, the Goths soon found themselves unable either to advance or retreat, and eventually the whole of them were forced by hunger to surrender; they were disarmed, and were sent as captives to reside in different cities within the empire. Upon this national misfortune the aged Hermanric in 367 sent the Gothic leader Athanaric with a fresh body of Goths to oppose the Roman army, which under the generals Victor and Arintheus (the commanders respectively of the cavalry and infantry), and animated by the presence of Valens, had crossed the Danube by a bridge of boats, and carried the war into the territory of the Goths. An indecisive contest was waged for the next two years, until at length Athanaric risked a pitched battle, was defeated, and sued for peace.

Meanwhile in 368 the Allemanni made a third incursion into Gaul. Suddenly crossing the Rhine they surprised Moguntiacum (Mainz) while the people were occupied in celebrating a festival, ravaged the town, and carried off a large number of captives. Valentinian determined to inflict a severe vengeance upon the entire nation. He assembled

¹ Coins issued from this Mint have lately been found, stamped with Valentinian's name and that of Londinium Augusta.

² Chap. XIII, p. 429.

a powerful army, crossed the Rhine into their territory, devastated a large number of their villages, and then attacked the Allemanni in the position they had taken up on the almost inaccessible mountain of Solicinium,¹ on one side of the valley of the Neckar. At this battle the behaviour of the Roman legions, particularly in their splendid attack upon the heights on which the Allemanni were posted, and this after a preliminary repulse in which the battle had seemed to be going against the Romans, was especially fine, and showed that the Roman army had lost nothing of its time-honoured courage and endurance. They ascended the mountain on three sides, stormed its summit, and having gained it, drove the Allemanni down the northern slope, where another body of the army intercepted their retreat and inflicted upon them immense slaughter. During the battle Valentinian was nearly drowned in crossing a swamp, while his chamberlain, who followed him carrying the emperor's magnificent gold and jewelled helmet, was drowned and the imperial helmet lost in the swamp. Valentinian's young son Gratian, then nine years old, was present at this battle, though being too young for the actual conflict he was put in a place of safety in the rear. This victory entirely crushed the Allemanni for the rest of Valentinian's reign. After gaining it the emperor was urged to advance further and conquer the whole of Germany; but he wisely refrained, his object not being to add territories to the empire, but to make the frontier thoroughly strong.

Accordingly, having inflicted this crushing defeat upon the Allemanni for daring to ravage a Roman province and carry off captives from a city of the empire, Valentinian, who had a passion for fortress building, in 369 began his great work of frontier defence, which formed one of the most notable features of his reign. Along the whole length of the Rhine frontier, from the borders of Rhætia to the mouth of the Rhine, a distance of about 600 miles, he planted countless fortresses, castles, and towers to strengthen the existing frontier defences; ² while his own engineering and mechanical

¹ In what is now Wurtemberg.

² One of these numerous fortresses built by Valentinian which was specially celebrated stood where the ruined castle of Heidelberg now stands.

skill was largely employed in laying out these works and providing new descriptions of weapons for their armament.¹

But the Rhine frontier did not alone engage Valentinian's attention. It is a far cry from thence to Timgad on the borders of the Sahara ; but we find Valentinian at the same time that he was thus occupied in strengthening the forts on the Rhine carrying out a complete restoration of the great fortress of Timgad, besides erecting other buildings to increase the attractions of that city.² As we stand amidst the remains of any of these Roman defences of the empire we are led to marvel at the power of Rome which could erect barriers of this kind in northern Britain, similar defences in southern Germany, others on the lower course of the Danube, others along the Euphrates and Tigris, and others again on the borders of the great desert of Africa, maintaining over all of them unceasing supervision.

From the mountains of Caledonia to the mouth of the Danube Valentinian had in five years made his name a terror to the northern tribes, and during the rest of his reign was little troubled by them. In 371 an army of 80,000 Burgundians, a tribe inhabiting the banks of the Elbe, and hereditary foes of the Allemanni, appeared on the banks of the Rhine, and demanded certain subsidies which they declared Valentinian had promised them if they would attack the Allemanni. The emperor, however, being too wise to pay money to a formidable armed host, refused the demand, and the wrathful Burgundians, too much afraid of the army and forts of Valentinian to venture on an attack upon the Roman power, and in dread of being assailed by the Allemanni from the rear, after a time were forced to retire.

In North Africa the misgovernment and corruption of the

¹ "The younger Victor mentions the mechanical genius of Valentinian" (Gibbon).

² The great magnificence of the city of Timgad in the 4th century has been disclosed by the excavations there in recent years, which have shown, among other evidences of the splendour of this great city, that it had no less than eleven *Thermae*, or Roman Baths ; whereas Rome itself had no more than seven. See also Vol. II, Appendix XVI, Timgad.

governor, Count Romanus, had for several years been causing the gravest complaints to reach the emperor. At length the latter sent thither two officers of high rank, Jovinus and Palladius, to hold an inquiry; but Romanus by means of bribes successfully prevented this inquiry. A second time they were sent back to Africa by the emperor to make a further examination. But Romanus again managed by deception, threats, and bribes to prevent any adverse report being made to the emperor. Eventually Jovinus fell a victim to the intrigues of Romanus, and was forced to confess that he had lied; whereupon he, with others, by the emperor's order was executed. But the infamous Romanus still escaped, and shortly afterwards by his tyranny drove the Moorish prince, Firmus, into rebellion. Then Valentinian sent thither his faithful and successful general Theodosius, as governor of North Africa in supersession of Romanus, with a small force of veteran soldiers. On examining the papers left behind him by Romanus, Theodosius by chance discovered and brought to light the whole of the intrigues which had been carried on by the latter for eight years. Palladius committed suicide, but Romanus managed to escape. For the next two years (372-374), Theodosius had to conduct an arduous campaign against Firmus, who after first attempting bribery, and then trying to deceive Theodosius by a pretended submission, fled to the mountains of the Atlas range. But Theodosius, with a body of picked troops never exceeding 4000 men, pursued him from place to place with steady perseverance, even though sometimes attacked by forces numbering 20,000 Moors, and at length Firmus, to avoid capture, committed suicide. Having thus put down the rebellion, Theodosius soon brought back the whole province to peace and order (374).

Valentinian's speech to his eldest son Gratian, when in 372, the latter, at thirteen years old,¹ was invested by him at Amiens with the title of *Augustus*, and named as his successor, shows much regarding Valentinian's character, and what view he took of his duty as an emperor. Addressing the young

¹ Some writers place this episode in 367, when Gratian was eight, but Dr. Hodgkin thinks it more probable that it took place in 372, when Gratian was thirteen.

boy before him, in front of the assembled troops, he said, "Thou hast now, my Gratian, received these imperial robes. Now therefore begin to fortify thy soul to receive a share of the burden of an emperor. . . . Prepare to cross with dauntless heart the Danube and the Rhine, even though ice-bound with frost, and to stand firm in the battle; to shed thy blood for the defence of thy subjects; to think nothing too great a labour which tends to the safety or the welfare of the Roman Empire."

During the reigns of Valentinian I and his son Gratian it is specially necessary to bear in mind a point which applies to all the emperors of the period 314-395, and often tends to become obscured. These emperors took a high view of their duty as defenders of the empire. As a result the greater part of their history is occupied with campaigns against the barbarians upon the long line of the northern frontier, campaigns conducted in order that the vast empire behind them as they faced these foes might have peace. And well did these 4th century emperors carry out this ideal, not resting in luxurious ease in Rome or elsewhere as many of their predecessors had done, nor carrying on wars of conquest, but ever employed in personally defending the empire. But while the history of these emperors thus becomes so largely occupied with campaign after campaign, we are apt to imagine that this period of the history of the Roman Empire was taken up entirely with war, and to forget that while war was thus waged upon the frontier with the above object, the vast empire of Rome behind that frontier was enjoying peace and progressing in civilization and prosperity.

Valentinian made Trèves his chief residence rather than Milan because while Milan (the capital of the second prefecture) was protected by the Alps, Trèves (the capital of the first prefecture) was adjacent to the most dangerous part of the frontier, where it was subject to constant and formidable attacks from the Franks and the Allemanni. Valentinian's son Gratian when he became emperor adopted the same course, being seldom at Milan and making Trèves his chief residence, both these emperors considering that the defence of the empire was their chief duty, and that the post of danger was their proper place.

It is a mistake to suppose, as has generally been done, that Valentinian was an emperor of only ordinary abilities.¹ To be so sagacious and clear-sighted a commander as Valentinian I showed himself, and to gain success in war under the conditions which confronted him in most of his campaigns, requires the highest abilities that any man can possess; but his military achievements were not Valentinian's only claim to renown. During his twelve years' reign he did much for the improvement of the administration of the empire and the welfare of the people, thinking "nothing too great a labour" which tended to that object, and never giving himself any relaxation; and the absence of any rebellions throughout so wide an empire (except that produced by Romanus in Africa) sufficiently shows his success and the happiness and contentment of the people under his rule. He reduced taxation, and visited with stringent punishment governors whom he detected in oppressing the people. Displaying a style and spirit of the best kind in his legislation, he carried still further that reform in the laws which Constantine had begun, helping still further to create a more civilized atmosphere. He curtailed the opportunities of the wealthy for escaping punishment by bribery, insisted upon the publicity of all trials, and granted greater facility for appeals. He prohibited with greater severity the exposure of new born infants,² and appointed in every city *Defensors*, freely elected by the people, to be their advocates and supporters in the tribunals, and to bring their grievances to notice. He published regulations to protect and encourage the corn-supply by sea, reduced the contributions in kind levied on the agricultural population, and settled barbarian colonists upon waste lands. He gave attention to the financial affairs

¹ This is owing to two reasons; both to Gibbon, in his systematic desire to disparage all the Christian emperors, having depreciated Valentinian in this manner, and also to the ecclesiastical writers having done the same in consequence of Valentinian's determined neutrality in matters of religion and his refusal to be a religious partisan in the contest between the Arians and the Catholics (see p. 508).

² Valentinian I was the first emperor who made infanticide a capital offence, the Romans having formerly considered that the child was the absolute property of the father, who was at liberty to decide whether it should live or not.

of the empire which had highly satisfactory results, and he enacted that grammar and rhetoric were to be taught in every city in both Greek and Latin. In all these matters he was faithfully followed by his brother Valens; while both the brothers were simple and unostentatious in their private life, and irreproachable in regard to morality. Among other measures for the benefit of the people, Valentinian established in Rome a regular system for public medical assistance, appointing fourteen physicians, one in charge of each of the fourteen quarters of the city. By these and similar measures Valentinian increased in no small degree the prosperity of the empire.¹

Valentinian's character being what it was, it is not surprising that he had a special hatred for anything of the nature of sorcery or magical arts. It was an age in which, not only were such practices very prevalent (especially at Rome and Antioch), but also an epidemic of suspicion regarding them prevailed, while the well-known abhorrence of the emperor for all such practices caused many persons to be put to death² by local governors upon the most absurd and fantastic charges of sorcery, witchcraft, or magic.³ The

¹ Among many indications of the prosperous state in particular of Gaul in Valentinian's reign, there is to be seen near the village of Nennig, in the valley of the Moselle about 20 miles south of Trèves, amidst the remains of a Roman villa of this period, a remarkably fine mosaic pavement, 49 feet long by 33 feet wide (representing a combat of gladiators), which is the best work of that kind known, surpassing in execution even the mosaic of the Athletes in the Lateran museum at Rome.

² As was the case in England when a similar epidemic of suspicion regarding witchcraft and magic at one time seized upon all classes during the 17th century.

³ The daughter of Festinus, the Proconsul of the province of Asia, being ill of a fever, her father called in an old woman to cure her "by singing a soft charm-like song" of which she was fond. The treatment succeeded, but the poor old woman was thereupon put to death as a witch by Festinus. On another occasion a young man in the public Baths was observed to be muttering in turn the seven vowels of the Greek alphabet while at the same time pressing his fingers, first on the marble of the bath, and then on his chest. His real motive was that he imagined this would cure him of a stomach-ache. But he was suspected of practising magic, was accused thereof to Festinus, and put to death.

numerous executions thus occasioned increased Valentinian's reputation for excessive cruelty.

But Valentinian's most honourable characteristic, one which gained him little favour among the ecclesiastical writers of later centuries, was his determined impartiality in matters of religion, he being the first emperor who, himself a Catholic, nevertheless maintained absolute neutrality, refusing to show favour to that party in opposition to the Arians. He not only himself observed perfect neutrality, but he also promulgated laws prohibiting alike Jews, Pagans, Catholics, and Arians from attempting to oppress each other. In this particular his brother Valens did not follow his example, it being apparently impossible for an Arian to be tolerant, and he oppressed the Catholics throughout the East.

The reign of Valentinian I, so important from a military point of view, is scarcely less so in regard to the Christian Church. For it was during this age from the time of Valentinian to that of Theodosius that the constitution of the Christian Church became consolidated, before the great flood came fifty years later which in the West swept all else away, and without which consolidation that Church could scarcely have survived amidst the general wreck.

In that constitution the first fundamental principle which had by this time been thoroughly established was that all Bishops are of equal rank and authority. Thus St. Jerome, writing at this time, says :—"Wherever a Bishop is, whether at Rome or Eugubium,¹ at Constantinople or Rhegium, at Alexandria or Tani, he is of the same worth. Neither the power of riches, nor the humility of poverty, makes a Bishop higher or lower ; all are successors of the Apostles." The sole authority over a Bishop in ecclesiastical matters was a General Council of such Bishops.

Secondly, for administrative convenience, the various dioceses had for some time been grouped together under "Metropolitans" (sometimes called Archbishops), the Metropolitan being the Bishop of the metropolis or chief city of a

¹ He purposely mentions three of the most insignificant places, by way of contrast.

province. The title had long been in use without any special duties being connected with it,¹ but this was now done. In detailing those duties it was carefully laid down that this arrangement was not to be considered as giving any right of interference by the Metropolitan Bishop in the affairs of any other Bishop's diocese, and that the duties of the Metropolitan were confined to presiding in the synods of his province, seeing that the "canons" (laws) passed in such synods were duly promulgated, supervising the consecration of new Bishops, and representing his province in communications with other provinces of the Church. Thus the position of an Archbishop or Metropolitan towards the Bishops of his province was simply that of "Primus inter pares,"² and their independence remained untrammelled.

Subsequently (in the next reign) a further step of the same kind was taken, by grouping the Metropolitans under Patriarchs (or Popes),³ the duties of the latter being in the same way carefully limited so as not to trench upon the principle of the independence of Bishops, to which principle great importance was attached.

Above the whole stood the General Council of Bishops, its authority absolute over all, whether Popes, Metropolitans, or Bishops. Since Bishops were chosen by the people, the constitution of the Church is thus essentially democratic, not autocratic, the Church not being constituted like an army, or even like a Republic (which has a President), but being ruled by an assembly of Bishops all of equal rank and authority.⁴ And upon this equality of Bishops great stress was from the earliest times laid, and through all groupings of dioceses under Archbishops, Metropolitans, or Popes was carefully preserved.

The most important sees at this time were :—Antioch, as the city from which the religion had been spread, and the chief city towards the east ; Alexandria, as the great seat of learning, and the chief city towards the south ; Rome, as the former imperial city ; Constantinople, as the imperial city, or

¹ See Chap. X, p. 329.

² "First among equals."

³ See p. 537.

⁴ Even the presiding Bishop at a General Council was not given a casting vote.

“New Rome” ; Jerusalem, as the mother of all the Churches ; and Milan, as the capital city of the western portion of the empire. The title of Pope¹ had for some time been given by courtesy to the Metropolitans of two of these sees, viz., Antioch and Alexandria, but this was as yet merely an honorary title, and it was not until the next reign that it became a definite title attached to five of these sees on giving them the abovementioned “patriarchal” jurisdiction.

The Arian struggle still continued ; out of the six most important sees, four, Antioch, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Milan² were all held by Arian bishops. The great Athanasius, Pope of Alexandria, after being for a short time again driven into exile by Valens, passed the last four years of his life in peaceful possession of his see, dying in 373. A scarcely less notable Bishop in Valentinian’s reign was Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, the probable author of the “Te Deum.” He was Bishop of Poitiers throughout the troubled years 353–364, and through the Arian influence at the court of Constantius was banished to Phrygia, but on Valentinian’s accession returned to his see. Next to Athanasius he was the greatest theologian and preacher of his time. Jerome calls him “the trumpet of the Western Church against the Arians,” and speaks of his “arrowy Rhone of eloquence.” Hilary died in 368, leaving a widow and a daughter, Abra.³

Still more celebrated at this period was Basil, commonly called Basil the Great, who became Metropolitan of Caesarea, in Cappadocia, in 370. The mantle of Athanasius, as the steadfast upholder of the Catholic faith in the midst of Arian persecution, fell upon him, and when Valens, rigorously persecuting the Catholics throughout the eastern portion of the empire, put Arians into every see, Basil alone among the Catholics maintained his post in spite of threats of torture, banishment, and death, behaving with dauntless courage. At length Valens visited Caesarea to eject him in person, but

¹ Regarding whether it is best to use this word or that of Patriarch, see Preface, p. xii.

² Until 374 (see p. 512).

³ St. Hilary came of an ancient and illustrious family, and his parents were Pagans. He is commemorated in the Prayerbook of the Church of England on the 13th January.

was so overawed by Basil's dignity and courage that he gave way and left him in possession of his see. It is, however, as the founder of monastic orders that Basil is most notable. In a long tour he visited the monastic solitudes of the deserts of Egypt, and from the Nile carried back to Cappadocia the theory of a new monasticism, and instead of the hermit ideal of Egypt instituted the community life, with its encouragement of works of mercy, care of the sick, and education of the young. Basil died in 379.¹

During the reign of Valentinian, as well as during that of his son Gratian, the Bishop of Rome was Damasus, who succeeded Liberius in 366.² The see of Rome had not as yet risen to a position of any importance in the Church. Three things jointly contributed to cause this: first, "the Church of God sojourning at Rome" (to use the expression of St. Clement)³ had not up to this time produced any Bishop of eminence since St. Clement himself; secondly, from the political point of view the see was overshadowed by that of Milan, the capital of the West, and became still more so when in 374 Milan gained as its Bishop the man who became the leading Bishop of his time (see below); and thirdly, Rome was still the abode of a strong Pagan influence. Damasus' secretary was the celebrated Jerome.⁴

In 374 a remarkable election took place at the capital of the western portion of the empire, Milan. At this time the Consul of Liguria (northern Italy) was Ambrosius. His father (of the same name) had held the almost royal position of Praetorian Prefect of Britain, Gaul, and Spain,⁵ under

¹ St. Basil preceded St. Benedict, the founder of monastic orders in the West, by 150 years.

² Damasus died in 384. His tomb is to be seen in the Catacombs at Rome.

³ Chap. V, p. 199.

⁴ St. Jerome subsequently removed to Palestine, where he wrote his great work the Latin version of the Bible, called the *Vulgate*, which became the version used in the West, and of equal authority with the Greek original. It is St. Jerome's principal title to fame. He lived until 420, dying at the age of ninety.

⁵ The position of ruler over the whole of what are now the modern countries of England, France, Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, and Spain, may well be called an almost royal one.

Constantine the Great, Constantine II, and Constans, and Ambrose had been born and brought up in his father's palace at Trèves. Gradually rising like his father in the public service, Ambrose had, at the age of thirty, become, as Consul of Liguria, the ruler over nearly all northern Italy, and with no thought further from his mind than that of entering upon an ecclesiastical career. In 374 Auxentius, Bishop of Milan, an Arian, died. The invariable practice of the Christian Church being that the Bishop of a diocese should be elected by the people, and not be appointed by any superior authority,¹ it necessarily followed, so long as the Arian struggle continued, that every election of a Bishop raised a tumult between the Arians and the Catholics over the choice of a successor; and it was so in this case. Ambrose, the governor of the province, being absent from Milan at the time, proceeded thither to quell this disturbance. He was much liked by the people on account of his justice and his upright character, being also noted for his "golden eloquence"; and while he stood, surrounded by his guards, in the large hall of justice at Milan, endeavouring to pacify the excited people and to persuade the two parties to make peace, the voice of a child was heard in the crowd crying out, "Ambrose for Bishop, Ambrose for Bishop." The people took up the cry, and shouted the same words. The governor refused absolutely to become their Bishop, and resorted to every expedient to quiet the people, and get them to choose someone suited to the office, but to no purpose. At length finding himself unable to produce any result, and beset by an excited crowd wherever he went, he fled from the city. But the people were not to be denied; they followed him, and by force carried him back with them, and he found himself practically compelled to agree to their will. Already a Catholic in belief, he was now baptized, and a week later was consecrated as Bishop of Milan. He became the leading

¹ As long as any of the Apostles lived Bishops had been selected by them, but as soon as the Apostles passed away it became the invariable practice for the Bishop to be elected by the whole body of Christians concerned; and this continued the practice of the Church for many centuries after this time. It is still acknowledged in theory as the only proper method, and certain forms are kept up to preserve a semblance of adherence to the theory.

Bishop of the West during the whole of the next two reigns, and the greatest theologian of his time.¹

During the years 371–374 Valens from his capital at Antioch was chiefly engaged in obstructing the operations which Sapor, king of Persia, was endeavouring to carry out against Armenia, in which object Valens was in the end successful. In the year 374 he was thrown into great trepidation by a report made to him that certain persons (by means of a magic ring, suspended over a consecrated table upon which was a metal dish inscribed with the letters of the alphabet) had spelt out part of the name of his successor; whereupon he became for the time entirely engrossed in searching out and putting to death all who came under his suspicion in the matter, to the almost entire exclusion of all other affairs.²

Valentinian I was married twice. His first wife was Severa, a grand-daughter of Constantine the Great, and the mother of Valentinian's elder son, Gratian, born in the year 359.³ Valentinian's second wife was Justina, the widow of the usurper Magnentius.⁴ She was married to Valentinian about the year 367, when Gratian was eight years old. She was a woman of an excitable disposition, and a strong Arian, and that party received from her on all occasions much assistance. By her Valentinian had three daughters, Justa, Grata, and Galla, and a son, Valentinian, who was four years old at his father's death.

In 375, when Valentinian I was fifty-five, Pannonia, the province in which he was born and brought up, was invaded by the Quadi, who retreated after laying it waste with fire and sword. Valentinian, then at Trèves, was furious that any tribe should dare to ravage a province of the empire, and most of all Pannonia. It is possible that friends, and even relatives, of his own may have been slaughtered or outraged by the Quadi, and in any case the people whom he specially loved had been so. He quickly assembled a large army, marched to Pannonia, and, enraged by the atrocities

¹ St. Ambrose remained Archbishop of Milan until his death in 397.

² See p. 527.

³ It is uncertain in what year Severa died, but probably in 365.

⁴ Chap. XIV, p. 458.

of which he heard from the inhabitants, and by the sight of the devastation wrought by the Quadi, crossed the Danube into the country of the latter, burning for revenge. Overbearing all resistance, he slaughtered the Quadi in all directions, killing their king, and burning and destroying like a consuming fire. It is stated that when after executing this vengeance he repassed the Danube, he did so without having lost a single Roman soldier during the expedition. If so, it is a strong proof of the efficiency of his army.

But Valentinian's vengeance was not yet sated, and intending to carry out a further punishment of the Quadi in the spring, he went into winter quarters at Bregotio, on the Danube.¹ While there, in November, a humble deputation from the Quadi arrived to crave for pardon. They were admitted to the emperor's presence, displaying, with their unsightly figures, their "breastplates of horn sewn on linen jackets, the pieces overlapping like the feathers of a bird," and their crouching attitude, a wonderful contrast to the emperor of the Romans, with his majestic appearance, his tall and well-shaped figure, clad in a steel cuirass, and upon his head a helmet ornamented with gold and jewels.² They made a humble apology for the incursion into Pannonia, declaring it had been a raid carried out by marauders not subject to their control. But their excuse was palpably an unblushing prevarication, exactly the thing which always specially roused the wrath of Valentinian, and on hearing it the memory of all the outrages which had been perpetrated upon the inhabitants of a province which was, naturally, more than all others dear to him, combined with the dishonest nature of the excuse put forward, filled Valentinian with such indignation that he burst into a furious passion, was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and died (17th November, 375). His body was carried to Constantinople, and was there interred in Constantine's great church of the Twelve Apostles, which from this time forth became the regular burial-place of the Roman emperors.

