

Zosimus, New History. London: Green and Chaplin (1814).

Book 1.

BOOK THE FIRST.

WHEN Polybius of Megalopolis proposed to write the history of all the remarkable occurrences of his own times, he thought it proper to demonstrate by facts, that the Romans, who were continually at war with the neighbouring states, for six hundred years after the building of their city, acquired in that space of time no considerable extent of dominion. But after they had subdued a small part of Italy, which upon the invasion of Hannibal they lost at the battle of Cannae, and viewed their enemies under their own walls; they made so great a progress in good fortune, that in less than fifty-three years, they became masters, not only of all Italy and Africa, but likewise of Spain. And being still desirous to enlarge their empire, they crossed the Ionian sea, conquered Greece, and ruined the Macedonians, whose king they carried to Rome in chains. No person can therefore suppose that all this proceeded from causes merely human, but either from fatal necessity, the influence of the planets, or the will of the Deity, which regards with favour all our actions, while they are just and virtuous. For these provide for future contingencies by such a train of apparent causes, that thinking persons must conclude the administration of human affairs to be in the hands of a divine Providence; so that when the energy of nations by the divine influence is roused and alert, they flourish in prosperity; and on the contrary, when they become displeasing to the gods, their affairs decline to a state resembling that which now exists.

But it being my design to demonstrate by actual circumstances the truth of my observations, I shall begin by stating, that from the Trojan war to the battle of Marathon the Greeks performed no exploits worthy of being mentioned either against each other or any foreign power. But when Darius with his prefects brought against them an army of immense magnitude, eight thousand Athenians, as if inspired from Heaven, and armed by mere chance, advanced to oppose him, and met with such success as to kill ninety thousand, and compel the remainder to fly from their country. And it was this engagement that enabled the Greeks ⁶ to improve their condition. But Xerxes, after the death of Darius, invaded Greece with a force so much more considerable, that he appeared to carry all Asia along with him into Greece; for the sea was covered with his ships, and the land with his soldiers. Finding it necessary to cross from Asia into Europe, he constructed a bridge over the Hellespont for the passage of his foot soldiers, and, as if the two elements of earth and water were not capable of receiving his army without depriving them of their natural use, cut a channel through Mount Athos, in which his ships rode as in the sea. In the mean time the Greeks, though terrified at the bare report of the approach of such an enemy, prepared to oppose him with their utmost strength. In a naval engagement at Artemisium, and another at Salamis, they so far exceeded their former victory, that Xerxes was glad to escape with life, having lost the greatest part, of his army; and the destruction of the remainder of them at Plateae gave such a completion to the renown of the Greeks, that, by the force, of the reputation they had acquired, they not only liberated the Greeks that were settled in Asia, but possessed themselves of almost all the islands.

And indeed, had they continued amicable with each other, and contented with the condition they then stood in, and had the Athenians and Lacedemonians not quarrelled for the government of Greece, they would never have had to submit to any foreign power. But the strength of Greece being exhausted by the Peloponnesian war, and its cities impoverished, Philip found opportunity to enlarge the kingdom left him by his father, by arts and stratagems, though in strength inferior to all his neighbours. For by his money he so bound to him his own soldiers, and all others that would fight under his banners, that he became sufficiently powerful to contend with the Athenians at Cheronea, and after that victory by his courtesy and affability insinuated himself so much into the regard of all, that he thought himself able to march against the king of Persia, but died before he could levy a competent force.

Alexander, who succeeded to the throne, having settled the affairs Greece, crossed into Asia with a considerable army. Having there conquered the Satrapes who opposed him, he advanced towards Darius himself, who had fixed himself with an innumerable host in all the places near to Issus. There he gained in an engagement with the Persians an incredible victory, routed Darius, and proceeded through Phoenicia and Syria into Palestine. His actions at Tyre, and Gaza may be read in the historians ⁷ of his life. From thence he marched into Egypt, and having paid his devotions to Jupiter Ammon, and ordered Alexandria to be erected, he returned to finish the Persian war. On his march, finding that he was esteemed by all people, he proceeded into Mesopotamia; and though he heard that Darius was prepared to receive him with a greater army than before, yet he advanced with the force he then had, and engaged at Arbela; where he gained so important a victory, as to destroy all the troops of Darius, and overturn the Persian monarchy, although the king himself escaped. Darius being murdered by Bessus, Alexander, after performing great achievements in India, returned to Babylon, where he died. After his decease, the dominion of the

Macedonians being divided into several principalities, which were enfeebled by continual wars against each other, the remaining part of Europe was subdued by the Romans. Crossing afterwards into Asia, they contended with the king of Pontus and Antiochus, then with the Dynastes or sovereigns of Egypt; thus enlarging their empire every year, so long as their senate retained its authority, because their consuls were ambitious of emulating each other. But the commonwealth being ruined by the civil wars between Sylla and Marius, and between Julius Caesar and Pompey, the aristocracy, or government of the nobles, was set aside, and Octavianus chosen dictator. The entire administration of affairs was thus committed to him alone, without the consideration, that it was like throwing the hopes and interests of all the people on the hazard of a die, and placing that vast empire at the risk of the inclination and authority of a single ruler. For were it the inclination of such a ruler to govern according to justice and moderation, he could not hope to give satisfaction to all, not being able to protect such as were at a considerable distance in any convenient time, nor to select so many officers, that would fear the disgrace of not performing their duty; nor could he suit his own disposition to the different humours of so many. But if he should wish to break through the bonds of imperial and regal government, and exercise absolute tyranny, by subverting the existing establishments, conniving at great crimes, selling of justice, and regarding his subjects as slaves (as most, and indeed with a few exceptions, almost all the emperors have done), it must of necessity follow, that his unbounded savage authority would prove a common calamity. , It is the very nature of such a despotism, that fawning miscreants and parasites are preferred to situations of the greatest trust, whilst modest quiet men, who are averse to so base a manner of living, resent with justice that ¹⁸ they themselves cannot enjoy similar benefits. Hence cities are filled with sedition and tumult; for when all offices, both civil and military, are conferred upon ill disposed magistrates, it both renders the citizens restless in peace, and discourages the soldiers in war.

That this is the case has been plainly shewn by experience, and the train of events that took place soon afterwards, in the reign of Octavianus. For the dance called Pantomimus, which signifies a dance in imitation of every one, was introduced into Rome at that period ; it never having before been in use in Italy, being invented by Pylades and Bathyllus; besides many other innovations, that still are productive of great evil. Octavianus however appears to have ruled with great moderation, more particularly after he listened to the counsel of Athenodorus the stoic, and when compared to Tiberius his successor. The tyranny of the latter was so severe as to be intolerable to his subjects, who expelled him to an island, where he secreted himself for some time and then died. To him succeeded Caius Caligula, who far exceeded Tiberius in every species of wickedness, and was slain by Chaereas, who resolved by that bold action to deliver the state from his cruel tyranny. The next emperor was Claudius, who intrusted the management of all his affairs to *Libertini* (the sons of those who had been slaves) that were eunuchs, and his end was disgraceful. Nero and his successors were then raised to the imperial throne. Of whom I shall not state any thing, in order that the world may not be pained by the repetition of the impious and monstrous enormities of which they were guilty. But Vespasian, and Titus his son, acted during their reigns with greater moderation. On the contrary, Domitian exceeded all his predecessors in cruelty, luxury, and avarice; for which reason, after he had for fifteen successive years tormented the commonwealth, he was put to death by Stephanus, one of his freed men ; thus receiving the punishment which his actions merited.

After him several worthy sovereigns succeeded to the empire: Nerva, Trajan, and afterwards Adrian, Antoninus Pius, and the brothers Verus and Lucius, who reformed many abuses in the state, and not only recovered what their predecessors had lost, but made likewise some new additions. But Commodus, the son of Marcus, on becoming emperor, addicted himself not only to tyranny, but to other monstrous vices, until his concubine Marcia assumed the courage of a man and put him to death, and the empire was conferred on Pertinax. But the imperial guards being unable to submit to the strictness of his discipline, which ¹⁹ caused them to mutiny and to murder him, Rome was on the point of becoming a seat of anarchy and disorder, while the pretorian soldiers, who were intended for the protection of the palace, attempted to deprive the senate of the power of appointing a sole ruler. And the empire being now put up as it were to sale, Didius Julianus, at the instigation of his wife, assisted by his own folly, produced a sum of money with which he purchased the empire ; and exhibited such a spectacle as the people had never before witnessed. The soldiers who raised him to the dignity, by violence put him in possession of the palace and all that it contained. But he was called to account and deprived of life by the very men who were the means of his exaltation, nor was his life more than a momentary golden dream.

At his removal, the Senate consulted whom to elect Emperor, and fixed on Severus. But Albinus and Niger pretending a right to the throne at the same time, a furious civil war broke out between the competitors; the cities being divided between the different parties. On this great commotions were excited in Egypt and the eastern parts of the empire, and the Byzantines, who espoused the cause of Niger, and entertained him, were ready for the most dangerous enterprises, until he was vanquished by Severus and killed. After him Albinus likewise took leave of the empire and the world together, and thus the sole power now devolved on Severus. He therefore applied himself to the correction of the enormities that had sprung up, punishing severely the soldiers that had murdered Pertinax, and delivered the empire to Julianus. Having done this, and regulated the army, he marched against the Persians, and in this expedition took Ctesiphon and Babylon, over-ran the Arabians, called *Scenites* from their dwelling in tents,

conquered the principal part of Arabia, and performed many other great achievements. He was besides inexorable to delinquents, and made public distribution of the property of those who were guilty of any heinous offence.

Having adorned many cities with sumptuous edifices, he declared his son Antoninus emperor, but at his death left his other son Geta co-heir with him in the government, appointing for their guardian Papinianus, a person eminent for his strict justice, and for his ability in the knowledge and interpretation of the law, in which he excelled every Roman either before or since his time. But this worthy man in a short time, became odious to Antoninus, because he used his utmost endeavours to frustrate a design which he had discovered, formed by Antoninus against his brother Geta. He resolved therefore to remove this obstacle, and concerted with **10** the soldiers the destruction of Papinianus. This being effected, and his hands at liberty, he slew his brother, whom his own mother could not save, though he fled to her for protection.

But not long after Antoninus was remunerated for the murder of his brother, and it was never known who was the person that killed him. The soldiers at Rome then chose for emperor Macrinus, the prefect of the court; while those in the east set up Emisenus, who was related to the mother of Antoninus. Each army was now so tenacious of its choice, that a civil disturbance arose between them, and while the supporters of Emisenus Antoninus were bringing him to Rome, those of Macrinus advanced from Italy. The two armies engaging at Antioch in Syria, Macrinus was so completely routed, that he was compelled to fly from the camp, and was taken and put to death between Byzantium and Chalcedon.

Antoninus, after this victory, punished all that had espoused the cause of Macrinus as enemies, and led so dissolute and shameful a life, and held such frequent communication with magicians and jugglers, that the Romans, unable to endure his excessive luxury, murdered him, tore his body in pieces, and proclaimed Alexander emperor, who likewise was of the family of Severus. He, though very young, gave such signs of a good disposition, as inspired the people with hope that he would prove a mild ruler. He made Flavianus and Chrestus prefects of his court, men not only well acquainted with military affairs, but excelling in the management of civil business. But Mamaea, the emperor's mother, placed over them Ulpianus, as an inspector of their conduct, and indeed as a partner in their office, he being an excellent lawyer, and knowing not only how to regulate present affairs, but to provide prudently for the future. This gave such offence to the two soldiers, that they secretly planned his destruction. When Mamaea understood this, she prevented their design by putting aside the conspirators, and making Ulpianus the sole prefect of the court. But afterwards becoming suspected by the army, for reasons which I am unable to state, there being many various reports concerning his inclination, he lost his life in a tumult, which the emperor himself could not prevent.

The soldiers after this event, forgetting by degrees their former regard for Alexander, appeared unwilling to put his commands in execution, and in order to avoid being punished for their negligence, excited public commotions, in which they promoted a person, named Antoninus, to the empire. But he, being incapable of sustaining so weighty a charge, declined, it. They **11** chose in his stead Uranius, a man of low and servile condition, whom they immediately placed before Alexander, dressed in purple, by which they intended to express more strongly their contempt for the emperor. Alexander, finding himself surrounded with so many difficulties, became changed, both in bodily constitution, and in disposition; and was infected with an insatiable avarice, amassing riches with the utmost solicitude, which he confided to the care of his mother.

