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THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES



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TORONTO

The Age of the Antonines

(The History of the Decline and Fall of
the Roman Empire, by Edward
Gibbon, Chapters I.–III.)

Edited by

J. H. Fowler, M.A.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1919

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First Edition 1907.
Reprinted 1909, 1912, 1919.

GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD.

NOTE.

THE first three chapters of Gibbon's History are here printed without abridgment. If the quantity should be found too great for one term's work, the omission of the first ten pages of Chapter III. (pp. 58-67) is suggested.

With the hope that the book may be specially useful in introducing some who have never learnt Latin to the study of Roman history and antiquities—and they could hardly find a better introduction than through Gibbon, who of all English prose writers most accurately reproduces the spirit of ancient Rome—such preliminary information as seemed necessary for this purpose has been supplied in the Introduction and Glossary.

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INTRODUCTION.

I. GIBBON'S LIFE.

THERE are few English men of letters so well known to us as EDWARD GIBBON. This is because he left behind him a sketch—or rather several drafts of a sketch—of his life. In it he has not merely recorded events, but the impressions that events made upon him, the growth of his mind and affections, the influence of friends and of books. It is one of the most charming pieces of autobiography in the language, and if it does not win our unreserved affection for its author—if we miss in him some of the qualities that we love and esteem most heartily—we can scarcely read it without learning to admire not only his splendid powers of intellect, but his candour to us and his faithfulness to his friends.

He was born at Putney, April 27, 1737, the son of a country gentleman. A very delicate child, he underwent no strict discipline in his early years: “compassion always suggested an excuse for the indulgence of the master or the idleness of the pupil.” For a time he was at Westminster School, where his devoted aunt, Miss Catherine Porter, opened a dame’s house for the express purpose, apparently, of receiving her nephew as a pupil. In his fifteenth year—after

he had been withdrawn from Westminster on account of ill-health—his constitution strengthened, and he was sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, arriving there “with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed.” He owed little to Oxford. The duty of instructing the undergraduates was neglected by the Fellows of Magdalen, and Gibbon, who would quickly have responded to an inspiring tutor, wasted his time. Such reading as he pursued led to his deciding prematurely to join the Church of Rome, and in consequence he was expelled from the University. His father then sent him to a Swiss Protestant pastor at Lausanne. M. Pavilliard was a helpful teacher, and Gibbon now began to acquire knowledge rapidly. He had already begun to think for himself. In a while he came back of his own accord to Protestantism, but gradually lost all faith in religion. Almost the only bias that mars the splendid impartiality of his History is a prejudice against Christianity, which leads him, in the words of his admirer Byron, to “sap a solemn creed with solemn sneer.” At Lausanne he fell in love with Mlle. Curchod, who was “learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment and elegant in manners.” Gibbon’s father disapproved the match. Edward “sighed as a lover, obeyed as a son,” and Mlle. Curchod afterwards married M. Necker, the eminent French minister of finance.

Returning to England in 1758, Gibbon held a commission in the Hampshire militia for two years. Thus he acquired some knowledge of military matters and the military point of view, and “the captain of the Hamp-

shire grenadiers was not useless to the historian of the Roman Empire."

After this he went abroad again, and paid his memorable visit to Rome. "It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind." "Twenty happy years," as he says in concluding the Memoirs of his Life and Writings, were "animated by the labour of my history." They were passed partly in London, and partly in Lausanne. "It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden [at Lausanne]. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

Gibbon continued to live at Lausanne till 1793, when he returned to England on account of the illness of his friend, Lord Sheffield, who, however, survived him and

published his *Miscellaneous Writings*. Gibbon died in London, January 16, 1794.

II. HIS BOOK.

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire—the passing away of the old European civilisation and the birth of the new—has been called the greatest event in human history. The book which records it is, on the whole, the greatest achievement in historical literature. In some of the finest qualities of a historian—power of description, love of truth, impartiality—one ancient writer, Thucydides, is as great as Gibbon; and historical science has made such advances since Gibbon's time, especially in its investigation into the causes of events, that his analysis now seems inadequate. But neither before nor since has one man ever carried out successfully so colossal a literary undertaking as was accomplished by Gibbon, when, with infinite skill and pains, he traced out from scattered and imperfect materials the story of Europe from the close of the second century of the Christian era to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Rightly to be appreciated, the history must be read as a whole. The first three chapters, which alone are to occupy us now, do not give scope for the splendid powers in which his admirers have found something of the greatness of the Roman Empire itself. It is in his later narrative that he “marches with the steady and measured tramp of a Roman legion,” or constructs “a magnificent Roman aqueduct spanning over the chasm which separates the ancient from the modern world.” Yet from these opening chapters we may

gather a distinct notion of his style, and admire its dignity and clearness and the ease with which he handles a vast theme.

A NOTE ON GIBBON'S STYLE.

In the memoirs, Gibbon has an interesting passage on his own style. "The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declaration: three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect."

Among the qualities of Gibbon's own mind reflected in his style we may remark:—(1) a certain *stateliness*: this is saved from pomposity both by the greatness of his theme and by the excellence of his matter, but not wholly saved from stiffness: he seems always to be writing in full dress; (2) *humour*—allowed more play in the notes, but occasionally revealing itself in the text, as in the account of Herodes Atticus (cp. p. 44, l. 30-35 and p. 45, l. 11-15); (3) *caustic wit*, showing itself in his immortal epigrams (cp. p. 6, l. 7-9; p. 28, l. 24-5); (4) *judicial balance*, illustrated by the antithetical form into which he loves to cast his sentences: e.g., "to resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly" (82. 18), "an amnesty which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generosity to observe" (72. 7). This last feature of Gibbon's style was imitated by Macaulay, who has been called, though somewhat unfairly, "a popular nineteenth-century Gibbon."

As for the "choice and command of language," the reader should note:—(1) the frequent use of *abstract substantives* in place of verbs—e.g., "the military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent *invasion* of the imperial prerogative"; (2) the large proportion of *Latinisms* as compared with modern English; (3) the frequent instances

in which words are used in a sense differing from their modern use—*e.g.*, manners, seasonable, commerce, image, rite, allege, prevent, engage, resume, ideal, family, lucubration: many of these words are of Latin origin, and Gibbon's use is nearer than our own to the proper sense of the Latin word; (4) the effectiveness of the *epithets*, especially of the single epithets in which a character is often fixed for all time, 'the inimitable Lucian,' 'the furious Caligula,' 'the stupid Claudius.'

In the structure of sentences, Gibbon is more *periodic* than a modern writer; *i.e.*, subordinate clauses are not 'tacked on' at the end of the principal sentence but inserted into the body of it, or even put first—*e.g.*, "Instead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians" (16. 36-17. 4).

III. THE HISTORY OF ROME BEFORE THE ANTONINE PERIOD.

The city of Rome was founded (according to tradition) in 753 B.C. At first it was governed by kings, some of them at least of Etruscan origin. Then it expelled its kings (510 B.C.) and became a Republic, though the chief power in practice was not exercised by the assembly of the citizens (the Comitia), but by two annually elected magistrates called Consuls and a Council called the Senate, who at first were drawn only from the original or Patrician families. Under Senate and Consuls Rome rapidly grew in power, and by 270 B.C. she had conquered the whole of Italy. Then came a long and terrible struggle with Carthage, the richest and most powerful empire in the west.

Rome was victorious in the end, and the victory brought Sicily, Spain and northern Africa under her dominion. Greece, Macedonia, Asia Minor, Egypt, Gaul (modern France) were added in rapid succession. But internal troubles grew with, and largely in consequence of, this external success. The government of the Senate became corrupt and incompetent; the great generals and their armies lost the old loyalty to the Republican constitution; Rome was filled with a rabble of foreigners and slaves, and the old yeoman class, who had been the strength of her armies, almost died out of Italy. Finally, a quarrel between two great generals, Cæsar and Pompey, brought about the fall of the Republic. Cæsar became practically, though not nominally, monarch. After his assassination (B.C. 44) a time of chaos followed, and then Rome and her subjects everywhere, who had suffered fearfully from lack of steady government and from the rapacity and oppression of Roman generals and nobles, welcomed the strong and just rule of Cæsar's nephew and adopted heir, Augustus. The foundation of the Empire is generally dated from his decisive victory at Actium over his rival Antony, B.C. 31.

The good work of Augustus (died A.D. 14) and his able successor, Tiberius (A.D. 14-37), outlasted the reigns of the less capable Emperors Caligula and Claudius and of the wicked Nero, and even survived the year of anarchy (A.D. 69), in which four Emperors in succession filled the throne. Vespasian, the first of the Flavian dynasty (69-79), was a strong and sensible ruler who ably carried out the ideas of Augustus; he was succeeded by his son Titus, popular but weak (79-81), and

Titus by Domitian, who was bitterly hated by the Roman aristocracy and murdered in 96. The five Emperors who followed were all good rulers, and their reigns—known collectively as the Age of the Antonines, though the Antonine name properly belongs only to the last two of the five—were the happiest period of the Roman Empire for the great mass of its inhabitants. Gibbon, indeed, thought this the happiest period in the history of the human race. It was an ‘autumn summer’ of felicity, coming when decay had already set in, and in these first three chapters Gibbon passes its chief features in rapid review before he proceeds to his proper task—the narrative of the long and stormy winter that followed. The five Emperors of this period were Nerva (96-98), Trajan (98-117), Hadrian (117-138), Antoninus Pius (138-161), and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (161-180).

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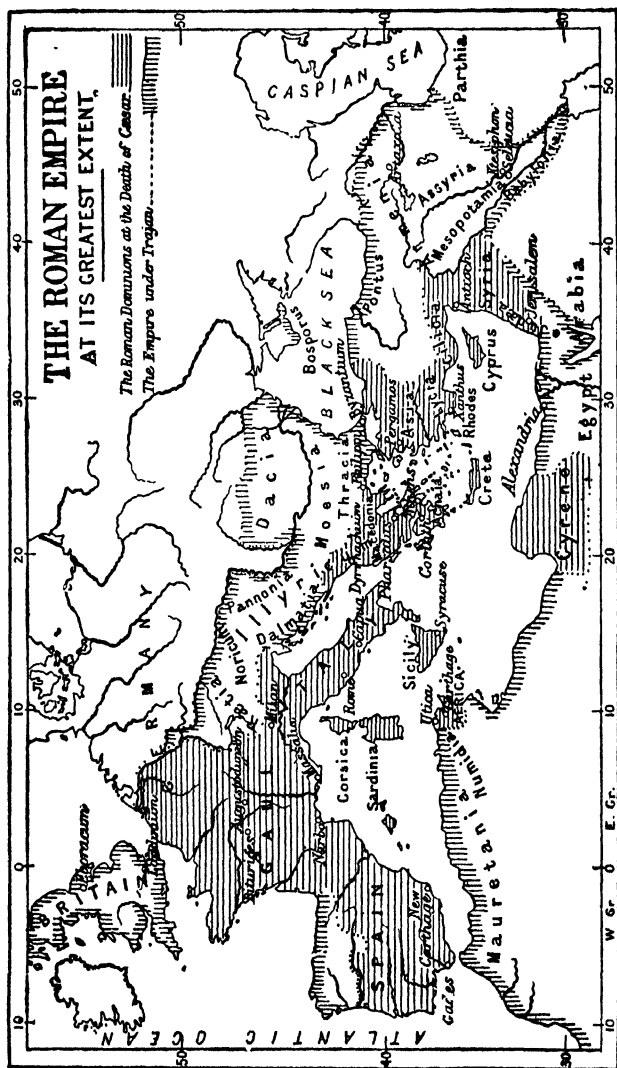
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THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXTENT AND MILITARY FORCE OF THE EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

IN the second century of the Christian *Æra*, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilised portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful, influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence. The Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, 10 and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than fourscore years, the public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this and of the two succeeding chapters, to describe the prosperous condition of their empire; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall: a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth.

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic ; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and the martial enthusiasm of the people. The seven first centuries were filled with a rapid succession of triumphs ; but it was reserved for Augustus to relinquish the ambitious design of subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of moderation
10 into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and situation, it was easy for him to discover that Rome, in her present exalted situation, had much less to hope than to fear from the chance of arms ; and that, in the prosecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious and less beneficial. The experience of Augustus added weight to these salutary reflections, and effectually convinced him that, by the prudent vigour of his counsels, it would be easy to secure every concession which the safety or
20 the dignity of Rome might require from the most formidable barbarians. Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honourable treaty, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which had been taken in the defeat of Crassus.