The character of Valentinian is one open as daylight. Never

¹ Bregotio was near the modern city of Presburg, in Hungary.

² Ammianus Marcellinus xvii, 12, 2; xxvii, 10, 11; xxix, 3, 4; and xxx, 9, 6. Ammianus was evidently an eyewitness of this scene as an officer of the Imperial Guards.

from first to last do we find him engaged in any transaction in which he employed artifice, sought to gain his end by "diplomacy," or showed ambiguous conduct. Capable, upright, and resolute, and hating all effeminacy and profligacy, he was, as before remarked, a born king of men. Those whose vices he crushed with an iron hand have abused him, and later historians, perhaps disliking so masterful a character, have underrated him, declaring him an emperor of mediocre abilities who only delighted in war; but the people of his wide empire, who needed protection against the ravages of barbarian foes and against the operations of crafty and oppressive governors, honoured him greatly, and only wished that his iron hand could be ubiquitous. He was a much finer character than the historian Gibbon has represented, and than later historians who have followed the latter's estimate have depicted; while the fact that a century later the Romans when they desired to give the highest praise to Theodoric the Great in having "brought back to Italy the days of happiness," compared him "to Trajan and Valentinian," shows plainly how much below his deserts has been the character that historians have generally given to Valentinian I.

His chief characteristic was an inflexible love of justice; but he knew not how to temper justice with mercy, or possibly seldom had cases before him where the latter quality would have been desirable in the interests of those who looked to him for protection. Any oppression of the people, or attempts at trickery or subterfuge, roused him to the fiercest wrath. Just and straightforward himself, he was easily deceived by those who were otherwise, and unscrupulous governors often contrived thus to elude his vigilance and oppress the people; but when he caught them doing so he made them repent it. As a commander in war he surpassed Theodosius, and was only surpassed by Constantine. The safety of the empire was guarded by his military ability; its welfare was preserved by his untiring attention to its administration; and crushing vengeance fell upon barbarians or others who dared to invade Roman provinces, or to maltreat his subjects. Under such a ruler the people dwelt in security and contentment; and it was no wonder that in after years men named Valentinian I as one of the best of all the long line of Roman emperors.

GRATIAN

375—383

We now come to an emperor upon whom it might have been supposed that historians would have delighted to dwell, on account of his successes in waging war and in making peace, his care for the people, handsome appearance, and ideal character, but regarding whom, on the contrary, they have said so very little that he is probably less generally known than any other emperor.

Gratian, born in 359, the elder son of Valentinian I, and named after the latter's father, was seventeen when he succeeded to the throne. We have seen the principles as to his imperial duty which had been taught him by his father from his earliest years, and to these he faithfully adhered, but to them added other qualities which his father did not possess, and which Gratian must presumably have inherited from his mother Severa. Though so young when he came to the throne he ruled well, at first no doubt chiefly owing to his three excellent advisers,—the old general Merobaudes, a Frank, who was faithful to Gratian throughout his life,¹ Ausonius, formerly his tutor and now his chief minister, and Ambrose, who two years before had been the just and wise Consul of Liguria, and was now the universally revered Archbishop of Milan.

The contemporary writers, both Pagan and Christian, give glowing pictures of Gratian. His manly qualities, ability, handsome appearance, and attractive disposition, caused a brilliant career to be confidently anticipated for this son of Valentinian. The contemporary Pagan writer Themistius calls him "the beautiful boy-emperor," "a fair mind in a fair body," and says that "the rough handsomeness of Valentinian was softened and made lovable in the face of his son."² He praises his justice, his constant efforts to obliterate and make amends for his father's cruelties, and his repayment of

¹ See p. 553.

² Themistius, and to some extent also Ausonius, wrote in the style of flowery panegyric, and therefore their words must of course be taken with certain reservations; but at the same time their statements were felt to be so true that they met with no contradiction.

sums which had been exacted by oppression in previous reigns, and declares that Gratian's "symmetry of soul," and his powers of conciliation, "fought more powerfully for Rome than any number of mailed knights."

The contemporary writer, Ausonius¹ gives Gratian similar praises, and delighting in a play upon words calls him "the gracious, the grateful, the gratitude-inspiring Gratian"; while all writers record his courage, ability, skill in all manly exercises, hatred of dissensions, unselfishness, and purity of life. Rare indeed is it to find such uniform praise of a character in history, later historians having found nothing to controvert these lavish praises bestowed upon Gratian by his contemporaries. But perhaps the strongest evidence of all in favour of Gratian's character is furnished by the historian Gibbon. For the latter, unable after careful search to find any flaw in a character so valuable to the cause of Christianity, adopts the astute course of saying hardly anything about him. Nothing could better prove that there was no flaw to be found.²

It is true that the Pagan writer Ammianus Marcellinus says of Gratian:—"While the youthful down was yet on his cheeks he showed promise of emulating the best of the emperors, if he had not given his mind too much to sport;" and he goes

¹ Gibbon says that Ausonius was a Pagan. There has however been a controversy about this, some writers being of opinion that Ausonius was a Christian. His chief work is the *Mosella*, describing the fertility and happiness of the valley of the Moselle.

² This silence on Gibbon's part is the reason why so little is generally known about the emperor Gratian. The manner in which Gibbon during Gratian's eight years' reign, contrives to talk of anything and everything rather than Gratian, obliterating his notable deeds in war and peace, and the fact that he was ruling over the chief part of the empire, is exceedingly clever. In the little which he does say about him he depicts him as a well-dispositioned, but weak and indolent, youth, leaning upon his colleague Theodosius, and fond of hunting, and endeavours to make out that this latter amusement (which Gibbon tells us in his autobiography that he detests) was the cause of Gratian's downfall, cleverly contriving, not only to obliterate all which shows Gratian to have been the very reverse of weak and indolent (together with the fact that his career was nearly over before any leaning upon Theodosius was possible), but also to drop entirely out of sight the real causes of that downfall, because these were highly honourable to Gratian, and through him to the cause of Christianity (*Decline and Fall*, III, 356-358. Edition 1862).

on to describe how Gratian delighted "to spend whole days in those vast preserves which are called *vivaria*, slaying savage beasts with his multitudinous arrows. And this at a time when even the patient earnestness of a Marcus Aurelius would have been all too little for the sad necessities of the empire."¹ But it must be remembered that Ammianus Marcellinus was a Pagan, and though he is generally more free from bias than other Pagan writers, he had at this time removed to Rome, and was writing in the midst of all that Pagan society at Rome which was most inimical to the Christian emperors, and above all to Gratian in consequence of his particular attitude in regard to religion. In any case it is evident that he is referring to Gratian at an age when the latter was little more than a boy, for not only does he say "while the youthful down was yet on his cheeks," but also Ammianus' History *ends at the death of Valens in 378*, three years after Gratian came to the throne. So that it is plain that his remarks do not refer to the period of Gratian's life after the latter reached manhood; a point which is important in regard to the use which has been made of his words² in accounting for the causes which brought about Gratian's tragic end.

In addition to the qualities which earned for him so many praises from the contemporary writers, Gratian, unlike the other Christian emperors who had preceded him (Constantine, Constantius, Jovian, and Valentinian), showed throughout his life a real sense of religion. When at the age of nineteen he was about to start on his campaign to help his incapable uncle Valens against the Goths he begged Ambrose (whom he greatly loved) to give him "some writing of the Catholic faith by which to strengthen my heart for the battle"; which called

¹ To the Pagan writers Marcus Aurelius was the model emperor, and quoted by them on all occasions. His great crime of the three years' general massacre of Christians,—that crime which moved a John Stuart Mill to call it "the most tragical fact of all history,"—was in their eyes no crime at all, not because they were inimical to Christians, but because to them expediency sufficiently excused such an act. And later on we find Ammianus Marcellinus himself exemplifying this Pagan attitude of mind, and in regard to a most dastardly massacre of Gothic boy hostages, committed in his own lifetime, seeing no harm in it because it was in his eyes justified by expediency (see p. 526).

² Page 550.

forth Ambrose's celebrated treatise *De Fide*, which was written for Gratian on this occasion. And at the end of the latter's life the chief cause of the unpopularity which eventually brought about his ruin and death has been held by a high authority¹ to have been his "uncompromising Christianity."

Gratian was married, shortly before his father's death, to Constantia Postuma, the daughter of Constantius and Faustina.² At the desire of the army he associated with himself his four-year-old half-brother, Valentinian II, and with much unselfishness Gratian gave to his little half-brother the nominal rule of Italy and North Africa, guided by his mother Justina, suggesting that his step-mother and her son should reside at the capital, Milan, while he took up his residence at Trèves, where a constant watch to resist the northern tribes was required. Nor, though he was a firm Catholic and his step-mother an exceedingly bitter Arian, do we ever hear of any failure on Gratian's part to live in concord with his step-mother and his half-brother, notwithstanding that the position was one which in any other hands would have been certain to provoke quarrels.

There was however another direction in which Gratian's abilities were powerless to prevent ill consequences. While he ruled the larger and more important part of the empire which his father had undertaken as his special charge,³ including the defence of the whole line of the frontier from the mouth of the Rhine to Singidunum (Belgrade) on the Danube, he was heavily handicapped in having in the eastern portion of the empire a colleague who was in all points the very opposite of himself, his uncle Valens, so incapable, and so imbued with petty vanity, jealousy, and general stupidity, that if the whole empire had been searched no more actively harmful a being for such a position could have been found. And these qualities, as soon as Valens no longer had Valentinian to guide him, quickly brought about the most disastrous results, Valens being called upon to meet a situation with which he was totally incompetent to deal.

¹ The late Dr. Hodgkin.

² Chap. XIV, p. 474. Constantia narrowly escaped capture by the Quadi in her journey through Pannonia towards Milan in 375 for this marriage.

³ See p. 495.

For there now began movements in the dark regions of Scythia whose effects extended over the whole of northern Europe, and there were heard the first rumblings of an approaching storm which was to burst, thirty years later, with overwhelming force upon the Roman Empire. For many generations the Vandals, the Alans, the Goths, and other northern races had, in successive waves from Scythia, been moving westwards and southwards, and pressing with ever increasing force upon the long line of the northern frontier of Rome's empire, a barrier which Valentinian had lately made stronger than ever. And now in Gratian's reign we hear for the first time of a fresh and still larger wave of this kind, and a new and more terrible name, the Huns. This great nomadic race, coming in vast hordes from the wilds of Central Asia, of the Tartar type, fierce, ignorant, with strangely deformed bodies, shrill voices, flat noses, small black eyes, and uncouth gestures, and both hated and feared by the other northern races, by whom they were regarded as half-devils in appearance and character, utterly detestable and terrible, began to press upon the Goths and the other northern races from the rear and to force them upon the Roman frontier.¹ This pressure came upon the Goths first, as the most eastern of the northern races along the line of the frontier; and in 376, about a year after the death of Valentinian, the Visigoths (settled since Aurelian's time in Dacia), being thus hard pressed, and seeing no other resource, sought the protection of the Roman Empire, and implored from Valens permission to be allowed to pass within it and be given some place of settlement. They saw no safety except in placing the broad stream of the Danube between them and these inhuman foes, on whom even the Goths could justly bestow the name of barbarians.

Valens, for the first time thrown upon his own resources, was utterly incapable of dealing with such a situation, and accordingly adopted a course which included every possible disadvantage and carefully excluded every possible advantage. Not having the strength of character to refuse such a request,

¹ The great Hermanric died just about the time that this pressure began. He was murdered by a chief of the Roxolani who had deserted the standard of Hermanric, and whose innocent wife Hermanric in revenge had caused to be torn asunder by wild horses.

he granted it; thereby committing a great strategical error. For since Rome's whole military force was practically massed upon her frontier, this action placed a large body of her most powerful enemies in a position which took that whole line in flank, thus nullifying to a large extent the long line of defences upon the strengthening of which so many emperors had expended so much time and money. The Roman armies guarding it, and facing their enemies towards the north, would, when the time came, find themselves attacked by a portion of their foes from the right rear. Even the numerous strong fortresses built to strengthen the northern frontier by Valentinian were by this action of his stupid brother deprived of much of their value.

Valens having settled upon this ill-advised course, proceeded to carry it out exactly in the manner bound to make it most harmful, by converting the Goths from allies, grateful for protection in their time of need, into bitter and maddened enemies. First he took away all the grace of compliance with their request by attaching to that compliance two of the hardest and most ignominious conditions, requiring that the Goths should deliver up their arms, and should agree that all the boys not old enough for military service should be given up as hostages and dispersed among various distant provinces of the eastern part of the empire. And secondly, without troubling himself at all about the details, he left a matter which, for any remote chance of success, required tactful, and above all *just*, handling, to be carried out by a band of the most detestable officials, headed by Lupicinus and Maximinus, who treated the Goths worse than if they had been prisoners of war. These officials first roused the Goths to fury by atrocious insults to their women and girls, and then by their rapacity and extortions in regard to supplies of food still further maddened them by famine. It would be difficult to find anywhere else so many blunders combined in a single transaction.

The transportation across the Danube of this vast host, with their women and children, wagons and property, took days. Their number was computed by the Roman officers superintending the immigration at 200,000 fighting men, and the whole population at a million. They were allowed to settle in Mœsia. Shortly afterwards another vast host, the

Ostrogoths,¹ appeared upon the Danube, and sought the same protection. They were at first refused, but nevertheless crossed the Danube, and after some discussion they also were allowed to settle in Mœsia. Troubles soon arose. The Goths were a noble race, much more so than any of the other northern nations, and they only required decent treatment to become the firm friends of the Romans. But the shameful ill-treatment to which they were subjected by the Roman officials of Valens continued; a dishonourable massacre of some of the Goths at Marcianople² roused the whole nation to fury; and rising in rebellion they carried fire and sword through Thrace, while an indecisive battle at Ad Salices in the autumn of 377 left them unsubdued. Valens, at Antioch, now felt that the matter had become serious. He wrote to his nephew Gratian asking for his assistance, and in April 378 marched with a large army from Antioch to bring the Goths to submission.

Meanwhile Gratian during the years 376 and 377 had been winning much distinction in Tyrol and on the Rhine, overcoming exceptional difficulties in a campaign in the Black Forest against the Lentienses, whom he had beaten and brought to submission, and showing much personal bravery and aptitude for war by the successful manner in which on several occasions he had led his troops in person. And in May 378 he gained a great victory over the Allemanni. The latter had crossed the Rhine near Strassburg, bent on ravaging the adjacent country. Gratian, who had been just about to start for the east to help his uncle, marched against them, encountered them at Colmar, about thirty miles south of Strassburg, and completely defeated them. The Romans were greatly outnumbered, and the victory is ascribed by the contemporary writers to the splendid training of the Roman

¹ It has recently become the fashion to style the Ostrogoths the East Goths and the Visigoths the West Goths, but it seems preferable for clearness to adhere to the names by which these races have been known for centuries. One scarcely recognizes, e.g. the Visigoths under the name of the West Goths, though that is a correct translation of their name. Moreover when the Goths came to be settled within the empire the Visigoths were settled to the east of the Ostrogoths (see p. 533), so that these new names become all the more undesirable in their tendency to confuse the reader.

² Founded by Trajan, and named by him after his sister Marciana.

legions and to the personal valour of Gratian. The Allemanni long maintained their ground, and were slaughtered in immense numbers, and when at length they gave way were driven into the river, in which many were drowned ; their king was killed, and it is stated that only 5000 out of 70,000 survived to repass the Rhine. Having gained this victory Gratian set out with his army for the east, but on the way turned aside, crossed the Rhine, and traversing the country of the Allemanni and the Lentienses, forced them both to entire submission, thereby securing the peace of Gaul during his absence. He then proceeded on his march to the east.

Valens, reaching Constantinople at the end of May, remained there for some time to gather further reinforcements, and towards the end of June having collected an army of about 50,000 men, proceeded against the Goths, who, under their chief Fritigern, were collected near Bercœa, on the south side of the Balkans. Valens first advanced to the Maritza pass, but hearing that a portion of the enemy had been despatched to intercept his communications with Constantinople, retired again towards Hadrianople, Fritigern at the same time moving towards Nike. Had Valens waited a few days for the arrival of Gratian's army, composed of troops inured to war in various successful campaigns upon the Rhine, and elated by their recent victory over the Allemanni at Colmar, the Romans, instead of the great disaster they now experienced, would almost certainly have inflicted upon the Goths a crushing defeat. And Gratian wrote strongly urging this course upon his uncle. But the news of his brilliant nephew's victory at Colmar was bitterly galling to the small-souled Valens, who accordingly determined to attack the Goths before Gratian could arrive. The Goths had been reinforced by contingents of Alans and Huns, and enormously outnumbered the Roman army, but by a climax of stupidity Valens believed them only to number about 20,000 men, when they were probably more like 200,000. Two days before the battle Count Richomer arrived bringing a second letter from Gratian, saying that he was advancing by rapid marches, and earnestly beseeching that no such dangerous course might be taken as to attack the Goths until the junction of the two armies should ensure success. But though some of Valens' generals urged him

strongly to wait for this, Valens, jealous of his nephew, rejected this advice and early on the 9th August 378 started to advance against the Goths.

After a march of some hours Valens arrived at noon in front of their position, and drew up his line of battle, making, as a final mistake, the serious error of placing his cavalry in front of his infantry. Fritigern deceived him for a short time with pretended negotiations until his own cavalry, who were absent at a distance foraging, should come up, and then on their arrival sent his cavalry against the much smaller force of Roman cavalry, and having put them to flight, attacked the main body. "Immediately," says Ammianus Marcellinus, "the Goths swept down upon the Roman army like a thunderbolt," surrounding it in front and on both flanks. On the part of the Romans the whole affair was without generalship of any kind. Instead of the extremely open order in which Constantine had always made his infantry fight, the latter on this occasion, placed in too close order originally, and forced still closer by the pressure of the Goths on both flanks, were, Ammianus says, "so tightly jammed together that they could scarcely raise a hand or draw a sword, while their spears were broken by the swaying of their own unmanageable mass." They stood raging but helpless, an easy mark for the missiles of the Goths, which mowed them down from a distance. Fiercely cursing the ineptitude which had brought them into such a position, they died by hundreds. To see such mishandling of brave and well-disciplined troops rouses indignation against the incapacity responsible for it. At length after the Roman troops had been slaughtered for hours without being able to damage their opponents, what was left of the army gave way, and fled in confusion.¹ Valens was

¹ Gibbon is completely wrong in what he imagines to have been the reason of the defeat. He attributes the loss of the battle to the infantry *losing the protection of the cavalry*, when the latter were put to flight by the superior force of Gothic cavalry. Had he lived after the days of the Peninsular war and Waterloo he could scarcely have made such an error. Valens' cavalry by being placed in front of the infantry, instead of being an assistance became a danger, obstructing the infantry and tending by their own defeat to unsteady the latter, bringing upon them a strain which only the stoutest infantry can stand; though the Roman infantry did so on this occasion until they were nearly all killed.

burnt in a hut in which he took refuge. The emperor, forty officers of highest rank, and two-thirds of the whole army of Valens, perished. It was a disaster which almost rivalled that which befel the army of Decius at Abricium 127 years before.¹

One consolation however the Romans had, viz. that the incapable and small-minded Valens, the sole cause of both the defeat and the circumstances which led to the contest, was slain. One feels that it was a deliverance which made even such a defeat almost worth enduring. In the three years that he had been left without the guidance of Valentinian he had contrived to do about as much harm as any single individual could achieve.

Regarding this battle at Hadrianople the cause of the defeat is plain. The accounts of the battle show that the defeat did not occur through any flaw in the quality, discipline, or training of the troops, but solely through the most complete want of generalship, (i) in not waiting for the army which was being brought up by Gratian, (ii) in drawing up the infantry in the absurdly close order in which they were expected to fight, (iii) in placing the cavalry in front of the infantry, and (iv) in the absence of orders when the enemy's attack was developed.

This defeat, great as it was, is often given an importance greater than military considerations justify. In the first place only one half of the Roman army was defeated, the second, and stronger, half under Gratian being still intact. In the second place one defeat amidst a long list of victories has not the same importance as when the latter do not exist. The Roman army could point to some twenty victories in that same century, some of them gained shortly before and some shortly after this defeat, and one of them (Colmar) in the very same year. And in the third place a defeat of this kind is crushing if not retrieved, but of little permanent importance if retrieved by subsequent victory. And this defeat was fully retrieved by the successive victories over these same Goths by Theodosius and Gratian separately during the next two years.

But the noxious influence of Valens was not at once removed

¹ Chap. X, p. 319.

even by his death. For on receiving news of it his master-general of the troops of the east, Julius, trained in the motives of action which had governed Valens, and fearful of what might be the effect upon the Gothic boys distributed as hostages among various cities of the east on hearing of such a victory gained by their nation, arranged and carried out a wholesale massacre of all of them except those of quite tender years; a dastardly crime which was calculated to prevent the Goths from ever again making friends with the Romans, and would have had this result had any one but Gratian had to deal with them.¹ It indicates how Pagan sentiments still in many cases lingered that in regard to this atrocious massacre of the boy hostages we find the contemporary Pagan historian Ammianus Marcellinus (a man who everywhere shows a deep hatred of oppression) approving of this cowardly and treacherous massacre of the Gothic boys on the same ground that he and all Pagan writers excused the crime of Marcus Aurelius, viz. expediency, approving of it as being necessary for the public safety.

Gratian, advancing rapidly to join his uncle, was met as he traversed the western part of Mœsia by fugitives from the battle bringing news of the great disaster which had occurred, and found himself, at the age of twenty, confronted by a grave crisis to the empire. He at once gave evidence of his ability. The Goths, elated at their immense victory, after threatening first Hadrianople and then Constantinople, and being repulsed, were spreading devastation over Thrace, Dardania, and the eastern part of Illyricum. Posting himself with his army at Sirmium, at the eastern corner of Pannonia, Gratian protected that province both from the victorious Goths and from a threatened attack by other tribes north of the Danube, and proceeded to make arrangements for retrieving the disaster which had occurred. As a part of those arrangements he had to consider the appointment of a colleague to take the place of Valens and become the ruler of the eastern portion of the empire, as it was absolutely necessary that he himself should return ere long to the West, and especially to the defence of the Rhine frontier. The choice that he made was a thoroughly sound one; and five months after the disaster at Hadrianople

¹ See pp. 532-533.

Gratian on the 19th January, 379, proclaimed at Sirmium as his colleague Theodosius, a tried soldier whom he had summoned from Spain, the son of Valentinian's trusted general of the same name, and gave him the rule of the eastern portion of the empire. In no act of his life did Gratian more signally show his wisdom than in the choice he thus made. Gratian retained, like his father, the larger and more important part of the empire, the two western prefectures and half the third prefecture,¹ Theodosius receiving, like Valens, half the third prefecture and the fourth prefecture.

Theodosius' father had, about two months after the death of Valentinian, been treated with the most shameful ingratitude. Amongst the other disastrous peculiarities of Valens was a constant suspicion that all men were plotting to deprive him of a position for which he was so unfit. The year before Valentinian's death it was reported to Valens that some persons at Antioch had (unlawfully) consulted "the diviners" as to the name of his successor, and that the answer given by the magic ring² which was used showed that the name began with the four Greek letters ΘΕΟΔ (Theod). This threw Valens into a paroxysm of suspicious fear; a reign of terror set in throughout the whole of the provinces ruled by him, in the course of which Maximus, who had been Julian's instructor in occult science, Eutropius, the historian, and a large number of innocent men whose names began with the fatal letters (such as Theodorus, Theodotus, Theodosius, Theodolus, etc.), were put to death in the eastern portion of the empire. Valentinian's successful general, then governing North Africa, was of course about the first person on whom the suspicions of Valens would rest, but so long as Valentinian lived he was safe. When, however, in the following year, Valentinian was dead, and when the empress Justina had been given, nominally at all events, the rule of Africa by Gratian, the opportunity occurred, Justina being, like Valens, an Arian. In the most mysterious way, and without any cause being assigned, the capable and highly honourable Theodosius, against whom no single accusation of disloyalty had ever been breathed, was suddenly, shortly after Valentinian's death, ordered to ascend a scaffold at Carthage, and executed, no one having to this

¹ Chap. XI, p. 347.