While his affairs were thus unfortunately situated, the armies in Pannonia and Moesia, which were far from respecting him previously, now became more disposed to revolt, and being therefore determined on an innovation, raised to the empire Maximinus, the captain of a Pannonian troop. Having collected all his forces, he marched into Italy with the utmost speed, thinking it the safest to attack the emperor by surprise. But Alexander, who was then in the vicinity of the Rhine, having received intelligence of their intended revolt, proceeded to Rome without loss of time. He offered pardon to the soldiers and to Maximinus upon the condition that they would desist from their attempt; he could not however appease them, and therefore desperately exposed himself to death. Mamaea his mother, and the prefects, who issued from the palace to allay the tumult, were likewise murdered. Maximinus thus became well established in the throne, but the people universally regretted the change of a moderate emperor for a cruel tyrant. Maximinus was of obscure birth, and therefore on his exaltation to the imperial dignity, his excessive insolence in his new authority eclipsed those good qualities with which nature had endowed him. He thus became intolerable to all men, not only doing injuries to those that were in honourable offices, but being guilty of the greatest cruelties in the exercise of his power, bestowing favours only upon sycophants who laid information against quiet persons, by charging them with being debtors to the imperial treasury. At length he went so far as to murder persons out of avarice, before he heard them plead in their own defence, seized on the towns as his own, and plundered the inhabitants.

The nations subject to the Romans being unable to endure his monstrous cruelty, and greatly distressed by the ravages he committed, the Africans proclaimed Gordianus and his son, of the same name, emperors, and sent ambassadors to Rome, one of whom was Valerianus, a man of consular rank, who afterwards himself became emperor. This was highly gratifying to the senate, which deliberated how to remove the tyrant, inciting the soldiers to revolt, and reminding the people of the injuries they sustained |12 as well in their individual capacities, as in that of members of so mighty a state. Having thus agreed how to act, they selected out of the whole senate twenty persons who understood military discipline, and out of that number appointed two, Balbinus and Maximus, to hold the chief command, and proceeded towards Rome, being ready for an insurrection. But Maximinus, hearing of their intention, marched with great precipitation towards Rome, with the Moors and Gauls that were under his command, and on the way laid siege to the garrison of Aquileia, because they closed their gates against him. His own party, at length consulting the public benefit, with great reluctance consented to those who wished to put him to death, and he was thereby reduced to such extremity, as to be under the necessity of making his son a petitioner in his behalf, supposing that his tender age would abate their anger and incline them to compassion. But at this they became more enraged, and after they had murdered the boy in a most barbarous manner, they dispatched the father likewise; on which one of them cut off his head, and carried it to Rome, as an evidence and a trophy of their victory. Being thus delivered from all their apprehensions, they waited for the arrival of the two emperors from Africa.

These princes being wrecked in a storm, the senate conferred the supreme direction of affairs on Gordianus, the son of one of them. In his reign, the Romans relaxed a little from their former melancholy, being treated by the emperor with plays and other amusements. But awaking as it were from a profound sleep, they formed a secret conspiracy against the emperor, instigated by the counsel of Balbinus and Maximus, who incited some of the soldiers against him. This being detected, the heads of the conspiracy, and many of the accomplices, were put to death.

Soon after this, the Carthaginians became discontented with the emperor, and attempted to substitute Sabianus in his stead; but Gordianus raised a force in Africa, which quickly caused them to submit. Upon this they delivered up the intended usurper, solicited pardon for their offences, and were freed from the danger that hung over them. Meantime Gordianus married the daughter of Timesicles, a man in high estimation for his learning, and appointed him prefect of the court; by which he seemed to supply the deficiency of his own youth in the administration of public affairs. Having secured the empire, he was in continual expectation that the Persians would make an attack on the eastern provinces, Sapores having succeeded in that kingdom to Artaxerxes, who had restored the government to the Persians from the |13 Parthians. For after the death of Alexander the son of Philip, and of his successors in the empire of the Macedonians, at the period when those provinces were under the authority of Antiochus, Arsaces a Parthian, being exasperated at an injury done to his brother Teridates, made war upon the satrap of Antiochus, and caused the Parthians to drive away the Macedonians, and form a government of their own. The emperor therefore made all possible preparations for marching against the Persians. Although he appeared in the first battle to have obtained the victory, yet the confidence of the emperor in the success of this enterprize was considerably diminished by the death of Timesicles, the prefect of the court. Philip being chosen in his place, the emperor's popularity in the army was gradually dissipated and vanished. Philip was a native of Arabia, a nation in bad repute, and had advanced his fortune by no very honourable means. As soon as he was fixed in his office, he aspired at the imperial dignity, and endeavoured to seduce all the soldiers that were disposed to innovation. Observing that abundance of military provisions was supplied, while the emperor was staying about Carrae and Nisibis, he ordered the ships that brought those provisions to go further up the country, in order that the army, being oppressed with famine, might be provoked to mutiny. His design succeeded to his wish; for the soldiers, under pretence of want of necessaries, surrounded Gordianus in a violent manner, and having killed him, as the chief cause of so many perishing, conferred the purple on Philip according to their engagement. He therefore made peace with Sapores, and marched towards Rome; and as he had bound the soldiers to him by large presents, he sent messengers to Rome to report that Gordianus had died of a disease. On his arrival at Rome, having made the senate his friends, he thought it most politic to confer the highest preferments on his near relations. From this motive he made his brother Priscus general of the army in Syria, and intrusted the forces in Moesia and Macedonia to his son-in-law Severianus.

Thinking that he had by these means established himself in the possession of the empire, he made an expedition against the Carpi, who had plundered all the country about the Ister. When an engagement took place, the Barbarians not being able to withstand the impetuous charge of the Romans, fled into a castle in which they were besieged. But finding that their troops, who were dispersed in various directions, had again rallied in a body, they resumed their courage, and sallying from the castle attacked the Roman army. Being unable to bear the brisk onset of the |14 Moors, the army solicited for peace, to which Philip readily assented, and marched away. As there were at that time many disturbances in the empire, the eastern provinces, which were uneasy, partly, owing to the exactions of exorbitant tributes, and partly to their dislike of Priscus, their governor, who was a man of an intolerably evil disposition, wished for innovation, and set up Papianus for emperor, while the inhabitants of Moesia and Pannonia were more inclined to Marinus.

Philip, being disturbed by these events, desired the senate either to assist him against such imminent dangers, or, if they were displeased with his government, to suffer him to lay it down and dismiss him quietly. No person making a reply to this, Decius, a person of illustrious birth and rank, and moreover gifted, with every virtue, observed, that he was unwise in being so much concerned at those events, for they would vanish of themselves, and could not possibly long subsist. And though the event corresponded with the conjecture of Decius, which long experience in the world had enabled him to make, Papianus and Marinus being taken off, yet Philip was still in fear, knowing how obnoxious, the officers in that country were to the army. He therefore desired Decius to assume the command of the legions in Moesia and Pannonia. As he refused this under the plea that it was inconvenient both for Philip and himself, Philip made use of the rhetoric of necessity, as the Thessalians term it, and compelled him to go to Pannonia to punish the accomplices of Marinus. The army in that country, finding that Decius punished all that had offended, thought it most politic, to avoid the present danger, and to set up a sovereign who would better consult the good of the state, and who, being more expert both in civil and military affairs, might without difficulty conquer Philip.

For this purpose they clothed Decius in purple, and notwithstanding all his apprehensions of future mischances, compelled him to assume the supreme authority. Philip therefore, on hearing that Decius was thus made emperor, collected all his forces to overpower him. The supporters of Decius, though they knew that the enemy had greatly the advantage in numbers, still retained their confidence, trusting to the general skill and prudence of Decius in affairs. And when the two armies engaged, although the one was superior in number, yet the other so excelled it in discipline and conduct, that a great number of Philip's partizans were slain and he himself amongst them, together with his son, on whom he had conferred the title of Caesar. Decius thus acquired the empire. |15

The Scythians, taking advantage of the disorder which every where prevailed through the negligence of Philip, crossed the Tanais, and pillaged the countries in the vicinity of Thrace. But Decius, marching against them, was not only victorious in every battle, but recovered the spoils they had taken, and endeavoured to cut off their retreat to their own country, intending to destroy them all, to prevent their ever again, making a similar incursion. For this purpose he posted Gallus on the bank of the Tanais with a competent force, and led in person the remainder of his army against the enemy. This expedition exceeded to his utmost wish ; but Gallus, who was disposed to innovation, sent agents to the Barbarians, requesting their concurrence in a conspiracy against Decius. To this they gave a willing assent, and Gallus retained his post on the bank of the Tanais, but the Barbarians divided themselves into three battalions, the first of which posted itself behind a marsh. Decius having destroyed a considerable number of the first battalion, the second advanced, which he likewise defeated, and discovered part of the third, which lay near the marsh. Gallus sent intelligence to him, that he might march against them across the fen. Proceeding therefore incautiously in an unknown place, he and his army became entangled in the mire, and under that disadvantage were so assailed by the missiles of the Barbarians, that not one of them escaped with life. Thus ended the life of the excellent emperor Decius.

To him succeeded Gallus; who declared his son Volusianus his associate in the empire, and published an open declaration, that Decius and his army had perished by his contrivance. The Barbarians now became more prosperous than before. For Gallus not only permitted them to return home with the plunder, but promised to pay them annually a sum of money, and allowed them to carry off all the noblest captives; most of whom had been taken at Philippopolis in Thrace.

Gallus, having made these regulations, came to Rome, priding himself on the peace he had made with the Barbarians. And though he at first spoke with approbation of Decius's mode of government, and adopted one of his sons, yet, after some time was elapsed, fearing that some of them who were fond of new projects might recur to a recapitulation of the princely virtues of Decius, and therefore might at some opportunity give the empire to his son, he concerted the young man's destruction, without regard either to his own adoption of him, or to common honour and justice. |16

Gallus was so supine in the administration of the empire, that the Scythians in the first place terrified all the neighbouring nations, and then laid waste all the countries as far by degrees as the sea coast ; not leaving one nation subject to the Romans unpillaged, and taking almost all the unfortified towns, and many that were fortified. Besides the war on every side, which was insupportably burdensome to them, the cities and villages were infested with a pestilence, which swept away the remainder of mankind in those regions; nor was so great a mortality ever known in any former period.

At this crisis, observing that the emperors were unable to defend the state, but neglected all without the walls of Rome, the Goths, the Borani, the Urugundi, and the Carpi once more plundered the cities of Europe of all that had been left in them; while in another quarter, the Persians invaded Asia, in which they acquired possession of

Mesopotamia, and proceeded even as far as Antioch in Syria, took that city, which is the metropolis of all the east, destroyed many of the inhabitants, and carried the remainder into captivity, returning home with immense plunder, after they had destroyed all the buildings in the city, both public and private, without meeting with the least resistance. And indeed the Persians had a fair opportunity to have made themselves masters of all Asia, had they not been so overjoyed at their excessive spoils, as to be contented with keeping and carrying home what they had acquired.

Meantime the Scythians of Europe were in perfect security and went over into Asia, spoiling all the country as far as Cappodocia, Pesinus, and Ephesus, until Aemilianus, commander of the Pannonian legions, endeavouring as much as possible to encourage his troops, whom the prosperity of the Barbarians had so disheartened that they durst not face them, and reminding them of the renown of Roman courage, surprised the Barbarians that were in that neighbourhood. Having destroyed great numbers of them, and led his forces into their country, removing every obstruction to his progress, and at length freeing the subjects of the Roman empire from their ferocity, he was appointed emperor by his army. On this he collected all the forces of that country, who were become more bold since his successes against the Barbarians, and directed his march towards Italy, with the design of fighting Gallus, who was as yet unprepared to contend with him. For Gallus had never heard of what had occurred in the east, and therefore made only what accidental preparations were in his reach, while Valerianus went to bring the Celtic and German legions. But [17](#) Aemilianus advanced with great speed into Italy, and the armies were very near to each other, when the soldiers of Gallus, reflecting that his force was much inferior to the enemy both in number and strength, and likewise that he was a negligent indolent man, put him and his son to death, and going over to the party of Aemilianus, appeared to establish his authority.