His generals, in the early part of his reign, attempted the reduction of Æthiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thousand miles to the south of the tropic ; but the heat of the climate soon repelled the invaders and protected the unwarlike natives of those sequestered regions. The
30 northern countries of Europe scarcely deserved the expense and labour of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom ; and though, on the first attack, they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they soon, by a signal act of despair, regained their independence, and reminded Augustus

of the vicissitude of fortune. On the death of that emperor his testament was publicly read in the senate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his successors, the advice of confining the empire within those limits which nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries: on the west the Atlantic Ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and towards the south the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa.

Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus was adopted by 10 the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Cæsars seldom showed themselves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer that those triumphs which *their* indolence neglected should be usurped by the conduct and valour of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent invasion of the Imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as interest, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers entrusted to his care, without aspiring to conquests which 20 might have proved no less fatal to himself than to the vanquished barbarians.

The only accession which the Roman empire received during the first century of the Christian æra was the province of Britain. In this single instance the successors of Cæsar and Augustus were persuaded to follow the example of the former, rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its situation to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite their arms; the pleasing, though doubtful, intelligence of a pearl fishery attracted their avarice; and as 30 Britain was viewed in the light of a distinct and insulated world, the conquest scarcely formed any exception to the general system of continental measures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the most stupid, maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid of all the emperors, the far greater part of the island

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

But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain ; and for ever disappointed this rational, though extensive, scheme of conquest. Before his departure the prudent general had provided for
30 security as well as for dominion. He had observed that the island is almost divided into two unequal parts by the opposite gulfs or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Across the narrow interval of about forty miles he had drawn a line of military stations, which was afterwards fortified, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart, erected on foundations of stone. This wall of

Antoninus, at a small distance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, was fixed as the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preserved, in the northern extremity of the island, their wild independence, for which they were not less indebted to their poverty than to their valour. Their incursions were frequently repelled and chastised ; but their country was never subdued. The masters of the fairest and most wealthy climates of the globe turned with contempt from gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and 10 from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the forest were chased by a troop of naked barbarians.

Such was the state of the Roman frontiers, and such the maxims of Imperial policy, from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general. The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest ; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The first exploits of Trajan were against the Dacians, 20 the most warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had insulted, with impunity, the majesty of Rome. To the strength and fierceness of barbarians they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality and transmigration of the soul. Decebalus, the Dacian king, approved himself a rival not unworthy of Trajan ; nor did he despair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confession of his enemies, he had exhausted every resource both of valour and policy. This 30 memorable war, with a very short suspension of hostilities, lasted five years ; and as the emperor could exert, without control, the whole force of the state, it was terminated by the absolute submission of the barbarians. The new province of Dacia, which formed a second exception to the precept of Augustus, was about thirteen hundred miles in

circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Dniester, the Theiss, or Tibiscus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. ^c The vestiges of a military road may still be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighbourhood of Bender, a place famous in modern history, and the actual frontier of the Turkish and Russian Empires.

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military
10 glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him, the Roman emperor undertook an expedition against the nations of the East, but he lamented with a sigh that his advanced age scarcely left him any hopes of equalling the renown of the son of Philip. Yet the success of Trajan, however transient, was rapid and specious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by intestine discord, fled before his arms. He descended the river Tigris
20 in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian Gulf. He enjoyed the honour of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals, who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravaged the coasts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching towards the confines of India. Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had
30 accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, were reduced into the state of provinces. But the death of Trajan soon clouded the splendid prospect; and it was justly to be dreaded that so many distant nations would

throw off the unaccustomed yoke, when they were no longer restrained by the powerful hand which had imposed it.

It was an ancient tradition that, when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who presided over boundaries, and was represented according to the fashion of that age by a large stone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself. A favourable inference was drawn from his obstinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs as a sure presage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede. During 10 many ages, the prediction, as it is usual, contributed to its own accomplishment. But though Terminus had resisted the majesty of Jupiter, he submitted to the authority of the emperor Hadrian. The resignation of all the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his reign. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign; withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria; and, in compliance with the precepts of Augustus, once more established the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire. 20 Censure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has ascribed to envy a conduct which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meanest and the most generous sentiments, may afford some colour to the suspicion. It was, however, scarcely in his power to place the superiority of his predecessor in a more conspicuous light, than by thus confessing himself unequal to the task of defending the conquests of Trajan. 30

The martial and ambitious spirit of Trajan formed a very singular contrast with the moderation of his successor. The restless activity of Hadrian was not less remarkable when compared with the gentle repose of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman,

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

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

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on

their confines that they were as little disposed to endure as to offer an injury. The military strength, which it had been sufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to display, was exerted against the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hostilities of the barbarians provoked the resentment of that philosophic monarch, and, in the prosecution of a just defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many signal victories, both on the Euphrates and on the Danube. The military establishment of the Roman empire, which thus assured either its tranquillity or success, 10 will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws which it was their interest, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade. The legions themselves, even at the time when they were recruited in the most 20 distant provinces, were supposed to consist of Roman citizens. That distinction was generally considered either as a legal qualification or as a proper recompense for the soldier; but a more serious regard was paid to the essential merit of age, strength, and military stature. In all levies, a just preference was given to the climates of the north over those of the south; the race of men born to the exercise of arms was sought for in the country rather than in cities, and it was very reasonably presumed that the hardy occupations of smiths, carpenters, and huntsmen would supply more 30 vigour and resolution than the sedentary trades which are employed in the service of luxury. After every qualification of property had been laid aside, the armies of the Roman emperors were still commanded, for the most part, by officers of a liberal birth and education; but the common soldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn

from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate, of mankind.

That public virtue, which among the ancients was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince; and it
10 became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature—honour and religion. The peasant, or mechanic, imbibed the useful prejudice that he was advanced to the more dignified profession of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valour; and that, although the prowess of a private soldier must often escape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honours he was associated. On his first entrance into the
20 service, an oath was administered to him with every circumstance of solemnity. He promised never to desert his standard, to submit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the emperor and the empire. The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion; nor was it esteemed less impious than it was ignominious, to abandon that sacred ensign in the hour of danger. These
30 motives, which derived their strength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more substantial kind. Regular pay, occasional donatives, and a stated recompense, after the appointed term of service, alleviated the hardships of the military life, whilst, on the other hand, it was impossible for cowardice or disobedience to escape the severest punishment. The centurions were authorised to

chastise with blows, the generals had a right to punish with death ; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. From such laudable arts did the valour of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmness and docility, unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians.

And yet so sensible were the Romans of the imperfection of valour without skill or practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which 10 signified exercise. Military exercises were the important and unremitted object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained, both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large sheds were erected in the winter quarters of the troops, that their useful labours might not receive any interruption from the most tempestuous weather ; and it was carefully observed, that the arms destined to this imitation of war should be of double 20 the weight which was required in real action. It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every species of arms that was used either for offence or for defence, either in distant engagement or in a closer onset ; to form a variety of evolutions ; and to move to the sound of flutes in the Pyrrhic or 30 martial dance. In the midst of peace, the Roman troops familiarised themselves with the practice of war ; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the only circumstance which distinguished a field of battle from a field of exercise. It was the policy of the ablest generals,

and even of the emperors themselves, to encourage these military studies by their presence and example ; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condescended to instruct the inexperienced soldiers, to reward the diligent, and sometimes to dispute with them the prize of superior strength or dexterity. Under the reigns of those princes, the science of tactics was cultivated with success ; and as long as the empire retained any vigour, their military instructions were respected as the most perfect model of
10 Roman discipline.

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the service many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are described by Polybius, in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from those which achieved the victories of Cæsar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The constitution of the Imperial legion may be described in a few words. The heavy armed infantry, which composed its principal strength, was divided into ten cohorts, and fifty-five companies, under the orders
20 of a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honour and the custody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five soldiers, the most approved for valour and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts consisted each of five hundred and fifty-five ; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to six thousand one hundred men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their service ; an open helmet, with a lofty crest ; a breast-plate, or coat of mail ; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler
30 on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about six feet, and which was terminated by a massy

triangular point of steel of eighteen inches. This instrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-arms ; since it was exhausted by a single discharge, at the distance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet, when it was launched by a firm and skilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durst venture within its reach, nor any shield or corslet that could sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the Roman had darted his *pilum*, he drew his sword, and rushed forwards to close with the enemy. It was a short well-tempered Spanish blade, that carried a double edge, and was 10 alike suited to the purpose of striking or of pushing ; but the soldier was always instructed to prefer the latter use of his weapon, as his own body remained less exposed, whilst he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adversary. The legion was usually drawn up eight deep ; and the regular distance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks. A body of troops, habituated to preserve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themselves prepared to execute every disposition which the circumstances of war, or the skill of their leader, might 20 suggest. The soldier possessed a free space for his arms and motions, and sufficient intervals were allowed, through which seasonable reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhausted combatants. The tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians were formed on very different principles. The strength of the phalanx depended on sixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the closest array. But it was soon discovered, by reflection as well as by the event, that the strength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion. 30

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten troops or squadrons ; the first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of an hundred and thirty-two men ; whilst each of the other nine amounted only to sixty-six. The entire establishment formed a regiment, if we may use the modern

expression, of seven hundred and twenty-six horse, naturally connected with its respective legion, but occasionally separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the wings of the army. The cavalry of the emperors was no longer composed, like that of the ancient republic, of the noblest youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military service on horseback, prepared themselves for the offices of senator and consul; and solicited, by deeds of valour, the future suffrages of their countrymen. Since the
10 alteration of manners and government, the most wealthy of the equestrian order were engaged in the administration of justice, and of the revenue; and whenever they embraced the profession of arms, they were immediately entrusted with a troop of horse, or a cohort of foot. Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the same provinces, and the same class of their subjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horses were bred, for the most part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers despised the complete armour with which the cavalry of the East were
20 encumbered. *Their* more useful arms consisted in a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad sword, were their principal weapons of offence. The use of lances and of iron maces they seemed to have borrowed from the barbarians.

The safety and honour of the empire was principally entrusted to the legions, but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honourable
30 distinction of Romans. Many dependent princes and communities, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service. Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state. All these were included under the general name

of auxiliaries ; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom, much inferior to those of the legions themselves. Among the auxiliaries the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of prefects and centurions, and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline ; but the far greater part retained those arms, to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this institution each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was 10 allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons ; and was capable of encountering every nation with the advantages of its respective arms and discipline. Nor was the legion destitute of what, in modern language, would be styled a train of artillery. It consisted in ten military engines of the largest, and fifty-five of a smaller size ; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, discharged stones and darts with irresistible violence.

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of 20 a fortified city. As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle ; and we may calculate that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans ; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midst of the camp, the prætorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others ; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries 30 occupied their respective stations ; the streets were broad and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides, between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in

breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves ; to whom the use of the spade and the pick-axe was no less familiar than that of the sword or *pilum*. Active valour may often be the present of nature ; but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline.

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

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests, and preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism. If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their numbers, we shall not find it easy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which
30 was itself a body of six thousand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thousand five hundred men. The peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors was composed of no less than thirty of these formidable brigades ; and most probably formed a standing force of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men. Instead of being confined

within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their stations, for the most part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to describe the distribution of the troops. Three legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and consisted of sixteen legions, in the following proportions : two in the Lower, and three in the Upper Germany ; one in Rhætia, one in 10 Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Mæsia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was entrusted to eight legions, six of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquillity of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. Above twenty thousand chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of City Cohorts and Prætorian Guards, watched over the safety of the 20 monarch and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the Prætorians will very soon and very loudly demand our attention ; but, in their arms and institutions, we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance, and a less rigid discipline.

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness ; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land ; nor was that warlike 30 people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the most remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than of curiosity ; the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction

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

We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian

and the Antonines. We shall now endeavour, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but, at present, divided into so many independent and hostile states.

Spain, the western extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenean mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided between two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Bætica, and Tarraconensis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians; and the loss sustained by the former, on the side of the East, is compensated by an accession of territory towards the North. The confines of Grenada and Andalusia correspond with those of ancient Bætica. The remainder of Spain—Gallicia, and the Asturias, Biscay, and Navarre, Leon, and the two Castilles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon,—all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona. Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs.