² Page 513.

day ever been able to discover by whose order. It is however considered by most writers to be probable that the cause of an execution which has always puzzled mankind was that here mentioned, and that the influence of Valens was exerted to put to death the most prominent man of the objectionable name, who though not under Valens' authority, was under that of his excitable Arian sister-in-law. In any case it is abundantly evident from the conduct of the younger Theodosius towards Gratian, both then and afterwards, that the latter had nothing whatever to do, either directly or indirectly, with the elder Theodosius' death.¹

Theodosius the younger, born in 346, and thirteen years older than Gratian, had served in Britain under his father, and subsequently, when the latter went to Africa in 372, had been employed by Valentinian upon the Danube frontier, and at the time of his father's death had risen to the high office of governor of Mœsia. Upon the mysterious execution of his father in 376 he had resigned the public service in silent indignation, and had retired to live on his estates in Spain. When summoned thence by Gratian to Sirmium, and made by him his colleague, he was thirty-three years old. Gratian's wisdom in this selection was fully attested by the result. For Theodosius proved one of the wisest and most able emperors that Rome ever had. But how great must, in the circumstances, have been the nobility of character of both these men for such a transaction to have been possible; that of Gratian in being ready, without a shadow of suspicious fear, to place perfect confidence in a man who had received such a cruel injury from his house, and in being willing to raise him

¹ Gibbon's view is that the death of the elder Theodosius "may justly be imputed to the arts of ministers who abused the confidence and deceived the inexperienced youth of Valentinian's sons" (*Decline and Fall*, III, 276). Since one of the two sons was a child of four the remark is evidently aimed at the other, i.e. Gratian. Seventy pages further on in his history Gibbon goes further, and, taking this which he had "assumed" as though it were a fact which had been proved, speaks of Gratian as one who had been guilty of "the murder of his (Theodosius') father" (*Decline and Fall*, III, 346). As noted in the text, the whole conduct of the younger Theodosius towards Gratian fully refutes both the innuendo and the assertion thus unfairly based upon it.

to a position of equality with himself ; and that of Theodosius in being ready to overlook a grievous wrong which he had felt so bitterly, to accept the position of colleague to one whose nearest relatives had so cruelly rewarded his father's life-long and faithful services to the empire, and to give to Gratian, as he did, the most thorough loyalty throughout the rest of the latter's life.

Having established Theodosius in the rule of the east, Gratian, feeling quite certain that the Roman army of the east was fully able to cope with the Goths now that it had an able soldier as its commander, marched his own army back to the west, where his presence was needed, the Franks and Vandals having crossed the Rhine. In a short campaign he completely defeated them, after which he returned to Trèves. Meanwhile in the eastern provinces it was soon shown how capable and vigorous was his new colleague. Fixing his headquarters at Thessalonica in Macedonia, Theodosius got together a fresh army, quickly effected that most difficult thing for any commander, the restoring to confidence troops demoralized by a crushing defeat, and then, leading his army against the Goths, in a single campaign entirely defeated them, and by the end of the year 379 had completely driven them out of Thrace. His success showed unmistakably that the defeat at Hadrianople was not due to any falling off in the military qualities of the troops, and that all that the Roman army required was a commander who understood his business, instead of an incapable ruler without either common-sense or knowledge of war, like Valens.

The defeat of the Romans at Hadrianople in August 378 has generally been spoken of as the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire, and as an irreparable disaster. It was nothing of the kind. In the first place the Goths, as always the case with them, did not know how to follow up their victory and therefore failed to make it as crushing as would have been the case had a Constantine, a Licinius, or a Valentinian commanded the victorious army. In the second place, the Romans had suffered an even greater disaster when Decius and his whole army perished in 251, and had afterwards retrieved that disaster, though owing to its magnitude that

retrieval had taken fifteen years ; and in this case in 378 the Romans similarly retrieved the disaster at Hadrianople, and did so, not after fifteen years, but in only one year. In the third place, this disaster, suffered at one part of the frontier from the Goths, was to a large extent balanced by the almost equally crushing defeat inflicted by the Romans at Colmar upon the Allemanni at the other part of the frontier. And in the fourth place it has been too much the custom of historians to fix the eye solely upon these military affairs on the frontier, allowing to slip out of sight the fact that all the rest of the empire remained in its normal state of prosperity, undisturbed by these events of the years 376-379 on the frontier. Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Italy, Spain, Gaul, and Britain heard of a great defeat having occurred in Thrace, but were not otherwise affected by it. When the fall of the Roman Empire really did begin it was far otherwise ; defeats were not retrieved ; one defeat succeeded another ; enemy after enemy appeared ; and country after country was overrun and destroyed. Whereas in this case within the space of two years not only were the Goths entirely defeated and brought to sue for peace, but a peace in every way satisfactory, grounded on a firm basis of personal friendship, was established.¹ Moreover there was yet to intervene, before either the decline or the fall of the Roman Empire began, the long reign, over the whole undivided empire, of an emperor who has been looked upon by some as almost equal to Constantine the Great, and his reign as the most prosperous in the whole course of Rome's history next to that of Constantine.

What no doubt historians have meant in speaking of this matter as they have is that as a consequence the Goths became permanently placed south of the Danube and within the boundary of the empire. And that in the first instance was a strategical error. But it was one which just and generous dealing was able to convert into no error at all. Rome had on previous occasions in her history proved herself able satisfactorily to absorb and assimilate races (e.g. the Gauls) no less warlike, and far less gifted with noble qualities, than the Goths, and there was no reason why she should not do the same again in this case. And in fact she began to do so, and

¹ Pages 532-533.

during the next twenty years this assimilation was taking place ; and it was only when, after the death of Theodosius the Great, mismanagement and incapacity stopped the process, and changed the Goths again into enemies, that disaster ensued. Such absorption of a warlike race by a great empire requires for success (as our own race knows by its experience in India) not less than two, and more often three generations ; and during the whole of that time the ruling race must, through a long succession of officials, evince tact, good temper, justice, kindness, and generosity. Instead, however, of three generations of such treatment the Goths had less than one ; consequently disaster followed. But there was no inherent reason for such a result, and had the original policy been continued that result would not have occurred.

But scarcely had Theodosius retrieved the disaster at Hadrianople, and driven the defeated Goths out of Thrace, than in the spring of the year 380 he fell dangerously ill at Thessalonica, and for many months was entirely unable to attend to public affairs, while he very nearly died. Thereupon the Goths returned in force, the Ostrogoths invading Pannonia, and the Visigoths Thessaly and Epirus. In this emergency Gratian, once more leaving the Rhine frontier, came again to the rescue, and while his colleague lay insensible and apparently dying at Thessalonica, achieved a great success, both in war and diplomacy.

Establishing his headquarters at Sirmium, Gratian himself opposed the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, while he sent his generals Bauto and Arbogast against the Visigoths in Thessaly and Epirus. In both cases he was entirely successful ; during the summer of 380 the Visigoths were driven out of Thessaly and Epirus, and the Ostrogoths defeated in Pannonia, and both of them brought to sue for peace. Then Gratian showed the other side of his brilliant character, and having beaten the Goths in the field proceeded to bring into play those powers of conciliation in which he so excelled. Here he was no less successful, by his wise and gracious treatment completely vanquishing the justly exasperated Goths, burning with all the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the Romans in the four years since they crossed the Danube. He put before

them that the lands to the north of the Danube which they had quitted had now been occupied by the Huns and other races, therefore they could not return thither ; that to devastate provinces as they had been doing only left them less to eat afterwards ; that, as they had themselves seen, they could never take the walled cities of such provinces, while, as they had also seen, the Roman armies could always beat them in the end. Was it not, then, much better to settle down on lands which he was ready to give them, to be held on a military tenure, reviving an ancient custom of the Roman republic, whereby they would become "fœderati," contributing a fixed contingent to the army for the defence of the empire in return for the lands given them, acknowledging the sovereignty of the emperor, and no longer possessing a king, but retaining their own form of government, and not subjected to the code of laws of Rome.

When these considerations were placed before the Goths by him who had beaten them in the field, and were urged with all the charm of manner which was natural to Gratian, and which, as Themisteus says, always "so fascinated the barbarians," fascinating them because they saw that the kindly expressions were real and not assumed for reasons of diplomacy, Gratian's terms were soon accepted. They who had been so maddened with fury and undying hatred against the Romans owing to the iniquitous treatment they had received from Valens and his officials (including the massacre of the boy hostages and many other wrongs) were completely won over by this gracious young emperor of twenty-one, whom they felt instinctively they could trust when he assured them that neither from himself nor his colleague should they ever experience such ill-treatment again. Demonstrating loudly in their own language their admiration for Gratian, the Goths agreed to become "fœderati" of the empire. With the result (as we are told by the Gothic historian, Jordanes) that when at the end of the autumn Theodosius rose from his sick bed he found a peaceful settlement concluded with the Goths on such a sound basis "that he gladly concurred therewith and accepted the fact with very grateful mind." This peaceful settlement of a great difficulty has been held by all modern historians to show "a wise statesmanship," though owing

to Gibbon's silence on the point they have all avoided stating who effected it.¹

This important new departure was a magnificent triumph for Gratian's powers. Always successful in war, he was no less successful in making friends afterwards; so that the statement of the contemporary writer Themisteus that he was "equal in value to any number of mailed knights" was no exaggeration. Its truth in this case was fully proved by the result. Obviously the future success of such a settlement depended entirely upon the degree of tact and judgment with which the details were carried out. Both the emperors did their part with equal ability in this respect. The Ostrogoths were given lands in Pannonia and Upper Mœsia and the Visigoths in Lower Mœsia; Gratian's promise that they should receive just and friendly treatment was fully observed; their immediate wants were supplied by free gifts of corn and cattle; their industry was encouraged by an exemption from taxation for a given term; they were left free to administer their own form of government; the military contingent to be supplied by them was fixed at 40,000 men; and so long as Gratian and Theodosius lived the Goths gave no further trouble.

In November 380, Theodosius, on recovering from his long illness at Thessalonica, removed for the first time to his capital, Constantinople. Two months afterwards, in January 381, the now somewhat aged Gothic chief, Athanaric,² who had taken no part in the struggle of the preceding five years, returned to the Danube from the north-west, crossed that river, and came to Constantinople. He was hospitably received

¹ Ammianus Marcellinus had ended his history two years before this, but Zosimus, the contemporary Roman historian, Jordanes, the Gothic historian, and various ecclesiastical writers of the time all plainly record this long and serious illness of Theodosius during which he was quite unable to attend to any public affairs and was believed to be dying. Yet modern historians, following Gibbon (who to discredit Gratian has purposely wrapped up the matter in a fog), have ignored this period during which Theodosius was *hors-de-combat*, and have spoken of the final subjection of the Goths, and the important settlement made with them, as though it was the work of Theodosius, making no mention of Gratian in the matter. The whole affair has been extricated from the confusion in which Gibbon had involved it by Dr. Hodgkin in his *Italy and her Invaders*, Vol. I.

² Page 501.

by Theodosius, and the amazement and admiration of the barbarian chief at the beauty, strength, and commerce of Constantinople, and at the arms, discipline, and training of the Roman troops, are vividly recorded by the Gothic historian Jordanes. Athanaric died a fortnight afterwards at Constantinople, whereupon Theodosius accorded him a stately funeral, and erected a fine monument to his memory, and all his followers, won over by this treatment, enlisted under the standard of the Roman Empire.

As ruler of the eastern portion of the empire Theodosius soon showed his value, the most advantageous part of his work being performed in undoing the mistakes of Valens. He quickly removed the grave stigma which had attached to the administration of the eastern part of the empire through the iniquitous conduct of its officials, such as that displayed by Lupicinus and Maximinus towards the Goths. The incapacity and mal-administration of Valens had everywhere produced immense evils; during the comparatively few years of the latter's rule corruption and tyranny had become rife in every direction in his portion of the empire, and required to be put down with a strong hand. Theodosius applied himself vigorously to the task, rapidly swept out the Augean stable, and restored the administration to a sound condition. The wisdom of his action on all occasions, with the encouragement that he gave to all who were upright and honest in character, soon made him highly popular, and the best results followed throughout the eastern provinces.

Religious matters still continued to occupy a prominent place in public affairs. Gratian's first step on being left responsible for the whole empire by the death of Valens had been, during the five months that intervened before his appointment of a colleague, to publish an edict proclaiming religious liberty throughout the eastern portion of the empire, in consequence of which proclamation many of the exiled Catholic bishops were able to resume their sees. Following this step ensued in January 379 the appointment of Theodosius as Gratian's colleague in place of the Arian Valens. By this appointment the empire came under the rule of two emperors both of whom were Catholics, and before Gratian and Theodosius

separated at Sirmium they had agreed that, this being the case, Arianism should now be put down. For a time the arduous military operations of the year 379 against the Goths necessarily absorbed all attention, but early in 380 an imperial edict was issued in the joint names of Gratian and Theodosius embodying the resolution they had agreed upon at Sirmium, and declaring that it was the will of the emperors that their subjects should embrace the Catholic faith, and abandon Arianism. This of course more largely affected the eastern portion of the empire, where Arianism was dominant, than it did the western portion, where the two parties were more evenly balanced.

In November 380, upon recovering from his illness and making his first entry into his capital, Constantinople, Theodosius, in accordance with the edict issued eight months before, forthwith called upon Demophilus, the Archbishop of Constantinople, either to subscribe to the creed of Nicæa or resign his office.¹ Demophilus resigned, the afterwards celebrated Gregory of Nazianzus was appointed in his place, and Theodosius thereupon placed Catholics in charge of all the churches in Constantinople, and proceeded to do the same throughout the eastern portion of the empire. The harshness and cruelty of the Arians during the fifty years they had been in power had to a large extent alienated the people, and they were willing enough to abandon Arianism when the pressure of Court influence in favour of it was withdrawn. Henceforth Arianism made its home among the Goths and other northern barbarians, thereby afterwards becoming the dominant faith throughout Europe when the latter conquered the different portions of the western half of the empire.²

Six months later the two emperors followed this up by issuing an order in their joint names to the Bishops of both

¹ A further corroboration of the fact that it was Gratian and not Theodosius who made the satisfactory peace with the Goths in the summer of 380 is scarcely required after the definite words of Jordanes, but one is here afforded by the fact that this action in regard to Arianism, taken so promptly by Theodosius as soon as he was well enough to attend to public affairs, was not taken until November 380; the reason being that since the publication of the edict on the subject early in that year he had been entirely *hors-de-combat*.

² Vol. II, Chaps XVII to XIX.

West and East assembling the *Second General Council*. Fifty-six years had passed since the assembly of the First General Council, and another such council was now required in order to pronounce a decision in regard to two new forms of belief which had sprung up, and were becoming largely adopted; viz. that originated by Macedonius, a former Archbishop of Constantinople, and that started by Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea. The Macedonians (often called the Semi-Arians) denied the co-equal Godhead of the Holy Spirit; the Apollinarians denied that Christ had a human soul as well as a human body, whereas the Catholics maintained that the Incarnation implied a human soul as well as a human body. The Council met at Constantinople on the 2nd of May, 381. It sat, we are told, in the "great and ancient" church of St. Irene. It was attended by 186 Bishops, and presided over by Meletius, Pope of Antioch. It decided that neither the Macedonian belief nor the Apollinarian belief had been held "from the first," and declared them both to be "heresies," and not the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Also in order to prevent the Macedonian, or Semi-Arian, error from adoption in future, this Council added to the Nicene creed the clauses¹ which refer to the Holy Spirit.²

This Second General Council also completed the organization of the Church. In the same way that the various dioceses had previously been grouped together under Metropolitans, so now a further step of the same kind was taken by grouping together the Metropolitans under Patriarchs, or Popes,³ the term which had hitherto been a courtesy title applied to the Metropolitans of Antioch and Alexandria,⁴ being now employed for this new purpose, and definitely attached to the Metro-

¹ The clauses containing the words, "And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets." (But regarding the words "and the Son," see Vol. II, Chap. XXIII, p. 353.)

² The other of the two errors, that of Apollinarius, is barred by the sentence in the Athanasian creed translated, with some difficulty, into the English words, "of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."

³ See Preface, p. xii.

⁴ Sometimes also in other cases. For in A.D. 250 the clergy of Rome, writing after the death of their Bishop, Fabian, to Cyprian, address him as Pope of Carthage.

politan Bishop of the principal city of each of the five " patriarchates " under which the whole of the dioceses of Christendom were now grouped.

These five great patriarchates, which together embraced all Christendom,¹ were :—(i) Antioch, as the original capital of Christianity, and the most important city to the east ; (ii) Alexandria, as the centre of learning, and the most important city to the south ; (iii) Rome, as being the former capital of the empire ; (iv) Constantinople, as being " New Rome," and the capital of the empire ; and (v) Jerusalem, *honoris causâ*, as the mother of all the Churches. In giving to Rome the dignity of a " patriarchal see " the Council made no mention of any religious reason (such as any special connection, for instance, with St. Peter), but gave that dignity solely on the political ground stated ; a point on which some generations later much controversy took place between Rome and Constantinople. The jurisdiction of these five Popes was, as in the case of the Metropolitans,² carefully limited so as not to trench upon the independence of Bishops, it being strictly laid down that the holders of the new office were not to interfere in the affairs of any other Metropolitan's province, and that the duties of the office were confined to presiding on any occasion of a synod or council of the Bishops of the patriarchate, seeing that the canons passed by General Councils were duly promulgated, and representing the patriarchate in communications with other patriarchates. The five Popes, as a mark of their office, wore round the neck a scarf made of the wool of a lamb, called the *pallium*.

Upon the publication of the decree of the Council, Damasus, the first Bishop of Rome to be given the new title of Pope, with a view to enhance the dignity of his see sought to maintain that the honour given it of being one of the five patriarchal sees was wrongly based upon the political ground stated by the Council, and wrote a document enunciating a theory of a Petrine hierarchy with its " first seat " at Rome, its " second seat " at Alexandria, and its " third seat " at Antioch ; but no one paid any attention to this theory, which

¹ Excepting Armenia, Georgia, and Abyssinia, these countries being outside the Roman empire.

² Page 509.

entirely ignored the whole history of the Church, while Antioch and Alexandria naturally treated Damasus' theory with supreme contempt and indifference.¹ The city of Rome had for so many centuries been associated in men's minds with the centre of all authority that even its ceasing to be any longer the imperial capital still left the name of that city a power to conjure with. And Damasus was disingenuously endeavouring to use this power while at the same time repudiating the very fact upon which it was solely based, that of Rome having been formerly the imperial city. On the other hand the General Council correctly measured the influence still attaching to the name of Rome in giving the see of that city (even though it occupied so much less important a position in the Church) an equal honour with the sees of Antioch and Alexandria on the political ground stated in its decree.

Ever since the First General Council had taken place it had become recognized that the supreme authority in "the Church of God" (as it was called) was a General Council of Bishops, summoned from time to time as occasion arose from as many different parts of the empire as possible. So long as the Bishops attending it fairly represented the majority of the countries over which the Church had spread, the Council was accepted as being "Œcumenical" (i.e. General). Its decisions were absolute. Obviously, therefore, in order that such a Council should be given this unquestioned obedience as the unanimous voice of the whole Church, it was essential that the Bishops composing it should be perfectly independent. Hence the great stress laid upon that which is a fundamental principle of the Catholic Church, viz. the axiom that all Bishops are equal.²

The weight of authority which a General Council wielded, by reason of the immense body of opinion which it represented, was enormous, and far exceeded that which has ever been possessed by any parliament or other representative body. An assembly of men, all distinguished either for learning or character, each of whom had been elected by the

¹ Chap. XII, p. 377.

² Page 508.

people of some diocese as the most fit man in that diocese for the office of Bishop, and gathered from countries inhabited by so many different races subject to an infinite variety of conditions, possessed such a weight of authority that its decisions were felt rightly to command the obedience of all men.

In one particular a General Council differed from all other Councils, Parliaments, or legal assemblies throughout the world, in all ages. A General Council, though it was (and is) the supreme authority in the Church, like any other council could not assemble of its own motion; it had always to be assembled by some reigning emperor, or empress. But whereas in the case of all other courts or legal assemblies the convening authority invariably has jurisdiction to confirm (or refuse to confirm) the laws or decisions drawn up by the court, parliament, or legal assembly which he has convened, this is not the case in regard to a General Council of the Church. Its rulings (or canons) are absolute, and subject to no confirming authority. In this matter, as in so many others, the sagacity of Constantine the Great laid a foundation which was adhered to throughout all subsequent ages. He had convened the First General Council, and having done so had stood aside and left the Council to decide upon the matters submitted to it, and to promulgate its rulings thereon, without any further reference to himself, which would have destroyed the absolute supremacy in the Church of a General Council. And the course he took became the law for all time.¹

General Councils only assembled at long intervals; there were only six in the whole 355 years from 325 to 680. Each was convened by some emperor; ² and each was assembled in consequence of disputes upon some vital question of doctrine which were threatening to divide the Church. But having given its decision on that point each General Council considered also many other matters brought before it, and gave

¹ Nevertheless there is a certain kind of confirming authority. For the decision of a General Council was not considered absolute until ratified by being accepted by the general body of the Church at large. Hence the common phrase stating that such and such a decision was passed by a certain General Council "and accepted by the whole Church."

² Or empress (Chap. XVIII).

decisions also upon these.¹ The last General Council took place in 680, after which time the circumstances of Europe for many centuries rendered such an assembly impossible. Fortunately before this took place all points of importance had been submitted to one or other of the General Councils which had been assembled during these 355 years, so that there remained no primary point undecided.²

Local Councils, composed of Bishops from some particular part of the Church, also assembled from time to time to settle matters affecting only that part of the Church. Such a Local Council could neither contravene a decision of a General Council, nor encroach upon the sphere of a General Council by formulating decisions on matters affecting the whole Church. A Local Council might be a small gathering, composed of Bishops from merely two or three provinces, called together to settle Church matters concerning only these provinces, or it might be a large gathering of the Bishops of many provinces; but small or large it still remained solely a Local Council, with no power to trench upon the sphere of a General Council. An example of such a Local Council is the Council of Arles, assembled in 314.³ This council has sometimes been called "a General Council of the Western Church," but that is an error. There was no "Western Church"; while

¹ While a Parliament calls its decisions *laws*, the Church uses the more ancient (Eastern) word *canon*; but the two mean the same. Examples of these canons, or decisions, on lesser points than the main one on which a Council assembled, are to be seen in Appendix VI.

² These General Councils have an important living interest to all members of the Church of England. For while the Church of England requires (in a canon of 1571) that all disputes as to her doctrine or practice shall be decided by whether the disputed doctrine or practice was or was not held or followed by the Church during the first six centuries of Christianity, the Parliament of England has supported this by an Act of the legislature, laying down that in any disputes which may come before the law courts as to whether a doctrine is or is not that held by the Church of England, the question is to be decided by reference to the decisions of these General Councils. The Act is the first of Queen Elizabeth's reign (Act I of Elizabeth), the particular words being: "the first four General Councils, or any of them, or any other General Council by which the same errors have been declared heresy." The latter clause includes the Fifth and Sixth General Councils, which were supplementary to the Fourth (Chaps. XXII and XXV).