But Valerianus brought into Italy from beyond the Alps a vast army, with which he deemed himself secure of conquering Aemilianus. The soldiers of Aemilianus, who saw that his conduct was more like that of a private sentinel than of an emperor, now put him to death as a person unfit for so weighty a charge.

By these means Valerianus became emperor with universal consent, and employed himself in the regulation of affairs. But the excursions of the Scythians, and of the Marcomanni, who made an inroad into all the countries adjacent to the empire, reduced Thessalonica to extreme danger; and though they were with much difficulty compelled to raise the siege by the brave defence of those within, yet all Greece was in alarm. The Athenians repaired their walls, which they had never thought worth their care since Sylla threw them down. The Peloponnesians likewise fortified the Isthmus, and all Greece put itself upon its guard for the general security.

Valerianus, perceiving the empire in danger on every side, associated his son Gallienus with himself in the government! and went himself into the east to oppose the Persians. He entrusted to his son the care of the forces in Europe, thus leaving him to resist the Barbarians who poured in upon him in every direction. As the Germans were the most troublesome enemies, and harrassed the Gauls in the vicinity of the Rhine, Gallienus marched against them in person, leaving his officers to repel with the forces under their command any others that should enter Italy, Illyricum, and Greece. With these designs, he possessed himself of and defended the passages of the Rhine, at one time preventing their crossing, and at another engaging them as soon as they had crossed it. But having only a small force to resist an immense number, he was at a loss how to act, and thought to secure himself by a league with one of the German princes. He thus not only prevented the other Barbarians from so frequently passing the Rhine, but obstructed the access of auxiliaries.

Meanwhile the Borani, the Gothi, the Carpi, and the Urugundi, nations that dwell on the Ister, left no part of Italy or Illyricum unpillaged, but devastated all without any opposition. The Borani, indeed, attempted to pass over into Asia, which they [18](#) easily effected by the aid of those that reside on the Bosphorus, who were induced more through fear than good-will to supply them with vessels, and to guide them in their passage. For though while they were governed by their own kings, who succeeded in an hereditary descent, they had always kept the Scythians out of Asia, either from the regard they had for the Romans, or for the sake of their commerce, or out of gratitude for the annual presents sent them by their kings; yet subsequently, when the royal line was extinct, and the authority had fallen into the hands of mean and worthless individuals, they yielded to fear, and gave the Scythians a free ingress into Asia, even carrying them over in their own ships.

While the Scythians plundered all before them, the people who inhabited on the sea-coast of Pontus, removed into the fortified towns in the interior; the barbarians at the same time making an attack on Pityus, which is surrounded by a strong wall, and possesses a convenient harbour. But Successianus, who commanded the army there, made so vigorous a defence, that the Barbarians were routed, and in such dread lest the other garrisons hearing what was done might join with that of Pityus and totally destroy them, that they hastened with the utmost speed to their ships, and returned home under great hazard, having lost many of their companions at the battle of Pityus. Thus the

inhabitants of the vicinity of the Euxine sea, who owed their preservation to the conduct of Successianus, were relieved from all present apprehension lest the Scythians after this repulse should pay them another visit. But while Valerianus sent for Successianus, made him prefect of the court, and consulted with him about the repairing of Antioch, the Scythians procured ships from the Bosphorans, and again crossed the streight. The inhabitants of the other side retained the vessels, and would not permit the Bosphorans to take them home again, as they had before done, on which they advanced into the country near to Phasis, where is the temple of Diana, called from the place Phasiana, and the palace of king Aeeta ; and having made a fruitless attempt to take that temple, proceeded direct to Pityus. Having there seized on the castle, and turned out the garrison, they advanced forward ; and as they had a large navy into which they put all the captives who were able to manage an oar, they sailed with favourable weather, which continued almost the whole summer, towards Trapezus. This is a large and populous city, and was then guarded by ten thousand men above the usual complement. When they commenced the siege of it, they did not therefore even imagine that they should |19 succeed, as it was surrounded by two walls; but when they observed that the soldiers were addicted to sloth and inebriety, and that instead of continuing on guard, they were always in search of pleasures and debauchery, they piled against the wall trees which they had prepared for the purpose of scaling it, on which their troops mounted in the night and took the city. The soldiers within were struck with consternation at the sudden and unexpected assault; some of them succeeded in escaping through the gates; the rest were slaughtered by the enemy. Having thus got possession of the place, the Barbarians acquired an incredible quantity of money, besides a very great number of slaves; for almost all the inhabitants of the country had fled for refuge into that city, as it was strongly fortified. Having demolished all the temples and houses, and every thing that contributed to the grandeur or ornament of the city, and devastated the adjacent country, they returned home with a great number of ships. When the neighbouring Scythians perceived the booty they had acquired, they determined on making a similar attempt, and for that purpose prepared a fleet, which their captives, and others who through necessity had taken up their abode among them, assisted them in building. They resolved however not to set out as the Borani had, because it was tedious and hazardous to sail that way, and they would have to pass through places that were already plundered. They staid therefore until winter, and then leaving to their left the Euxine sea, and to the right the Ister, Tomes, and Anchialus, while their land forces marched as quickly as they could along the shore, they arrived at the lake of Phileatina, which lies to the west of Byzantium near the Pontus. Finding that the fishermen of that lake had concealed themselves and their vessels in the neighbouring fens, they made an agreement with them, to put their land forces on board the fishermen's boats, and sailed forward in order to pass the straight between Byzantium and Chalcedon. And though there was a guard from Chalcedon as far as the temple which stands at the entrance of the Pontus, which was strong enough to overpower the Barbarians, yet some of the troops marched away under the pretext of meeting a general whom the emperor had sent there, and others were so terrified that when they first heard of it they fled with all possible precipitation. The Barbarians then crossed over, took Chalcedon without opposition, and got possession of abundance of money, arms, and provisions.

From thence they marched to Nicomedia, a great city, celebrated for its affluence; where, though the citizens on hearing of their |20 approach had escaped with all the riches they could take with them, the Barbarians still were astonished at the vast quantity of valuables they found, and rendered great honour to Chrysogonus, who had formerly advised them to go to Nicomedia. And when they had over-run Nicaea, Cius, Apamaea, and Prusa, and treated those places in the same manner, they proceeded towards Cyzicus; but the river Rhyndacus had so overflown its banks in consequence of the violent rains that had fallen, that they were unable to cross it and were compelled to retire. They then set fire to Nicomedia and Nicaea, and loading with their spoil waggons and ships, began to think of returning home; which terminated their second incursion.

Valerianus had by this time heard of the disturbances in Bithynia, but his district would not allow him to confide the defence of it to any of his generals. He therefore sent Felix to Byzantium, and went in person from Antioch into Cappadocia, and after he had done some injury to every city by which he passed, he returned homeward. But the plague then attacked his troops, and destroyed most of them, at the time when Sapor made an attempt upon the east, and reduced most of it into subjection. In the mean time, Valerianus became so effeminate and indolent, that he despaired of ever recovering from the present ill state of affairs, and would have concluded the war by a present of money; had not Sapor sent back the ambassadors who were sent to him with that proposal, without their errand, desiring the emperor to come and speak with him in person concerning the affairs he wished to adjust; To which he most imprudently consented, and going without consideration to Sapor with a small retinue, to treat for a peace, was presently laid hold of by the enemy, and so ended his days in the capacity of a slave among the Persians, to the disgrace of the Roman name in all future times.

Such being the state of the east, an universal confusion and feebleness prevailed at that period. The Scythians unanimously collected into one body out of every nation and country within their territory, one part of their forces plundering Illyricum, and laying waste its towns, while the remainder penetrated into Italy as far as Rome.

Gallienus in the mean time still continued beyond the Alps, intent on the German war, while the Senate, seeing Rome in such imminent danger, armed all the soldiers that were in the city, and the strongest of the common people, and formed an army, which exceeded the Barbarians in number. This so alarmed [21](#) the Barbarians, that they left Rome, but ravaged all the rest of Italy. At this period, when Illyricum groaned under the oppression of the Barbarians, and the whole Roman empire was in such a helpless state as to be on the very verge of ruin, a plague happened to break out in several of the towns, more dreadful than any that had preceded it. The miseries inflicted on them by the Barbarians were thus alleviated, even the sick esteeming themselves fortunate. The cities that had been taken by the Scythians were thus deserted.

Gallienus, being disturbed by these occurrences, was returning to Rome to relieve Italy from the war which the Scythians were thus carrying on. It was at this time, that Cecrops, a Moor, Aureolus and Antoninus, with many others, conspired against him, of whom the greater part were punished and submitted. Aureolus alone retained his animosity against the emperor.

After this, Posthumus, who commanded the Celtic army, was also inclined towards innovation, and accompanied some soldiers that revolted at the same time to Agrippina, which is the principal city on the Rhine, in which he besieged Salonius, the son of Gallienus, threatening to remain before the walls until he was given up to him. On this account the soldiers found it necessary to surrender both him and Silvanus, whom his father had appointed his guardian, both of whom Posthumus put to death, and made himself sovereign of the Celtae.

The Scythians, who had dreadfully afflicted the whole of Greece, had now taken Athens, when Gallienus advanced against those who were already in possession of Thrace, and ordered Odonathus of Palmyra, a person whose ancestors had always been highly respected by the emperors, to assist the eastern nations which were then in a very distressed condition. Accordingly, having joined to the remainder of an army that still remained in the country many of his own troops, he attacked Sapor with great boldness; and having taken several cities belonging to the Persians, he retook Nisibis also, which Sapor had formerly taken, and ravaged it at the same time. Then advancing, not once merely, but a second time, as far as Ctesiphon, he blocked up the Persians in their fortifications, and rendered them content to save their wives, their children and themselves, while he disposed of the pillaged country at his pleasure. Shortly afterwards, whilst residing at Emisa, he lost his life by a conspiracy as he was celebrating the birth-day of a friend. Zenobia then took upon her the administration of affairs. She was the wife of [22](#) Odonathus, but had the courage of a man, and with the assistance of her husband's friends, acted in every respect as well as he had done.

While affairs were thus situated in the east, intelligence was brought to Gallienus, who was then occupied in the Scythian war, that Aurelianus, or Aureolus, who was commander of the cavalry posted in the neighbourhood of Milan to watch the motions of Posthumus, had formed some new design, and was ambitious to be emperor. Being alarmed at this he went immediately to Italy, leaving the command against the Scythians with Marcianus, a person of great experience in military affairs. While he carried on the war with great ability, Gallienus, in his journey towards Italy, had a plot formed against him by Heraclianus, prefect of the court, who communicated his design to Claudius, in whom the chief management of affairs was vested. The design was to murder Gallienus. Having found a man very ready for such an undertaking, who commanded a troop of Dalmatians, he entrusted the action to him. To effect it, the party stood by Gallienus at supper and informed him that some of the spies had brought intelligence, that Aureolus and his army were close at hand. By this they considerably alarmed him. Calling immediately for his horse and arms, he mounted, ordering his men to follow him in their armour, and rode away without any attendance. Thus the captain finding him alone killed him.

When the troops were calmed by their commanders, Claudius was chosen emperor, having previously been designed for that dignity by general consent. Aureolus, who had for a long time kept himself out of the hands of Gallienus, presently sent agents to Claudius, to effect a peace. Surrendering himself, he was killed by the guards of the emperor, who still remembered the hatred they bore against him for his treachery.