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the Ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the Duchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburg, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father, he introduced a division of Gaul equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to

- the principal national distinctions, which had comprehended above an hundred independent states. The sea-coast of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more
- 10 ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Cæsar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valour, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Basil to Leyden, received the pompous names of Upper and Lower Germany.
- *Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the six provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, the Celtic, or Lyonnese, the Belgic, and the two Germanies.
- 20 We have already had occasion to mention the conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this island. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland, as far as the Friths of Dumbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain lost her freedom the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgæ in the West, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk. As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language,
- 30 Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

Before the Roman conquest, the country which is now called Lombardy was not considered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls,* who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the Apennine. The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast, which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn; but the territories of that state, which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians. The middle part of the peninsula, that now 10 composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of a civilised life. The Tiber rolled at the foot of the seven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs, their successors adorned villas, and *their* posterity have erected convents. Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of 20 Naples; the rest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marsi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the sea-coasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Augustus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Istria was annexed to that seat of Roman sovereignty.

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at the distance of only thirty 30 miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the most part to the south-east, collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is, at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears scarcely equal to such an accession of waters. The provinces of the Danube soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the

Illyrian frontier, and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire ; but they deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Mæsia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The province of Rhætia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube ; from its source, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria ; the city of Augsburg is
10 protected by the constitution of the German empire ; the Grisons are safe in their mountains ; and the country of Tyrol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the house of Austria.

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save,—Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Slavonia,—was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman
20 government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German prince, who styles himself Emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe that, if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary, between the Theiss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the house of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman empire.

30 Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long, but narrow, tract between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the sea-coast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa. The inland parts have assumed the Slavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia ; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the

latter a Turkish pasha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Christian and Mahometan power.

After the Danube had received the waters of the Theiss and the Save, it acquired, at least among the Greeks, the name of Ister. It formerly divided Mæsia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already seen, was a conquest of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the present state of those countries, we shall 10 find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeswar and Transylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilst the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia acknowledge the supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Mæsia, which during the Middle Ages was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkish slavery.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, 20 and Greece, preserves the memory of their ancient state under the Roman empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Hæmus and Rhodope to the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province. Notwithstanding the change of masters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has ever since remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia, derived more solid advantages from the 30 policy of the two Philips; and, with its dependencies of Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Ægean to the Ionian Sea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that so many immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in a single province of the Roman empire, which,

from the superior influence of the Achæan league, was usually denominated the province of Achaia.

Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed, with some
 10 propriety, to the peninsula which, confined between the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district westward of Mount Taurus and the river Halys was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and
 20 Pontus possessed the northern side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria; the inland country, separated from the Roman Asia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe that the northern shores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Asia and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or
 30 Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries.

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria was the seat of the Seleucidæ, who reigned over Upper Asia, till the successful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became

subject to the Romans, it formed the eastern frontier of their empire; nor did that province, in its utmost latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and, towards the south, the confines of Egypt and the Red Sea. Phœnicia and Palestine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The former of these was a narrow and rocky coast; the latter was a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent. Yet Phœnicia and Palestine will for ever live in the memory of mankind; since America, 10 as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other. A sandy desert, alike destitute of wood and water, skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence, and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to form any settled habitations, they soon became subjects to the Roman empire.

The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt., By 20 its situation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman præfect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron sceptre of the Mamelukes is now in the hands of a Turkish pasha. The Nile flows down the country, above five hundred miles from the tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks, on either side, the extent of fertility by the measure of its inundations. Cyrene, situated towards 30 the west and along the sea-coast, was first a Greek colony, afterwards a province of Egypt, and is now lost in the desert of Barca.

From Cyrene to the ocean, the coast of Africa extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet so closely is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or sandy desert,

that its breadth seldom exceeds fourscore or an hundred miles. The eastern division was considered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage it became the centre of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and disorderly states of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of

10 Algiers oppresses the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Massinissa and Jugurtha: but in the time of Augustus the limits of Numidia were contracted; and at least two-thirds of the country acquiesced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Cæsariensis. The genuine Mauritania, or country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, or Tangier, was distinguished by the appellation of Tingitana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Sallè, on the Ocean, so infamous at present for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the

20 Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the Emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear that his more southern dominions, Morocco itself, and Segelmessa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of Mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets; but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the

30 ancient and the new continent.

Having now finished the circuit of the Roman empire, we may observe that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, so famous among the ancients, were two mountains which seemed to have been torn asunder by some convulsion of

the elements ; and at the foot of the European mountain the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean Sea, its coasts and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baleares, which derive their names of Majorca and Minorca from their respective size, are subject at present, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. It is easier to deplore the fate than to describe the actual condition of Corsica. Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and 10 most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms ; whilst the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military Order, into fame and opulence.

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to 20 forget, the outlying countries which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence ; and they gradually assumed the licence of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth. But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern historian require a more sober and accurate language. He may impress a juster image of the greatness of Rome by observing that the empire was above two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia to Mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer ; that it extended in length more than three 30 thousand miles, from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates ; that it was situated in the finest part of the Temperate Zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degrees of northern latitude ; and that it was supposed to contain above sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and well-cultivated land.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE UNION AND INTERNAL PROSPERITY OF THE ROMAN
EMPIRE, IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

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

I. The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it
20 concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true ; by the philosopher as equally false ; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour ; nor was it confined by the

chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth. Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder, or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the pagan mythology was interwoven with various but not discordant materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived or who had died for the benefit of their country, were 10 exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed that they deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed in peace their local and respective influence ; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast 20 in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative ; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes in the most distant ages and countries were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interests required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and of flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent and an Omnipotent Monarch. Such was the mild spirit of 30 antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference than to the resemblance of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves that, under various names and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities. The elegant mythology of

Homer gave a beautiful and almost a regular form to the polytheism of the ancient world.

The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature as a very curious and important speculation, and in the profound inquiry they displayed the strength and weakness of the human understanding. Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and the Platonists endeavoured to reconcile the jarring
10 interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the first cause ; but, as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work ; whilst, on the contrary, the spiritual God of Plato and his disciples resembled an idea rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less religious cast ; but, whilst the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to
20 deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The spirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation and supported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philosophy into a variety of contending sects ; but the ingenuous youth, who from every part resorted to Athens and the other seats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike instructed in every school to reject and to despise the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible that a philosopher should accept as divine truths the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity ; or that he should adore, as gods,
30 those imperfect beings whom he must have despised, as men ! Against such unworthy adversaries, Cicero condescended to employ the arms of reason and eloquence ; but the satire of Lucian was a much more adequate as well as more efficacious weapon. We may be well assured that a writer conversant with the world would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they

not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society.

Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interests of the priests and the credulity of the people were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason ; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently 10 practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods ; and, sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume ; and they approached, with the same inward contempt and the same external reverence, the altars of the Libyan, the Olympian, or the 20 Capitoline Jupiter.

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers ; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators ; and the office of 30 Supreme Pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals which humanise the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination as a convenient instrument of policy ; and they respected, as the

firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion that, either in this or in a future life, the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods. But, whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes ; and that, in every country, the form of superstition which had received the sanction of time and experience was the best adapted to the climate and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently
10 despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods and the rich ornaments of their temples ; but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous power of the Druids ; but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars, subsisted in
20 peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism.

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world, who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country. Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies ; and the Roman senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited ; the
30 temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy. But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed over the cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and Serapis at length assumed their place among the Roman deities. Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of

government. In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn embassies; and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities by the promise of more distinguished honours than they possessed in their native country. Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind.

II. The narrow policy of preserving without any foreign mixture the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune, and hastened the ruin, of Athens and Sparta. 10 The aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own wheresoever they were found, among slaves or strangers, enemies or barbarians. During the most flourishing æra of the Athenian commonwealth the number of citizens gradually decreased from about thirty to twenty-one thousand. If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover that, notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, 20 amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the social war, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men able to bear arms in the service of their country. When the allies of Rome claimed an equal share of honours and privileges, the senate indeed preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious concession. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the severe penalty of their rashness; but the rest of the Italian states, as they successively returned to their duty, were admitted into the bosom of the republic, and 30 soon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterwards lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But, when the popular assemblies had been suppressed by the administration of the emperors, the conquerors were

distinguished from the vanquished nations only as the first and most honourable order of subjects ; and their increase, however rapid, was no longer exposed to the same dangers. Yet the wisest princes who adopted the maxims of Augustus guarded with the strictest care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffused the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality.

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

the Third Founder of Rome ; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence. •

The provinces of the empire (as they have been described in the preceding chapter) were destitute of any public force or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece, and in Gaul, it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies which taught mankind that, as the Roman arms prevailed by division, they might be resisted by union. Those princes whom the ostentation of gratitude 10 or generosity permitted for a while to hold a precarious sceptre were dismissed from their thrones, as soon as they had performed their appointed task of fashioning to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was everywhere exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute and without control. But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the 20 peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

“Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits,” is a very just observation of Seneca, confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory ; and we may remark that, about forty years after the reduction of 30 Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day by the cruel orders of Mithridates. These voluntary exiles were engaged for the most part in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers ; and the

veterans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled with their families in the country where they had honourably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts and the most convenient situations were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent; and [as] they
10 were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance, they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire which was seldom disappointed of sharing, in due time, its honours and advantages. The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendour of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome. The right of *Latium*, as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted a more
20 partial favour. The magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families. Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions; those who exercised any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public service, or displayed any personal talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet even in the age of the Antonines, when the
30 freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to those whose pretensions were seconded by favour or merit. The grandsons of the

Gauls who had besieged Julius Cæsar in Alesia commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome. Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue. The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in 10 the provinces, the east was less docile than the west to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colours, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendour of prosperity, became gradually more visible as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilised by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The 20 language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia, that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains, or among the peasants. Education and study insensibly inspired the natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They solicited with more ardour, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honours of the state; supported the national dignity in 30 letters and in arms; and, at length, in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have disowned for their countryman. The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long since civilised and corrupted. They had too much taste to relinquish their language, and too

much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues, of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power. Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and sentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progress of colonies and conquest, had been diffused from the Hadriatic to the
10 Euphrates and the Nile. Asia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the East, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects. Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and especially in Egypt. The use of their
20 ancient dialects, by secluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians. The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the contempt, the sullen ferociousness of the latter excited the aversion, of the conquerors. Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city; and it was remarked that more than two hundred and thirty years elapsed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome.

30 It is a just though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe soon became the favourite object of study and imitation in Italy and the western provinces. But the elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged

the charms of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin, tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government. The two languages exercised at the same time their separate jurisdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business were equally conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

It was by such institutions that the nations of the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigour of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price, accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction, the most severe regulations and the most cruel treatment seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the

hardships of servitude. The existence of a slave became an object of greater value, and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and
10 death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance or a less cruel master.

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave; and, if he had any opportunity of making himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few
20 years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse. It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have
30 prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable distinction was confined to such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were

rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, *they* likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation. Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a 10 peculiar habit, but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers. Without interpreting, in their utmost strictness, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads, we may venture to pronounce that the proportion of slaves, who were valued as property, was more considerable than that of servants, who can be computed only as an expense. The youths of a promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and their price was ascertained by the degree of their skill and talents. Almost every profession, either 20 liberal or mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury. It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase than to hire his workmen; and in the country slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general observation, and to display the multitude of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were 30 maintained in a single palace of Rome. The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate, which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her property. A freedman, under the reign of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left

behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and, what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves.

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

Domestic peace and union were the natural consequences of the moderate and comprehensive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Asia, we shall behold despotism in the centre and weakness in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the
30 administration of justice, enforced by the presence of an army; hostile barbarians, established in the heart of the country, hereditary satraps usurping the dominion of the provinces, and subjects, inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquished nations, blended into one great people, resigned the hope, nay, even

the wish, of resuming their independence, and scarcely considered their own existence as distinct from the existence of Rome. The established authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exercised with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tiber. The legions were destined to serve against the public enemy, and the civil magistrate seldom required the aid of a military force. In this state of general security, the leisure as well as opulence both of the prince and people were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire. 10

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture constructed by the Romans, how many have escaped the notice of history, how few have resisted the ravages of time and barbarism ! And yet even the majestic ruins that are still scattered over Italy and the provinces would be sufficient to prove that those countries were once the seat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention ; but they are rendered more interesting by two important circumstances, which connect 20 the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful history of human manners. Many of those works were erected at private expense, and almost all were intended for public benefit.