³ Chap. XIII, p. 398.

nothing could make a Local Council into a General Council ; their respective spheres, and powers, are quite distinct ; and the decisions of a Local Council could never have the same authority as those of a General Council.¹

Gratian had now (381) been six years emperor. During the first two of those years he had twice crossed the Rhine, and overcoming many obstacles amidst trackless mountains and impenetrable forests, had in 376 and 377 engaged in successful contests with the Lentienses and other barbarian tribes of that region, contests in which he had won much personal renown. He had then in May 378 won an important victory over the Allemanni at Colmar, and had subsequently hastened eastwards with an army to help his uncle. Arriving a few days after the disaster at Hadrianople in August, he had protected Pannonia from the victorious Goths, and in January 379 had made a most wise selection of a colleague, and had installed him as joint emperor with himself. He had then returned to the West, and in the summer of 379 had opposed the Franks and Vandals on the Rhine and completely defeated them. In January 380, upon his colleague becoming *hors-de-combat* through severe illness, he had returned again to the East, and had during the summer of 380 opposed and defeated both the Ostrogoths in Pannonia and the Visigoths in Epirus, and caused both of them to sue for peace. He had then, while his colleague lay apparently dying, gained a consummate diplomatic success, inducing the Goths to abandon their just wrath at the succession of cruel injuries they had received, and had arranged a peaceful settlement with them on a sound and enduring basis. And finally, having previously, in conjunction with his colleague, issued an important edict in regard to Arianism, he had, on that

¹ It so happens that this is very clearly demonstrated in the case of the Council of Arles. For though it was composed of Bishops from almost the whole of the West, including Britain itself, yet it will be observed that it is not taken, in the Act of the Parliament of England quoted on the previous page, as one of the authorities whose decisions are to be referred to in disputed questions. Showing that its decisions were not considered to have the same weight, even in a country represented at it, as those of the General Councils,

colleague recovering from his illness, joined with him in assembling early in 381 the Second General Council. All this Gratian had accomplished before he was twenty-two years old.

And the strange thing is that in all these varied transactions during an exceptionally difficult time, transactions in which he had to deal with Pagans and Christians, Goths maddened by ill treatment, fraudulent and culpable Roman officials, and bitter religious sectarians, including a jealous and excitable step-mother, we hear no word of enmity from any of these against him. Writers bitter against all others are not so in speaking of Gratian. He seems to disarm enmity, and to move amidst these elements of discord as if clad in some impalpable armour, passing scatheless through circumstances in which other men could not avoid rousing animosity from some side; so that the lavish encomiums of the contemporary writers seem no flattery, but borne out by the facts, while "brilliant," "gallant," "peace-loving," "gracious," "generous," and "unselfish," are the only epithets heard. It is a strange feature, one seldom met with in history.

During six years, in which he had fought against the Lentienses, the Allemanni, the Franks, the Vandals, and the Goths, Gratian had been almost continuously engaged in war. But meanwhile at Trèves in the intervals of these campaigns he had done much to ameliorate the condition of the people in the western part of the empire. We hear of his causing the registers of arrears of taxation to be burnt in every town throughout the provinces over which he ruled, because he considered that they pressed too hardly upon the people, of his reducing taxation so largely that he left the treasury almost empty, and of various acts of liberality and kindness of heart, many of them done with the object of amending the consequences of his father's harshness. The Pagan (or semi-Pagan) Ausonius, speaking (evidently with a feeling that it was a novelty) of "the young emperor who from his boyhood has never begun the day without a prayer to the Almighty God," praises his thoughtfulness for others, his courtesy when yielding to what others desired, his manly appearance when reviewing the troops, his temperance as regards food and wine, and his chastity. He describes how he had often seen Gratian,

“if any misfortune had taken place on a campaign, going round the tents of a whole legion, asking each man how he fared, examining the soldiers’ wounds, and speaking words giving comfort and courage”; he details various unusual ways in which he had frequently seen Gratian helping his sick or convalescent soldiers, adding that he “gave up everything to the sick;” and he says that Gratian “gave easy access to all who invoked his help, and never even complained of the interruption.” However much of this praise we may ascribe to the flattery of one who had received many benefits from Gratian, there must have been a solid substratum of truth underlying these statements.¹

There is no doubt that in all this the early teaching of the great Bishop of Milan, Ambrose, was much concerned. Undoubtedly Ambrose had had a very large share in moulding the character of Gratian. And though in these later years they seldom met, Gratian being always at Trèves or absent on his various campaigns, yet we know from the writings of Ambrose that it rejoiced him to see that what Gratian had learnt as a boy he was carrying out.

Gratian’s amusements (though his fully occupied life left but little time for such things) were of a very different character from those which had occupied other young emperors of the same age in Pagan times, a Nero, a Commodus, or an Elagabalus. Gibbon has asserted that Gratian was effeminate²; but while the latter’s deeds in war alone are sufficient to refute such a charge, even his amusements were of a manly kind. His chief recreation was sport; and sport in those days meant a very different thing from that which now goes

¹ As regards the idea (suggested by Gibbon) that Gratian leant upon Theodosius, it is only necessary to remark that it could only have occurred during the last two years of Gratian’s life (381–383), after Theodosius recovered from his severe illness, and that there is not a particle of evidence that in Gratian’s acts during those two years (his deeds in administration, the four episodes in regard to Paganism in 382, and the contest with Maximus in 383) Theodosius took any part. Moreover, all the matters for which Gratian’s conduct chiefly received praise from his contemporaries were essentially matters depending upon his own personal character.

² See p. 548. He draws his authority from Pagan writers who preferred even the antics of an Elagabalus to the rule of a Christian emperor.

by that name. It did not mean the comparatively safe kind of sport which consists in shooting wild animals with a rifle, galloping after hounds, or shooting pheasants, but meant the dangerous amusement of spearing wild boars, or the still more dangerous shooting of lions and bears with arrows. Gratian laid out vast preserves near Trèves for this purpose. He had many men in his bodyguard belonging to the northern races, especially Alans, who were accustomed to the hunting of savage animals. These men he took with him in his spearing of boars and shooting of lions and bears, and delighted to spend whole days in this pursuit when he could get the time. No better training for the dangers and hardships of war, both for himself and his men, could have been devised; and this has plainly failed to be understood by those who in modern times have made this occupation of his a ground of complaint against Gratian.¹ Since the combats in the amphitheatre had been abandoned practice in the use of the bow and the spear against savage foes could only be obtained in this manner. Such practice could not be obtained by mere shooting at a target; though Gibbon, in his contempt for such matters, evidently imagines that this would have sufficed.

For six years Gratian's career had been an uninterrupted record of success, triumph over difficulties, and popularity; in everything he had attempted, whether in war, diplomacy, or administration, he had succeeded; and his constant endeavours to relieve the people's burdens had earned him well-deserved gratitude from all the humbler classes. And then, in 382, when he was twenty-three, all Gratian's bright career clouded over; almost in a moment brilliant summer changed to gloomiest winter. He came in contact with a matter in which if he was to be true to those principles which he had steadfastly embraced unpopularity, fierce disapproval, and bitter enmity were inevitable. Gratian did not shrink. He might have avoided the unpopularity which came upon him if he would; he had not to *do* anything, but only to "let sleeping dogs lie," to act as previous emperors, Christian in name like himself, had acted, as his own father had acted. But those emperors had not had in their boyhood the kind of

¹ See p. 550.

teaching given by a St. Ambrose, while Gratian had ; and so he could not act as they had done.

Several separate instances all combined about this time to call forth that "uncompromising Christianity" which has been declared to have ultimately caused Gratian's ruin and death. Gratian had always declined to wear the robes of a Pontifex Maximus (or High Priest of the Romans), or to allow himself to be addressed by that essentially Pagan title. At length the College of Pontifices at Rome determined to make a personal effort to overcome this reluctance. They therefore in 382 travelled from Rome to Trèves, bringing with them a new robe, and besought Gratian that he would accept it, and would appear before the people dressed as their Pontifex Maximus, as every Roman emperor before him had done. Gratian absolutely refused, saying that it was unlawful for him as a Christian to wear the dress of such an office, or to be called by such a title. There is no doubt that he was absolutely right ; his refusal was only that which such a request would meet with from any king or emperor in these days ; but that refusal gave dire offence. The unpopularity which this action on his part aroused was immense, and was not even entirely confined to Pagans. All previous emperors, it was said, whether Christians or not, had borne this time-honoured title, therefore why should Gratian refuse to do so ?

About the same time still greater offence was given by Gratian in regard to the altar of Victory in the Senate-house at Rome. On this altar for many hundred years the senators had been accustomed to burn incense to the statue of Victory before beginning their deliberations. The altar had been removed by Constantius, but replaced soon afterwards by Julian. Gratian now ordered this worship to cease, since Christianity, and not Paganism, had been adopted as the religion of the empire, and ordered the statue and the altar to be removed. Intense indignation was the consequence among all the senators and nobles of Rome, a large number of whom still clung more or less to the ancient religion.

In this same year (382) Gratian gave a third offence to the Pagan party by building at Milan that city's most celebrated church, that which remained as the cathedral of Milan for 1000 years, and is now known as the church of St. Ambrose.

It was built on the site of a previously existing Pagan temple dedicated to Bacchus, and the porphyry columns of the latter were used to support the canopy over the altar, where they still remain. Though the temple was entirely disused and in ruins, this action increased still further the wrath of the Pagan party against Gratian.

Also in this same year (382) Gratian issued an edict forbidding contributions to be any longer levied from the people for defraying the expenses of the Pagan sacrifices in the temples at Rome and for the support of the Vestal Virgins, and also confiscating to the State the rich revenues appropriated to the numerous Pagan temples in Rome, which though unused by the people had still attached to them a large body of priests. This edict has sometimes been styled a harsh one, but on the contrary it was absolutely just and right, and such as an emperor responsible for protecting the people from oppression was bound in justice to issue. It was in every way unjust that the people of Rome should be forced to pay contributions to keep up Pagan sacrifices which were no longer attended by them, or to maintain the Vestal Virgins. It was also no less unjust that the people should be heavily taxed to fill the imperial treasury while rich revenues, given in former times for the support of the temples, and no longer required for that object, were allowed to remain alienated in order to maintain a body of Pagan priests in idleness. Nevertheless not only was there a loud outcry on the part of the Pagan priests at this "spoliation of the temples," but also many of the ancient nobility of Rome sided with them in denouncing this measure. An important deputation of the nobles of Rome travelled from thence to Trèves to protest against this edict, and Gratian's firm refusal to alter his order caused burning anger to be felt against him by all the priestly class and the nobility of Rome.

These four episodes,¹ all occurring in one year, caused a

¹ Gratian is sometimes spoken of as though he ruled over only Britain, Gaul, and Spain, but these four episodes show conclusively that though he gave his step-mother Justina and his little half-brother Valentinian II the nominal rule of Italy and North Africa, and allowed them to reside at his proper capital Milan, Gratian in regard to all important questions ruled the whole of the western portion of the empire.

strong tide of unpopularity to rise against Gratian among all the large class who still sympathized with Paganism even if they did not openly profess that religion, and especially the nobility, who lived chiefly in Rome. Notwithstanding the edicts of Constantine and his successors on the subject of Christianity they had practically always allowed an exception in the case of Rome, whose Paganism they had had to leave to die slowly away in the course of time, and Paganism was in reality the State religion of the city of Rome down to 382, when Gratian thus gave it its death blow. Forthwith ready pens, especially in Rome, flew to vilify this too-Christian emperor. It was an art in which writers of that age were adepts. The principles taught by the artful science of Rhetoric¹ were still as much in favour as ever. It was declared by these writers that Gratian's deeds were the work of others who easily led one having a soft and tractable disposition, that he was a tool in the hands of bigoted Bishops who procured imperial edicts to punish failures in regard to theology, that he indolently neglected public affairs to consume his time in the chase, and, worst offence of all, that he preferred "barbarians" to Romans.² This voluble abuse from that Pagan party whose animosity became more malevolent the more Paganism declined, would have had little importance for subsequent ages had it not furnished a mine from whence later opponents of Christianity could draw materials to disparage and disgrace the first Christian emperor who refused to make any compromise with Paganism, and to whom the Christian world would naturally point with pride.

Unfortunately for Gratian the unpopularity called forth by these four episodes in regard to Paganism was supplemented by discontent which from another cause grew up at the same time in the army. This discontent was occasioned by the falling off in those special irregular donations which the troops had grown accustomed from time to time to receive over and above their pay, Gratian's large reductions of taxation having so reduced his treasury that he found it impossible to give

¹ Chap. II, p. 45 (footnote) and Appendix III.

² These diatribes of the Pagan party are chiefly contained in the *Historia Miscella*, a miscellaneous history written by various anonymous Pagan writers.

such lavish extra donations to the troops, and would not tax the people in order to do so. At the same time we know, on the best possible authority,¹ that even this would not have caused the army to revolt from Gratian had it not been for the false information given to the troops by the usurper Maximus as to the mental attitude of Gratian's colleague Theodosius.

It has been asserted that one of the chief causes for the discontent in the army was Gratian's forming his bodyguard principally of Alans.² But this, while it was one of the various assertions by which the Pagan party, as already noted, endeavoured to pile up charges against Gratian, can have had no real basis of truth. For in the case of every emperor, even as far back as Augustus, it had been the invariable custom for the emperor's bodyguard to be composed almost entirely of northern barbarians, and Gratian in enlisting Alans into his bodyguard was therefore doing nothing unusual.

The picture which the historian Gibbon has drawn of the emperor Gratian, and which on his authority has become the accepted one, is so exceedingly different from that here represented that it becomes necessary to refer to his statements and the grounds on which they are based.³ It has already been noted that, seeing that the Christian world would naturally point with pride to the character of this emperor, and being unable to find any flaw therein, Gibbon has adopted the course of saying as little as possible about him; and his picture of Gratian⁴ as "a gentle youth" dominated by others, "the tool of bigoted Bishops," and whose "soft and tractable disposition," when it lost the guidance of skilful counsellors, "descended to the level of his natural genius," while he amused himself "with the most frivolous gratifications,"⁵ and without a single hint,¹ in this estimate of Gratian's character and occupations, regarding the latter's deeds in war, or his achievements in peace, is almost ludicrous when we think of Gratian's five

¹ That of the usurper Maximus himself, the author of the lie which deceived the troops.

² Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, III, 358.

³ See Preface, p. xiii.

⁴ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, III, 356-357.

⁵ It is evident from what follows that Gibbon in this expression refers to the occupations of sport,

campaigns in five successive years against the Lentienses, the Allemanni, the Franks, and the Ostrogoths, all of them ending in victories, campaigns which allowed little or no time for the "frivolous gratifications" to which Gibbon alludes. It has also been noted that his suggestion that Gratian leant upon Theodosius is refuted by the fact that Gratian's career was nearly over before this could have taken place.¹

But it is with reference to the events of the last year of Gratian's life, and to the causes of the latter's downfall and death, that Gibbon's attitude in the matter becomes most notable. Anxious to avoid having to admit that any emperor suffered ruin and death through his steadfast Christianity, Gibbon has first eagerly seized upon the diatribes of the enraged Pagan party, and magnifying what were already mendacious fabrications has put forward these as the causes of Gratian's becoming unpopular,² even carefully suppressing the real reasons for this feeling among the Pagan party, viz. the four successive episodes in the year 382, not one of which he mentions. In view of the fact that these four episodes brought out so clearly Gratian's character, and the reasons why the influential Pagan party at Rome were so incensed against him, this four times repeated omission on Gibbon's part is very marked.

Having thus accounted for Gratian's unpopularity with the Pagan party without mentioning episodes which would have redounded to Gratian's credit, Gibbon next in regard to the discontent of the army leads away attention from the true cause of that discontent (the falling off in the donations), since this, being due to Gratian's reductions of taxation, would also bring credit to him, and instead of it attributes the discontent of the army to two causes, both of them so exceedingly weak as reasons for such discontent that they can only have been chosen in order to hide the true cause, and attributes the discontent in the army to Gratian's fondness for sport and his forming the bodyguard chiefly of Alans (which it has already been shown was nothing unusual), at the same time suppressing all mention of the lie told to the troops by the usurper

¹ Page 543 (footnote).

² Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, III, 357.

Maximus which the latter afterwards declared had been a principal means by which he had induced the troops to revolt. Gibbon in his autobiography informs us that he himself never had anything but a detestation for the "frivolous amusement" of hunting and sport, in which he says he never took part, lavishing much contempt upon it. And being unable to find any other flaw in Gratian, he finds one at last, he considers, in the words of Ammianus Marcellinus regarding Gratian's fondness for the chase, ignoring the fact that these words were written by a Pagan authority anxious, as the passage shows,¹ to draw a comparison to the advantage of Paganism, and also the fact that in any case they only refer to Gratian in his youth, since Ammianus' History ends when Gratian was nineteen.

Gibbon declares that this was the chief cause of Gratian's ruin,² and that the army revolted from Gratian because he spent his time in sport, and "prostituted to the viler purposes of hunting" his skill with the bow and spear, while at the same time taking Alans into his bodyguard and employing them to assist him in this "vile amusement." But troops who would revolt from a brave, just, and capable young emperor, who had always led them to victory, because of his fondness for sport have never yet been seen anywhere in the world. Moreover Gratian's history has merely to be glanced at to see that it could not be true that he spent all his time, or even much of it, in this way, since his five campaigns and the other events of his life left little time for such pursuits. Nevertheless this preposterous absurdity as to the army having revolted from Gratian owing to his fondness for sport (a statement which shows such an ignorance alike of soldiers, of the sport referred to, and of the conditions of war) has been uniformly handed down on Gibbon's authority as the cause of the downfall and death of Gratian.

The resentment felt at Gratian's action in the four episodes regarding Paganism all within one year, combined with the simultaneous discontent in the army at the falling off in the special donations, created a feeling of disaffection which was

¹ See p. 518.

² Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, III, 358.

steadily rising all through the year 382. This was soon taken advantage of by one who proposed to raise himself by the very method which Gratian had felt forced to a large extent to give up. Early in 383, Maximus, an officer born and brought up in Spain, who was stationed in Britain, saw an opportunity in this state of things to conspire against Gratian. Maximus had no abilities, but he was very rich, and he proposed to elevate himself to the throne by profuse bribes to the troops. He was merely one of that class of ignorant and brutal usurpers who having gained the throne in this fashion, had invariably proved vicious and murderous tyrants, a class of emperors who had been forgotten under such rulers as the empire during seventy years had possessed. Throughout the four years that this usurper held Gaul he proved himself to be a blood-thirsty tyrant of just this type, being described by the contemporary writers as "a raging beast," "glutting his cruelty with the blood of the innocent," "ever greedily seeking for gold," and "murdering indiscriminately in order to squeeze gold and ever more gold out of an unhappy people with which to retain the favour of the army;" while his only idea of military strategy was the profuse bribery of his opponent's troops.

Maximus, by magnifying and misrepresenting the unpopularity of Gratian, and especially by giving out that Theodosius would be glad to see the downfall of the house of Valentinian in revenge for his father's death (a lie which Maximus afterwards confessed when taxed with it by Theodosius,¹ stating at the same time that without it he would never have been able to persuade the troops to rebel against Gratian), raised a mutiny in Britain, and crossed over into Gaul with a large body of troops, which he steadily augmented by bribery. Gratian at the time was again occupied in a campaign against the Allemanni near Heidelberg. Returning as quickly as possible to Trèves, he found on arrival there that many of his troops, profusely bribed by Maximus, had already gone over to the latter. However he still had a considerable force, while his faithful generals Merobaudes and Count Vallio remained loyal to him, and with as little delay as possible Gratian marched against the usurper. The two armies met

¹ Chap. XVI, p. 564.

near Paris ; but Gratian's treasury, always much reduced in consequence of his remissions of taxation, was at a specially low ebb at the moment owing to the expenses of the expedition against the Allemanni, and he was quite unable to wage the monetary kind of warfare which Maximus prosecuted. During five days the latter avoided a battle, maintaining only indecisive skirmishes, and during the whole time Maximus and the commander of his cavalry, Andragathius, were tampering with the fidelity of Gratian's troops. The latter melted rapidly away, entire squadrons going over to the enemy, making a battle impossible, and when at length Gratian saw his Mauretanian cavalry crossing the plain to join Maximus he knew there was nothing left to him but flight. The treacherous Andragathius pursued him with a picked body of cavalry, but did not capture him at once, only doing so in the end by a peculiarly cruel artifice.

Gratian fled southwards through Gaul towards the Mont Cenis pass, hoping to reach Milan, his own proper capital, where his step-mother Justina and his young step-brother were,¹ all cities in Gaul being afraid to shelter him from the successful Maximus. Regarding this hard-pressed ride of about three hundred miles by Gratian from Paris to Lyons, pursued by the cavalry of Andragathius, the events of which some of those who accompanied Gratian afterwards related to Ambrose, the latter in his writings gives us a pathetic picture. Deserted by all except a faithful little band of troopers, and with no other friend accompanying him, finding city after city closed against him, enduring extreme hardships of hunger and thirst, riding continuously onwards with both horses and men worn out with fatigue, able only to snatch a brief rest at long intervals by reason of the knowledge of the pursuing cavalry, Gratian had ever on his lips the name of Ambrose, the thought of whose grief for him made his own grief (Ambrose says) more bitter ; while he drew comfort and support on his desolate journey from some of the things that Ambrose had taught him. "Truly," said he, "my soul waiteth still upon God ; my enemies can slay my body, but they cannot extinguish the life of my soul."

¹ Gratian's little half-brother, Valentinian II, was twelve years old at the time of Gratian's death.

At length as, wearied out with the long and rapid ride, they approached Lyons,¹ Gratian saw on the opposite bank of the Rhone, a closed litter being borne along the bank of the river, and it was reported to him that it contained his newly-wedded wife, Laeta.² Leaving his little band of troopers where they were, Gratian crossed the river to embrace his wife and tell her of his misfortune, when forth from the litter there stepped, not the form of his wife, but the traitor Andragathius, whose retainers at once seized Gratian, and carried him a prisoner into Lyons. A solemn oath was sworn to him by Andragathius that no harm should happen to him; he was entertained at a splendid banquet; and in the midst of the banquet he was stabbed to death by the traitor Andragathius, calling with his last breath on the name of Ambrose (25th August 383). And the latter relates his death in a commentary on the 62nd psalm, which psalm begins with the words that Gratian had quoted during his flight. Maximus even refused to surrender his body to his relatives, while he also put to death Gratian's two faithful generals, Merobaudes and Count Vallio. Gibbon asserts that Merobaudes was unfaithful to Gratian, and the chief cause of the latter's ruin. But Dr. Hodgkin and other authorities are of the opinion that this assertion is untrue.³ Moreover if it were true then there seems no reason why Maximus should have put Merobaudes to death.

So ended the life, at the age of twenty-four, of the brave, unselfish, and true-hearted Gratian, whose character, in its inherent nobleness from first to last, makes him one of the most attractive of all the Roman emperors. He became emperor at the same age as Nero, Commodus, Elagabalus, and Carinus; yet how different was the result. Like Cara-

¹ The city of Grenoble (originally Gratianopolis), about 80 miles to the south-east of Lyons, near where the route over the Mont Cenis pass issued into Gaul, derives its name from Gratian, who founded its bishopric. Had Gratian reached it he would probably have been safe.

² His second wife. His first wife, Constantia Postuma, had died some years before.

³ Regarding Merobaudes, Dr. Hodgkin says:—"Notwithstanding a passage in one of the chroniclers which throws a doubt upon his fidelity, there is reason to believe that the old general remained true to the house of Valentinian to the end, and perished because of that fidelity."

calla, Gratian also had a brother who might prove a rival, one who had been acclaimed as emperor by an influential party; yet how different was the conduct of Gratian towards the boy Valentinian II from that of Caracalla towards his brother Geta. It is in fact in Gratian that we for the first time see a really Christian emperor; those emperors who had preceded him during the sixty years since the establishment of Christianity had been Christians by profession; in Gratian for the first time we have the reality. Many are the examples which history shows of the fact that uncontrolled power like that wielded by a Roman emperor produces such great temptations that human nature can seldom stand against them; Gratian not only furnished one of the very rare exceptions, but showed the world a new thing.