The Scythians were by this time so elated by their former success, that they appointed a place of meeting with the Heruli, Peucæ, and Gothi, near the river Tyra, which empties itself into the Pontus; where having built six thousand vessels, and put on board them three hundred and twenty thousand men, they sailed across the Pontus, and made an attempt on Tomes, a fortified town, but were repulsed from it. From thence they proceed to Marcianopolis, a city of Mysia, but failing there likewise in their attack on it, they took the opportunity of a favourable wind and sailed forward. On their arrival at the streights of Propontis, they could not manage their vessels in so violent a current, and while they were carried down by it without any [23](#) order, they fell foul on each other, by which some of them were sunk, and others driven on shore, to the great destruction both of men and ships. On this account the Barbarians departed from the Propontis, and sailed towards Cyzicus. Being obliged to return from thence without success, they passed through the Hellespont, and arrived at Mount Athos. Having there refitted and careened their vessels, they

laid siege to Cassandria and Thessalonica, which they were near taking by means of machines which they raised against the walls. But hearing that the emperor was advancing with an army, they went into the interior, plundering all the neighbourhood of Doberus and Pelagonia. There they sustained a loss of three thousand men, who were met with by the Dalmatian cavalry, and with the rest of their force engaged the army of the emperor. Great numbers were slain in this battle on both sides, but the Romans, by a pretended flight, drew the Barbarians into an ambuscade and killed more than fifty thousand of them. The remainder of the Scythians sailed round Thessaly and Greece to pillage all the country, and as they were not strong enough to attack the towns which had fortified themselves, and provided for their own security, they carried off all the men that they found in the open country.

The Scythians being thus dispersed, with the loss of great part of their troops, Zenobia began to think of extending her dominion, and therefore sent Zabdas into Egypt, because Timagenes an Egyptian attempted to place Egypt under the government of the Palmyrenians. He had for this purpose raised an army of Palmyrenians, Syrians, and Barbarians, to the number of seventy thousand, which was opposed by fifty thousand Egyptians. A sharp engagement ensued between them, in which the Palmyrenians had greatly the advantage. He then departed, leaving them a garrison of five thousand men.

During these transactions, Probus, who had been appointed by the emperor to clear the sea of pirates, having heard of the subjugation of Egypt by the Palmyrenians, marched against them with his own forces, and with as many of the Egyptians as were averse to the Palmyrenians, and drove out their garrison. The Palmyrenians rallying with fresh forces, Probus, having levied a body of Egyptians and Africans, gained another victory, and drove the Palmyrenians out of Egypt. But as Probus was encamped on a mountain near Babylon, thereby cutting off the passage of the enemy into Syria, Timagenes, who was well acquainted with the country, seized on the summit of the mountain with two thousand men, and attacked the Egyptians by surprize. Probus being taken with the rest killed himself. [|24](#)

Egypt being thus reduced by the Palmyrenians, the Barbarians, who survived the battle of Naissus between Claudius and the Scythians, defending themselves with their carriages which went before them, marched towards Macedon, but were so distressed by the want of necessaries, that many of them and of their beasts perished with hunger. They were met likewise by the Roman cavalry, who having killed many of them, drove the rest towards Mount Haemus; where being surrounded by the Roman army, they lost a vast number of men. But a quarrel ensuing between the Roman horse and foot soldiers, the emperor wishing the foot to engage the Barbarians, the Romans, after a smart engagement, were defeated with considerable loss, but the cavalry, coming up immediately, redeemed in some degree the miscarriage of the infantry. After this battle, the Barbarians proceeded on their march, and were pursued by the Romans. The pirates who cruized about Crete and Rhodes retired without doing any thing worthy of mention; and being attacked by the plague on their way home, some of them died in Thrace and some in Macedon. All that survived were either admitted into the Roman legions, or had lands assigned for them to cultivate and so become husbandmen. Nor was the plague confined to the Barbarians alone, but began to infest the Romans, many of whom died, and amongst the rest Claudius, a person adorned with every virtue. His death was a severe loss to his subjects, and was consequently much regretted by them.

Quintillus, the brother of Claudius, was then declared emperor. He had reigned but a few months, and had performed nothing worthy of notice, before Aurelianus was raised to the imperial throne. Some writers inform us, that Quintillus was advised by his friends, as soon as they heard of Aurelianus being made emperor, to die by his own hand, and give place voluntarily to a man of so much greater merit. They report, that he complied by opening a vein and bleeding to death. Aurelianus, having regulated the empire, went from Rome to Aquileia, and from thence into Pannonia, which he was informed the Scythians were preparing to invade. For this reason he sent orders to the inhabitants of that country to carry into the towns all their corn and cattle, and every thing that could be of use to the enemy, in order to distress them with famine, with which they were already afflicted. The Barbarians having crossed the river into Pannonia had an engagement, the result of which was nearly equal. But the same night, the Barbarians recrossed the river, and as soon as day appeared, sent ambassadors to treat for peace. [|25](#)

The Emperor, hearing that the Alemanni and the neighbouring nations intended to over-run Italy, was with just reason more concerned for Rome and the adjacent places, than for the more remote. Having therefore ordered a sufficient force to remain for the defence of Pannonia, he marched towards Italy, and on his route, on the borders of that country, near the Ister, slew many thousands of the Barbarians in one battle. Several members of the senate being at this time accused of conspiring against the emperor were put to death ; and Rome, which before had no walls, was now surrounded with them. This work was begun in the reign of Aurelianus, and was finished by Probus. At the same time Epitimus, Urbanus, and Domitianus, were likewise suspected as innovators, and were immediately apprehended and punished. During these occurrences in Italy and Pannonia, the emperor prepared to march against the Palmyrenians, who had subdued all Egypt, and the east, as far as Ancyra in Galatia, and would have acquired Bithynia even as far as Chalcedon, if the inhabitants of that country had not learned that Aurelianus was made emperor, and so shook off the Palmyrenian yoke. As soon as the emperor was on his march thither,

Ancyra submitted to the Romans, and afterwards Tuana, and all the cities between that and Antioch. There finding Zenobia with a large army ready to engage, as he himself also was, he met and engaged her as honour obliged him. But observing that the Palmyrene cavalry placed great confidence in their armour, which was very strong and secure, and that they were much better horsemen than his soldiers, he planted his infantry by themselves on the other side the Orontes. He charged his cavalry not to engage immediately with the vigorous cavalry of the Palmyrenians, but to wait for their attack, and then, pretending to fly, to continue so doing until they had wearied both the men and their horses through excess of heat and the weight of their armour; so that they could pursue them no longer. This project succeeded, and as soon as the cavalry of the emperor saw their enemy tired, and that their horses were scarcely able to stand under them, or themselves to move, they drew up the reins of their horses, and, wheeling round, charged them, and trod them under foot as they fell from their horses. By which means the slaughter was promiscuous, some falling by the sword, and others by their own and the enemies' horses.

After this defeat, the remains of the enemy fled into Antioch, Labdas, the general of Zenobia, fearing that the Antiochians on hearing of it should mutiny, chose a man resembling the emperor, [126](#) and clothing him in a dress such as Aurelianus was accustomed to wear, led him through the city as if he had taken the emperor prisoner. By this contrivance he imposed on the Antiochians, stole out of the city by night, and took with him Zenobia with the remainder of the army to Emisa. In the meantime, the emperor was intent on his affairs, and as soon as it was day called the foot soldiers around him, intending to attack the defeated enemy on both sides; but, hearing of the escape of Zenobia, he entered Antioch, where he was joyfully received by the citizens. Finding that many had left the city, under apprehensions that they should suffer for having espoused the party of Zenobia; he published edicts in every place to recal them, and told them, that such events had happened more through necessity than of his own inclination. When this was known to the fugitives, they returned in crowds, and were kindly received by the emperor; who having arranged affairs in that city proceeded to Emisa. Finding that a party of the Palmyrenians had got possession of a hill above the suburbs of Daphne, thinking that its steepness would enable them to obstruct the enemy's passage, he commanded his soldiers to march with their bucklers so near to each other, and in so compact a form, as to keep off any darts and stones that might be thrown at them. This being observed, as soon as they ascended the hill, being in all points equal to their adversaries, they put them to flight in such disorder, that some of them were dashed in pieces from the precipices, and others slaughtered in the pursuit by those that were on the hill, and those that were mounting it. Having gained the victory, they marched on with great satisfaction at the success of the emperor, who was liberally entertained at Apamea, Larissa, and Arethusa. Finding the Palmyrene army drawn up before Emisa, amounting to seventy thousand men, consisting of Palmyrenes and their allies, he opposed to them the Dalmatian cavalry, the Moesians and Pannonians, and the Celtic legions of Noricum and Rhaetia, and besides these the choicest of the imperial regiment selected man by man, the Mauritanian horse, the Tyaneans, the Mesopotamians, the Syrians, the Phoenicians, and the Palestinians, all men of acknowledged valour; the Palestinians besides other arms wielding clubs and staves. At the commencement of the engagement, the Roman cavalry receded, lest the Palmyrenes, who exceeded them in number, and were better horsemen, should by some stratagem surround the Roman army. But the Palmyrene cavalry pursued them so fiercely, though their ranks were broken, that the event was quite contrary to the expectation of the Roman cavalry. For they were [127](#) pursued by an enemy much their superior in strength, and therefore most of them fell. The foot had to bear the brunt of the action. Observing that the Palmyrenes had broken their ranks when the horse commenced their pursuit, they wheeled about, and attacked them while they were scattered and out of order. Upon which many were killed, because the one side fought with the usual weapons, while those of Palestine brought clubs and staves against coats of mail made of iron and brass. The Palmyrenes therefore ran away with the utmost precipitation, and in their flight trod each other to pieces, as if the enemy did not make sufficient slaughter; the field was filled with dead men and horses, whilst the few that could escape took refuge in the city.

Zenobia was not a little disturbed by this defeat, and therefore consulted on what measures to adopt. It was the opinion of all her friends that it would be prudent to relinquish all pretensions to Emisa, because the Emisenes were disaffected towards her and friendly to the Romans. They advised her to remain within Palmyra, and when they were in security in that strong city, they would deliberate at leisure on their important affairs. This was no sooner proposed than done, with the concurrence of the whole assembly. Aurelianus, upon hearing of the flight of Zenobia, entered Emisa, where he was cordially welcomed by the citizens, and found a treasure which Zenobia could not carry along with her. He then marched immediately to Palmyra, which he invested on every side, while his troops were supplied with provisions of every kind by the neighbouring country. Meantime the Palmyrenes only derided the Romans, as if they thought it impossible for them to take the city; and one man in particular spoke in very indecent terms of the emperor's own person. Upon this, a Persian who stood by the emperor said, "If you will allow me, sir, you shall see me kill that insolent soldier:" to which the emperor consented, and the Persian, placing himself behind some other men that he might not be seen, shot at the man while in the act of looking over the battlements, and hit him whilst still uttering his insulting language, so that he fell down from the wall before the soldiers and the emperor. The besieged however still held out, in hopes that the enemy would withdraw for want of provisions, and persisted in their resolution, until they were themselves without necessaries. They then called a council, in which it

was determined to fly to the Euphrates, and request aid of the Persians against the Romans. Having thus determined, they set Zenobia on a female camel, which is the swiftest of that kind of [|28](#) animals, and much more swift than horses, and conveyed her out of the city.

Aurelianus was much displeas'd at the escape of Zenobia; and therefore exerted all his industry to send out horsemen in pursuit of her. They succeeded in taking her, as she was crossing the Euphrates in a boat, and brought her to Aurelianus. Though much pleas'd at this sight, yet being of an ambitious disposition, he became uneasy at the reflection that in future ages it would not redound to his honour to have conquer'd a woman. Meantime some of the Palmyrenes, that were shut up in the town, resolv'd to expose themselves courageously, and to hazard their being made captives in defence of their city. While others on the contrary employ'd humble and submissive gestures from the walls, and intreat'd pardon for what was past. The emperor accepting these tokens, and commanding them to fear nothing, they pour'd out of the town with presents and sacrifices in their hands. Aurelianus paid due respect to the holy things, receiv'd their gifts, and sent them away without injury.

But having made himself master of this city, with all the treasure it contain'd, he return'd to Emisa, where he brought Zenobia and her accomplices to a judiciary trial. Zenobia coming into court pleas'd strongly in excuse of herself, and produc'd many persons, who had seduc'd her as a simple woman, and among the rest Longinus, whose writings are highly beneficial to all lovers of learning. Being found guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, he receiv'd from the emperor sentence of death, which he bore with so much courage, as to console to his friends who were much concern'd at his misfortunes. Several besides Longinus suffer'd upon the accusation of Zenobia.