It is natural to suppose that the greatest number, as well as the most considerable of the Roman edifices, were raised by the emperors, who possessed so unbounded a command both of men and money. Augustus was accustomed to boast that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble. The strict economy of Vespasian was the source of 30 his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the stamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inspection. He was himself an artist ; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the monarch. They were encouraged by the

Antonines, as they contributed to the happiness of the people. But if the emperors were the first, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was universally imitated by their principal subjects, who were not afraid of declaring that they had spirit to conceive, and wealth to accomplish, the noblest undertakings. Scarcely had the proud structure of the Coliseum been dedicated at Rome, before the edifices of a smaller scale indeed, but of the same design and materials, were erected for the use, and
10 at the expense, of the cities of Capua and Verona. The inscription of the stupendous bridge of Alcantara attests that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Lusitanian communities. When Pliny was entrusted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richest or most considerable of the empire, he found the cities within his jurisdiction striving with each other in every useful and ornamental work that might deserve the curiosity of strangers or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the Proconsul to supply their
20 deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation. The opulent senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honour, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendour of their age and country; and the influence of fashion very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors, we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

30 The family of Herod, at least after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense

treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of law, the emperor might have asserted his claim; and the prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confession, the officiousness of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refused to accept any part of it, and commanded him to use, without scruple, the present of fortune. The cautious Athenian still insisted that the treasure was too considerable for a subject, and that he knew not how to *use it*. *Abuse it then*, replied the monarch, with a good-natured peevishness; 10 for it is your own. Many will be of opinion that Atticus literally obeyed the emperor's last instructions, since he expended the greatest part of his fortune, which was much increased by an advantageous marriage, in the service of the Public. He had obtained for his son Herod the prefecture of the free cities of Asia; and the young magistrate, observing that the town of Troas was indifferently supplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian three hundred myriads of drachms (about a hundred thousand pounds) for the construction of a new aqueduct. But in the 20 execution of the work the charge amounted to more than double the estimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus silenced their complaints by requesting that he might be permitted to take upon himself the whole additional expense.

The ablest preceptors of Greece and Asia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil soon became a celebrated orator in the useless rhetoric of that age, which, confining itself to the schools, disdained to visit either the Forum or the Senate. He was 30 honoured with the consulship at Rome; but the greatest part of his life was spent in a philosophic retirement at Athens, and his adjacent villas; perpetually surrounded by sophists, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the superiority of a rich and generous rival. The monuments of his genius have perished; some remains still preserve the

fame of his taste and munificence ; modern travellers have measured the remains of the stadium which he constructed at Athens. It was six hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finished in four years, whilst Herod was president of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla he dedicated a theatre, scarcely to be paralleled in the empire ; no wood except cedar very curiously carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum, 10 designed by Pericles for musical performances and the rehearsal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over Barbaric greatness ; as the timbers employed in the construction consisted chiefly of the masts of the Persian vessels. Notwithstanding the repairs bestowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to decay. Herod restored its ancient beauty and magnificence. Nor was the liberality of that illustrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The most splendid ornaments bestowed on the temple of Neptune in the 20 Isthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a stadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Canusium in Italy, were insufficient to exhaust his treasures. The people of Epirus, Thessaly, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponnesus, experienced his favours ; and many inscriptions of the cities of Greece and Asia gratefully style Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor.

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modest simplicity of private houses announced the equal condition of freedom ; whilst the sovereignty of the people was 30 represented in the majestic edifices destined to the public use ; nor was this republican spirit totally extinguished by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honour and benefit that the most virtuous of the emperors affected to display their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a just indignation, but the vast extent of ground which had been usurped by his selfish luxury was

more nobly filled under the succeeding reigns by the Coliseum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddess of Peace and to the genius of Rome. These monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the most beautiful productions of Grecian painting and sculpture; and in the Temple of Peace a very curious library was open to the curiosity of the learned. At a small distance from thence was situated the Forum of Trajan. It was surrounded with a lofty portico in the form of a quadrangle, into which four 10 triumphal arches opened a noble and spacious entrance; in the centre arose a column of marble, whose height of one hundred and ten feet denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which still subsists in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact representation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran soldier contemplated the story of his own campaigns, and, by an easy illusion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen associated himself to the honours of the triumph. All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire, 20 were embellished by the same liberal spirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, triumphal arches, baths and aqueducts, all variously conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleasures of the meanest citizen. The last mentioned of those edifices deserve our particular attention. The boldness of the enterprise, the solidity of the execution, and the uses to which they were subservient, rank the aqueducts among the noblest monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a just pre-eminence; but the 30 curious traveller, who, without the light of history, should examine those of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude that those provincial towns had formerly been the residence of some potent monarch. The solitudes of Asia and Africa were once covered with flourishing cities, whose populousness, and even whose existence, was derived

from such artificial supplies of a perennial stream of fresh water.

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works, of the Roman empire. The observation of the number and greatness of its cities will serve to confirm the former and to multiply the latter. It may not be displeasing to collect a few scattered instances relative to that subject, without forgetting, however, that, from the vanity of nations and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of
10 city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and upon Laurentum. I. *Ancient Italy* is said to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities ; and for whatsoever æra of antiquity the expression might be intended, there is not any reason to believe the country less populous in the age of the Antonines, than in that of Romulus. The petty states of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whose superior influence they had been attracted. Those parts of Italy which have so long languished under the lazy tyranny of priests and viceroys
20 had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war ; and the first symptoms of decay which *they* experienced were amply compensated by the rapid improvements of the Cisalpine Gaul. The splendour of Verona may be traced in its remains : yet Verona was less celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan or Ravenna. II. The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government ; London was already enriched
30 by commerce ; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boast of her twelve hundred cities ; and, though in the northern parts many of them, without excepting Paris itself, were little more than the rude and imperfect townships of a rising people, the southern provinces imitated the wealth and elegance of Italy. Many were the cities of Gaul, Marseilles,

Arles, Nismes, Narbonne, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Autun, Vienne, Lyons, Langres, and Treves, whose ancient condition might sustain an equal, and perhaps advantageous, comparison with their present state. With regard to Spain, that country flourished as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhausted by the abuse of her strength, by America, and by superstition, her pride might possibly be confounded, if we required such a list of three hundred and sixty cities as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Vespasian. III. Three hundred African cities had once 10 acknowledged the authority of Carthage, nor is it likely that their numbers diminished under the administration of the emperors : Carthage itself rose with new splendour from its ashes ; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, soon recovered all the advantages which can be separated from independent sovereignty. IV. The provinces of the east present the contrast of Roman magnificence with Turkish barbarism. The ruins of antiquity, scattered over uncultivated fields, and ascribed by ignorance to the power of magic, scarcely afford a shelter to the oppressed peasant or 20 wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Cæsars, the proper Asia alone contained five hundred populous cities, enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had once disputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius, and their respective merits were examined by the senate. Four of them were immediately rejected as unequal to the burden ; and among these was Laodicea, whose splendour is still displayed in its ruins. Laodicea collected a very considerable revenue from its flocks of sheep, celebrated for the 30 fineness of their wool, and had received, a little before the contest, a legacy of above four hundred thousand pounds by the testament of a generous citizen. If such was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have been the wealth of those cities whose claim appeared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Ephesus, who so long disputed

with each other the titular primacy of Asia. The capitals of Syria, and Egypt held a still superior rank in the empire : Antioch and Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities, and yielded with reluctance to the majesty of Rome itself.

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

and, by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel an hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads. The use of the posts was allowed to those who claimed it by an Imperial mandate ; but, though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or convenience of private citizens. Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean ; and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake. The coasts of 10 Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbours ; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature ; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tiber, and formed by the Emperor Claudius, was an useful monument of Roman greatness. From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten to Alexandria in Egypt.

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed 20 to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind ; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The east was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury ; whilst the west was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates and 30 the industry of more civilised nations were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe ; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which

were successively imported into Europe from Asia and Egypt; but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits that grow in our European gardens are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy, and, when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and
10 the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the island of Sicily and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste, of the savage inhabitants. A thousand years afterwards, Italy could boast that, of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her soil. The
20 blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul. This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquished; and there is some reason to believe that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines. 3. The olive, in the western world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers
30 to that useful plant; it was naturalised in those countries; and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighbourhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience. 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it

might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown.

5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media. The assured supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added an assiduous attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich 10 and the subsistence of the poor. The elegant treatise of Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry, under the reign of Tiberius ; and it may be observed that those famines which so frequently afflicted the infant republic were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours.

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures ; since the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the 20 Roman empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly, employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age ; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessities, and 30 none the superfluities, of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the

possessors of land ; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As
10 long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forest of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube ; and the barbarians were astonished at the
20 price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets, and other manufactures of the East ; but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of an hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt, on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon, was the usual term of their navigation, and
30 it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January ; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported on the backs of camels from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire. The

objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling : silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold ; precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond ; and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals. The labour and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit ; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expense of the Public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and 10 manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only, instrument of commerce. It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that, in the purchase of female ornaments, the wealth of the state was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations. The annual loss is computed, by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling. Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet, if we compare the propor- 20 tion between gold and silver, as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine, we shall discover within that period a very considerable increase. There is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce ; it is therefore evident that silver was grown more common ; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world ; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

30

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past, and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt, and honestly confessed, by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true principles of social life, laws, agriculture, and science, which had been first invented by

the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly established by the power of Rome, under whose auspicious influence the fiercest barbarians were united by an equal government and common language. They affirm that, with the improvement of arts, the human species was visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing splendour of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden ; and the long festival of peace, which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of their ancient animosities, and
10 delivered from the apprehension of future danger." Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation which seems to prevail in these passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men
20 were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valour remained, but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independence, the sense of national honour, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for
30 their defence to a mercenary army. The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors ; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and

refinement, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit. The sciences of physic and astronomy were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy and the writings of 10 Galen are studied by those who have improved their discoveries and corrected their errors; but, if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, still reigned in the schools, and their systems, transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exercise the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the 20 poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations: or, if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the imagination after a long repose, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by a uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with those bold ancients, who, by expressing their genuine 30 feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honour. The name of Poet was almost forgotten; that of Orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.

The sublime Longinus, who in a somewhat later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," says he, "as some children always remain pignies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined ; thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand themselves, or to attain that
10 well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients, who, living under a popular government, wrote with the same freedom as they acted." This diminutive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pignies, when the fierce giants of the north broke in and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom ; and, after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

20 THE obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state, in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is entrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism. The influence of the clergy, in an age of superstition, might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind ; but so

intimate is the connection between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the Church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people. A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against enterprises of an aspiring prince.

Every barrier of the Roman constitution had been levelled by the vast ambition of the dictator ; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the triumvir. After the 10 victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, surnamed Cæsar by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards Augustus, by the flattery of the senate. The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions, conscious of their own strength and of the weakness of the constitution, habituated during twenty years' civil war to every act of blood and violence, and passionately devoted to the house of Cæsar, from whence alone they had received and expected the most lavish rewards. The provinces long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, 20 sighed for the government of a single person, who would be the master, not the accomplice, of those petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing with a secret pleasure the humiliation of the aristocracy, demanded only bread and public shows, and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almost universally embraced the philosophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, and suffered not the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the senate 30 had lost its dignity ; many of the most noble families were extinct. The republicans of spirit and ability had perished in the field of battle, or in the proscription. The door of the assembly had been designedly left open for a mixed multitude of more than a thousand persons, who reflected disgrace upon their rank, instead of deriving honour from it.

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

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

It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had assisted at this assembly) to describe the various emotions of the senate ; those that were suppressed, and those that were affected. It was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus ; to seem to distrust it was still more dangerous. The respective advantages of monarchy and a republic have

often divided speculative inquirers ; the present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy ; and these general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amidst this confusion of sentiments, the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept the resignation of Augustus ; they conjured him not to desert the republic which he had saved. After a decent resistance the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the 10 senate ; and consented to receive the government of the provinces, and the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known names of PROCONSUL and IMPERATOR. But he would receive them only for ten years. Even before the expiration of that period, he hoped that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed, and that the republic, restored to its pristine health and vigour, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was 20 preserved to the last ages of the empire by the peculiar pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnised the tenth years of their reign.