For though he had only eight short years in which to show it, and these also in the volatile period of life between the ages of seventeen and twenty-four, yet Gratian taught all those who might sit on thrones after him that to be a great monarch, and at the same time to be true to what Christianity taught (even though surrounded by flatterers, and with none near him who would oppose his slightest wish), were two things not incompatible; that it could be done. And it was so done by Gratian that when the assassin's dagger called him to a sudden and violent death he had nothing to look back upon that was to be regretted, as is acknowledged by the whole of the contemporary authorities; while even those Pagan writers who were most inimical to him acknowledged the same when they were compelled to fall back upon a charge of overfondness for sport as the only fault they could find in this emperor.

Some may be led to imagine that the character of Gratian as here drawn depends largely upon laudatory statements of contemporary writers which may be merely court flatteries. But it is not so. We may eliminate all such statements and the same result will remain in the bare facts of Gratian's life. For, eliminating the whole of what his contemporary admirers have said of this nature, we have, first, his distinguished deeds in war during the five years 375-380, and his admirable winning over of the Goths to friendship by his generous treatment in the year 380. Secondly, we have the fact that

in a crisis universally held the greatest which ever came upon the Roman Empire he, at the age of twenty, admittedly displayed unexampled coolness, wisdom, and fortitude. Thirdly, we have the sagacity and nobility of character which he showed five months later in his selection of a colleague. Fourthly, we have his deeds in the administrative sphere, his burning the registers of arrears of taxation, his constant care for the people, his reducing taxation so largely that he seriously hampered himself, his liberality and kindness of heart to those who had suffered from his father's harshness, and his care for his sick and wounded soldiers, a thing previously unknown. And fifthly, we have his refusal to adopt the title of Pontifex Maximus, his removal of the altar of Victory from the Senate-house, and his refusal to allow the people to be unjustly taxed in order to support the Pagan priests at Rome, all of which deeds he knew must bring upon him fierce enmity, and might, if he would, have left undone. How forcibly these various deeds of Gratian's life refute the falsehoods enunciated by the enraged Pagan party, and contradict the picture of him which upon the authority of Gibbon has been that hitherto accepted, is self-evident.

The abilities demonstrated by Gratian both in war and peace during his eight years' reign, combined with the attractive qualities of disposition which were felt by all who came in contact with him, made up a character which was a new experience to the world. Few indeed are the cases which history has to show of individuals such as Gratian seated upon a throne; and few as they are they all belong to the later ages. The honour due to him is peculiarly his own; that of being the first who showed the world what it meant to be a Christian emperor.

CHAPTER XVI

THEODOSIUS THE GREAT

383 — 395

THE last emperor who ruled over the whole Roman Empire. Strong, wise, just, and courageous, Theodosius has even been thought by some (especially by ecclesiastical admirers) almost equal to Constantine the Great ; but no such comparison can in fact be made. Theodosius was not only entirely wanting in the tremendous energy displayed throughout life by Constantine, but also in Theodosius neither brilliant victories showing profound military genius, nor great reorganizations of the entire public service of the empire, and still less, the lifting a whole world to a higher plane of civilization and enlightenment, or far-sighted achievements capable of lasting sixteen hundred years, are to be found. Nevertheless, though he cannot be compared to Constantine, and though the name of Great was in the first instance only applied to Theodosius by the Church (on account of his thorough suppression of Arianism), historians have by degrees concurred with the Church in according this honour to his name, on account of the firmness and justice of his rule and the state of prosperity to which he thereby brought the empire. Besides wisdom, justice, and courage, one of the most marked features in his character was a peculiar mixture of indolence and irascibility ; sometimes he is found for long periods carrying out nothing worthy of record, and at others suddenly roused to great wrath, and under its influence committing some violent act which in his cooler moments he sincerely repented.

But the chief characteristic in Theodosius the Great was an overweening caution. In war he made victory practically

certain before he would consent to strike. But this valuable quality he carried to an excess. Never would he risk anything. And since in order to reach the highest results risks must at times be taken, no brilliant deed either in war or peace is ever found done by him. The result is to make him the least interesting of all the emperors of this period of the empire's zenith, and he never rouses our admiration as Constantine, Julian, Valentinian, and Gratian all do on occasion. His character was in fact more or less commonplace and wanting in originality, and this trait in his character, when combined with his fits of indolence, his slow and cautious movements where a nobler nature would have been fired at once to avenge the death of a colleague to whom he owed much, or to march to the relief of the oppressed, and his outbursts of unmeasured fury, tends to make us feel that the renown given to Theodosius (chiefly through the advocacy of the Church) has been to some extent excessive. At the same time he did much to earn men's gratitude; he put down with a firm hand the unrest in matters of religion which had long troubled the eastern half of the empire, he displayed much wisdom and common-sense in his administration, he governed on the whole with justice, and by a firm and equable rule he brought the empire to a high state of prosperity. He was the first emperor after Constantine the Great who made Constantinople his usual residence, and he added considerably to the imperial palace and to the adornment of the city.

The death of Gratian left Theodosius, who up to that time had possessed only half the third prefecture and the fourth prefecture, the rightful ruler over the whole empire. It might have been expected that he would forthwith march to the West to avenge the murder of the colleague who had raised him from obscurity to the imperial throne, and to suppress the usurper who had seized Gaul and was exercising the greatest tyranny upon its inhabitants. But at this crisis Theodosius' extreme caution at once made itself apparent. He knew that the troops in Gaul, the most formidable portion of the army, had been to a man gained over by the lavish bribes of Maximus, and were being kept contented by an unceasing stream of donations. At the same time the portion of his own army that would form

the best counterpoise to the legions of Gaul, the Goths, had been too short a time enrolled as *fœderati* for him to be sure of them in a contest, while they were at present occupied in getting their new lands into order. The stream of gold wrung from the cruelly oppressed inhabitants of Gaul would in time run dry; while the Goths would become each year more reliable as soldiers of his army. Consequently he would wait. He therefore temporized. How deeply the lie against himself in regard to Gratian by which in large degree Maximus had gained his ends rankled in Theodosius' mind is clearly shown by the first question he put, five years afterwards, to Maximus when the latter was brought a prisoner before him; while Theodosius' choleric temper must have specially prompted him to immediate action in revenge. But nevertheless his supreme caution caused him for the time being to stifle his resentment; he even consented to receive an embassy from the usurper, and agreed to his remaining in possession of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. He would risk no conflict with Maximus until he was absolutely certain of winning, which was not the case at present. It was not a dignified position for an emperor such as Theodosius to take up; while every sentiment of honour and gratitude should have made him eager to avenge the murder of Gratian, to whom he owed everything, and to refuse to make any terms with his murderer; but he knew his troops and the conditions of the case better than we do; and he was the quintessence of wariness.

The above procedure on the part of Theodosius left the empress Justina and her twelve-year-old son Valentinian II to cope as best they might with the usurper Maximus; and the latter was already casting an avaricious eye upon Italy. It was evidently of no use at present to look for any assistance from Theodosius, upon whom one of his periodical seasons of indolence appeared to have supervened, causing him to show no disposition to march to the West to protect Italy. In these circumstances Justina, though hitherto the bitter enemy of Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, feeling that he was the only strong man among those around her, besought him to become the protector and support of her young son, and to take measures to protect his dominions from the designs

of Maximus. Thus solicited, Ambrose in the winter of 383–384, crossed the Alps and proceeded to Trèves, where Maximus had established his court, and entered into negotiations which at first produced no result, Maximus demanding that the boy Valentinian II and his mother should come to him in person ; but after a long delay Ambrose extracted a promise from Maximus that he would not attack Italy. In the meantime Justina's general, Count Bauto, with such troops as could be collected, had occupied the passes of the Alps in strength, and Italy was for the time safe. Maximus afterwards declared that he had been foiled in his intentions by Ambrose and Bauto together.

The empress Justina, however, did not long remain grateful to Ambrose for the valuable assistance he had given. In 385 she began to demand that one of the churches of Milan should be made over to the Arian worship. In an age such as the present it would not have been an unreasonable request ; but in the existing state of affairs in regard to Arianism it was one which it was impossible to grant. It would have revived again all the fierce controversy which had been brought to an end by the edict of Gratian and Theodosius in 380. Ambrose therefore refused, on the ground that the Catholic religion having been established by the imperial edict, and Arianism prohibited, it was unlawful for him as a Bishop to do anything of the kind.¹ The contest between empress and archbishop over this matter raged furiously, the whole population of Milan becoming involved in it. Ambrose was twice summoned before the council and told that he must yield to the imperial will. Nevertheless he still refused. At length he was ordered to quit the city, and troops were sent to enforce the order. But the people surrounded him as a guard, and defended him in the cathedral church ; and in the end Ambrose's firmness prevailed.

During the years 384–387 Theodosius in the east was mainly

¹ Gibbon expends much indignation over this refusal, sneering at Ambrose, and speciously putting forward arguments such as would apply at the present day. But the conditions of the time were altogether different, and statesmanship, as well as faithfulness to his position as a Bishop, required that Ambrose should act as he did.

occupied in long and difficult negotiations with Sapor III of Persia regarding Armenia, negotiations which finally resulted in a partition of Armenia between Rome and Persia. In 386 a large body of Ostrogoths who had hitherto remained in their original locality north of the Danube, and had been conquered by the Huns, appeared on the Danube and requested to be admitted within the empire, in the same manner as the rest of their nation. Theodosius refused the request, whereupon they attempted to cross the river, making a night attack upon the Roman forces guarding it, but were defeated with great loss. After this defeat, however, the survivors were allowed to settle within the empire, like the rest of their nation, as *fœderati*.

In February 387, in consequence of a special tax imposed by Theodosius upon Antioch, a serious riot occurred at that city, and in connection with it we first hear of a very notable man. The infuriated mob attacked the palace of the governor, plundered the public Baths, and finally threw down the statues of the emperor and his recently deceased empress, Flaccilla,¹ and dragged them through the streets with insults. The riot was soon suppressed by the governor, the ringleaders were put to death, and a courier was despatched to Constantinople bearing a report of what had occurred; but the people having come to their senses, were dismayed at what would be their fate when the emperor came to hear of what had taken place. When the news reached Theodosius he was seized with fury, and in the heat of his anger gave orders for the entire destruction of the proud city of Antioch, "the Crown of the East," and the massacre of all its inhabitants. On the 22nd March the imperial commissioners, Caesarius and Hellebicus, reached Antioch with the emperor's sentence upon the city. This was more temperate than that which he had at first enunciated. Antioch, the metropolis of the East, was to be stripped of its privileges, lands, and revenue, and degraded to the rank of a "village"; baths, circus, and theatres were to be closed; the public distribution of corn to the inhabitants was abolished;

¹ Flaccilla, married to Theodosius before he was selected by Gratian as his colleague, was not a strong character, and took no part in public affairs. It is however recorded of her that she was accustomed to visit the hospitals and nurse the sick.

and a strict enquiry was to take place to elicit the names, not only of all who had perpetrated, but also of all who had failed to prevent, the insults to the sacred statues.

The people were panic-stricken. The aged Bishop, Flavian, Pope of Antioch, braving the hardships of a rapid journey of 800 miles, set forth for Constantinople to plead with the emperor for a reversal or mitigation of the terrible sentence. Meanwhile many of the principal inhabitants were arrested, and examined with torture, while the rest waited in terrified suspense to learn their doom, cheered only by the calming influence of one man. John Chrysostom, born at Antioch in 347, the son of a military officer of high rank, had studied under the noted Pagan rhetorician Libanius, and had in 386 been ordained a deacon and appointed by Flavian as the chief preacher in the cathedral of Antioch, where his extraordinary eloquence had won him the name by which he is always known.¹ While the city awaited in terror the result of the commissioners' enquiry, and of Flavian's intercession at Constantinople, Chrysostom preached every day in the crowded cathedral of Antioch, exhorting the people in impassioned language to exercise fortitude and calmness, to repent of their sins, and to prepare on the one hand for death should the emperor's sentence be executed, and on the other hand for a reformed life should the emperor's heart be touched by the intercession made to him, and the city be spared. Meanwhile the imperial commissioners continued their examination, but they were touched by the repentance of the city, and having concluded their enquiry, reserved judgement until their report had been placed before the emperor. Caesarius, taking the report with him, and travelling day and night, managed to cover the whole distance to Constantinople in only six

¹ "Chryso-stomos," golden-mouthed. "St. Chrysostom's sermons have been said to be the finest ever uttered by any uninspired man. A great number, taken down as they were preached, still remain, and fully justify his reputation as the Church's greatest preacher. They are distinguished by much good sense, abundant and apt illustrations, and a clear and flowing style of language. He is always making practical applications, and appeals to his hearers with a deep knowledge of the human heart" (Canon Robertson).

days,¹ and on arrival joined his intercession with that of Flavian. Theodosius' anger had already been calmed by Flavian's intercession, and the city was pardoned, the joyful news being received on Easter Day.

On this same Easter Day 387, while Antioch was transported with joy at its relief from the miseries it had been anticipating, there took place more than 2000 miles away in the West, at Milan, an event fraught with important consequences (more especially to the English race) which have lasted to the present day, viz. the baptism in the cathedral of Milan by St. Ambrose of a man who was destined to become more celebrated even than the latter, Augustine of Thagaste, better known as Augustine of Hippo, the city of which he was subsequently Bishop for thirty-five years. Born in 354 at the little town of Thagaste in Numidia, his father a Pagan, and his mother the tender-hearted Christian, Monica, at the age of seventeen Augustine was sent to Carthage to study rhetoric, and in 383 (the year of Gratian's death) was appointed professor of rhetoric at Milan. There, three years later, at the age of thirty-two, he became converted to Christianity, and on Easter Day 387 was baptized by St. Ambrose. His mother Monica died a few months later at Ostia, as she and he were preparing to embark for Africa, her last words being to bid this son, for whose conversion she had wept and prayed for many years, always to pray for her at the time of the Holy Sacrifice. He returned to Thagaste, in 390 was ordained a priest at Hippo, and in 395 was chosen as Bishop of Hippo (the modern Bona). His reputation does not rest upon his learning; Jerome was in this age the great ecclesiastical scholar, Ambrose the great ecclesiastical statesman, and

¹ The rapidity with which journeys were accomplished in the Roman Empire by means of the excellent roads is shown in the case of this episode. The riot at Antioch occurred on the 26th Feb. Between that date and the 22nd March (24 days) the riot was suppressed, the governor wrote his report of it, a courier conveyed the report to Constantinople (800 miles), the emperor's orders were issued to Caesarius and Hellebicus to proceed to Antioch, and these officers travelled thither. From which it would appear that both the courier and the imperial commissioners must have covered at least 100 miles each day; while in the case of the return journey of Caesarius to Constantinople the latter covered 133 miles each day.

Chrysostom the great preacher ; but Augustine was the great thinker of the age, taking all the learning of the ancient world and making it the raw material of his theology. And it has often been said that the theology of St. Augustine has more deeply permeated the religious thought of the English race and of the Church of England than the theology of any other teacher of religion since the Apostles.

In August 387 Maximus, notwithstanding the engagement he had given, invaded Italy. The empress Justina, with her three daughters and her son Valentinian II (by this time sixteen), fled to Aquileia, and thence by sea to Thessalonica, to the protection of Theodosius. The latter proceeded from Constantinople to Thessalonica, promptly fell in love with one of the three daughters of Valentinian I and Justina, the beautiful princess Galla, and married her, at the same time promising at her request to reinstate her young brother.

Theodosius now prepared for war with the usurper Maximus, and as usual, made arrangements which rendered the result a foregone conclusion. The whole of the East, from the Euphrates to the Adriatic, and from the Nile to the Caucasus, resounded with his military and naval preparations. Theodosius, always deliberate, and not inclined at once to leave his newly-married bride, occupied the whole winter in these extensive preparations, but in May 388, he set out from Constantinople to dispose of Maximus. The latter, after marching through northern Italy and establishing himself at Aquileia, had advanced to Siscia on the Save. Theodosius, not content with a large army under his own command, which included a numerous force of cavalry, with squadrons of Goths and Alans formed into mounted archers, had also despatched a powerful fleet to make a diversion upon the coasts of Italy, and a separate force, under his best general Arbogast, to advance by the Danube route through Rhætia.

The main army, by a rapid march, reached Siscia towards the beginning of July, crossed the Save, and promptly routed the enemy, the traitor Andragathius being killed. A second victory was won about a week later at Pætovio on the Drave, Maximus flying for safety to Aquileia. Theodosius, rapidly following him, and passing through Æmona, which had stood a long siege, gave Maximus no time to prepare to defend

Aquileia, and the latter finding himself surrounded, was forced to surrender. Three miles outside the city Theodosius pitched his camp, and there the trembling tyrant, with his hands tied behind him, was brought before him. "Is it true," said the emperor, "that it was with my concurrence that you usurped the throne from Gratian, and murdered him?" To which Maximus replied, "It is not true, but without that pretext I could never have persuaded the troops to revolt from Gratian." Theodosius looked at him for a moment in contemptuous pity, but regard for public justice, and the memory of Gratian, forbade his being spared, and Maximus was forthwith removed by the guards and beheaded (28th July, 388).

Theodosius then advanced to Milan, proclaimed a general amnesty to all who had sided with Maximus, sent Arbogast to rule in Gaul, restored Justina and her son Valentinian II to their former position, and at last rescued Gratian's body, having it brought back from Gaul, and buried at Milan. The empress Justina died immediately after reaching Milan. Theodosius, to his honour, supported the aged mother, and educated the orphan daughters, of Maximus.¹

For the next three years Theodosius fixed his residence at Milan, gradually bringing back the West to the same state of order and good government to which he had brought the East. The essential feature of his rule was sound and solid administration, carried out cautiously and without any startling innovations. His legislation shows a steadfast aim at removing injustice and improving the social condition of the people. Thus we find, among others, laws enacted by him directing that provision is to be made for the children of criminals, that farmers are not to be compelled to sell corn to the State at less than its market value, that special officers are to be appointed to see that robbers and highwaymen do not go unpunished, that men robbed on the highways are to be permitted to slay the robber, that an accused person shall not be at once thrown into prison, but be given time to put his affairs in order, that the whole of a criminal's property is not to be confiscated, but a portion of it to go to his children, that tax-gatherers are to use fixed weights and measures,

¹ Ambrose. Tome ii. Epist xl, p. 955.

and that men are not to be forced to undertake high offices involving costly expenditure by which they may be ruined. Laws of this kind showed much personal knowledge of the life of the people and the directions in which they were apt to suffer injustice. And by many similar enactments Theodosius probably did more to increase the general prosperity of the empire and the happiness and contentment of the people than might have resulted from more showy legislation.

In June 389 Theodosius paid a visit to Rome, accompanied by his niece Serena, the second of his two sons (the five-year-old Honorius), and the young Valentinian II, remaining there about three months. At Rome he effected various local reforms (several of which tended still further to hasten the end of the dying remnants of Paganism), attended the public games, mixed freely with all classes, and by his genial temperament gained much popularity with the Romans. During this visit Theodosius founded at Rome the church dedicated to the memory of St. Paul, which afterwards became the fifth of that city's five principal churches, situated outside the walls a little more than a mile from the Ostian Gate. Though now standing in a locality uninhabitable owing to the malaria induced 150 years later by the cutting of the aqueducts, it was at that time surrounded by a populous suburb and many country residences of the nobles, and eventually became the finest church in Rome. Damasus had died in 384, and had been succeeded as Bishop of Rome and Pope of the western patriarchate by Siricius (384-398), who during the emperor's visit also began building the church of St. Pudenziana, which still exists. While the court was at Rome Theodosius' niece Serena, visiting the temple of Rhea, and seeing a costly necklace round the neck of the goddess, took it off, in the presence of the last of the Vestal Virgins, and placed it round her own neck, thereby giving great offence, which had serious results to herself nineteen years later. In September Theodosius returned to Milan.

In the spring of 390 Theodosius was thrown into another of his furious gusts of rage at news received from Thessalonica, where, in consequence of the deserved imprisonment of a favourite charioteer of bad character, the people at the games had raised a serious riot in which they had murdered the

commander of the troops, Botherich, and some of his guards. On hearing of this outrage the emperor, transported with rage, issued orders for a summary retribution. The people of Thessalonica, gathered in the circus watching the races, were suddenly surrounded and attacked by the troops, who executed an indiscriminate massacre of men, women, and children, lasting three hours, in which 7000 persons were slain. Atrocious as it was, this massacre was, of course, not so atrocious as the deliberate, widespread, and cruel massacres of perfectly innocent persons, which had been carried out by Marcus Aurelius in 177-180, by Septimius Severus in 203-211, by Decius in 250-251, by Valerian in 257-260, and by Diocletian in 303-305; but nevertheless Theodosius, when his first burst of anger had cooled, was thoroughly ashamed of his order, and despatched an urgent command reversing it, but it was too late, the messenger only reaching Thessalonica after the massacre had taken place.¹

Thereupon Ambrose, the Archbishop of Milan, wrote to the emperor expressing his horror at such a crime, and, appealing to Theodosius' nobility of character, pointed out that it was impossible that he could be admitted to the Holy Communion until he had, like David, shown repentance for such an act. The emperor by this time felt great remorse for his deed; nevertheless on the following Sunday he came in state to the cathedral as usual, and was about to enter it when the brave Archbishop ordered the large western door to be closed, met the emperor in the *atrium* in front of the church, and told him he could not be admitted. Theodosius spoke of his contrition, but Ambrose replied that so public a crime demanded an equally public contrition. Whereupon the emperor withdrew. And it demonstrates how truly great was Theodosius' character that he admitted Ambrose to be right, and voluntarily underwent the humiliation of a public acknowledgement of his crime before the whole people. Laying aside his im-

¹ We obtain at once a measure of the superior standard in all such matters in the period from Constantine to Theodosius as compared with that of the Antonine emperors, or of any period before 312, by our own instinctive feeling that such conduct is less excusable in an emperor belonging to the 4th century than in an emperor belonging to the 2nd or 3rd century.

perial ornaments, he remained for eight months in seclusion, and then, on Christmas Day 390, was formally and publicly re-admitted to the communion of the Church, while at the same time he issued a law, to guard against such terrible episodes in the future, enacting that an interval of thirty days was to elapse between a capital sentence and its execution.

The church where this celebrated episode occurred, formerly the cathedral of Milan, built by Gratian in the last year of his reign, and now called the church of St. Ambrose, is still to be seen in Milan, with its characteristic *atrium* (or forecourt) in which this interview took place, and the large western door opening into it which was closed in the face of Theodosius. St. Ambrose's plain marble episcopal chair is still to be seen in the apse behind the choir, and in the crypt the large marble sarcophagus containing his remains. The porphyry pillars of the ruined Pagan temple of Bacchus on the site of which this church was built still support the canopy over the high altar, and remain as an interesting memorial of the construction of this church having helped to cause the death of its founder, Gratian. In this church was kept for eight centuries the small gold diadem studded with precious stones, having round the inside of it a thin strip of iron said to be a nail of the True Cross.¹

In 391 Theodosius left Milan again for the East. Before his departure he committed to Valentinian II, who was now twenty, but weak in character, the nominal rule of the West, commending him to the guidance of Ambrose. Theodosius on reaching Constantinople entered that city by "the Golden Gate," erected by his orders to commemorate his victory over Maximus, in a chariot drawn by elephants. In the following year he issued an edict to extinguish the dying embers of Paganism, prohibiting in all cities any further Pagan sacrifices, and forbidding the people even to enter the Pagan temples, which thereupon in many cases were pulled down by the people themselves; Theodosius thus finally completing what Constantine had begun.