I cannot here omit to mention what happen'd before the ruin of Palmyra, though I profess only to write a transient history. For as Polybius informs us by what means the Romans in a short space of time attain'd a vast empire, it is my purpose to show on the other hand, that by their ill management in as short a time they lost it. But I am now speaking of the Palmyrenes, who, having as I related, acquir'd a large portion of the Roman empire, were warn'd by several declarations from the gods of the overthrow which they afterwards sustain'd. For example; at Seleucia in Cilicia there was a temple of Apollo (call'd there Sarpedonius) and in that temple an oracle. It is report'd of this deity, that he us'd to give to those that were infest'd with locusts a species of birds, call'd Seleuciades, which us'd to hover about his temple, and would send them along with any [|29](#) that desir'd it; that these birds would fly amongst the locusts, catch them in their mouths, and in a moment destroy a vast number of them, thus deliver'd the people from the mischief they produc'd. This I ascribe to the felicity of that age; our own generation has not merited such kindness from heaven. The Palmyrenes, having consult'd this oracle, to learn if they should ever gain the empire of the east, receiv'd this answer,

Accurs'd race! avoid my sacred fane,
Whose treach'rous deeds the angry gods disdain.

And some persons enquir'd there concerning the success of the expedition of Aurelianus against the Palmyrenes, the gods told them,

One falcon many doves commands, whose end
On his destructive pounces must depend.

Another story was likewise much circulat'd of the Palmyrenes. Between Heliopolis and Bilbis is a place call'd Aphaca, where is a temple dedicat'd to Venus Aphacitis, and near it a pond resembling an artificial cistern. Here is frequently seen, near the temple and in the adjacent places, a fire in the air, resembling a lamp, of a round figure, which has appear'd even in our time, as often as people have assembled there on particular days. Whoever resort'd hither, brought to the pond some offering for the goddess, either in gold, silver, linen, silk, or any thing of like value. If she accept'd it, the cloth sunk to the bottom, like substances of greater weight; but if reject'd, they would float on the water; and not only cloth and such substances, but even gold, silver, or any other of those materials which usually sink. For an experiment of this miracle, the Palmyrenes, in the year before their overthrow, assembled on a festival, and threw into the pond several presents of gold, silver and cloth, in honour of the goddess, all of which sunk to the bottom. In the following year, at the same festival, they were all seen floating on the surface; by which the goddess foretold what would happen.

In this manner was the regard of heaven shewn to the Romans, as long as they kept up their sacred rites. But it is my lot to speak of these times, wherein the Roman empire degenerat'd to a species of barbarity, and fell to decay. I shall display the causes of such misfortunes; and point out those oracles, by which such events were predict'd. I ought now to return to the place whence I digress'd; lest I should appear to leave the order of history imperfect. Aurelianus march'd towards Europe, carrying with him Zenobia, her son, and the rest of the confederates in this

rebellion. Zenobia is said to have died, either of [30] disease, or want of food, but the rest were all drowned in the straight between Chalcedon and Byzantium. Aurelianus continued his journey into Europe. On his route he was informed by a messenger, that a party he had left at Palmyra, having won over Apsicus, the principal author of all that was past, was tampering with Marcellinus, whom the emperor had appointed prefect of Mesopotamia and of the east, to assume to himself the imperial robe. Under pretence of taking time for deliberation, he delayed them so long, that they again importuned him repeatedly. He was forced therefore to frame ambiguous answers to their demands, until he had given notice to Aurelianus of their design. In the meantime the Palmyrenes, having clothed Antiochus in purple, continued at Palmyra. Aurelianus, being informed of this, hastened into the east, without any preparation, and arriving at Antioch, surprized all the people, who were then attending a horse-race, and were astonished at seeing him. From thence he proceeded to Palmyra, which he took and razed without a contest, but not thinking Antiochus worthy of being punished, on account of the meanness of his condition, he dismissed him. After this action, he speedily reduced the Alexandrians, who were disposed to a rebellion, being already in commotion. He then entered Rome in triumph, where he was most magnificently received by the senate and people. At this period also be erected that sumptuous temple of the sun, which he ornamented with all the sacred spoils that he brought from Palmyra; placing in it the statues of the sun and Belus. After this he easily reduced Tetricus with his rebellious accomplices, whom he brought to signal punishment. He likewise called in all the counterfeit money, and issued new, to avoid confusion in trade. Besides which he bestowed on the people a gift of bread, as a mark of his favour; and having arranged all affairs set out on a journey from Rome.

During his stay at Perinthus, now called Heraclea, a conspiracy was thus formed against him. There was in the court a man named Eros, whose office was to carry out the answers of the emperor. This man had been for some fault threatened by the emperor, and put in great fear. Dreading therefore lest the emperor should realize his menaces by actions, he went to some of the guard, whom he knew to be the boldest men in the court; he told them a plausible story, and shewed them a letter of his own writing, in the character of the emperor (which he had long before learned to counterfeit), and persuading them first that they themselves were to be put to death, which was the meaning [31] expressed by the letter, he endeavoured to prevail on them to murder the emperor. The deception answered. Observing Aurelianus to go out of the city with a small retinue, they ran out upon him and murdered him. He was buried on the spot with great magnificence by the army in consideration of the great services he had performed, and the dangers he had undergone for the good of the public.

Upon his death the empire fell into the hands of Tacitus, in whose time the Scythians crossed the Palus Maeotis, and made incursions through Pontus even into Cilicia, until he opposed them. Partly in person, and partly by Florianus, prefect of the court, whom he left in commission for that purpose, this emperor completely routed and destroyed them. He himself was going into Europe, but was thus circumvented and killed. He had committed the government of Syria to his cousin Maximinus, who treated the nobility of that country with such austerity, that he caused them both to hate and fear him. Their hatred became so excessive, that at length conspiring with the murderers of Aurelianus, they assaulted Maximinus, and having killed him, fell on and slew Tacitus also as he was upon his departure.

An universal civil disturbance now arose, those of the east chusing Probus emperor, and those at Rome Florianus. The former of these governed all Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt; but the latter was in possession of all the countries from Cilicia to Italy; besides which the homage of all the nations beyond the Alps, the Gauls, Spaniards, Britons, and Africans was paid to him. When both therefore were ready for war, Florianus came to Tarsus, resolving to encamp there, leaving his victory over the Scythians at the Bosphorus unfinished, by which he gave them an opportunity of recovering themselves and returning home, though he had cut off their retreat. Probus protracted the time, because he came with less preparation for a battle. By these means it came to pass, that the weather, being exceedingly hot, a pestilential disorder broke out amongst the troops of Florianus, most of whom were Europeans, and consequently unaccustomed to such excessive heat, by which many were taken off. When Probus understood this, he thought it a proper time to attack the enemy. The soldiers of Florianus, attempting what exceeded their strength, fought some slight skirmishes before the city, but nothing being done worthy of notice, some of the troops of Probus deposed Florianus. Having performed this, he was kept in custody for some time, until his own soldiers said, that it was the will of Probus that he should share the empire. Florianus therefore assumed [32] the purple robe again, until the return of those who were sent to know the true resolution of Probus. On their arrival they caused Florianus to be killed by his own soldiers.

Probus, having thus gained the empire, marched forward, and performed a very commendable action for the public good, as a prelude to what he should afterwards do. For he resolved to punish those who had murdered Aurelianus, and conspired against Tacitus; though for fear of an insurrection he did not openly execute his design, but planted a company of men, in whom he had confidence, at a convenient post, near to which he invited the murderers to a feast. Coming there in expectation of being entertained at the emperor's table, Probus ascended into a balcony from whence he could view the action, which he gave a signal to his men to perform. As soon as they had received it, they

fell on the murderers in their defenceless state, and left only one of them alive, whom he caused afterwards to be burnt alive, as a very dangerous criminal.

While Probus was thus employed, Saturninus, a Moor, the most familiar friend of the emperor, and for that reason entrusted with the government of Syria, threw off his allegiance, and rebelled against the emperor. When Probus learned this, he resolved to frustrate his designs, but was anticipated by the soldiers in the east, who destroyed Saturninus and all his associates. He likewise suppressed an insurrection in Britain, by means of Victorinus, a Moor, who had persuaded him to confer the government of Britain upon the leader of the insurgents. Having sent for Victorinus, and chosen him for his consul, he sent him to appease the disturbance; who going presently to Britain, took off the traitor by a stratagem. Having performed these affairs as I have related, Probus obtained several victories over the Barbarians in two different wars ; in one of which he himself commanded, but left the other to the conduct of his lieutenant. Perceiving that it was necessary to assist the cities of Germany which lay upon the Rhine, and were harrassed by the Barbarians, he inarched with his army towards that river. When the war begun there, a grievous famine prevailed throughout the surrounding country; but a heavy shower of rain and corn fell together, so that in some places were great heaps of it made by its own descent. At this prodigy, all were so astonished that at first they dared not touch the corn to satisfy their hunger; but being at length forced to it by necessity, which expels all fear, they made bread of it, which not only allayed their hunger, but enabled them to gain the victory with great ease. The emperor terminated [33](#) several other wars, with scarcely any trouble ; and fought some fierce battles, first against the Logiones, a German nation, whom he conquered, taking Semno their general, and his son, prisoners. These he pardoned upon submission, but took from them all the captives and plunder they had acquired, and dismissed, on certain terms, not only the common soldiers, but even Semno and his son. Another of his battles was against the Franks, whom he subdued through the good conduct of his commanders. He made war on the Burgundi and the Vandili. But seeing that his forces were too weak, he endeavoured to separate those of his enemies, and engage only with apart. His design was favoured by fortune; for the armies lying on both sides of the river, the Romans challenged the Barbarians that were on the further side to fight. This so incensed them, that many of them crossed over, and fought until the Barbarians were all either slain or taken by the Romans ; except a few that remained behind, who sued for peace, on condition of giving up their captives and plunder; which was acceded to. But as they did not restore all that they had taken, the emperor was so enraged, that he fell on them as they were retiring, killed many of them, and took prisoner their general Igillus. All of them that were taken alive were sent to Britain, where they settled, and were subsequently very serviceable to the emperor when any insurrection broke out. The wars upon the Rhine being thus terminated, a circumstance happened in Isauria which should not be omitted. There was an Isaurian named Lydius, who had been a robber from his youth, and with a gang like himself had committed depredations throughout Pamphylia and Lycia. This gang being attacked by the soldiers, Lydius, not being able to oppose the whole Roman army, retreated to a place in Lycia called Crymna, which stands on a precipice, and is secured on one side by large and deep ditches. Finding many who had fled there for refuge, and observing that the Romans were very intent on the siege, and that they bore the fatigue of it with great resolution, he pulled down the houses, and making the ground fit for tillage, sowed corn for the maintenance of those that were in the town. But the number being so great that they were in need of much more provisions, he turned out of the place all that were of no service, both male and female. The enemy perceiving his design forced them back again ; on which Lydius threw them headlong into the trenches that surrounded the walls, where they died. Having done this, he constructed a mine, from the town beyond the enemies camp; through [34](#) which he sent persons to steal cattle and other provisions. By these means he provided for the besieged a considerable time, until the affair was discovered to the enemy by a woman. Lydius, however, still did not despond; but gradually retrenched his men in their wine, and gave them a smaller allowance of corn. But this not answering the end, he was at length driven to such streights, that he killed all that were in the town, except a few of his adherents, sufficient as he thought to defend it, and some women, whom he ordered to be in common among them all. But when he had resolved to persevere against all dangers, there happened at length this accident. There was with him in the town a man who was expert in making engines, and in using them with such dexterity, that when Lydius ordered him to shoot a dart at any of the enemy, he never missed his aim. It happened that Lydius had ordered him to hit a particular person, whom either accidentally or on purpose he missed, for which he stripped and scourged him severely, and, moreover, threatened him with death. The man was so exasperated on account of the blows he had received, and so affrighted at the menaces, that he took an opportunity to steal out of the town; and falling in with some soldiers to whom he gave an account of his actions and sufferings, he shewed them an aperture in the wall, through which Lydius used to inspect all that was done in their camp, and promised them to shoot him as he was looking through it in his usual manner. The commander of the expedition on this took the man into favour; who, having planted his engine, and placed some men before him that he might not be discovered by the enemy, took aim at Lydius as he looked through the aperture, and with a dart shot him and gave him a mortal wound. He had no sooner received this wound, than he became still more strict with some of his own men. Having enjoined them upon oath never to surrender the place, he expired with much struggling.