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a 30 right to command the service of the Roman youth, and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious penalties, by striking the offender out of the list of citizens, by confiscating his property, and by selling his person into slavery. The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws,

were suspended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exercised an absolute power of life and death; his jurisdiction was not confined by any forms of trial or rules of proceeding, and the execution of the sentence was immediate and without appeal. The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legislative authority. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a
10 great distance from Italy, the generals assumed the liberty of directing them against whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged most advantageous for the public service. It was from the success, not from the justice, of their enterprises, that they expected the honours of a triumph. In the use of victory, especially after they were no longer controlled by the commissioners of the senate, they exercised the most unbounded despotism. When Pompey commanded in the East, he rewarded his soldiers and allies, dethroned princes, divided kingdoms, founded
20 colonies, and distributed the treasures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome he obtained, by a single act of the senate and people, the universal ratification of all his proceedings. Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or assumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the same time, the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the
30 state.

From what has been already observed in the first chapter of this work, some notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus entrusted to the ruling hand of Augustus. But, as it was impossible that he could personally command the legions of so many distant frontiers, he was indulged by the senate, as Pompey had already been, in the permission of

devolving the execution of his great office on a sufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority these officers seemed not inferior to the ancient proconsuls ; but their station was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commissions at the will of a superior, to whose *auspicious* influence the merit of their action was legally attributed. They were the representatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his jurisdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conquests of Rome. It was some satisfaction, however, to 10 the senate that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The imperial lieutenants were of consular or prætorian dignity ; the legions were commanded by senators, and the præfecture of Egypt was the only important trust committed to a Roman knight.

Within six days after Augustus had been compelled to accept so very liberal a grant, he resolved to gratify the pride of the senate by an easy sacrifice. He represented to them that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition 20 of the times. They had not permitted him to refuse the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers ; but he must insist on being allowed to restore the more peaceful and secure provinces to the mild administration of the civil magistrate. In the division of the provinces Augustus provided for his own power and for the dignity of the republic. The proconsuls of the senate, particularly those of Asia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honourable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by 30 lictors, the latter by soldiers. A law was passed that, wherever the emperor was present, his extraordinary commission should supersede the ordinary jurisdiction of the governor ; a custom was introduced, that the new conquests belonged to the imperial portion ; and it was soon discovered that the authority of the *Prince*, the favourite

epithet of Augustus, was the same in every part of the empire.

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

Although Augustus considered a military force as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it as a very odious instrument, of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect in his
20 own person all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view, he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the consular and tribunitian offices, which were, in the same manner, continued to all his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome, and represented the dignity of the state. They superintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and presided in the assemblies both of the senate and people. The general control of the finances was entrusted to their care ; and,
30 though they seldom had leisure to administer justice in person, they were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction ; but, whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised by that degree above the laws, and exercised, in the defence of liberty, a temporary despotism. The character

of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. The appearance of the former was modest and humble; but their persons were sacred and inviolable. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, to stop, by a single word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic subsisted, the dangerous influence which either the consul or the tribune might derive from their respective jurisdiction 10 was diminished by several important restrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten persons; and, as both in their private and public interest they were adverse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution. But when the consular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were vested for life in a single person, when the general of the army was, at the same time, the minister of the senate 20 and the representative of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative.

To these accumulated honours the policy of Augustus soon added the splendid as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff, and of censor. By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes, of the Roman people. If so many distinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaisance of the 30 senate was prepared to supply every deficiency by the most ample and extraordinary concessions. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws: they were authorised to convoke the senate, to make several motions in the same day, to recommend candidates for the

honours of the state, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their discretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and by a most comprehensive clause, they were empowered to execute whatsoever they should judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majesty of things private or public, human or divine.

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the *Imperial magistrate*, the ordinary
10 magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigour, and almost without business. The names and forms of the ancient administration were preserved by Augustus with the most anxious care. The usual number of consuls, prætors, and tribunes were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, and continued to discharge some of their least important functions. Those honours still attracted the vain ambition of the Romans; and the emperors themselves, though invested for life with the powers of the consulship, frequently aspired to the title of that annual
20 dignity, which they condescended to share with the most illustrious of their fellow-citizens. In the election of these magistrates, the people, during the reign of Augustus, were permitted to expose all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, instead of discovering the least symptom of impatience, humbly solicited their suffrages for himself or his friends, and scrupulously practised all the duties of an ordinary candidate. But we may venture to ascribe to his councils the first measure of the succeeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the senate.
30 The assemblies of the people were for ever abolished, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without restoring liberty, might have disturbed, and perhaps endangered, the established government.

By declaring themselves the protectors of the people, Marius and Caesar had subverted the constitution of their country. But as soon as the senate had been humbled and

disarmed, such an assembly, consisting of five or six hundred persons, was found a much more tractable and useful instrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the senate that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occasion, to adopt the language and principles of Patricians. In the administration of their own powers, they frequently consulted the great national council, and *seemed* to refer to its decision the most important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces were subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the 10 senate. With regard to civil objects, it was the supreme court of appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal, constituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public station, or that affected the peace and majesty of the Roman people. The exercise of the judicial power became the most frequent and serious occupation of the senate; and the important causes that were pleaded before them afforded a last refuge to the spirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of state, and as a court of justice, the senate possessed very considerable prerogatives; ~~but~~ in 20 its legislative capacity, in which it was supposed virtually to represent the people, the rights of sovereignty were acknowledged to reside in that assembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their sanction. Their regular meetings were held on three stated days in every month, the Calends, the Nones, and the Ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themselves, who gloried in the name of senators, sat, voted, and divided with their equals.

To resume, in a few words, the system of the Imperial 30 government, as it was instituted by Augustus, and maintained by those princes who understood their own interest and that of the people, it may be defined as an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly

professed themselves the accountable ministers of the senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed.

The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. The emperors, if we except those tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, disdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life, they affected to confound themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an
10 equal intercourse of visits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were suited only to the rank of an opulent senator. Their family, however numerous or splendid, was composed entirely of their domestic slaves and freedmen. Augustus or Trajan would have blushed at employing the meanest of the Romans in those menial offices which, in the household and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are so eagerly solicited by the proudest nobles of Britain.

The deification of the emperors is the only instance in
20 which they departed from their accustomed prudence and modesty. The Asiatic Greeks were the first inventors, the successors of Alexander the first objects, of this servile and impious mode of adulation. It was easily transferred from the kings to the governors of Asia ; and the Roman magistrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of festivals and sacrifices. It was natural that the emperors should not refuse what the proconsuls had accepted ; and the divine honours which both the one and the other received from the
30 provinces attested rather the despotism than the servitude of Rome. But the conquerors soon imitated the vanquished nations in the arts of flattery ; and the imperious spirit of the first Cæsar too easily consented to assume, during his lifetime, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his successor declined so dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the

madness of Caligula and Domitian. Augustus permitted indeed some of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honour, on condition that they should associate the worship of Rome with that of the sovereign ; he tolerated private superstition, of which he might be the object ; but he contented himself with being revered by the senate and people in his human character, and wisely left to his successor the care of his public deification. A regular custom was introduced, that, on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the 10 senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods : and the ceremonies of his apotheosis were blended with those of his funeral. This legal, and, as it should seem, injudicious profanation, so abhorrent to our stricter principles, was received with a very faint murmur, by the easy nature of Polytheism ; but it was received as an institution, not of religion, but of policy. We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the characters of Cæsar or Augustus were far superior to those of the popular 20 deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of such a mixture of fable and mystery as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As soon as their divinity was established by law, it sunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame or to the dignity of succeeding princes.

In the consideration of the Imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Augustus, which was not however conferred 30 upon him till the edifice was almost completed. The obscure name of Octavianus he derived from a mean family in the little town of Aricia. It was stained with the blood of the proscriptions ; and he was desirous, had it been possible, to erase all memory of his former life. The illustrious surname of Cæsar he had assumed, as the adopted son of the dictator ;

but he had too much good sense either to hope to be confounded, or to wish to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was proposed in the senate to dignify their minister with a new appellation ; and after a very serious discussion, that of Augustus was chosen, among several others, as being the most expressive of the character of peace and sanctity which he uniformly affected. *Augustus* was therefore a personal, *Cæsar* a family distinction. The former should naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was
10 bestowed ; and however the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inseparably connected those appellations with the Imperial dignity, and they have been preserved by a long succession of emperors,—Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans,—from the fall of the republic to the present time. A distinction was, however, soon introduced. The sacred title of Augustus was always reserved for the monarch,
20 whilst the name of Cæsar was more freely communicated to his relations ; and, from the reign of Hadrian at least, was appropriated to the second person in the state, who was considered as the presumptive heir of the empire.

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition, prompted him at the age of nineteen to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterwards laid aside. With the
30 same hand, and probably with the same temper, he signed the proscription of Cicero and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial ; and according to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and at last the father, of the Roman world. When he framed the artful system of the Imperial authority, his moderation was inspired by his fears. He wished to deceive

the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government.

I. The death of Cæsar was ever before his eyes. He had lavished wealth and honours on his adherents ; but the most favoured friends of his uncle were in the number of the conspirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority against open rebellion, but their vigilance could not secure his person from the dagger of a determined republican ; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus, would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Cæsar 10 had provoked his fate as much by the ostentation of his power as by his power itself. The consul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names ; nor was he deceived in his expectation that the senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion, as long as it was supported by the virtue, or by even 20 the prudence, of the successors of Augustus. It was a motive of self-preservation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conspirators against Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked the person of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

There appears, indeed, *one* memorable occasion, in which the senate, after seventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reassume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the consuls convoked that assembly in the Capitol, condemned 30 the memory of the Cæsars, gave the watchword *liberty* to the few cohorts who faintly adhered to their standard, and during eight and forty hours acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the prætorian guards had resolved. The stupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, invested

with the Imperial purple, and prepared to support his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end ; and the senate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable servitude. Deserted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble assembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the prætorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amnesty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generosity to observe.

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

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years, from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. The soldiers were
30 seldom roused to that fatal sense of their own strength, and of the weakness of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of such dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were assassinated in their palace by their own domestics : the convulsions which agitated Rome on the death of the former were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the

space of eighteen months four princes perished by the sword ; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this short, though violent, eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away, unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by the *authority of the senate and the consent of the soldiers*. The legions respected their oath of fidelity ; and it requires a minute inspection of the Roman annals to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in 10 a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle.

In elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and mischief. The Roman emperors, desirous to spare the legions that interval of suspense, and the temptation of an irregular choice, invested their designed successor with so large a share of present power, as should enable him, after their decease, to assume the remainder without suffering the empire to perceive the change of masters. Thus Augustus, after all his fairer prospects had been snatched from him by untimely deaths, 20 rested his last hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law, by which the future prince was invested with an authority equal to his own over the provinces and the armies. Thus Vespasian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. Titus was adored by the eastern legions, which, under his command, had recently achieved the conquest of Judea. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were suspected. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent 30 monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the Imperial dignity ; and the grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father.

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

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

Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple from the assassins of Domitian before he discovered that his feeble age was unable to stem the torrent of public disorders which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predecessor. His mild disposition was respected by the good ; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character,
30 whose justice should strike terror into the guilty. Though he had several relations, he fixed his choice on a stranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany ; and immediately, by a decree of the senate, declared him his colleague and successor in the empire. It is sincerely to be lamented, that, whilst we are fatigued with the disgusting

relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus, and the virtue of Trajan.

We may readily believe that the father of his country 10 hesitated whether he ought to intrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments, the arts of the empress Plotina either fixed the irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption, the truth of which could not be safely disputed ; and Hadrian was peaceably acknowledged as his lawful successor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast 20 and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and vanity. As they prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet, in the first days of his reign, he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire ; and the tediousness of a 30 painful illness rendered him, at last, peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant ; and the honours decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus.

The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a successor. After revolving in his mind several men of distinguished

merit, whom he esteemed and hated, he adopted Ælius Verus, a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous. But whilst Hadrian was delighting himself with his own applause, and the acclamations of the soldiers, whose consent had been secured by an immense donative, the new Cæsar was ravished from his embraces by an untimely death. He left only one son. Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius; and, on the
10 accession of Marcus, was invested with an equal share of sovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus, he possessed one virtue—a dutiful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philosophic emperor dissembled his follies, lamented his early death, and cast a decent veil over his memory.