The unfortunate young Valentinian II did not long survive

¹ Regarding this celebrated crown and its connection with Constantine, see Vol. II, Chap. XXIV, pp. 426-430. It is now kept in the cathedral of Monza.

when Theodosius' personal protection was removed. His chief general, Arbogast, ruling in Gaul, absorbed all power, and, though ready to acknowledge the authority of Theodosius, treated Valentinian with contempt, and the latter, who had moved to Vienne, near Lyons, found himself almost a prisoner in his palace. Foreseeing that he was likely soon to fall a victim to the designs of Arbogast, he, early in May 392, sent an urgent message to Milan imploring Ambrose to come to his assistance. But though the latter started at once, halfway to Vienne, as he was crossing the Alps, the news met him that Valentinian was dead, murdered in the palace at Vienne¹ by the orders of Arbogast (15th May, 392), who thereupon set up in his place a puppet emperor, a rhetorician named Eugenius. Valentinian's body was carried to Milan, and wept over by his two sisters (for whose sake he had refrained from marrying), and was buried in a huge porphyry sarcophagus at Milan.

The empress Galla ceaselessly adjured Theodosius to avenge her brother. But, as on the previous occasion when Gratian was murdered, Theodosius, under the combined effects of caution and indolence, did not do so for two whole years. He knew that this was no case of meeting a commander of so little ability as Maximus; that Arbogast, who had served under himself, was the best general in the empire; and that the struggle would be a severe one. He therefore made long and very thorough preparations for the contest. All through the year 393 these preparations went on, troops being summoned from the most distant parts of the empire, ships being built to increase the naval strength in the Adriatic, the arsenals being kept hard at work, and the troops brought to the highest pitch of training.

At last in June 394 Theodosius started, with a large and well-equipped army. But the beautiful empress Galla, she for whom the whole campaign had been undertaken, died

¹ His body was found strangled in a room in the palace. The partisans of Arbogast declared that he had committed suicide, but this is rendered specially improbable by the fact that he had requested Ambrose to come and administer to him the rite of baptism, deferred until now that he feared the loss of his life. Moreover both the empress Galla and Theodosius evidently knew that he had been murdered by Arbogast.

in giving birth to a daughter ¹ as the army was leaving Constantinople, and Theodosius marched westwards with a heavy heart.

It shows how successfully and with what wisdom the process of absorbing the Goths into the empire was being carried out, when we find that this army marching against Arbogast included among its best troops nearly 40,000 Goths, the contingent from the Ostrogoths being commanded by Gainas, and that from the Visigoths by their chief Alaric (belonging to the royal race of the Balti),² then about thirty years old, and about to obtain his first view of Italy. It is good to see how at this period several of the most distinguished officers in the Roman army belonged to the northern races,³ and instead of being an error (as almost invariably held by historians on the authority of the narrow-minded Roman writers), it shows how well Rome understood the way to rule a great empire. It has once before been noted ⁴ as highly important, that when a race had been included in such an empire it should at no long interval be raised to full equality with the rest of the empire by allowing it to contribute a portion of the military strength. The large-minded policy is thus to act; the small-minded one is, from fear of trusting the recently conquered race, to exclude it from the army of the empire, thereby keeping it in the position of a subject race. Rome had in turn absorbed the Gauls, the warlike races of Spain, and the warlike races of Illyricum, Pannonia, and Rhætia, and had in each case raised the conquered race to full equality in the manner mentioned, and even some of her best emperors had come from these races. She was now adopting the same course in the case of the Goths. And had the latter continued to be treated

¹ The afterwards celebrated Galla Placidia.

² Among the Goths the Amals, the royal race of the Ostrogoths, took precedence of all; but the royal race of the Visigoths, the Balti (or Baltha), came only second to the Amals. The name appears in our English names Theobald and Ethelbald, in the German Willibald, and in the Italian Garibaldi.

³ As, for instance, Stilicho, a Vandal, then 34 years old, and married to the emperor's niece, Serena; Bauto, a Frank, whose daughter was a year or two later married to Theodosius' son Arcadius; Saul, an Alan; and the brave and loyal Armenian, Bacurius, who was killed in the ensuing battle.

⁴ Chap. VI. p. 214.

as they were by Gratian and Theodosius, the result would undoubtedly have been as satisfactory as it had been in that of other warlike races which had been incorporated within the empire. Moreover the change in the feelings of the Goths which subsequently turned them from a race forming part of the empire once more into enemies of Rome is directly to be traced to the mismanagement of the successors of Theodosius, which caused the Goths to feel themselves treated as a subject race, a position which they refused to endure.

Theodosius had a march of 1100 miles to take before reaching the pass over the Julian Alps, where he expected to have to fight Arbogast, who, with his puppet Eugenius, had advanced to Aquileia. The Roman road from Sirmium to Aquileia crosses the Julian Alps at the "Pear Tree" pass (now the Birnbaumer Wald), a plateau not more than 2000 feet high. Arbogast had for some reason not occupied the plateau itself (probably owing to the fury of the celebrated *Bora*, an icy wind which blows fiercely over this plateau),¹ but was encamped in the valley below the western end of the pass, on the bank of the river Frigidus (now the Wipbach),² and there a two days battle took place on the 5th and 6th September (probably near the present town of Heiligen Kreuz), known as the battle of the Frigidus.

We know nothing about the tactics employed, but it appears that Arbogast adopted the rôle of the defence and Theodosius that of the attack, which as the latter had the preponderance of numbers was natural. The attack was led by the Gothic troops of Theodosius' army, and these troops suffered enormously. A long and severe struggle throughout the whole of the first day ended most unsuccessfully for Theodosius; of the Goths nearly half their total number are said to have been killed, and the rest of them retired, though not in disorder, from the field.

¹ Nothing can stand against it, and heavy laden wagons have been overturned by it.

² This river derived its name from its peculiar character. Icy cold even in summer, it suddenly bursts forth from the foot of the cliffs near the town of Wipbach, not a mere mountain stream, but a river as large as the Aar at Thun; and countless Roman soldiers in crossing the Julian Alps, on their hot marches between the east and west of the empire, have refreshed themselves with its clear ice-cold water.

When night fell Arbogast thought he had gained the victory. Theodosius was advised by his generals to retreat during the night, but he would not, and seeking out a solitary place in the hills, spent the night in earnest prayer. On the morning of the 6th September he renewed the battle; before long the dreaded *Bora* began to blow down from the pass from behind his troops into the faces of the enemy, blinding them with clouds of dust, tearing their shields from their hands, and carrying back their missiles upon themselves, and Arbogast's army, unable to fight under these conditions, was completely routed. Eugenius was seized and slain; Arbogast fled into the mountains, and after wandering there for two days committed suicide. This hardfought victory having been gained, Theodosius advanced through northern Italy to Milan, where he granted a general pardon to all who had taken the part of Arbogast, even the latter's ministers only losing their rank and titles for a year. The poet Claudian, the last of the Roman poets, and a Pagan, who flourished in the reign of Theodosius and his son Honorius, wrote a long poem on the battle of the Frigidus, glorifying the emperor in grandiloquent language.

It had been predicted to Theodosius before leaving Constantinople that he would win the battle, but would not long survive it. Though he was only forty-eight, his constitution had never recovered the shock it sustained by his long and dangerous illness in the year 380, and soon after establishing himself again at Milan he felt that his end was approaching. Thereupon he sent to Constantinople for his younger son Honorius (now eleven), to come to him, in charge of his niece Serena, the wife of his capable general Stilicho. He had left his elder son Arcadius (now eighteen) in charge of affairs in the East when he started from Constantinople.

Theodosius only survived his beloved empress Galla seven months, and died at Milan on the 17th January, 395. On his deathbed he left the eastern half of the empire to his son Arcadius, and the western half to his son Honorius, a division of the empire which neither Theodosius nor any one else at that time contemplated being permanent, but which eventually became so, the two portions never again being united. It was decided that the dead emperor must be buried like

his predecessors in Constantine's church of the Twelve Apostles at Constantinople ; but before the *cortège* started from Milan a solemn funeral service was held in the cathedral of Milan, where the scene of his penance had taken place. The funeral oration was spoken by Ambrose, the Archbishop, who at the same time comforted the little Honorius, who sat crying bitterly at not being allowed to accompany his father's body back to Constantinople which had been his home. On reaching Constantinople the body of the dead emperor was received by his son Arcadius, and buried by him in the church of the Twelve Apostles.

A crushing disaster rapidly retrieved ; two powerful rebellions successively defeated ; the fifty years' discord in religious matters made to cease ; a counterfeit of the true religion suppressed ; the lingering remains of Paganism extinguished ; peace and good government everywhere established throughout that wide dominion, these are the achievements of Theodosius the Great. It is the last view that we have of Rome's great empire as a whole ; henceforth its history becomes that of two separated portions, and then of many separate countries. And it is Theodosius who has made that last view one of an empire flourishing in peace and prosperity.

At the end of the reign of Theodosius (or possibly during the first year of the reigns of his two sons) was published the important *Notitia Dignitatum*,¹ a complete Official Directory and Army List of the whole Roman empire, both East and West, in ninety chapters. It contains the names of each principal official and of his subordinates, with a description of his office, and a list of the secretaries, notaries, registrars, and other classes of persons belonging to it. This voluminous Directory furnishes an invaluable mine of information on many subjects, while it helps to demonstrate the prosperous

¹ Its full title is, *Notitia dignitatum omnium, tam civilium quam militarium, in partibus Orientis et Occidentis* ("The official list of all ranks, both civil and military, in both East and West"). Regarding one principal copy, German characteristics have been somewhat amusingly exemplified. In 1839 the German editor Böcking, with national undue assumption of superiority, wrote, "In what corner of that great chaos of manuscripts and books called England this codex may now be lying I am unable to conjecture." And all the time it was safely housed and duly catalogued in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

and efficient condition of the empire at the close of the reign of Theodosius. The variety of subjects upon which it is able to supply information is infinite; for instance, the whole identification of the existing ruins along the line of the Wall of Severus in Britain has been educed from the mention in the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the names of the cohorts occupying the different stations.

This year of Theodosius' death (395) is notable as being that in which the Christian Church decided upon what writings (among the many which advanced a similar claim) should be accepted as inspired and form the New Testament; thus deciding upon what is called "The Canon of Holy Scripture." It is strange to realize that not less than twelve generations of Christians had lived and died before such a point as what was "the Bible" (so far as the New Testament was concerned) was finally determined.

From Augustus to Theodosius there had been 56 emperors. Of these 16 reigned too short a time to be justly reckoned either good or bad; but of the remaining 40 emperors who during the 423 years from B.C. 28 to A.D. 395 governed the Roman Empire, 24 had been good emperors and 16 bad. And perhaps the greatest monument ever raised to the qualities and abilities of the military profession is constituted by the fact that out of the 24 good emperors who at different times ruled so ably this vast empire of Rome, no less than 18 were soldiers;¹ while out of the 16 bad emperors two only were soldiers.

At the beginning of this history it was asserted² that the zenith of the Roman Empire is not the period of eighty-two years (98-180) under the emperors from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius, but is the period of eighty-one years (314-395), under the emperors from Constantine to Theodosius, and that the condition of that empire under this latter group of emperors surpassed, from every point of view, its condition under the earlier group. It now remains to consider how far this assertion is correct.

¹ A list comprising such names as Augustus, Tiberius, Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Aurelian, Constantine the Great, Valentinian I, and Theodosius the Great.

² Preface, p. viii.

In determining such a question there is one kind of evidence which is superior to all others. It is an important axiom (one too little regarded) never to rely upon the evidence of authorities when there is better evidence available. And this is the case here. The statements of contemporary authorities may mislead us on such a point owing to half-a-dozen different causes, even supposing that the writers in question were free from bias, which was seldom the case, as most of these authorities were Pagans anxious to prove that the condition of the empire in its best Pagan period (the 2nd century), surpassed that in its Christian period (the 4th century), and that Christianity had brought nothing but a decline. On the other hand the evidence furnished by *the empire itself* cannot lie. This kind of evidence is therefore infinitely superior to that of the writings of any "authorities," no matter who they may be.¹ For that reason this more reliable kind of evidence has throughout alone been here employed in determining the question of whether the 2nd century (hitherto held to have been the zenith of the Roman empire) was surpassed or not by the 4th century, and to what degree. The chief factors in such a question may be assumed to be military strength, splendour of cities, prosperity of the people, and general standard of enlightenment, civilization, and public and private morality.

(i) *Military strength.* The contemporary writers tell us little or nothing regarding the interior economy, *personnel*, training, and efficiency of the army at this period. This, however, is perhaps after all no loss, since instead of contemporary writings which might be in error either through ignorance of military affairs or through bias on the part of the writers, it leaves us in regard to the efficiency of the army at this time to the surer guide of the records which inform us what that army accomplished. As before remarked,² the strength and efficiency of an army or body of troops is not to be measured by what this or that contemporary writer may say of it, but by what that army or body of troops has shown that it could do.

Every evidence shows that the military strength of the

¹ For the chief authorities regarding the period from Constantine to Theodosius, see Note D, p. 588.

² Chap. XIV, p. 490 (footnote).

empire at this period (the 4th century), had advanced enormously since the time of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. Not only were the frontier defences far more perfect, and the army nearly double in numbers, but the military genius of Constantine in for the first time dividing the army into definite general officers' commands, reducing the size of the legion to one better suited to the tactics of the time, separating the command of the cavalry from that of the infantry, and forming a distinct department for the arsenals and commissariat, had quadrupled its fighting power.¹ And although its foes had grown much more formidable, by reason of their increased numbers, their improved skill in war, and the more warlike character of the Goths, the Franks, and the Persians, in comparison with the Dacians, the Quadi, the Marcomanni, and the Parthians,² nevertheless the training and efficiency of the Roman army had in the intervening 134 years increased in still greater proportion, as is proved by its deeds. Never once was it defeated when commanded by a real soldier; only twice in these eighty-one years was it defeated at all, once in the Persian campaign in 363, when its retreat reflected as much glory upon it as any of its victories, and once under Valens at Hadrianople in 378, when its defeat was in no way due to imperfection in the troops, and was quickly retrieved.³ And against these two defeats it could set a long list of victories, a list of military achievements with which those of the period 98-180 (even including the victories under Trajan) could not compare for an instant. Nor was it likely that troops who could fight against Romans in the manner shown at the battles of Turin and Verona in 312, at the battle of Cibalae in 314, at the battle of Hadrianople in 323, and at the battle of Mursa in 351, would find much difficulty in disposing of barbarian foes, and the Goths, the Franks, the Allemanni, and the Quadi all suffered crushing defeats from them in the years 332, 356-359, 366, 368, 375, 378, and 380.⁴

¹ Chap. XIII, pp. 427-428.

² It must be remembered that the Parthians were in the 3rd century succeeded by the much more warlike Persian empire under the dynasty of the Sassanidæ.

³ Chap. XV, p. 529.

⁴ Chap. XIII, p. 429; Chap. XIV, p. 467; and Chap. XV, pp. 498, 502, 514, 522, and 531.

Speaking of the Roman army during this 4th century the historian Gibbon has asserted, "Not a vestige was left of that severe simplicity which in the ages of freedom and victory had distinguished the line of battle of a Roman army from the confused host of an Asiatic monarch."¹ The whole of the battles fought by Constantine (more especially those at Turin, Verona, Saxa Rubra, Cibalae, and Hadrianople, and the thorough defeat of the Gothic host in 332), the hard-fought battle of Mursa under Constantius in 351, the splendid series of victories under Julian over the Franks and Allemanni in 356-359, the no less splendid conduct of the Roman army in the retreat from Persia in 363, the victories of that army under Valentinian on the Rhine, in Britain, and in Africa, including in particular its behaviour at the battle of Solicinium in 368, the victory of Colmar under Gratian in 378, the victories of Theodosius and Gratian over the Goths in 379 and 380, and the victories at Siscia and Pœtovio under Theodosius in 388, give an overwhelming refutation to the assertion. Moreover Ammianus Marcellinus, who had himself taken part in several of these battles during the 4th century, distinctly states that the discipline of the Roman troops was so excellent that they could always beat the barbarian forces, even though the latter were much more numerous, contrasting the "impetuous fury of the barbarians" with "the steady discipline and coolness" of the Roman troops.² The evidence furnished by the long list of battles which have been quoted, fought between 312 and 388, supported as it is by the statement of such a witness, shows conclusively that never in the whole course of its history was the Roman army at so high a pitch of discipline, training, and efficiency, or the military strength of the empire so great, as it was in the period from Constantine to Theodosius.

¹ Gibbon. *Decline and Fall*, II, 322. The statement is aimed at Constantine. Plenty of authorities for any statement against the man who abolished Paganism as the State religion could of course always be found amongst his persistent revilers, the Pagan writers of the time, and Gibbon has used them freely. But while in other matters to refute such untruths is more difficult, in military matters the hard facts of the battlefield are able to do so; as in this case.

² Ammianus Marcellinus, xvi, 12, 47.

To what a degree the period 98–180, from Trajan¹ to Marcus Aurelius, was surpassed in this respect is easily shown by two examples out of many. In the period between 166 to 180 three great provinces, the size of modern kingdoms, Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia, were ravaged by the Marcomanni and the Quadi for no less than fourteen years, the whole power of the Roman army being unable to expel them. On the other hand in the year 332, upon the Goths advancing in immense strength under their king Araric into Mœsia, the Roman army in a single battle promptly and completely crushed them, and drove the survivors back in flight across the Danube. Again in the year 375, when the Quadi dared to invade Pannonia as they had done in the 2nd century, the Roman army in a single short campaign crossed the Danube into their country, devastated it from end to end, slaughtered them in immense numbers, killed their king, and brought the Quadi to their knees. To any one who has sufficient military knowledge to realize what a general want of effectiveness for war is shown by the instance quoted in connection with the years 166–180, and on the other hand what great efficiency in numberless details, all combining to produce the result, is shown by the instances quoted in connection with the years 332 and 375, the difference in the military strength demonstrated will at once be apparent. And when we take note of the whole of the examples which have been quoted in connection with Constantine, Julian, Valentinian, Gratian, and Theodosius the idea that the military strength of the empire in the time of the Antonine emperors was equal to that which it possessed in the period from 314 to 395 becomes altogether, and even absurdly, untenable.

(ii) *Splendour of cities.* In regard to whether the splendour of the cities of the empire in the 2nd century was surpassed or not in the 4th century, the point is particularly plain. For the empire in the age from Constantine to Theodosius possessed uninjured every one of the splendid buildings erected at Rome and elsewhere up to the time of Commodus (at the

¹ Trajan's victories, though great, were not gained over such warlike races as the Roman army had to meet in the 4th century, the Dacians being a much less warlike race than the Goths, the Franks, and the Allemanni, and the Parthians than the Persians.

end of the 2nd century), and *in addition* possessed also the buildings which had since then been erected in Rome, in North Africa,¹ and in other parts of the empire by Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Alexander Severus, Diocletian, Constantine, Valentinian I, and Theodosius, including not only the many splendid buildings erected after the 2nd century at Rome, and in North Africa, but also the four new capitals of Trèves, Milan, Sirmium, and Nicomedia, and, above all, the new city of Constantinople. To these may be added the church of the Holy Sepulchre built by Constantine at Jerusalem and called "the Great Church," the church built by him at Antioch and called "the Golden Church," the magnificent church of the Holy Apostles built by him at Constantinople, the five important churches built by him at Rome, the other notable churches built by him at Thessalonica, Nicomedia, Bethlehem, Mamre, Tyre, and Heliopolis, and the churches of St. Paul and St. Pudenziana built at Rome in the reign of Theodosius the Great, the most splendid feature of all these churches being their mosaic decoration. Thus as regards this point (ii) there had in the 4th century been nothing but additions to what was possessed in the 2nd century, and therefore, so far from any "decline," a great and tangible increase in the splendour of the cities of the empire.

(iii) *Prosperity of the people.* The evidence that the general prosperity, so far from declining, had in the 4th century immensely increased as compared with the 2nd century, is also superabundant. To the Roman of Rome, accustomed to look at everything solely from the standpoint of that city, and disgusted at the erection of four other capitals which vied with it, at the removal of the emperor and the court and all that city's former glory as the centre of the life of the empire, and most of all at the erection of Constantinople, there was nothing to be seen but a decline; but to every one else the evidence against this theory of a decline was immense.

The contemporary Roman writers universally condemn the burden of taxation during the period from Constantine to Theodosius as being crushingly heavy. But judging by

¹ Regarding the evidence furnished by the ruined cities of North Africa as to the numerous splendid buildings erected in those cities during the 3rd and 4th centuries, see Vol. II, Chap. XVIII, pp. 80-81.

the tangible evidence of a universal and constantly increasing prosperity in all directions, it would appear that very little weight should be attached to these statements. Improved civil administration, improved communications, improved municipal arrangements to increase the comfort of the inhabitants of towns, improved water supplies, and increased measures for defence all cost money, and this cost must usually be met by additional taxation, which therefore ever tends to increase in a country which is progressing. No one likes taxation, and consequently in the period in question (as in all other periods of progress in every age) we find loud complaints of the ever-rising taxation, and declarations that it is due to this or that extravagance on the part of the rulers. But the point is not whether a man pays more in this way than he did at a previous time, but whether he pays a larger proportion of his income; and details on this point are never forthcoming. Again the condition of the poorest classes in the period in question makes it very doubtful whether the burden of taxation was so heavy as contemporary writers assert; wherever we come across any details showing the condition of those classes in this 4th century the people do not present the appearance of being in nearly so great poverty as is the case with thousands of the poorest classes in the cities of the same countries in the present day. It is of course very difficult to ascertain the correct state of affairs on such a point, but the general facts (see below) are indisputable; and these show with tolerable certainty that the taxation cannot have been as crushing as contemporary writers would have us believe.¹

For when we turn to look at the empire itself in this 4th

¹ It is to be noted that this same complaint of crushing taxation is found made even in the 2nd century, under the Antonine emperors. And as the empire went on progressing the complaints, as usual, became louder. At the same time there is nothing to be said in favour of the Roman methods of taxation. Throughout her whole history Rome failed to evince in her fiscal policy a wisdom as enlightened as she displayed in her military arrangements, and most of her methods of taxation were beneath contempt in their short-sightedness, as well as in their tendency to open the door to every kind of corruption. Nevertheless, in spite of this, commercial prosperity steadily advanced owing to the good effects of her rule in other respects,

century, and to compare it with the conditions existing in the 2nd century, we are met by evidences on every hand of greatly increased prosperity, and of an immense change which cannot be gainsaid to be seen in this respect all over the empire. Two hundred years of Roman rule had changed half-barbarous countries into civilized provinces covered with busy cities and luxurious country residences. Places such as Paris had grown from obscure villages into important cities furnished with a Forum, Baths, an Amphitheatre, and many fine private residences; settlements which in the time of the Antonine emperors had been merely military camps had become busy and populous towns; countries such as Gaul and Britain which in the 2nd century had been for the most part forest-covered tracts were now in the 4th century overspread with thriving cities joined by numerous roads. We hear for instance at this time of eighty flourishing cities in northern Gaul alone; and in Britain we have all those evidences of an immense advance in the 4th century which have already been described,¹ including a great increase in the number of towns, many churches (all ascribed to the 4th century), and the numerous large and luxurious country-houses² remains of which have been discovered in Kent, Hampshire, Sussex, Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Lincolnshire, and shown by the evidence of coins to have all been built during this 4th century; while the mosaic pavements of these Roman villas show a high state of culture and civilization. The 4th century has often been called "the golden age of Roman Britain;" while it also sheds a flood of light upon the condition of that country at this time to find it regularly exporting large quantities of corn, a British Mint established in London, and skilled artisans stated to be more numerous in Britain than even in Gaul. In fact the theory of the Pagan writers that the 2nd century surpassed all later centuries could be refuted in a single sentence by saying, "Look at Gaul and Britain in the 2nd century, and look at Gaul and Britain in the 4th century."

It is the same in whatever direction we turn, whether to

¹ Chap. XV, pp. 499-500.

² Such as the Roman villas at Chedworth, at Stourton, at Frampton, at Littlecote Park, Ramsbury, and others, all belonging to the middle of the 4th century.