Ptolemais in Thebais having revolted from the emperor, and commenced a war. Probus, by the good conduct of his officers, compelled both that place and its allies to surrender. He likewise left in Thrace the Bastarnae, a Scythian people, who submitted to him, giving them land to inhabit there; on which account they observed the Roman laws and customs. But the Franks having applied to the emperor, and having a country given to them, a part of them afterwards revolted, and having collected a great number of ships, disturbed all Greece; from whence they proceeded into Sicily, to Syracuse, which they attacked, and killed many people there. At length they arrived in Africa, whence though they were [35] repulsed by a body of men from Carthage, yet they returned home without any great loss. This circumstance likewise happened during the reign of Probus. Eighty gladiators conspiring together, and having killed their keepers, ran out into the city, and plundered all in their way, many other persons, as is usual in such cases, without doubt mixing with them. But the emperor sent a party and suppressed them. When Probus, who was a brave and just prince, had done this * * * * *

(The remainder of this book and the beginning of the next are lost, to supply that deficiency in the narrative we have collected from other authors this short account;) "Probus was succeeded by Carus, who marched against the Persians as far as Ctesiphon, where he received the appellation of the Persian emperor, but soon afterwards died, according to some, of a disease, though others state, that he was killed by lightning. He had two sons, Numerianus a very promising youth, from whom the state might have expected all possible happiness and good, had he not been murdered by Aper; and Carinus, a person abandoned to all kinds of vice, who was killed by Diocletian."

SECOND BOOK.

[Note to the online edition: A gathering of 8 leaves has been lost from the only manuscript at this point, covering the end of book 1 and start of book 2.]

* * * * * THE longest period of the life of man is only equal to the intermediate space between these games. For an age, or the space of one hundred years, which we call *aiw_n*, is by the Romans called *seculum*. This is an excellent remedy for the plague, consumption and other diseases; of its origin receive this account. Valesius Valseius, from whom descended the Valerian family, was a great man among the Sabines, before whose house was a grove of very lofty trees, which were burnt with lightning. He was thus induced to enquire the meaning of such a portent. His children, moreover, falling sick, he consulted both the physicians and the soothsayers. He was told by them, that by the manner of the fire falling the gods were angry; which caused Valesius wisely to attempt by sacrifices to appease them. He and his wife being terrified, and expecting every moment the death of their children, he prostrated himself before Vesta, and promised to offer up two entire souls instead of their children, which were his own and that of their mother. But turning to the grove that had been burnt, he seemed to hear a voice that commanded him to carry the children to Tarentum, and there to warm some [36] Tiber water over the fire of Pluto and Proserpine, and to give it to the children to drink. On hearing this he despaired the more of the recovery of the children. For Tarentum was at a great distance, and besides there was no Tiber water to be had there: and it caused him to entertain more desponding thoughts of it, that the voice had told him the water must be warmed on the altar of the infernal deities, at which the soothsayers themselves were also startled. However, having heard it the second time, he obeyed the command of the gods. Putting his children on board a small river-vessel, he carried the fire along with him. The children were ready to faint through heat, while he sailed to that part of the river where the stream is most gentle; and taking up his lodging at a shepherd's cottage, he heard a voice say that he must stay at Tarentum, for that was the name of the place, which had the same name with Tarentum near the Iapygian promontory; On which Valesius, having paid due adoration to the gods for his good fortune, ordered the pilot to put to shore, and, landing, told the whole story to the shepherds. Presently taking some water out of the Tiber, and heating it on an altar erected by himself, he gave it to his children to drink; as soon as they had drunk it they fell asleep and were perfectly cured. But in that sleep they fancied that they saw a vision, which told them to offer black victims to Pluto and Proserpine, and to spend three nights in singing and dancing; which dream they communicated to their father, and that it was a huge man of a godlike presence, who ordered them to do it in the Campus Martius, where the horse-races are held. Valesius, therefore, intending to build an altar in that place, set the masons to dig, who found an altar ready made, on which was inscribed. "To Pluto and Proserpine". By which being more plainly instructed how to act, he sacrificed the black victims on the altar, and kept the vigils in that place.

This same altar, and the manner of sacrificing on it, thus originated. The Romans and the Albans being at war, and both prepared for battle, a monstrous figure appeared, clothed in a black skin, and crying out, that Pluto and Proserpine commanded sacrifices to be made to them before they fought, it disappeared. On which, the Romans, who were terrified at the sight, made an altar underground, and when they had sacrificed on it, buried it at the depth of twenty feet., in order that it might not be found by any but themselves. Valesius having found it, according to command, sacrificed upon it, and kept the vigils; for which he was called Manius Valerius Tarentinus. For the Romans call the infernal gods Manes, and Valere signifies to be in good health; [37] and the surname of Tarentinus he derived from Tarentum where he sacrificed. Some time afterwards, when a plague happened in the city, which

was the year after the expulsion of the kings, Publuis Valerius Publicola sacrificed a black bull and a black heifer to Pluto and Proserpine, by which he freed the city from, the disease. He wrote on the altar this inscription ; "Publius Valerius Publicola dedicated fire to Pluto and Proserpine in the Campus Martius, and exhibited spectacles in honour of them, for the preservation of the Roman people."

But afterwards, when they were oppressed with diseases and wars, which was in the year 352 after the building of the city, the senate endeavoured to deliver themselves from those calamities by means of the oracles of the Sibyls, and therefore commanded those whose office it was to consult those oracles. Having so done they told the senate, that by sacrificing to Pluto and Proserpine an end would be put to all their miseries. They therefore chose a convenient place, which they consecrated to Pluto and Proserpine as they were commanded, when Marcus Potitus was in his fourth consulate. And when the ceremony was completed, being delivered from their grievances, they again laid aside the altar in some extremity of the Campus Martius. These rites were afterwards neglected for many years, until some misfortunes befel them, and then Octavianus Augustus renewed the games which had before been celebrated, when Lucius. Censorinus and Marcus Manlius Puelius were consuls. They were again used under the consulate of Lucius Censorinus and Caius Sabinus, when Ateius Capito had explained the laws concerning them, and the fifteen men who had the care of the books of the Sibyls had found out the time when the sacrifice ought to be performed and the games held. After Augustus was dead, these games were celebrated by Claudius, without any regard to the due time. After him Domitian, who paid no regard to what Claudius had done, computed the years from the time when Augustus kept that festival, and seemed to observe their original institution. And after them Severus in the hundred and tenth year restored the same game, with his two sons Antoninus and Geta, when Chilo and Libo were consuls. This is said to be the manner in which these games were observed. The beadles went round at the time, and invited all the people to a spectacle, such as they had never witnessed and never would again. The Quindecimviri, in the summer season, a little before the games began, sat in the Capitol, and in the Palatine, temple, upon a tribunal, from which they distributed to the people a kind of purifying [|38](#) preparations, called *lustralia*, which consisted of torches, brimstone and pitch, of which none but freemen are allowed to participate. And when the people assembled in the above mentioned places and in the temple of Diana, which is on mount Aventine, each person brought wheat, barley, and beans, and kept vigils to the fatal sisters. The time of the festival being arrived, which was celebrated three successive days and nights in the Campus Martins, the victims were consecrated near the bank of the Tiber at Tarentum. There they sacrificed to several deities; to Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Latona, and to the Parcae, Lucinae, Ceres, Pluto, and Proserpine, which was performed in this order. The first night that the spectacles were exhibited, the emperor with the Quindecimviri sacrificed three lambs on as many altars purposely placed on the side of the river, where having sprinkled the altars with blood he offered up the victims whole. Then, having prepared a scene without a theatre, they placed a great number of lights, and made a large fire, by which they sang a new hymn, to render the games more solemn. They who performed these ceremonies were rewarded for their labour with the first fruits of their wheat, barley, and beans. For these were as I stated distributed among the people. The following day they went up to the Capitol, where the usual sacrifices were offered, and going from thence to the appointed place, celebrated games in honour of Apollo and Diana. On the next day, the principal ladies entered the Capitol at the hour appointed by the oracle, where they conducted themselves with due reverence : and at the third hour, in the temple of Apollo near the palace, twenty-seven children of each sex, whose parents were all living, sang hymns, and spoke in Greek and Latin ; by which the Roman empire was preserved. Besides these, however, there were other rites observed by the divine command, which as long as they were kept up preserved the Roman empire. And in confirmation of what I have stated, I will add the oracle of the Sibyl, which has been mentioned by others before my time ;

But when a hundred years and ten are past
Which is the longest time man's age doth last,
Romans ! be sure (it is fatal to mistake
In any point) due offerings to make
To heaven, and see you bring the sacrifice
Into that field which on the Tiber lies:
And do it, in that season, when the night
Deprives men least of the diurnal light.
After sun set; Then to the Parcae pay
Your homage; and upon their altars lay [|39](#)
Young sheep and goats : next the Lucinae please
With decent rites, who childing women ease,
Those finished offer a black hog and sow
To Tellus, for the product of the plow,
But to Jove's altar bring the bulls milk-while
For victims, in the day-time, not by night:
(For heavenly deities accept of none

But what are offer'd in the day alone.)
 And next to Juno sacrifice a cow
 Spotless all o'er, and pure as fulling snow,
 Then let Apollo, whom they call the sun,
 And Phoebus, have his equal honours done.
 Whilst in the temple Latin girls and boys
 In sacred hymns make a triumphant noise.
 But let them be apart, the girls to stand
 And sing on this, the boys on t'other hand;
 Besides this caution I must farther give
 That all the parents of them be alive.
 As for the married women, let them pray
 To Juno on their knees, that each one may
 Have their desire, both men and women too,
 But chiefly women. Then, let all of you
 Bring from your houses what is fit to bring,
 (As the first-fruits of every useful thing)
 To the immortal gods an offering.
 And let all that upon your altars lie,
 Whence you may men and women both supply.
 But to attend the gods be sure there be
 Both night and day a numerous company
 Of votaries both serious and free.
 These laws observ'd not Latium alone
 But Italy's extent your sway shall own.

Experience assures us, that while these ceremonies were duly performed, according to the direction of the oracles, the empire was secure, and likely to retain its sovereignty over almost all the known world ; and on the other hand, when they were neglected, about the time when Dioclesian laid down the imperial dignity, it fell to decay, and degenerated insensibly into barbarism. That I state nothing but truth I will prove from chronology. From the consulate of Chilo and Libo, in which Severus celebrated the secular games, or rites, to the ninth consulate of Dioclesian, and eighth of Maximianus, was a hundred and one years. Then Dioclesian from an emperor became a private individual, and Maximianus followed his example. But when Constantine and Licinius were in their third consulship, the 110 years were completed, and the festival ought to have been kept |40 according to custom; but it was neglected, and affairs consequently declined to their present unfortunate condition.

Three years after Dioclesian died, and the reigning emperors, Constantius and Maximianus Gallerius declared Severus and Maximinus (who was nephew to Gallerius), the Caesars, giving all Italy to Severus, and the eastern provinces to Maximinus. Affairs being all regulated and the barbarians quiet, since the Romans had been so successful against them, Constantine, who was the son of Constantius by a concubine, and had previously an ambition of being emperor (but was more inflamed with that desire, since Severus and Maximinus had acquired the name and honour of Caesars), was now resolved to leave the place where he had resided, and to go to his father Constantius, who was beyond the Alps, and generally in Britain. But being apprehensive of seizure by the way, many persons being well acquainted of his anxiety for dominion, he maimed all the horses that were kept for public service, whenever he came to any stable where they were kept, except what he took for his own use. He continued to do this throughout his journey, by which means he prevented those that pursued him from going further, while he himself proceeded toward the country where his father was.

It happened that Constantius died at that time; the guards, therefore, who thought none of his legitimate children to be fit for the imperial dignity, considered that Constantine was a person capable of sustaining it, and conferred the honour upon him, in hopes of being remunerated with handsome presents. When his effigy according to custom was exhibited at Rome, Maxentius, the son of Maximianus Herculus, could not endure the sight of Constantine's good fortune, who was the son of a harlot, while himself, who was the son of so great an emperor, remained at home in indolence, and his father's empire was enjoyed by others. He therefore associated with himself in the enterprise Marcellianus and Marcellus, two military tribunes, and Lucianus, who distributed the swine's flesh, with which the people of Rome were provided by the treasury, and the court-guards called Praetoriani. By them he was promoted to the imperial throne, having promised liberally to reward all that assisted him in it. For this purpose they first murdered Abellius, because he, being prefect of the city, opposed their enterprise.