As soon as Hadrian's passion was either gratified or disappointed, he resolved to deserve the thanks of posterity by placing the most exalted merit on the Roman throne.
20 His discerning eye easily discovered a senator about fifty years of age, blameless in all the offices of life; and a youth of about seventeen, whose riper years opened the fair prospect of every virtue: the elder of these was declared the son and successor of Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himself should immediately adopt the younger. The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now speaking) governed the Roman world forty-two years with the same invariable spirit of wisdom and virtue. Although Pius had two sons, he preferred the welfare of Rome to the interest of
30 his family, gave his daughter Faustina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the senate the tribunitian and proconsular powers, and, with a noble disdain, or rather ignorance, of jealousy, associated him to all the labours of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor, loved him as a parent, obeyed him as a sovereign, and, after he was no more, regulated his

own administration by the example and maxims of his predecessor. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.

Titus Antoninus Pius had been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice, and peace, was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of those virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harvests. 10 Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of* furnishing very few materials for history; which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life he was an amiable as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniences of his fortune, and the innocent pleasures of society; and the benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper. 20

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a severer and more laborious kind. It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent. His *Meditations*, composed in the tumult of a camp, are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons on philosophy, in a more 30 public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor. But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfection of others, just and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted that Avidius Cassius, who excited a rebellion in Syria, had

disappointed him, by a voluntary death, of the pleasure of converting an enemy into a friend; and he justified the sincerity of that sentiment, by moderating the zeal of the senate against the adherents of the traitor. War he detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human nature; but when the necessity of a just defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory
10 was revered by a grateful posterity, and above a century after his death many persons preserved the image of Marcus Antoninus among those of their household gods.

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm
20 but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

The labours of these monarchs were over-paid by the
30 immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal

moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression ; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and ministers prepared to serve, the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their 10 masters.

These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history. In the conduct of those monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue ; the most exalted perfection and the meanest degeneracy of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is 20 almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the stupid Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During four-score years (excepting only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign), Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was 30 fatal to almost every virtue and every talent that arose in that unhappy period.

Under the reign of these monsters the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition

more wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived, 1. The exquisite sensibility of the sufferers ; and 2. The impossibility of escaping from the hand of the oppressor.

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

The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for slavery. Oppressed beneath the weight of their own

corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preserved the sentiments, or at least the ideas, of their freeborn ancestors. The education of Helvidius and Thrasea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the same as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philosophy they had imbibed the justest and most liberal notions of the dignity of human nature and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth ; to abhor the successful crimes of Cæsar and Augustus ; and inwardly 10 to despise those tyrants whom they adored with the most abject flattery. As magistrates and senators, they were admitted into the great council which had once dictated laws to the earth, whose name gave still a sanction to the acts of the monarch, and whose authority was so often prostituted to the vilest purposes of tyranny. Tiberius, and those emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to disguise their murders by the formalities of justice, and perhaps enjoyed a secret pleasure in rendering the senate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this assembly 20 the last of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accusers assumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country ; and the public service was rewarded by riches and honours. The servile judges professed to assert the majesty of the commonwealth, violated in the person of its first magistrate, whose clemency they most applauded when they trembled the most at his inexorable and impending cruelty. The tyrant beheld their baseness with just contempt, and 30 encountered their secret sentiments of detestation with sincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the senate.

II. The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other, by the general resemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive

of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own breast or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, 10 and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and, when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of Imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he 20 could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive. "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."

NOTES.

A few of Gibbon's own notes have been retained: they are followed by the letter (G).

CHAPTER I.

Page 1, l. 8. *image of a free constitution, semblance of constitutional or republican government.*

Page 2, l. 22. *Parthians, the great Eastern Empire of this time, never really conquered by Rome. They had defeated Crassus, a famous Roman, at the battle of Carrhae, B.C. 53.*

l. 26. *Arabia Felix, south-eastern Arabia.*

l. 36. *regained their independence by the defeat of Varus, A.D. 9, which so distressed Augustus that he was said to have dashed his head against the walls of his chamber, crying "Varus, Varus, give me back my legions!" The German leader was Arminius (Hermann).*

Page 3, l. 21. *no less fatal. "Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus and Agricola were checked and recalled in the course of their victories. Corbulo was put to death." (G.)*

l. 34. *the most stupid (Claudius), dissolute (Nero), timid (Domitian).*

Page 4, l. 7. *Caractacus, prince of the Trinovantes in S.E. Britain, defied the Romans for nine years. He was conquered by Ostorius in 51 A.D., and taken to Rome, where the Emperor Claudius pardoned him.*

Boadicæa, queen of the Icēni, poisoned herself after her defeat by Suetonius, A.D. 61.

l. 15. *Grampian hills.* The battle was fought about A.D. 85; Tacitus calls the place *mons Graupius*, but there is no proof that he meant the Grampian hills.

l. 36. *wall of Antōninus.* "It was not such an elaborate construction as Hadrian's, but consisted of a fosse (about 40 ft. wide and 20 ft. deep) and an earth-wall (now known as Graham's dyke) on the southern side of the fosse. It did not run along hills, like Hadrian's wall, but through level country, for a

distance of about 37 miles, from Carridden on the Forth to West Kilpatrick on the Clyde. South of the fosse ran a military road, along which were ten camps surrounded with mound and ditch." (Bury, *Student's Roman Empire*.)

Page 6, l. 10. thirst of military glory. Cp. Milton's description of Fame (in *Lycidas*) as "that last infirmity of noble mind." The same thought occurs in Tacitus.

l. 16. son of Philip, Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, conqueror of Persia.

Page 8, l. 4. Upper Egypt, southern Egypt.

l. 12. Lanuvian villa, country-house at Lanuvium, a town of Latium, south of the Alban Mount.

l. 30. contemporary historian, Appian.

Page 11, l. 10. name of an army. Lat. *exercitus*.

l. 30. sound of flutes. Cp. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i. 549.

"Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders."

Pyrthic dance, a mimic war-dance, representing attack and defence in battle. It was of Greek origin, and was specially found among the Dorians of Sparta and Crete.

l. 33. ancient historian, Josephus, the Jewish historian.

Page 12, l. 9. tactics deal with the management of a battle, as 'strategy' with the planning of a campaign.

l. 13. Polybius (B.C. 204-122), a Greek historian who was carried as a hostage to Rome and detained there for 17 years. His history of the period between the outbreak of the second Punic War and the fall of Carthage and of Corinth is our chief authority for the events of those years.

Punic wars, against Carthage.

Page 13, l. 31. The cavalry. Gibbon's account needs correction in three important respects. (1) The "noblest youths of Rome and Italy" had ceased to form the cavalry of the Roman army long before the time of the Emperors. The Equites or knights in the last century of the Republic were an order in the State between the Senators and the people; the name had ceased to have any connection with the army. The cavalry of the Roman armies was furnished by the allies and was outside the legion proper. (2) Augustus, in re-organising the army, gave to each legion 120 horse divided into four squadrons. Gibbon is right in saying that these horsemen were of the same class as the legionary foot-soldiers, but he greatly exaggerates their numbers. (3) Augustus' reorganisation of the knights was more complete and deliberate than Gibbon's language suggests. He made them an even more distinct order in the State than they had hitherto

been, and used them as officers in the army, as jurymen, and as a civil service in the administration of the imperial provinces.

Page 14, l. 10. alteration of... government, establishment of the Empire.

Page 17, l. 6. distribution of the troops. Gibbon's account is partly based on what Tacitus says of the reign of Tiberius, and is not strictly accurate as regards the age of the Antonines; but the general impression which he gives is fairly correct.

Page 17, l. 19. city cohorts and praetorian guards. The number was hardly so great as 20,000. There were generally nine cohorts of praetorian guards, each cohort consisting of 1000 men, and six (originally four) city cohorts of the same size.

Page 18, l. 1. destruction of Carthage, B.C. 146.

extirpation of pirates, by Pompey, B.C. 67.

l. 13. Liburnians, light war-vessels with two banks of oars; their shape was long and narrow, pointed at both ends. The Romans adopted them from the Liburnians, a tribe of pirates on the Dalmatian coast.

l. 14. rival, Antony.

l. 33. monarch of the last century, Louis XIV., king of France from 1643 to 1715.

Page 19, l. 31. Alsace and Lorraine, ceded by France to Germany in 1871.

Savoy, now a department of France.

l. 33. Liege... Brabant. All of these are now united in the kingdom of Belgium, except part of Luxembourg, which is an independent Grand Duchy.

Page 20, l. 14. so flattering a circumstance, one which gave them such an opportunity of flattering their pride.

l. 15. Basil, Basel or Bâle.

l. 35. columns of Hercules, see p. 26, l. 34. Wall of Antoninus, p. 4, l. 36.

Page 21, l. 5. Romagna, the country along the coast of the Adriatic to the south of Venice, now part of the province of Emilia.

l. 8. Venice was yet unborn. Venice was founded in the 5th century A.D. by fugitives from the mainland taking refuge in the islands of the lagoons from the invading barbarians.

l. 11. ecclesiastical state, the States of the Church which ceased to exist when Victor Emmanuel entered Rome in 1870.

Page 22, l. 9. elector of Bavaria received title of king from Napoleon in 1805, and still retains that title in spite of the incorporation of Bavaria in the German Empire.

l. 11. **Grisons**, a canton of Switzerland.

l. 23. **Emperor of the Romans**. The 'Holy Roman Empire,' as it was called, nominally lasted till 1806, when Francis II., Emperor of Austria, resigned the empty title.

l. 33. **province of the Venetian state**, now part of Austria, as is also **Ragusa**. **Bosnia** is now under Austrian protection. **Moldavia and Wallachia** together form the kingdom of Roumania. The language is still 'Romanic,' i.e. a Latin dialect introduced by Trajan's soldiers.

Page 23, l. 17. Servia and Bulgaria taken from Turkey by the Berlin Treaty of 1878. Servia was made a kingdom; Bulgaria a self-governing principality.

l. 19. **Roumelia**. Western Roumelia is now generally called by its ancient name of Macedonia, and still belongs to the Turks. Eastern Roumelia, the ancient Thrace, is now attached to Bulgaria.

l. 26. **new city of Rome**, Constantinople.

l. 31. **two Philips**. The two greatest Macedonian kings of this name were Philip II., the father of Alexander, and Philip V., who was conquered with difficulty by the Romans.

Page 24, l. 1. Achaean league, a confederacy of Greek states, important in the history of the third and second centuries B.C.

l. 17. **Grecian colonies of Ionia**. **Milētus** and **Ephesus** were the most important.

l. 21. **Trebizond**, the ancient Trāpēzus.

l. 30. **Budzak**, etc. These names are no longer in use to describe the region of the Black Sea, the northern and eastern shores of which are now part of Russia. **Crim Tartary** is the Crimea; **Circassia** is the western part of the Caucasus; **Mingrelia** is the ancient Colchis.

l. 34. **Seleucidae**, a dynasty of Syrian kings founded by Seleucus, one of the generals of Alexander the Great.

Page 25, l. 11. letters. The Greeks learned the alphabet from the Phoenicians at some time between the tenth and the eighth century B.C.; but recent explorations in Crete have proved that a form of 'syllabic' writing was used in the Aegean islands some centuries before this.

l. 26. **Mamelukes**, mounted soldiery of Egypt, consisting originally of Circassian slaves. They made one of themselves Sultan in 1254, and maintained this dynasty till 1517.

Page 26, l. 18. Fez, capital of Morocco.

Page 27, l. 6. Minorca, ceded by England to Spain in 1803.

l. 9. **Corsica** had been ceded by the Genoese to the French in 1768, shortly before Gibbon wrote.

l. 10. **Sardinia and Sicily.** When Gibbon wrote there was a 'Kingdom of Sardinia,' which included part of the mainland of Italy, and a 'Kingdom of the two Sicilies,' i.e. Sicily and Naples.

Crete, now governed by a Greek Prince under the protection of the European powers. **Cyprus**, under British administration since the Berlin treaty of 1878.

Malta was given to England by the Peace of Amiens in 1802. It had been held by the Knights of St. John, a military order founded in 1100, till they were conquered by Bonaparte.

l. 24. **globe of the earth.** The Romans often spoke of their Empire under the name of *orbis terrarum*.