Gaul, to Britain, to North Africa,¹ or elsewhere; everywhere the 4th century immeasurably surpasses the 2nd century.² All this, while showing the great advance which had taken place, also helps to refute the cry that the people were crushed by heavy taxation. Cities do not grow up in all directions if the people are not prospering. If commerce were declining we should find abandoned harbours, fewer ships engaged in trade, and stagnating cities; instead of which we find at this period more harbours, more ships employed in commerce, and fresh cities rising into importance on account of their trade. In every direction in fact the evidence furnished by the empire itself shows that, so far from a "decline," there had been in the 4th century as compared with the 2nd century an immense advance in general prosperity.

(iv) *General standard of enlightenment and civilization.* But in the period from Constantine to Theodosius most of all is the great advance in the general standard of enlightenment, civilization, and morality (both public and private) apparent. This need scarcely be enlarged upon, being so palpable. The whole standard of the time is on a higher plane than that of

¹ Regarding mosaic pictures showing details of country life in North Africa in the 4th century, see Vol. II, Chap. XVIII, p. 82.

² Minor works of art belonging to the 4th century give the same testimony. Among the most notable of these may be mentioned:—

- (i) The two splendid porphyry sarcophagi of the empress Helena and Constantine's sister Constantia, with sculptures in high relief; now in the Vatican museum at Rome.
- (ii) The well known ivory diptych, of beautiful design and workmanship, inscribed *Symmachorum*, made in the 4th century on the occasion of the marriage of the daughter of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, and considered the most perfect existing example of a marriage diptych; now in the South Kensington Museum, London.
- (iii) The various fine ivory panels and other exquisite works in ivory, all belonging to the 4th century; now in the British Museum, London.
- (iv) The many beautiful specimens of "Gilt Glasses" at the South Kensington Museum, British Museum, and other places, all belonging to the 4th century.
- (v) The celebrated bowl of glazed ware belonging to the early part of the 4th century, having on it the heads of Constantine and his wife Fausta, made for Constantine himself, and now in the British Museum, London.

the 2nd century in these respects. Whether we look at the character of the men most respected in this period,¹ at the marked advance in the standard of morality in public affairs, at the equally marked advance in the standard of private morality expected in the case of emperors,² at the altered treatment of women, slaves, and prisoners, at the abolition of many cruel and inhuman laws in force in the 2nd century, at the more humane character of the age generally, or at the more civilized conditions in which the inhabitants of the empire lived, the difference as compared with the age of the Antonine emperors is so great that, as before remarked, it can only be likened to that between light and darkness.

The laws appertaining to the period 314–395 (as contained in the Theodosian Code), when compared with the laws in force in the period 98–180, give some measure of the wide chasm which exists in this respect between the 4th century and the 2nd century, affording conclusive evidence of the great advance in the whole conditions of social, political, and domestic life in the 4th century. One change which is typical is in regard to executions; under the emperors of the 2nd century torture was almost the invariable accompaniment of every execution; under the emperors of the 4th century the person condemned to be executed is beheaded, but not tortured. Again, the emperors of the 2nd century saw no harm in issuing an edict ordering a general slaughter of Christians, accompanied by cruel tortures; Constantine and his successors would have considered themselves indeed disgraced if they could have published such an edict as regards Pagans. And so great is the change in the 4th century that even a Pagan emperor belonging to that century, hating Christianity

¹ Such as, for instance, St. Ambrose or St. Basil, men who had held high positions in the world before they became honoured upon religious grounds, and were respected by all, from the lowest class to the very highest.

² In instituting a comparison between the 4th century and the 2nd century in regard to morality the 4th century stands at an unfair disadvantage from the fact that the vices of the 2nd century (even in the case of some of the leading emperors) were in great part such as cannot be mentioned. Had Constantine, Constantius, Julian, Valentinian, Gratian, or Theodosius been guilty of similar vices their characters would have been altogether blackened, which at once shows the higher plane of the 4th century.

and anxious to blot it out, will not order such a slaughter of its adherents. This one fact is alone sufficient to demonstrate the altogether higher plane of enlightenment and civilization reached by the empire in the 4th century.

It is probably impossible for any person in these days, when the effects of Christianity have permeated every part of the whole life of Europe, to realize what a change that religion brought about, and how within eighty years from the date of Constantine's final edict on the subject of the adoption of Christianity that religion and the kind of legislation induced by it changed the whole aspect of society. During the remainder of the 4th century, after that edict, this change was gradually taking place ; but many of the high officials were still Pagans, the system of government was still arranged upon the old lines though the emperor personally was Christian, and Paganism still had many adherents. It also takes a long time before a change in so vast a body of people as is represented by the population of the whole of the Roman Empire is able to make itself generally apparent. It is therefore not until the beginning of the 5th century (by which time Paganism had no longer any effective force) that the full effect brought about by the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the empire can be fully discerned.

Then indeed an immense change is apparent. And it is one which the 5th century, often justly condemned on account of much frivolity, luxury, and superstition in the portion of the Roman Empire which remained, can best exemplify. For the evils which were lashed by the moralists of the 5th century—the use of cosmetics and dyes by fashionable ladies, the luxury displayed in the houses and carriages of the rich, the immoral tendencies of the theatre, the superstition of the monks, and the excessive attraction of large classes to horse-racing and gambling—while they were no greater than could be paralleled in the 20th century, were practically as nothing compared to the dark evils universally rampant in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd centuries. In a comparison between the moral standard of the 5th century with that of the 2nd century writers have pointed out, not only that heavy punishments were in the 5th century meted out for crimes which had been the open practice even of emperors in the 2nd century, but

also that "With all their faults the monks and hermits of the 5th century are a good substitute for the priests of Cybele and Mithras of the 2nd ; and it was something that the government and the public opinion of the day had concurred to sweep away the orgies of Daphne and Canopus."¹

These various particulars demonstrate to what a high point the empire had attained in the age from Constantine to Theodosius. No doubt there were many flaws in administration, many cases of unpunished oppression, many evils as regards taxation to be found throughout so wide an empire ; but looking at the empire as a whole it may safely be said that never since the world began had it witnessed so high a state of general prosperity, contentment, civilization, and enlightenment among so large a portion of the human race as it did in the eighty-one years from Constantine the Great to Theodosius the Great. The Roman writers, with their eyes ever on Rome, and blind to all the rest of the empire, cared nothing as to whether other cities or provinces were prospering, and saw only that all the glory which once had centred in Rome as the capital had departed from that city ; while those who were Pagans declared that Christianity had brought nothing but deterioration, and continued to extol the age of the Antonine emperors when the city of Rome had been the centre of the life and glory of the empire. And the neglect of Rome by the emperors during the whole of the 4th century added its quota to the resentment felt by these writers. Constantine only visited Rome once after becoming supreme over the whole empire. Constantius only visited Rome once for a short time of less than a month. Neither Julian nor Jovian ever visited it at all ; nor did Valentinian I ; nor did Gratian ; and Theodosius only once for a short visit.²

All these emperors were occupied in advancing the welfare and prosperity of the empire as a whole, and in increasing the dignity and splendour of other cities, such as Trèves, Milan, and Constantinople. The Roman writers resented this as tending still further to reduce the glory of Rome, and ignored

¹ Oman, *The Byzantine Empire*, xi, 154.

² In seventy-eight years after Constantine's visit in 326 Rome was only twice visited by an emperor, by Constantius in 357, and by Theodosius in 389.

it as far as possible in their writings. But the most cursory glance at such provinces as Gaul, Spain, North Africa, and Britain utterly refutes their contention that in the 2nd century the empire was in a more exalted condition than it was in the 4th century; from every side come overwhelming proofs that the truth was the very reverse; and the Roman remains belonging to the 4th century still existing in the present day in various countries, and coming more and more to light through numerous researches, conclusively substantiate the fact.

Moreover even were the question one of comparison between the emperors of the 4th century and those of the 2nd century the case would be the same. For Constantine the Great in every way, as a commander in war, as an administrator, and as a far-sighted founder of great principles of government, immeasurably surpassed Trajan; Valentinian I, not only as a commander in war, and an inflexible lover of justice, but also as a stern crusader against vice, as well as in the morality of his private life, surpassed Hadrian; Theodosius the Great, both in military and in administrative achievements, surpassed Antoninus Pius; while Gratian presents a remarkable contrast to Marcus Aurelius; for while Marcus Aurelius through want of military ability was unable to prevent a large portion of the empire from being continuously ravaged by the barbarians during the greater part of his reign, Gratian on the other hand gained an uninterrupted succession of victories over the barbarians, defeated one race after another, and protected the empire from being ravaged by them; and again, while Marcus Aurelius for the sake of expediency abandoned his repeatedly enunciated principles of benevolence to mankind and consigned countless numbers of his subjects to torture and massacre, Gratian on the other hand endured odium in order to protect his subjects from injustice, and rather than abandon his principles for the sake of expediency suffered unpopularity, disaster, and death. So that a comparison between the emperors of the 4th century and those of the 2nd century shows the same result as one referring to the general condition of the empire.

The considerations successively detailed in regard to the

four factors of military strength, splendour of the cities, prosperity of the people, and general standard of civilization, enlightenment, and morality in the 4th century as compared with the 2nd century appear to show indisputably that the Roman empire of the period from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius (98-180) was immeasurably surpassed by that of the period from Constantine to Theodosius (314-395), that the latter period and not the former was its zenith, and that its decline did not begin until after the death of Theodosius the Great.

That this has not hitherto been recognized is due entirely to the way in which the historian Gibbon, with that hatred of Christianity which he possessed,¹ has treated this period, taking as his authorities those Pagan writers who had desired to show that Christianity had brought nothing but a decline.² By systematically belittling and misrepresenting Constantine, drawing an altogether unfair picture of Constantius, disparaging Valentinian I, obscuring almost entirely the character and deeds of Gratian, and damning with faint praise Theodosius, Gibbon has contrived to diminish to an immense extent the glory of the empire during the reigns of the Christian emperors, thus preventing the period from being recognized to be, as it was, the zenith of the empire. But the moment that, turning from the statements of bitterly biased authorities, we look at the facts of the empire itself all need for further argument to prove that the 4th century altogether surpassed the 2nd century becomes unnecessary.

Magnificent indeed is the spectacle of Rome's majestic empire as we view it at the end of the reign of the last emperor who ruled over the whole of it, and, turning away from the local contests on its northern frontier which have for some time occupied a disproportionate amount of our attention, look at the whole vast empire which had been created by Augustus and brought to its zenith by Constantine and his successors.

From the far regions of Caledonia in the west to the river Tigris in the east, and from the long line of the Rhine, the Danube, and the southern shores of the Black Sea in the north to the deserts of the Sahara and Arabia in the south, mankind

¹ Preface, p. xiii.

² See Note D, Zosimus.

had been brought to a pitch of civilization and enlightenment higher far than the world had ever known before. This empire's eighteen great provinces were ruled on behalf of the emperor by officers themselves holding an almost royal position. In every province were to be seen splendid cities whose architecture, commercial life, and degree of civilization were a marvel to the barbarian dwellers in regions outside the empire. Roads from city to city traversed the empire, and along them an organized service of posts made communication easy even between countries as far apart as Gaul and Mesopotamia. Round every coast were harbours filled with shipping which conveyed a busy commerce throughout all the shores of the Mediterranean. Moreover the inhabitants of this empire lived under a uniform and regular system of laws which had gradually been perfected during more than 400 years, and which, when discovered again after an oblivion of eight centuries in the West, were destined to form the basis of the laws of all modern countries. And as at the end of the reign of Theodosius the Great we take the last look at this vast dominion of Rome before the decline and fall of one half of it begin, we have before us an empire which had been brought to such a pitch that when its western half passed away the countries comprised therein would take more than nine hundred years before they reached again a similar degree of order and civilization.

NOTE D.

For the period from Constantine to Theodosius (the 4th century) the chief authorities are :—

- (i) Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea. He knew Constantine well, and his chief works are his *Ecclesiastical History*, and his *Life of Constantine*. He died in 340. (Christian.)
- (ii) Lactantius. A teacher of rhetoric at Nicomedia, who became a Christian, and in consequence of his high reputation was invited by Constantine to Gaul and made by him tutor to his son Crispus. He wrote various works, the chief being his *Institutiones Divinæ* and his *Deaths of the Persecutors*. He died at Trèves about 325. (Christian.)
- (iii) Ammianus Marcellinus. An officer of the Imperial Guards in the reigns of Constantine, Constantius, Julian, and Valentinian. Retired from the army in 376 after more than forty years' service. Wrote (about 378) a history from 98 to 378 in thirty-one books, but the first thirteen are lost. The eighteen which survive deal with the period 353–378, describing events often witnessed by himself. Though a Pagan he writes without any bitterness towards Christianity, and although he occasionally shows Pagan bias against the Christian emperors, is more free from it than any other writer. He displays much admiration for Constantine, as well as for all honest men, great power of describing character, and a desire to tell the truth as far as he knew it. He died apparently in 378. (Pagan.)
- (iv) Zosimus. A Pagan official of the Treasury at Constantinople. Exceedingly bitter against the whole of the Christian emperors, and especially against Constantine. Wrote (about 425) a history the main object of which was to exalt the period of the Antonine emperors as compared with that of the Christian emperors. He dates the beginning of the decline of the Roman empire from the close of the period of the Antonine emperors, commencing his history at the reign of Commodus and carrying it down to the capture of Rome by the Goths in 410. He delights in traducing Constantine and Theodosius, and finds nothing good in any Christian emperor. To Zosimus the *zenith* of the Roman empire was the age of the Antonine emperors and its *nadir* that of the Christian emperors. His style is exceedingly

obscure and confused, his history being interspersed with marvellous tales of heathen mythology intermingled with bitter abuse of the Christian emperors. He has been largely used by Gibbon, who it will be seen has followed his theory as to the period from which the decline of the Roman Empire is to be dated. Zosimus' history must have been kept hidden during his life (and for many centuries afterwards), or its bitter spirit against Christianity, and numerous falsifications of the truth, would assuredly have caused it to be destroyed. (Pagan.)

- (v) Eutropius. A senator. Wrote (about 370) an abridgement of Roman history. Put to death by Valens in 374 for being concerned in the affair of the magic ring at Antioch (Chap. xv, p. 527) (Pagan.)
- (vi) Eunapius. A Pagan writer very bitter against both Constantine and Theodosius. Wrote (about 410) a history from 270 to 404, the chief object of which (as he himself states) was to glorify the emperor Julian in comparison with the Christian emperors. (Pagan.)
- (vii) Ausonius. Selected by Valentinian I as tutor to Gratian, and was afterwards the latter's minister. He wrote various poems of which the most important is the *Mosella*.
(It is disputed whether he was a Pagan or a Christian.)
- (viii) Themistius. An orator. Thirty-three of his speeches are extant. Lived chiefly in Constantinople. (Pagan.)
- (ix) The *Notitia Dignitatum*. Drawn up between 395 and 405. A complete Official Directory and Army List for the whole empire (see Chap. xvi, p. 572).
- (x) The *Theodosian Code*. Codifying the whole legislation of the period from 312 to 437. Begun in 429 and completed and promulgated in 438.

The chief authorities of more modern times for the same period are :—

Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (published 1768–1788).

Tillemont's *Histoire des Empereurs* (published 1701–1738).

Clinton's *Fasti Romani* (published 1845).

NOTE E

PERSIAN KINGS OF THE DYNASTY OF THE SASSANIDÆ,
FROM 226 TO 380.*(This dynasty held the Persian throne for 400 years.)*

Artaxerxes (Ardishir)	226-240
(Founder of the Persian empire.)	
Sapor I, son of Artaxerxes	240-273
(Captured the emperor Valerian.)	
Hormizdas I, son of Sapor I	274
Varanes I (Bahram I), son of Hormizdas I	274-277
Varanes II (Bahram II), son of Varanes I	277-294
(Defeated by Carus.)	
Varanes III (Bahram III), son of Varanes II	294
Narses, brother of Varanes III	294-303
(Defeated by Diocletian.)	
Hormizdas II, son of Narses	303-310
Sapor II, son of Hormizdas II	310-380
(Born in 310 after his father's death, and crowned by the Magi even before his birth. Reigned seventy years. Called "The Great King.")	

For continuation of the Sassanian dynasty, see Vol. II, p. 323,
Note K.

Appendices



Livia,
daughter
Livius Dr
Claudia
b. B.C. 58

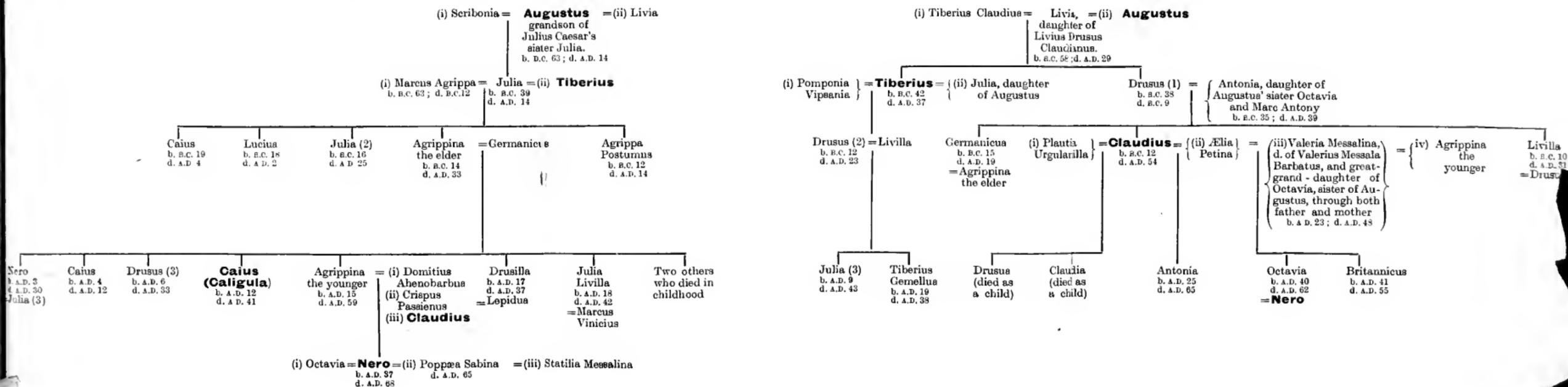
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APPENDIX I.
 GENEALOGY OF THE CAESARS.
 SHOWING THE TWO BRANCHES OF THE FAMILY.



APPENDIX II

Note on the Herods.

Herod the Great. His father, Antipater of Idumea, was given the kingdom of Judœa by Julius Caesar. Upon Antipater's death his son Herod after many struggles gained the kingdom. In B.C. 30 he was confirmed in it by Octavius (afterwards Augustus), his kingdom being enlarged in recompense for the assistance he gave in the war against Antony and Cleopatra. Thereupon Herod put to death all the members of the Sanhedrim except two. He married the beautiful Mariamne, a princess of the formerly reigning Asmonean house. Eventually, in one of the mad storms of rage to which he was subject, he put her to death. He was hated by the Jews, his policy being gradually to do away with the Jewish theocracy. After many years of dark intrigues and domestic tragedies he put to death his two handsome and accomplished sons by Mariamne. His name is repulsive in history on account of his constant murders of his nearest kindred in his mad rage. On his death-bed he ordered his eldest son Antipater to be executed. A few months before this he had massacred all the children in Bethlehem, as recorded in the New Testament. He died in the same year, viz. A.U.C. 750 of the Roman era (B.C. 4), the year of Augustus' census. His dominions he divided among three of his sons:—

- (i) Archelaus, who had as his share Judœa, Samaria, and Idumea. He was given by Augustus the title of *Ethnarch*. In A.D. 7 he was deposed by Augustus, and banished to Vienne in Gaul.
- (ii) Herod Antipas. A full brother of Archelaus. Had as his share Galilee and Perœa, with the title of *Tetrarch*. He is erroneously called a king in St. Mark vi. 14. He married first a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, but divorced her in order to marry Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip (not Herod Philip, the *Tetrarch*). In A.D. 26 he put to death St. John the Baptist, and it was to him that Christ was sent by Pilate. In A.D. 36 Aretas made war upon him, and completely defeated him. In A.D. 38 he was deprived of his dominions by Caligula, and banished with Herodias to Lyons in Gaul.
- (iii) Herod Philip. A half-brother of (i) and (ii), but a different person from the Philip who was the husband of Herodias. He had, as his share of his father's kingdom, Batanea and other districts east of the Jordan, with the title of *Tetrarch*. He married Salome, the daughter of Herodias.

APPENDIX III

The method adopted by Tacitus in his "*Annals*" in regard to the Emperor Tiberius; as unmasked by Mr. T. Spencer Jerome.

The truer picture of the emperor Tiberius has recently been forcibly substantiated by the scholarly examination of the portion of Tacitus' *Annals* dealing with Tiberius, carried out by Mr. T. Spencer Jerome, who unmasks as has never before been done the subtle processes of the science in which Tacitus had been trained.¹ After mentioning how the writing of history (so-called) in Tacitus' time was considered to be a branch of rhetoric and oratory, Mr. Jerome shows how cleverly Tacitus has followed the rules of that science, and thereby produced a picture of Tiberius which is entirely false.

After saying that the sketch of Tiberius given by Tacitus in the *Annals* is considered to a considerable extent untrustworthy by most scholars of to-day whose familiarity with the subject entitles their opinion to respect, Mr. Jerome first points out how constant and glaring in the *Annals* is the want of harmony between the facts which Tacitus narrates and his generalizations, the latter being completely out of accord with the former; ² as, for instance, his constantly speaking of a "bloody tyranny" while the facts which he relates in connection therewith show on the contrary that it was safer to libel the "tyrant" than to bring accusations against his enemies. Nor is it possible, as sometimes suggested, that Tacitus in his picture of Tiberius was merely following an established tradition. For the contemporary evidence is uniformly favourable to Tiberius, all sorts of writers for eighty years after that emperor's death—moralists, philosophers, publicists, satirists, and poets—all making statements about Tiberius indicating quite an opposite established tradition to that which Tacitus' theory requires. "Can we suppose," says Mr. Jerome, "that Juvenal, if he had heard such stories as appear in Tacitus, would have found no tarter phrase to apply to Tiberius than a reference to his tranquil old age?"

Mr. Jerome then points out that Roman education was devoted almost exclusively to rhetoric, that the object of this training was frankly avowed to be the production, not of truth, but of

¹ *The Tacitean Tiberius, a study in the historiographic method*, by Mr. T. Spencer Jerome; published in "Classical Philology," July, 1912. Also *Tiberius at Capri*, by Mr. T. Spencer Jerome; a paper read at the International Congress of Historical Studies in London, April, 1913.

² Mr. Jerome notes how this has always formed an insoluble problem to scholars.

the imitation of truth, and that the natural result was seriously to impair among the Romans the feeling for veracity.¹ "Perfectly shameless mendacity characterized nearly all of them. Cicero, who was no doubt above the average in character, was an inveterate liar. Quintilian, also a virtuous man, makes his *Institutes of Oratory* in great part a treatise on Lying as a Fine Art. . . . It is evident that persons whose education was mainly devoted to rhetoric, and who remained all their lives vastly enamoured of beautiful language, and furthermore were frankly and freely mendacious—though regarding a good reputation as a valuable asset on occasions when one wishes to deceive²—it is evident that such persons will approach the writing of history with somewhat different ideas from those which we regard as suitable."

After giving various instances showing that the writers of the time,—though they often asserted their own veracity,—had no belief in the veracity of others, Mr. Jerome says:—"By the time of Tacitus the labours of many generations of rhetoricians had reduced that art to a science, a kind of applied psychology, at which the moderns should not sneer, since it has deluded most of them." He then details the maxims of this science as laid down by its two great masters, Cicero and Quintilian, and shows how carefully Tacitus has followed them, producing as a result the Tacitæan Tiberius.³ The first of these maxims was the selection of some particular "colour," or type, such as the miser, the lover, the hero, or the coward. Among these types one which had long been in high favour with rhetoricians was that of the "Tyrant"; not a tyrant over the people, but over the aristocracy, the word meaning one who deprived the aristocracy of their special privileges. So that Tacitus in adopting this type was following a custom of his school which was highly in fashion.