Maximianus Gallerius, when he had learned this, sent Severus Caesar against Maxentius with an army. But while he advanced from Milan with several legions of Moors, Maxentius corrupted his troops with money, and even the

prefect of the court, Anullinus, [|41](#) and thereby conquered him with great ease. On which Severus fled to Ravenna, which is a strong and populous city, provided with necessaries sufficient for himself and soldiers. When Maximianus Herculus knew this, he was doubtless greatly concerned for his son Maxentius, and therefore, leaving Lucania where he then was, he went to Ravenna. Finding that Severus could not by any means be forced out of this city, it being well fortified, and stored with provisions, he deluded him with false oaths, and persuaded him to go to Rome. But on his way thither, coming to a place called the Three Tabernae, he was taken by a stratagem of Maxentius and immediately executed. Maximianus Gallerius could not patiently endure these injuries done to Severus, and therefore resolved to go from the east to Rome, and to punish, Maxentius as he deserved. On his arrival in Italy, he found the soldiers about him so treacherous, that he returned into the east without fighting a battle.

At this period Maximianus Herculus, who lamented the tumults which disturbed the public peace, came to Dioclesian who then lived at Carnutum, a town of Gallia Celtica, and endeavoured to persuade him to resume the empire, and not to suffer the government which they had preserved so long and with so much difficulty to be exposed to the madness and folly of those who had possessed themselves of it, and who had already brought it near to ruin. But Dioclesian refused to listen to him; for he wisely preferred his own quiet, and perhaps foresaw the troubles that would ensue, being a man well versed in matters of religion. Herculus therefore, perceiving that he could not prevail with him, came to Ravenna, and so returned to the Alps to meet Constantine, who lay there. And being naturally a busy faithless man, he promised his daughter Fausta to Constantine, which he performed, but persuaded him to pursue Maximianus Gallerius, who was then leaving Italy, and to lay wait for Maxentius. To all which Constantine agreed. He then left him, designing if possible to recover the empire, as he hoped to create a quarrel between Constantine and his son Maxentius. But while he attempted these things, Maximianus Gallerius assumed Licinius, as his colleague in the empire, with whose assistance he hoped to cope with Maxentius. But while Gallerius deliberated on these affairs, he died of an incurable wound, and Licinius then also claimed the sole dominion. Maximianus Herculus endeavoured, as I have said, to recover the empire by alienating the soldiers from Maxentius. For which purpose, by gifts and insinuating addresses, having brought them over to him, [|42](#) he endeavoured to form a conspiracy against Constantine, in which his soldiers were to join. But Fausta revealed it to Constantine, and Herculus, who was now overborne by so many disappointments, died of a distemper at Tarsus.

Maxentius, having escaped this danger, and being of opinion that he was now well enough established in the empire, sent persons into Africa, and in particular to Carthage, to carry his image about that country. But the soldiers in that country forbade it, out of regard to Maximianus Gallerius, and the respect they had for his memory, until they heard that Maxentius was coming to make war on them on the plea of an insurrection. They then went to Alexandria, but meeting with a great army with which they were not able to contend, they returned to Carthage. Maxentius, being disturbed at this, resolved to sail for Africa, and to punish the authors of the commotion. But the soothsayers having sacrificed and given him ill omens, he was afraid to go, not only because the entrails had that appearance, but also lest Alexander, who was prefect of the court in Africa, should be his enemy. To secure his passage thither from all doubt, he sent to Alexander, desiring him to send his son as an hostage. But he, suspecting that Maxentius did not desire his son for the mere purpose of an hostage, but to deceive him, denied the request. After this, Maxentius sending other agents to him to take him off by treachery and stratagem, the plot was discovered ; and the soldiers, having then got a favourable opportunity to rebel, conferred the purple robe on Alexander, though he was by birth not only a Phrygian, but a timid cowardly man, and unlit for any difficult undertaking, and was, moreover, of an advanced age.

At that time a fire happened at Rome ; whether it came out of the air or earth is uncertain. It broke out in the temple of Fortune; and while the people ran to extinguish it, a soldier, speaking blasphemy against the goddess, was killed by the mob out of zeal, by which a mutiny was occasioned among the soldiers. They would have destroyed the whole city, had not Maxentius soon appeased their rage. Maxentius after this sought every occasion to make war on Constantine, and pretending grief for his father's death, of which Constantine was the cause, he designed to go towards Rhaetia, which is contiguous both to Gaul and Illyricum. For he imagined that he should subdue Dalmatia and Illyricum, by the assistance of the generals in those parts, and of the army of Licinius. But thinking it better first to arrange affairs in Africa, he raised an army, bestowing the command of it on Rufius Volusianus, prefect of the court, and sent [|43](#) them into Africa. He sent Zeno also along with Rufius, who was a person not only expert in military affairs, but esteemed for his courtesy and affability. On the first charge, Alexander's troops retired on a body of men in the rear, nor was the other party left unconquered by the enemy. Alexander himself was taken and strangled.

The war being thus at an end, a good opportunity was afforded to sycophants and informers of impeaching all the persons in Africa, who had good estates, as friends to Alexander: nor were any of the accused spared, but some of them put to death, and others deprived of all their possessions. After this he triumphed at Rome for the mischief done at Carthage. Such was the state of the affairs of Maxentius, who conducted himself with cruelty and licentiousness towards all the inhabitants of Italy, and even to Rome itself. Meantime Constantine, who had long

been jealous of him, was then much more disposed to contention. Having therefore raised an army amongst the Barbarians, Germans, and Celts, whom he had conquered, and likewise drawn a force out of Britain, amounting in the whole to ninety thousand foot and eight thousand horse, he marched from the Alps into Italy, passing those towns that surrendered without doing them any damage, but taking by storm those which resisted. While he was making this progress, Maxentius had collected a much stronger army ; consisting of eighty thousand Romans and Italians, all the Tuscans on the sea coast, forty thousand men from Carthage, besides what the Sicilians sent him ; his whole force amounting to a hundred and seventy thousand foot and eighteen thousand horse.

Both being thus prepared, Maxentius threw a bridge over the Tiber, which was not of one entire piece, but divided into two parts, the centre of the bridge being made to fasten with irons, which might be drawn out upon occasion. He gave orders to the workmen, that as soon as they saw the army of Constantine upon the juncture of the bridge, they should draw out the iron fastenings, that the enemy who stood upon it might fall into the river.

Constantine, advancing with his army to Rome, encamped in a field before the city, which was broad and therefore convenient for cavalry. Maxentius in the mean time shut himself up within the walls, and sacrificed to the gods, and, moreover, consulted the Sibylline oracles concerning the event of the war. Finding a prediction, that whoever designed any harm to the Romans should die a miserable death, he applied it to himself, because he withstood those that came against Rome, and wished to take it. His application indeed proved just. For when Maxentius drew out |44 his army before the city, and was marching over the bridge that he himself had constructed, an infinite number of owls flew down and covered the wall. When Constantine saw this, he ordered his men to stand to their arms. And the two armies being drawn up opposite to each other, Constantine sent his cavalry against that of the enemy, whom they charged with such impetuosity that they threw them into disorder. The signal being given to the infantry, they likewise marched in good order towards the enemy. A furious battle having commenced, the Romans themselves, and their foreign allies, were unwilling to risk their lives, as they wished for deliverance from the bitter tyranny with which they were burdened; though the other troops were slain in great numbers, being either trod to death by the horse, or killed by the foot.

As long as the cavalry kept their ground, Maxentius retained some hopes, but when they gave way, he tied with the rest over the bridge into the city. The beams not being strong enough to bear so great a weight, they broke; and Maxentius, with the others, was carried with the stream down the river.

When the news of this victory was reported in the city, none dared to shew any joy for what had happened, because many thought it was an unfounded report. But when the head of Maxentius was brought upon a spear, their fear and dejection were changed to joy and pleasure. On this occasion Constantine punished very few, and they were only some few of the nearest friends of Maxentius; but he abolished the praetorian troops, and destroyed the fortresses in which they used to reside. At length, having arranged all things in the city, he went towards Gallia Celtica ; and on his way sent for Licinius to Milan, and gave him in marriage his sister Constantia, whom he had formerly promised him, when he wished him to unite with himself against Maxentius. That solemnity over, Constantine proceeded towards the Celtae. It was not long before a civil war broke out between Licinius and Maximianus, who had a severe engagement, in which Licinius at first appeared to have the disadvantage, but he presently rallied and put Maximianus to flight. This emperor, travelling through the east into Egypt, in hopes of raising a force to renew the war, died at Tarsus.

The empire being thus devolved on Constantine and Licinius, they soon quarrelled. Not because Licinius gave any cause for it, but that Constantine, in his usual manner, was unfaithful to his agreement, by endeavouring to alienate from Licinius some nations that belonged to his dominions. By this means an open rupture ensued, and both prepared for war. Licinius |45 took up his head-quarters at Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, which stands on a hill; the road to which is rugged and narrow. The greatest part of this road is through a deep morass, and the remainder up a mountain, on which stands the city. Below it extends a spacious plain, which entertains the view with a boundless prospect. On this Licinius fixed his camp, and extended the body of his army under the hill, that his flanks might be protected from the enemy. Constantine in the meantime drew up his men near the mountain, placing the horse in front, thinking that to be the best disposition lest the enemy should fall upon the foot, who moved but slowly, and hinder their advance. Having done this, he immediately gave the charge, and attacked the enemy. This engagement was one of the most furious that was ever fought; for when each side had expended their darts, they fought a long time with spears and javelins; and after the action had continued from morning to night, the right wing, where Constantine himself commanded, began to prevail. The enemy being routed, Licinius's troops, seeing him mounted and ready to fly, dared not stay to eat their portions, but left behind them all their cattle and provisions, taking only as much food as would suffice for one night, and marched with great precipitation along with Licinius to Sirmium, a city of Pannonia, by which runs a river which discharges itself into the Ister. In passing this town he broke down the bridge over the river, and marched on with an intention to levy troops in Thrace.

Constantine, having taken Cibalis, and Sirmium, and all the towns that Licinius had abandoned, sent five thousand men in pursuit of him. But as these were ignorant of the course he had taken, they could not overtake him. Constantine however, having rebuilt the bridge over the Saus, which Licinius had broken down, was with his army almost at his heels. Having entered Thrace, he arrived at the plain where Licinius lay encamped. On the night of his arrival there he marshalled his army, and gave orders for his soldiers to be ready for battle by day-break. As soon as it was light, Licinius, perceiving Constantine with his army, drew up his forces also, having been joined by Valens, whom he styled Caesar, after the battle of Cibalis. When the armies engaged, they first fought with bows at a distance ; but when their arrows were spent, they began to use their javelins, and poignards. Thus the battle continued very obstinately for a considerable time, until those whom Constantine had sent in pursuit of Licinius descended from an eminence upon the armies while they were engaged. These wheeled round the hill |46 before they arrived at them, deeming it best to join their own party from the higher ground, and to encompass the enemy. The troops of Licinius, being aware of them, courageously withstood against them all, so that many thousands were slain on both sides, and the advantage was equal, till the signal was given for both to retire. Next day they agreed on a truce, and entered into an alliance with each other, on condition that Constantine should possess Illyricum and all the nations westward, and that Licinius should have Thrace and the east; but that Valens, whom Licinius had made Caesar, should be put to death, because he was said to be the author of all the mischief which had happened. Having done this, and sworn on both sides to observe the conditions, Constantine conferred the rank and title of Caesar on Crispus, his son by a concubine called Minervina, who was as yet but a youth, and on Constantine, who was born but a few days before at Arelatum. At the same time Licinianus, the son of Licinius, who was twenty years of age, was declared Caesar, Thus ended the second war.