CHAPTER II.

Page 28, l. 6. Hÿphâsis, an eastern tributary of the Indus, now called the Beas. It marked the eastern limit of Alexander's conquest. He reached it in B.C. 326 in the *eighth* summer after crossing the Hellespont from Europe in 334. "The conquests of Alexander in Hindostan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great streams of the Indus." (G.)

Page 28, l. 7. Zingis (Zenghiz or Jenghiz Khan), a Mongol emperor who invaded Northern China in 1206, and by a succession of victories, which are said to have cost five million lives, added Northern China, Eastern Persia, and the whole of Tartary to his dominions.

Page 29, l. 2. admitted, etc. "The Christians as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman Empire, formed a very important exception; so important indeed that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work." (G.)

Page 30, l. 1. mythology of Homer. "The rights, powers and pretensions of the sovereign of Olympus are very clearly described in the 15th book of the *Iliad*; in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has improved the theology of Homer." (G.)

l. 4. **meditated**, etc. "The admirable work of Cicero, *de Natura Deorum*, is the best clue we have to guide us through the dark and profound abyss. He represents with candour and confutes with subtlety the opinions of the philosophers." (G.)

l. 8. **four most celebrated schools of ancient philosophy.** Gibbon's selection of four schools (Stoics, Platonists, Academics, Epicureans) is arbitrary and far from clear. The Academy (so called from the grove of the Attic hero Academus where its lectures were held) was the school founded by Plato, though it is true that in later times it departed widely from his teaching.

The Stoic school was founded at Athens by Zeno about 310 B.C. Its lofty morality inspired many of the noblest Romans. Epicurus, a contemporary of Zeno, held that gods either did not exist or did not care for man, and that pleasure was the highest human good.

l. 24. **Athens**, the favourite university under the Roman Empire.

l. 25. **school of philosophy**.

l. 33. **Lucian**, a Greek writer, born about 120 A.D., who satirised both the popular religion and the philosophers in witty dramatic dialogues.

Page 31, l. 20. Libyan, Olympian, Capitoline, i.e., African, Greek and Roman.

l. 26. **given laws to the senate, i.e.,** the best of the Roman senators had themselves been educated in the Athenian schools of philosophy.

Page 33, l. 21. eighty-three thousand. Mommsen estimates the number at twenty thousand only.

l. 26. **the chance of arms**, the war between Rome and her Italian allies, generally called the Social War, B.C. 90.

l. 27. **Samnites and Lucanians**, the brave Highlanders of southern Italy.

Page 34, l. 19. Calabria, the 'heel' of Italy.

l. 31. **historian, Livy**.

l. 33. **the Catos**. The two most famous were Cato the Censor, who began his career in the Second Punic War, and Cato 'of Utica' (as he is called from his death at Utica in Africa), the sturdy champion of the old Republic in the days of Cicero and Caesar.

l. 35. **Marius saved Rome from a threatened invasion of northern barbarians (the Cimbri and Teutones) as Camillus had saved her from the Etruscans and the Gauls.**

Page 35, l. 2. Catiline, whose revolutionary plot was discovered and suppressed by Cicero in his consulship, B.C. 63.

l. 32. **Mithridates**, king of Pontus, occupied the Roman province of Asia, and ordered a massacre of 80,000 Romans there, 88 B.C. The province had been left to the Romans by the will of King Attalus of Pergamus, who died B.C. 133, but its organisation as a province was not completed till B.C. 129.

l. 34. **farm of the revenue, i.e.,** contracting for the taxes. These were put up to auction in Rome, and bought by companies of Roman traders who undertook the collection of the taxes from the provincials.

Page 36, l. 14. municipal cities. The name of *municipium*

originally denoted an Italian town that was given the private rights of Roman citizenship without the public rights, i.e., without the right of voting or holding office.

Page 37, l. 9. ancient dialects. The Sabine dialects belonged to the same family as the Latin. Nothing is known of the origin of the *Etruscans*, who were a very powerful nation in early times. The *Venēti* were a people, probably of Illyrian origin, living on the Adriatic coast where Venice was afterwards founded. Gibbon does not give a complete list of Italian dialects.

l. 22. **universally adopted.** This is an over-statement.

l. 23. **Pannonia.** See p. 22, l. 18.

l. 24. **Punic, Phœnician,** the language of the Carthaginians.

l. 31. **in letters.** "Spain alone produced Columella, the Senecas, Lucan, Martial and Quintilian." (G.)

Trajan was a Spaniard.

l. 32. **the Scipios,** the proud and distinguished Roman family to which the conqueror of Hannibal belonged.

Page 38, l. 28. Ptolemies, the last dynasty of Egyptian kings before Egypt became a Roman province.

l. 30. **trite observation.** *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit—*"Captive Greece took captive her savage conqueror"—a famous saying of Horace.

Page 41, l. 14. myriads. "Athenaeus boldly asserts that he knew very many Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves." (G.)

Page 42, l. 20. imperfect calculation. Gibbon's estimate of the population of the Roman Empire is too large. Merivale reckons it at 85 millions in the time of Augustus, of which 40 fall to the European and 45 to the Asiatic provinces. If he is right, the population of these European countries is much larger now than it was then.

Page 44, l. 7. Cōlissēum (or Colosseum), the great amphitheatre, still imposing in its ruins, begun by Vespasian and finished by Domitian. It had room for 87,000 spectators. **Capua and Verona.** The amphitheatres in these two places are still standing.

l. 11. **Alcantara,** on the Tagus. The bridge, built in honour of Trajan, consisted of six arches, and was 670 ft. long and 210 ft. high. One arch was destroyed by the English in 1809.

l. 13. **Pliny the younger,** governor of Bithynia under the emperor Trajan. His letters are, next to Cicero's, the most valuable collection that have come down to us from Roman times.

l. 31. **Cimon and Miltiades,** historical heroes of Athens belonging to the time of the Persian Wars; **Theseus, Cecrops** and

Aeacus, legendary Athenian heroes ; **Jupiter** = Zeus, the supreme god of the Greeks.

Page 46, l. 9. Odæum. "The Odeum of Hērōdēs is here wrongly distinguished from his theatre and confounded with the Odeum of Pericles. The latter, which has disappeared, was close to the theatre of Dionysus, but on the east side ; that of Herodes, of which there are still ample remains, was on the west." (Bury.)

Page 47, l. 2. Claudian portico. Gibbon apparently means the temple to Claudius begun by Agrippina, diverted to other purposes by Nero, and afterwards restored by Vespasian. See Dennie, *Rome of To-day and Yesterday*, p. 203.

l. 3. temple of Peace, built by Vespasian ; esteemed the wonder of its age, but no longer standing.

l. 3. genius of Rome, protecting spirit of Rome. "Families, societies, cities and peoples had their Genius as well as individuals." (Seyffert.) Hadrian built a great temple to Venus and Rome on part of the site of Nero's Golden Palace.

l. 32. Spoleto in Umbria (Italy) ; **Metz** in Lothringen (Germany) ; **Segovia** in Spain, 46 miles N.W. of Madrid.

Page 48, l. 11. Laurentum, an ancient settlement on the coast of Latium described by Virgil (*Aeneid VII.*) as the capital of King Latinus.

Page 49, l. 21. the proper Asia, the Roman province of Asia.

Page 50, l. 12. chain of communication. "The following itinerary may serve to convey some idea of the direction of the road, and of the distance between the principal towns. I. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. II. London, 227. III. Sandwich, 67. IV. The navigation to Boulogne, 45. V. Rheims, 174. VI. Lyons, 330. VII. Milan, 324. VIII. Rome, 426. IX. Brundisium, 360. X. The navigation to Dyrrhachium, 40. XI. Byzantium, 711. XII. Ancyra, 283. XIII. Tarsus, 301. XIV. Antioch, 141. XV. Tyre, 252. XVI. Jerusalem, 168. In all 4080 Roman or 3740 English miles." (G.)

"In the time of Theodosius, Caesarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was 725 Roman or 665 English miles." (G.)

Page 52, l. 22. Strabo, a Greek, author of the chief geographical work that has come down to us from ancient times. He finished it about A.D. 23.

Page 55, l. 17. writer, Pliny the elder, author of the *Natural History*, uncle of the Pliny mentioned above, p. 44, l. 13. He perished in the eruption of Vesuvius, A.D. 79.

l. 19. **style, tone.**

l. 35. **social life**, the life of men in civilised states.

Page 57, l. 9. physic, here used for medical science.

l. 10. **Ptolemy**, a Greek astronomer of the second century A.D. The 'Ptolemaic' system of the universe, in which the earth was regarded as a fixed centre, was accepted till the time of Copernicus (sixteenth century).

l. 11. **Galen**, a very prolific Greek writer on medicine, and the most celebrated of ancient Greek physicians after Hippocrates. He settled in Rome under the Antonines. About 100 of his treatises are preserved.

l. 13. **Lucian**. See p. 30, l. 33.

l. 24. **revival of letters**, i.e. of learning, the 'Renaissance' after the Middle Ages. On the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the Greek scholars of that city fled westwards and brought science and Greek literature with them.

Page 58, l. 1. Longinus, a Greek teacher of rhetoric, born at Athens about 213 A.D., and made minister to her court by the accomplished Queen Zenobia of Palmyra. He "preserved the spirit of ancient Athens" by persuading the queen to throw off the Roman yoke. Gibbon calls him 'sublime' as the traditional author of the treatise *On the Sublime* (i.e. on a lofty literary style), from which he quotes (lines 5-12). But this treatise is now believed to have been written two hundred years earlier. The author's name may have been Longinus, but nothing is known of him.

l. 17. **after ... ten centuries**. See note above on 'revival of letters.'

CHAPTER III.

Page 59, l. 9. dictator, Julius Caesar.

l. 10. **triumvir**, Octavianus (Augustus) who—as a step to absolute power—got himself appointed one of a commission of three "for the settlement of the Republic" in B.C. 43. Antony and Lepidus were the other two commissioners.

l. 27. **Epicurus**. See note on p. 30, l. 8.

Page 60, l. 4. Agrippa, Augustus' best general, who helped him to win the battle of Actium, and whom he admitted into a sort of partnership in the imperial powers and dignities.

l. 11. **Prince of the Senate**. The name of *Princeps* by which the emperors liked to be known is now said to mean 'First Citizen,' and to have no connection with the old honorary title *Princeps Senatus* given in republican days to the most distinguished member of the senate.

l. 31. **Tacitus**, the most brilliant of Roman historians (about A.D. 54-117), wrote a history of the emperors from Tiberius to Domitian in two works known as the *Annals* and the *History*.

Page 61, l. 11. consented to receive, etc. In B.C. 27, Octavian laid down his extraordinary power, and received instead from the people 'proconsular power,' with command of some of the provinces, for ten years, and the title 'Augustus.'

l. 13. **Imperātor** "(from which we have derived emperor) signified under the republic no more than *general*, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman emperors assumed it *in that sense*, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it." (G.) As a regular title, denoting the permanent relation of the emperor to his troops, it *preceded* the emperor's name.

l. 36. **Porcian law**, confirming the right of citizens to appeal to the people, B.C. 197.

Semprōnian law of Caius Gracchus, B.C. 123.

Page 63, l. 6. to whose auspicious influence, because in imperial times every victory was won 'under the auspices of' the emperor, the supreme commander of the army. "Under the commonwealth a triumph could only be claimed by the general who was authorised to take the auspices [consult the omens before beginning battle] in the name of the people. By an exact consequence, drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reserved to the emperor." (G.)

Page 64, l. 22. powers of the consular and tribunitian offices. Augustus did not always hold the consulship or tribunate, but he got the senate and people to place him by the side of the regular magistrates—to give him a rank and authority equal to that of the actual holders of office. Thus he was given 'proconsular power,' but allowed to wield it also within the walls of Rome, as if he were consul, whereas the ordinary 'proconsul' forfeited his power if he entered Rome. Between 27 and 23 B.C. Augustus held the consulship every year with a colleague. After 23 B.C. he ceased to hold the consulship and relied partly on the 'proconsular power,' which he retained and which was made valid inside Rome, and partly on the 'tribunicial power' which was renewed to him every year till his death.

l. 33. **empowered the first magistrate** (i.e. the consul), as at the time of the conspiracy of Catiline in Cicero's consulship. But this right of the senate to override the laws had always been disputed.