Another maxim of this science was that in attacking a person who stands well in public estimation it is safer, says Cicero, to conceal your intentions and subtly to undermine him. Irrelevant things may be brought in if they will arouse prejudice, and you may refer to his relatives, or to the circumstances of his past life.

¹ Since the Pagan writers represented the Pagan gods as frequently practising mendacity it was not to be expected that they should look upon veracity as in any way essential.

² Quintilian, XII, 1, 12.

³ Mr. Jerome's careful analysis of Tacitus' method, and of the way in which he has followed the precepts of this subtle science, is highly instructive. It is supported by copious references to the *Annals*, and should be read *in extenso*.

If it cannot be shown that he has committed any wrong, or even been suspected thereof, it is well to suggest that he formerly concealed his wickedness, or that he had no opportunity to manifest his evil disposition, or had some reason to refrain from evil acts. "This passage from the great model of Roman literary men," says Mr. Jerome, "might be taken to be a summary of the introduction of Tiberius to the reader of the *Annals*." He shows how Tacitus follows these astute instructions to the letter, and that the whole of his representations of Augustus as craftily founding a despotism on the ruins of liberty, his various other insinuations against Augustus, his hints against Livia in connection with the deaths of Julia's sons, and his still worse hint that Livia poisoned Augustus,¹ are all intended as an introduction to lead up to the picture of Tiberius, and to create an atmosphere, as inculcated by Cicero. The instructions of the latter as to stating in full facts which militate against the theory propounded, because it is dangerous to exclude them, but to nullify their effect by skilful sneers, hints, or innuendoes, are also followed by Tacitus throughout. "In all parts of the work," says Mr. Jerome, "we have Cicero's precepts on this head followed *ad nauseam*. At the same time the stainless and austere private life of Tiberius, his long years of arduous public service, and his brilliant military and civil career are not mentioned."

Another important maxim was that it is sometimes advantageous to insert false episodes, either to stir up the passions of those whom it is desired to persuade, or to complete the unity of the character drawn; for according to the canons of the science such a picture must possess the unity which should mark a work of art. Cicero says that in introducing such episodes the truth of the matter is of no importance, provided an air of verisimilitude is obtained and that they be done with boldness, so as to catch the attention; while Quintilian lays down that such episodes must be fabricated carefully, so as to seem probable, and should if possible be connected with something that is true. By long established convention *unity* in the case of the character of the "Tyrant" required the elements of Cruelty, Injustice, Suspiciousness, Craftiness, and Sensuality, from which followed naturally Anguish of Soul. The strictness and rigour of Tiberius' treatment of aristocratic misconduct, and his quick shrewdness and complete understanding and destruction of the schemes of the aristocracy, could by skilful distortion be made to appear as supporting generalizations

¹ In these hints and innuendoes Tacitus palpably makes use of the Memoirs of Agrippina the younger.

of Cruelty, Injustice, Suspiciousness, and Craftiness; but there were no facts which could be twisted into supporting even generalizations of Sensuality and Anguish of Soul. So the Capri legend was fabricated to serve the purpose as regards Sensuality; and later on a garbled letter to the Senate was hastily interjected into an obviously unsuitable place,¹ to supply the remaining characteristic of Anguish of Soul.

Mr. Jerome brings a mass of evidence taken from the *Annals* which shows that the eleven years' orgy at Capri is one of these products of the rhetorician's art, inserted solely so as to catch the attention, and to supply the wanting element of Sensuality; together with plentiful evidence that the story was not believed by Tacitus himself. Following the maxim of his teachers to connect the fabrication with something which is true, Tacitus inserted in the story allusions to events of public history; but these events when examined are found *not to have occurred at that time at all, but some thirty years earlier*. And this, through being subsequently more clumsily imitated by Suetonius, has led to the disclosure of the falsehood of the whole story of the orgies said to have been perpetrated by Tiberius at Capri.²

Mr. Jerome shows that up to the date of the publication of the *Annals*—as late, that is, as A.D. 117—there is not a hint of this Capri legend regarding Tiberius in any of the eleven writers who during the intervening eighty years had more or less to say about this emperor, all of whom depict him as decent and serious. There were scandalous stories invented by Julia and her lovers at the time when, thirty years earlier, Tiberius was at Rhodes, stories invented in order to prevent Augustus from recalling Tiberius to Rome. These stories had long been forgotten in view of Tiberius' unassailable private life, until eighty years afterwards Tacitus dug them up, transferred them as to time and place, and inserted them in the *Annals* as having occurred at Capri at the latter end of Tiberius' life. "Thus," says Mr. Jerome, "a great literary creation was made which the world has mistaken for history, and the austere, stainless, and upright Tiberius was delivered over to the world's scorn."

Finally, as an instructive general example of the way in which Tacitus manages his narrative, Mr. Jerome takes the first few chapters of the sixth book of the *Annals*, the bloodiest period of the supposed furious tyranny. He shows how Tacitus first indulges

¹ *Annals*, VI, 6.

² For fuller details regarding the insertion of the Capri legend, and the way in which its source has been thus detected by Mr. Jerome, see his paper, *Tiberius at Capri*.

in a series of generalizations in which he gloomily refers to savage mandates, incessant accusations, the ruin of the innocent, the continual destruction of citizens, the glut of blood, trivial charges punished as heinous crimes, and a remorseless tyrant lurking about the suburbs of Rome¹ to gaze upon the torrent of blood. Yet when we come to the facts given in detail in connection with these remarks they are found to be quite at variance with these generalizations. Forming about one-sixth of the accusations set forth by Tacitus for the whole reign, they resolve themselves upon examination into twenty cases, in nine of which the result was acquittal or quashing of the proceedings; in a tenth case a Senator was exiled; in seven cases there were convictions, but no indication of any sentence; in two cases there were convictions of men who were odious as "delators," and two years afterwards one of them was executed, these two condemnations seeming to Tacitus fully merited; and in the twentieth case a satirist for his scurrilous writings was forbidden the emperor's table. No claim is made that any innocent person was convicted; and in most of these cases the moderating influence proceeded from the "bloody tyrant." "Yet," says Mr. Jerome, "by the author's skilful use of about a dozen invented passages, innuendoes, and declarations of secret thoughts made according to the rules of rhetoric, the general effect on ordinary readers, and on some scholars, is to make them forget the tame facts and remember the striking embellishments; and the impression produced is that one is reading the record of a bloody tyranny. The mastery of unscrupulous persuasion developed in ancient writers by a sedulous and almost exclusive devotion to rhetorical studies, based on a sound empiric psychology, has during all the succeeding centuries filled the world with a mass of distorted, contradictory, and impossible stories in all branches of human thought. When even to-day so justly eminent a scholar as Dr. Rhodes thinks that he finds in Tacitus 'diligence, accuracy, love of truth, impartiality, truthfulness and fairness in the narrative,' we cannot sneer at rhetoric. It may seem poor enough stuff when analysed, but it did its work to the confusion of historical knowledge, and in popular opinion has probably damned Tiberius beyond rescue."

In the present day, however, our object is the exact opposite of that which inspired the rhetorical school of the 1st and 2nd centuries, the modern scientific spirit demanding, not a cleverly fabricated work of art, nor amusement or comfort from the pleasing lie, but demanding one point alone—veracity.

¹ Yet as a fact Tiberius never visited Rome during these last eleven years of his life, though he once made arrangements to do so and went part of the way thither.

APPENDIX IV

Incursions of the barbarian tribes during the 250 years from Domitian to Constantine.

Years.	Reign.	Race.	Result.
A.D. 87-90	Domitian	Dacians	Overran Mœsia. An ignominious peace made by Domitian.
161-165	Marcus Aurelius	Parthians	Invaded the eastern frontier; defeated the Roman army; war for four years, at end of which Romans victorious.
166-172	Do.	Marcomanni	Swept over Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia; ravaged the whole country for six years, and carried off 160,000 captives. Romans suffered many defeats, but at length in 172 drove them out.
173-175	Do.	Marcomanni and Quadi	Again swept over and ravaged Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia. Eventually after three years of war were driven out.
175-176	Do.	Allemanni	Overran the Rhine provinces. After a year's war were driven out.
177-180	Do.	Marcomanni	Again overran Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia, ravaging those provinces. Contest continued without result for three years, and was still proceeding when Marcus Aurelius died. Peace hastily concluded by Commodus.
232-233	Alexander Severus	Persians	Indecisive war, but Mesopotamia preserved, and peace eventually made.
234-235	Maximin	Allemanni	Invaded the Rhine frontier, but driven back over the Rhine by Maximin.
242-244	Gordian III	Persians	Invaded the eastern frontier; defeated and driven back across the Euphrates by Gordian III.
250-251	Decius	Goths	Overran Mœsia and Thrace. Great defeat of the Roman army under Decius at Abricium.
252	Gallus	Goths	Invaded the Danube provinces. Driven out by Æmilianus.

Years.	Reign.	Race.	Result.
A.D. 254-260	Valerian	Franks	Crossed the Rhine and devastated the whole of Gaul.
257	Do.	Persians	Reconquered Mesopotamia and Armenia, and ravaged the eastern frontier.
258-260	Do.	Allemanni	Ravaged Rhætia and Noricum and penetrated into Italy as far as Ravenna. Driven out by a force collected by the Senate.
258-260	Do.	Goths	Ravaged Pontus, Bithynia, Mysia, and Greece.
258	Do.	Persians	Defeated the Roman army, carried off Valerian a prisoner to Persia, and ravaged Syria and Cilicia.
260-262	Gallienus	Goths	Ravaged Greece and advanced into Italy, but retired before Gallienus.
269	Claudius II	Goths	Ravaged Macedonia. Defeated by Claudius, and destroyed.
270	Aurelian	Goths	Invaded Danube provinces, but driven out by Aurelian.
270	Do.	Allemanni	Invaded Rhætia, and Italy as far as Umbria, but crushingly defeated by Aurelian.
276	Tacitus	Alans	Ravaged Pontus, Galacia, Cappodocia, and Cilicia. Driven out by Tacitus.
277	Probus	Allemanni	Invaded Rhætia, but driven out by Probus.
278	Do.	Sarmatians	Invaded Pontus, Galacia, and Cappadocia, but driven out by Probus.
280-281	Do.	Franks and Allemanni	Invaded Gaul. Driven out by Probus, pursued to the Elbe, and made to sue for peace.
306	Constantine	Franks	Invaded Gaul and captured Trèves. Defeated in two battles by Constantine, and driven out, their two kings being put to death.
322	Do.	Sarmatians	Invaded Illyricum. Defeated, pursued into Dacia, and subdued.
332	Do.	Goths	Invaded Mœsia. Defeated and driven out by Constantine.

APPENDIX V

Foreign wars conducted by the Romans during the 240 years from Trajan to Constantine.

Year.	Reign.	Race.	For how long.	Result.
101	Trajan	Dacians	101-103	First campaign against the Dacians. The latter defeated and subdued.
105	Do.	Dacians	105-106	Second campaign against the Dacians. The latter conquered, and Dacia incorporated in the Roman empire.
113	Do.	Parthians	113-116	Colchis, Iberia, Osrhœne, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria conquered.
197	Septimius Severus	Parthians	197-200	Parthians defeated. Mesopotamia (given up by Hadrian) reconquered, and the frontier again advanced to the Tigris.
208	Do.	Caledonians	208-211	Only partially successful. Wall of Severus built.
272	Aurelian	Palmyra	272-273	Zenobia defeated and taken captive, and Palmyra destroyed.
283	Carus	Persians	283	Ctesiphon and Seleucia taken, the Persians thoroughly defeated, and pursued far to the east.
297	Diocletian	Persians	297	The Persians attacked by the Romans under Galerius, who was severely defeated.
298	Do.	Persians	298	The Persians again attacked, completely defeated, and five provinces beyond the Tigris ceded to Rome.
314 to 337	Constantine	—	—	No foreign wars.

APPENDIX VI

Decisions of the First General Council besides that regarding the opinions of Arius, 6 July, A.D. 325.

1. "The festival of Easter to be kept everywhere on the same day, and the Pope of Alexandria¹ to notify, as heretofore, to the other churches on what day Easter will fall in the following year."

2. A man self-mutilated not to be ordained priest.

3. No one to be baptized, ordained priest, or consecrated bishop, without due time for instruction and probation.

4. Priests not to have female inmates in their houses, except near relations.

5. A bishop to be consecrated, if possible, by all the bishops of the province, or at least by three, with the consent of the rest; the consecration to be confirmed by the Metropolitan.

6. Excommunications to be examined by the next metropolitan synod, and if confirmed, then to be accepted generally.

7. The customary jurisdictions of the Metropolitan bishops of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome over all churches in those provinces to be maintained.

8. "As custom and ancient tradition show that the Bishop of Jerusalem ought to be honoured in a special manner, he should have precedence; without prejudice, however, to the dignity which belongs to the Metropolitan (i.e. of Cæsarea)."

9. "The Cathari (Puritans), if they wish to enter the Catholic and Apostolic Church, must submit to the imposition of hands. They are not to be re-baptized."

10. "The ordination of men afterwards found to have committed crimes is invalid, for the Catholic Church requires men who are blameless."

11. "Lapsi" to be excluded from the ministry.

12. "Lapsi" to do penance among the "hearers" for three years, and for two years more to take part with the faithful, but without admission to the Holy Eucharist.

13. Those who have laid aside their belts (in the persecution), and afterwards returned to military service, to do penance for three years.

14. No one dying to be refused the viaticum (Holy Communion).

¹ Regarding this title, see Chap. XIII, p. 440 (footnote). It had long been the custom for the Pope of Alexandria to settle the date of Easter, and to notify the same to all other Bishops throughout Christendom.

15. Catechumens who have lapsed to be "hearers" for three years.

16. Bishops and priests not to be translated to other dioceses and parishes.

17. Priests and deacons leaving their own Church to be sent back to it; and no Bishop to steal, as it were, a person belonging to another diocese and ordain him for his own Church.

18. Clergy not to take usury or any sort of scandalous gain.

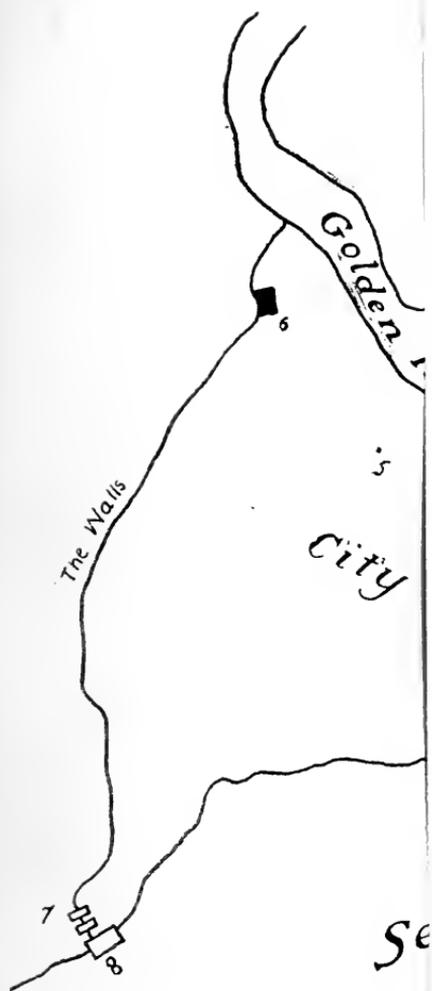
19. Deacons acting as assistants not to administer the Holy Eucharist to priests, it being contrary to custom that it should be administered to those who offer the sacrifice by those who cannot offer it.

20. Followers of Paul of Samosata wishing to return to the Catholic Church to be re-baptized.

21. "As some kneel on the Lord's day and on the days of Pentecost, the holy Synod (i.e. the Council) has decided that, for the observance of a general rule, all shall offer their prayers to God standing on those days as on other days."

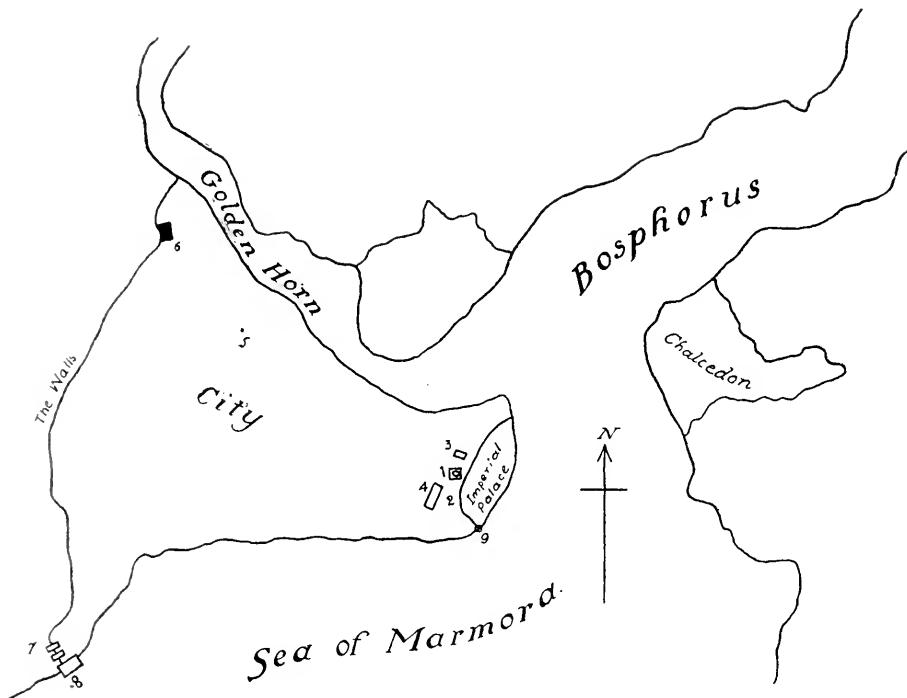
N.B.—An attempt was made at the Council to pass a Canon directing the celibacy of the clergy, but it was thrown out, chiefly through the opposition of Paphnutius (himself a celibate), who declared that too heavy a yoke ought not to be laid on the clergy, and that marriage is honourable in all.





1. St. Soph
2. Auguste
3. St. Irene
4. Hippodrome
5. Column
6. Blachern
7. The Golden Gate

Skeleton Plan of
Constantinople



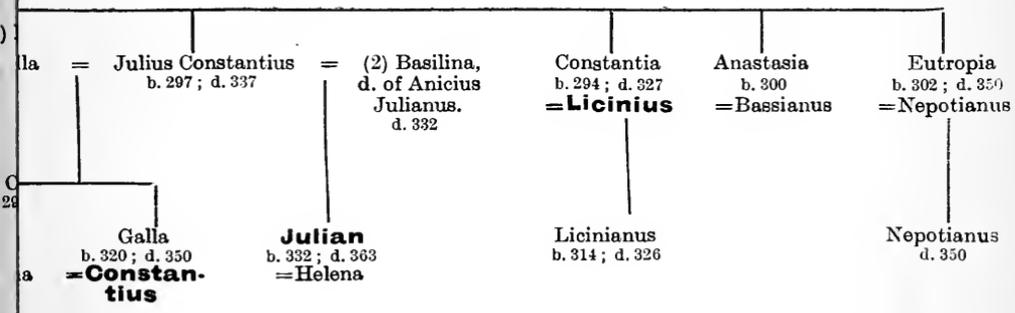
Scale 0 ————— 1 one mile.

1. St. Sophia.
2. Augusteum (or Forum).
3. St. Irene.
4. Hippodrome.
5. Column of Arcadius.
6. Blachernae Palace.
7. The Golden Gate.

8. The seven towers.
9. Lighthouse.

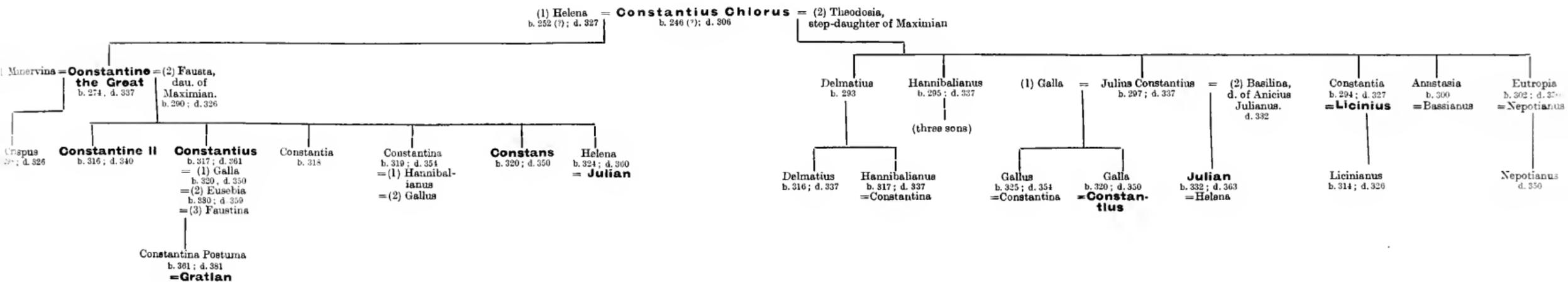
The length of the Golden Horn is seven miles.

N.B.—For fuller details of the Imperial Palace and the buildings surrounding it, see Appendix XIX (Vol. II).



APPENDIX VIII

GENEALOGY OF THE FAMILY OF CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS.



APPENDIX IX

Distances by the main road from the West to the East.

(From *Trèves* in Gaul to the Roman frontier
at *Circesium* in Mesopotamia.)

Places.	Inter- mediate (i.)	Inter- mediate (ii.)	Inter- mediate (iii.)	Total.	Remarks.
	miles.	miles.	miles.	miles.	
Trèves to Lyons	350				{ Cross Alps, by the Mont Cenis Pass.
Lyons to Turin	290				
Turin to Milan	100	740			
Milan to Verona	100				{ Cross Julian Alps, by "Pear Tree" Pass.
Verona to Aquileia	130				
Aquileia to Æmona	80				
Æmona to Siscia	160				
Siscia to Sirmium	200	670	1410		
Sirmium to Naissus	220				{ Sardica to the Succ Pass, 65. Succi Pass to Phil ippopolis, 45. Milan to Constanti nople, 1,360.
Naissus to Sardica	110				
Sardica to Philippopolis	110				
Philippopolis to Hadrianople	100				
Hadrianople to Constantinople	150	690	690	2100	
Constantinople to Cæsarea	360				{ Cross the Bosphorus. Carrhæ to Nisibis, 140. Nisibis to the Tigris at Bezabde, 70.
Cæsarea to Edessa *	210				
Edessa to Carrhæ	40				
Carrhæ to Resaina	70				
Resaina to Circesium	170	850	850	850	
From Circesium onwards to Ctesiphon, 320 miles.					
Total from Trèves to the Roman frontier at Circesium				2950	

* NB. From Antioch to Edessa is 170 miles.

APPENDIX X

Countries to which the most important emperors from Trajan to Theodosius belonged.

Emperor.	Country.	Birthplace.
Trajan	Belonged to a Roman family settled in Spain.	
Hadrian	Rome.	
Antoninus Pius . .	Belonged to a Roman family settled in Gaul.	
Marcus Aurelius . .	Rome.	
Septimius Severus .	North Africa.	{ Leptis Magna (the modern Tripoli)
Decius	Rome.	
Valerian	Rome.	
Claudius II	Illyricum.	
Aurelian	Illyricum.	
Tacitus	Rome.	
Probus	Pannonia.	Sirmium.
Diocletian	Illyricum.	Salona, near Spalato.
Constantine	Dardania (a new province formed out of a part of Mœsia).	Naissus.
Valentinian I . . .	Pannonia.	Cibalæ.
Theodosius	Belonged to a Roman family settled in Spain.	







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