Page 65, l. 26. censor. Augustus only held the censorship

temporarily, though he often discharged censorial duties as *Præfectus morum*.

Page 66, l. 22. successors of Alexander. Alexander himself, as well as his successors, was worshipped as a god.

Page 69, l. 33. Aricia, in Latium.

Page 72, l. 28. Commodus, the vicious son and successor of Marcus Aurelius.

Page 73, l. 1. four princes, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius.

Page 75, l. 3. abridgment, fragments of the work of Dio Cassius, a Greek historian of the Empire who lived in the second century. **panegyric,** an elaborate and affected speech of thanks to Trajan, for conferring the consulship upon him, delivered in the senate in A.D. 100 by the younger Pliny, and afterwards revised and published.

Page 76, l. 3. Antinous a favourite who was deified, after his premature death, by Hadrian. His statues are among the most famous of ancient works of art.

Page 77, l. 23. learned conference, i.e. discussion with learned men. l. 33. **Zeno.** See note on p. 30, l. 8.

Page 79, l. 4. ideal, i.e. theoretical.

l. 26. **Vitellius** "consumed in mere eating at least six millions of our money in about seven months. It is not easy to express his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog; but it is by substituting for a coarse word a very fine image." (G.)

l. 33. **monsters.** But it is very doubtful whether Tacitus gives us a fair impression of Tiberius, or Juvenal of Domitian. A very different notion of the work of these Emperors is obtained from studying the records of their provincial administration.

Page 81, l. 3. Helvidius and Thrasea, noble senators of Nero's reign who were accused of desiring to restore the Republic. Thrasea opened his own veins and bled to death on receiving intelligence of his condemnation. Helvidius, his son-in-law, was banished, returned to Rome subsequently, and was executed for treason in Vespasian's reign.

Tacitus, see note on p. 60, l. 31. **Pliny the younger,** p. 44, l. 13. **Cato of Utica,** p. 34, l. 33.

l. 26. **Majesty.** "The crime of *majesty* was formerly a treasonable offence against the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Augustus and Tiberius applied it to their own persons, and extended it to an infinite latitude." (G.)

Page 82, l. 16. Seriphus, a small island in the Aegean Sea.

l. 17. **Danube,** to which the poet Ovid was banished by Augustus.

GLOSSARY.

A. TECHNICAL TERMS.

- Augurs** (7. 9), a college of priestly officials in the Roman religion whose duty it was to take the *auspices*, i.e. to interpret the omens given by the flight of birds.
- Calends, Nones, Ides** (67. 26), divisions of the Roman month. The Calends were the first, Nones 5th, Ides 13th day of the month, except in March, May, July, October, when the Nones were on the 7th and the Ides on the 15th.
- Censors** (42. 9), two in number under the Republic, elected every five years; the highest office in distinction, though not in power. It was their duty to take the census of citizens, and they had the power of degrading unworthy senators and citizens.
- Centurion** (10. 36), the officer of a *century* (the sixtieth part of a Roman legion).
- Cohort** (13. 33), a division of the Roman army; generally the tenth part of a legion.
- Consuls** (14. 8), the two highest magistrates of the Republic, elected annually.
- Dictator** (61. 30), under the Republic an exceptional magistrate appointed for six months only in times of stress: he superseded all existing magistrates. Julius Caesar exercised his unconstitutional powers under this title.
- Freedmen** (40. 35), emancipated slaves. At Rome they were regarded as owing certain duties to their liberator, who was called their *patron* and, on his part, was bound to protect their interests.
- Lictors** (63. 31), attendants on the chief Roman magistrates; they carried a bundle of rods (*fusces*) with an axe in the middle; 12 lictors preceded a consul.
- Phalanx** (13. 26), the Macedonian formation of heavy infantry; an unbroken battle-line sixteen ranks in depth.
- Praefects** (15. 5), officers in command of the auxiliaries in the Roman army. The name was also given to various officers under the Emperor, e.g. to the imperial governor of Egypt.
- Praefecture** (45. 15; 63. 14), the sphere of a praefect—a name given to various commands under the Empire.

Praetorian Guards. See 17. 20.

Praetors (63. 13), Roman magistrates, originally appointed for the administration of justice in Rome, but increased in number as the Republic began to acquire provinces. The praetorship came next in dignity to the consulship, and was the last stepping-stone to that office.

Proconsul (61. 13), a magistrate acting 'for a consul': generally an ex-consul whose powers were continued to him outside Rome by the senate for the administration of a province. Augustus was given an extended form of 'proconsular power,' but did not call himself proconsul.

Stadium (46. 2) Greek word, race-course.

Tribunes (a) of soldiers (12. 20), the six chief officers of the legion; (b) of the people (65. 1), the special magistrates of the *plebs* or Commons of Rome, under the Republic ten in number, elected annually.

B. GENERAL.

* An Asterisk prefixed denotes that a word is not commonly used in this sense at the present time.

It must be remembered that a great writer uses the word that is best for his purpose and that another word cannot, as a rule, be substituted without weakening the sentence. The interpretations given in this Glossary are only meant to guide the pupil towards the sense.

allegory (29. 21), a description of one thing under the image of another.

amnesty (72. 6), general pardon.

apotheosis (69. 12), deification, the making into a god.

auspicious (56. 2), favourable; (63. 6), carrying an omen of success.

buckler (12. 30), shield.

censorious (55. 17), fault-finding.

censure (7. 21), blame.

complaisance (65. 30), French, disposition to oblige.

curious (30. 5), subtle; (47. 7) made with care.

declamation (51. 20), rhetoric.

***deduce** (1. 18), lay down in regular order.

delegated (28. 13), deputed, appointed to act for another.

disorder (29. 5), sickness.

dissemble (76. 14), to pretend that not to be which really is; to conceal.

- divination** (31. 35), the taking of omens in order to predict future events.
- ensign** (10. 29), standard, banner ; (66. 15) badge of office.
- equity** (64. 32), the correction or qualification of law when too severe or defective ; or the extension of the words of the law to cases not expressed, yet coming within the reason of the law.
- evolutions** (11. 29), military movements (*e.g.* the doubling of ranks or files, wheeling, countermarching).
- family** (68. 12), Lat. *familia*, household.
- generous** (52. 18), strong, full of spirit.
- habit** (41. 11), dress.
- husbandry** (53. 13), agriculture.
- idiom** (39. 6), peculiar language.
- *image** (1. 8 ; 71. 1), show, appearance, Lat. *imago*.
- indifferently** (48. 10), without distinction.
- insulated** (3. 31) surrounded by water, the same word as 'isolated, which also is derived from Lat. *insula*, island, through the French, *isole*.
- jurisdiction** (44. 16), legal authority.
- jurisprudence** (40. 26), the science of law.
- lecture** (77. 23), formal instruction by a professor.
- lucubration** (77. 24), study by lamp-light (Latin), 'burning the midnight oil.'
- *manners** (1. 6), civilisation (Latin *mores*).
- manumission** (40. 35), bestowal of freedom.
- mechanical** (41. 21), pertaining to manual labour.
- monsoons** (54. 27), periodical winds of the Indian Ocean blowing from S.-W. from April to October, and from N.-E. the rest of the year.
- mythology** (29. 36), system of myths or fables about heathen deities.
- parsimony** (74. 16), excessive frugality and economy.
- periodical** (54. 27), recurring at regular intervals.
- pervious** (50. 30), admitting a way through.
- polite** (43. 17), civilised.
- polytheist** (29. 1), believer in many gods.
- *posterity** (44. 32), descendant.
- prerogative** (67. 20), exclusive privilege.
- proscription** (59. 33), dooming to death ; the public offer of a reward for the head of a political enemy.

- proselyte** (32. 33), a new convert.
prostituted (40. 30), exposed to degradation.
pusillanimity (17. 2), cowardice.
*** relation** (75. 1), narrative.
resume (80. 25), Lat. *re-sumo*, take back.
rhetoric (45. 29), art of public-speaking.
sequestered (2. 29), secluded, remote.
seraglio (80. 23), the palace of an Oriental monarch.
solstice (54. 25), the time when the sun reaches the point in the ecliptic farthest from the equator, and seems to stand still, *i.e.* midsummer and midwinter.
sophists (45. 34), professors.
specious (6. 18), fair-seeming.
speculative (29. 1), philosophical.
suffrage (14. 9), vote.
*** suppose** (75. 14), to invent.
term (54. 29), limit.
tumultuous (59. 30), disturbed by tumults, disorderly.
tutelar (68. 34), protecting.
unremitting (79. 29), never letting go.

QUESTIONS.

Questions marked with an Asterisk are suggested as suitable subjects for short essays.

CHAPTER I.

1. What advice did Augustus give to his successors? When was it departed from, and why?
2. Draw a map showing the boundaries of the Roman Empire in the time of Augustus.
3. What do you know of the conquest of Britain?
4. Describe a Roman Camp (with a plan).
5. Describe the equipment of a Roman soldier.
- *6. Contrast the characters and work of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius.
7. Mention (in order from west to east) the chief differences made in the political map of Europe since Gibbon's day.
8. Explain : sedentary, donative, liberal birth.
9. Where are the following and what is their importance?—Misenum—Lugdunum—Wall of Antoninus—Cyrene.
- *10. Compare ancient with modern warfare.
11. Express in your own words, bringing out the meaning as clearly and exactly as you can :
 - (a) In the prosecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious.
 - (b) [In the map of Asia] instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us to observe the indelible characters of nature.

CHAPTER II.

1. What was the Roman attitude to foreign religions? Mention any exceptions and account for them.
2. What were the advantages of becoming a Roman citizen?
3. By what double method did Rome extend her citizenship?
4. How does Gibbon compare the use of the Latin and Greek languages under the Empire?

5. What distinction does Gibbon draw between the eastern and western provinces? What province of the Empire was the slowest to become Romanised, and why?

6. What do you know of Verona, Alcantara, the Coliseum, the Forum of Trajan, the Golden Palace, the proper Asia, Antioch, Ostia, the Columns of Hercules?

7. Express in your own words, making the sense as clear as you can :

(a) Princes, whom the ostentation of gratitude or generosity permitted for awhile to hold a precarious sceptre.

(b) In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modest simplicity of private houses announced the equal condition of freedom.

(c) From the variety of nations, and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and upon Laurentum.

*8. Write an account of an imaginary visit to a town in the Roman Empire, describing the buildings and other sights of the place.

9. What does Gibbon tell us of the cultivation of the olive?

10. Who were Serapis, Aesculapius, Lucian, the elder and the younger Pliny?

11. In what phrases does Gibbon sum up (a) the attitudes of different classes to religion, (b) the characteristics of Oriental empires?

12. Define: implicit, deprecate, incoherent, salutary, insensibly, promiscuous, trite, emulation.

13. To what does Gibbon apply the epithets: perennial, generous, curious?

14. What signs of decay in the Roman Empire were visible in this age?

CHAPTER III.

1. What powers of the old Republican magistrates did Augustus combine in his own person?

2. How does Gibbon contrast the consuls and the tribunes?

3. What powers did Augustus leave to the Senate?

4. In what phrases does Gibbon sum up (a) the imperial system of Augustus, (b) the function of history?

*5. Was there any drawback to the happiness of the Antonine period? Give reasons for your view.

6. How did the Emperors get over the difficulty that the throne was not hereditary?

7. What was the position of a Roman general under the Republic? What difference did the Empire make to that position?

8. Is the maxim "The king never dies" true of the Roman Empire?

*9. Describe an imaginary tour through the Empire in company with Hadrian.

*10. Compare the life of a Roman citizen under the Antonines with the life of an English citizen at the present time.

11. Explain from the context :

(a) The dream of liberty was at an end.

(b) His life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno.

(c) Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names.

12. To whom does Gibbon apply the epithets 'stupid,' 'furious,' and 'beastly'?

13. Define: suffrage, adulation, equity, amnesty, latent, auspicious, pristine, inexorable, accountable, arraign.

PASSAGES SUGGESTED AS SUITABLE FOR LEARNING BY HEART.

- P. 34, l. 18—p. 35, l. 3. "From the foot . . . of eloquence."
 42, l. 25—p. 43, l. 11. "Domestic peace . . . Roman empire."
 58, ll. 1-19. "The sublime . . . taste and science."
 71, l. 26—p. 72, l. 8. "There appears . . . to observe."
 77, ll. 21-35. "The virtue . . . all mankind."
 82, l. 2-end. "A modern tyrant . . . the conqueror."

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