Constantine hearing that the Sauromatae, who dwelt near the Palus Maeotis, had passed the Ister in boats, and pillaged his territories, led his army against them, and was met by the barbarians, under their king Rausimodus. The Sauromatae attacked a town which was sufficiently garrisoned, but its wall was built in the lower part of stone, and in the upper part of wood. They therefore thought that they might easily take the town by burning all the wooden part of the wall; and with that view set it on fire, and in the mean time shot at those who stood on the walls. The defenders threw down darts and stones upon the barbarians, and killed many of them ; and Constantine then coming up and falling on them from a higher ground, slew a great number, took some alive, and put the rest to flight. Rausimodus, having lost the greater part of his army, took shipping and crossed the Ister, with an intention of once more plundering the Roman dominions. Constantine, hearing of his design, followed them over the Ister, and attacked them in a thick wood upon a hill, to which they had fled, where he killed many of them, amongst whom was Rausimodus. He also took many of them prisoners, giving quarter to those that would submit; and returned to his head-quarters with an immense number of captives. These he distributed into the different cities, and then came to Thessalonica, where having constructed a harbour (this city not possessing one before), he made new preparations for war against Licinius. For this purpose, he fitted out two hundred galleys of war; each with thirty oars, |47 besides two thousand transport vessels, and raised a force of a hundred and twenty thousand foot, and ten thousand horsemen and sailors. Licinius, hearing of the great preparations of Constantine, sent messengers to every nation, commanding them to prepare a sufficient number of men for the navy, besides horse and foot soldiers. The Egyptians therefore sent out eighty galleys, the Phoenicians an equal number, the Ionians and Dorians of Asia sixty, the Cyprians thirty, the Carians twenty, the Bithynians thirty, and the Africans fifty. His foot-soldiers amounted to nearly a hundred and fifty thousand, but his horse only to fifteen thousand, which were sent to him from Phrygia and Cappadocia. Constantine's navy lay at Piraeus, that of Licinius in the Hellespont. When they had thus established their naval and military forces, Licinius encamped at Adrianople in Thrace, whilst Constantine sent for his navy from Piraeus, which was built and manned chiefly in Greece. Advancing with his infantry from Thessalonica, he encamped on the bank of the river Hebrus, which runs to the left of Adrianople. At the same time, Licinius drew up his army in order of battle, extending from a mountain which is above the town two hundred stadia, as far as the junction of another river with the Hebrus; thus the armies continued opposite to each other for several days. Constantine, observing where the river was least broad, concerted this plan. He ordered his men to bring trees from the mountain, and to tie ropes around them, as if he intended to throw a bridge over the river for the passage of his army. By this stratagem he deluded the enemy, and, ascending a hill on which were thick woods sufficient to conceal any that were in them, he planted there five thousand archers and eight hundred horse. Having done this, he crossed the Hebrus at the narrowest place, and so surprised the enemy that many fled with all their speed, while others, who were amazed at his unexpected approach, were struck with wonder at his coming over so suddenly. In the meantime, the rest of his army crossed the river in security, and a great slaughter commenced. Nearly thirty thousand fell; and about sunset Constantine took their camp, while Licinius, with all the forces he could muster, hastened through Thrace to his ships.

As soon as day appeared, the whole army of Licinius, or as many of them as had fled to the neighbouring mountains and vallies, together with those that Licinius through haste had left behind him, surrendered themselves to Constantine. Licinius being arrived at Byzantium, Constantine followed and besieged him in that city. His navy, as before related, had now left Piraeus and |48 lay at Macedon. He therefore sent orders to his admirals to bring the

ships into the Hellespont. This being effected according to the command of Constantine, the officers of his navy thought it not prudent to engage with more than eighty of their best sailing vessels, which were galleys of thirty oars each, because the place was too narrow for the reception of a greater number. Upon which Abantus, the admiral of Licinius, making use of two hundred ships, despised the smallness of the enemy's fleet, which he thought he could easily surround. But the signals on both sides being given, and the vessels meeting stern to stern, the seamen of Constantine managed their ships so as to engage in good order; but the ships of Abantus, sailing against the enemy without any order, and being confined by the narrowness of the place, became exposed to the enemy, who sunk and otherwise destroyed them. Many were thrown overboard; till at length night put an end to the engagement. The fleets then separated and put in at different places, the one at Eleus in Thrace, and the other at the Aeantian harbour. The following day, the wind blowing hard from the north, Abantus put out from the Aeantian port and prepared for action. But the galleys of fifty oars being come to Eleus by order of the admirals, Abantus was alarmed at the number of vessels, and hesitated whether to sail against the enemy. About noon the north wind subsided; the south wind then blew with such violence, that the ships of Licinius, which lay on the Asiatic coast, were some driven on shore, others broken against the rocks, and others foundered with all on board. In this affair five thousand men perished, together with a hundred and thirty ships filled with men, whom Licinius had sent out of Thrace to Asia accompanied by a part of his army; Byzantium being too small to contain all that were besieged with Licinius. The sea-fight being thus concluded, Abantus effected his escape with only four ships into Asia. The navy of Constantine, having arrived in the Hellespont laden with abundance of provisions and stores for his troops, weighed anchor in order to join in the siege of Byzantium, and to blockade the city by sea. The foot-soldiers of Licinius, being alarmed at the sight of such a navy, procured ships in which they sailed to Eleus.

Meantime Constantine continued intent upon the siege, and raised a mound of equal height, with the wall, on which he placed wooden towers that overlooked the wall, from which his soldiers shot: those who defended it, in order that he might with greater security bring battering rams and other engines of war near it. By these means he thought himself sure to take the city. At 149 which Licinius, being terrified, and not knowing how to act, resolved to leave Byzantium, and the weaker part of his army therein, and to take with him only such men as were fit for active service, and had given proofs of their attachment to himself, and to hasten without delay to Chalcedon in Bithynia. He flattered himself that another army might be raised in Asia, which would enable him again to contend with his adversary. Arriving therefore at Chalcedon, and, having appointed Martinianus to the command of the court guards, whom the Romans call *Magister officiorum*, his associate in this dangerous enterprise, he declared him Caesar, and sent him with an army to Lampsacus, to hinder the passage of the enemy from Thrace into the Hellespont. He posted his own men on the hills and passes about Chalcedon.

While Licinius was thus occupied, Constantine, who had a great number of transports as well as warlike vessels, and was desirous to make use of them in crossing over and possessing himself of the opposite shore, fearing that the Bithynian coast might be inaccessible to ships of burden, immediately constructed some small vessels, with which he sailed to the sacred promontory, which lies at the entrance of the Pontus, two hundred stadia from Chalcedon. He there landed his army, which, having done, he drew them up upon some adjacent hills. Licinius, though he then saw that Bithynia was already in the hands of his enemy, was rendered so desperate by danger, that he sent for Martinianus from Lampsacus, and in order to encourage his men to fight, told them that he himself would lead them. Having said what he thought necessary to encourage them, he drew them up in order of battle, and marching out of the city, met the enemy, who were prepared for him. A sharp engagement taking place between Chalcedon and the sacred promontory, Constantine had the superiority; for he fell on the enemy with such resolution, that of a hundred and thirty thousand men, scarcely thirty thousand escaped. When the Byzantines heard of this, they immediately threw open their gates to Constantine, as did the Chalcedonians also. Licinius after this defeat went to Nicomedia with what horse were left him, and a few thousands of foot.

At this time a Persian named Hormisdas, of the royal family, came over to Constantine for refuge, under these circumstances. His father had been king of Persia. He was once celebrating his own birth-day after the Persian manner, when Hormisdas entered the palace, bringing with him a large quantity of venison. But as the guests at the table did not rise, and pay him the respect and honour due to him, he became enraged, and told them he would 150 punish them with the death of Marsyas. This saying most of them did not understand, because it related to a foreign story; but one of them, who had lived in Phrygia, and had heard the story of Marsyas, explained to them the meaning of Hormisdas's menace, while they sat at table. It was therefore so treasured up in their recollection, that when his father died, they remembered his threat, and chose his younger brother king, though according to law the elder should be preferred above the other children. Not contented with that, they put Hormisdas in chains, and confined him on a hill which lies before their city. But after some time had elapsed, his wife effected his escape in this manner. She procured a large fish, and put a file in its belly, and, sewing it up again, delivered it to the most trusty of her eunuchs, charging him to tell Hormisdas, that he must eat the fish when no one was present, and use what he should find in its belly for his escape. When she had formed this contrivance, she sent several camels loaded with wine, and abundance of meat, to entertain her husband's keepers. While they were enjoying the feast she gave them,

Honnisdas cut open the fish, and found the file; having with that filed off the shackles from his legs, he put on the robe of the eunuch, and passed through the midst of his keepers, who were by that time perfectly intoxicated. Taking one of the eunuchs along with him, he fled to the king of Armenia, who was his particular friend. By these means he got safe to Constantine, who shewed him all possible kindness and respect.

But Licinius being besieged by Constantine at Nicomedia also, knew not what to do, being sensible that he had not an army equal to engage. Going, therefore, out of the city, he submitted himself to Constantine, and brought him the purple robe, proclaiming him his emperor and lord, and intreating pardon for what was past. He presumed that he certainly should escape with life, because Constantine had sworn to his wife that he would spare him. But Constantine delivered Martinianus to the guards that they might put him to death, and sent Licinius to Thessalonica, as if he were to live there in security. However, he afterwards broke his oath,¹ which was usual with Constantine, and caused him to be executed. |51

Now that the whole empire had fallen into the hands of Constantine, he no longer concealed his evil disposition and vicious inclinations, but acted as he pleased, without controul. He indeed used the ancient worship of his country²; though not so much out of honour or veneration as of necessity. Therefore he believed the soothsayers, who were expert in their art, as men who predicted the truth concerning all the great actions which he ever performed. But when he came to Rome, he was filled with pride and arrogance. He resolved to begin his impious actions at home. For he put to death his son Crispus, stiled (as I mentioned) Caesar, on suspicion of debauching his mother-in-law Fausta, without any regard to the ties of nature. And when his own mother Helena expressed much sorrow for this atrocity, lamenting the young man's death with great bitterness, Constantine under pretence of comforting her, applied a remedy worse than the disease. For causing a bath to be heated to an extraordinary degree, he shut up Fausta in it, and a short time after took her out dead. Of which his conscience accusing him, as also of violating his oath, he went to the priests to be purified from his crimes. But they told him, that there was no kind of lustration that was sufficient to clear him of such enormities. A Spaniard, named Aegyptius, very familiar with the court-ladies, being at Rome, happened to fall into converse with Constantine, and assured him, that the Christian doctrine would teach him how to cleanse himself from all his offences, and that they who received it were immediately absolved from all their sins. Constantine had no sooner heard this than he easily believed what was told him, and forsaking the rites of his country, received those which Aegyptius offered him; and for the first instance of his impiety, suspected the truth of divination. For since many fortunate occurrences had been thereby predicted to him, and really had happened according to such prediction, he was afraid that others might be told something which should fall out to his misfortune; and for that |52 reason applied himself to the abolishing of the practice. And on a particular festival, when the army was to go up to the Capitol, he very indecently reproached the solemnity, and treading the holy ceremonies, as it were, under his feet, incurred the hatred of the senate and people³.

Being unable to endure the curses of almost the whole city, he sought for another city as large as Rome, where he might build himself a palace. Having, therefore, discovered a convenient scite between Troas and old Ilium, he there accordingly laid a foundation, and built part of a wall to a considerable height, which may still be seen by any that sail towards the Hellespont. Afterwards changing his purpose, he left his work unfinished, and went to Byzantium, where he admired the situation of the place, and therefore resolved, when he had considerably enlarged it, to make it a residence worthy of an emperor. The city stands on a rising ground, which is part of the isthmus inclosed on each side by the Ceras and Propontis, two arms of the sea. It had formerly a gate, at the end of the porticos, which the emperor Sevtrus built after he was reconciled to the Byzantines, who had provoked his resentment by admitting his enemy Niger into their city. At that time the wall reached down from the west side of the hill at the temple of Venus to the sea side, opposite to Chrysopolis. On the north side of the hill it reached to the dock, and beyond that to the shore, which lies opposite the passage into the Euxine sea. This narrow neck of land, between there and the Pontus, is nearly three hundred stadia in length. This was the extent of the old city. Constantine built a circular market-place where the old gate had stood, and surrounded it with double roofed porticos, erecting two great arches of Praeconnesian marble against each other, through which was a passage into the porticos of Severus, and out of the old city. Intending to increase the magnitude of the city, he surrounded it with a wall which was fifteen stadia beyond the former, and inclosed all the isthmus from sea to sea. Having thus enlarged the city, he built a palace little inferior to that of Rome, and very much embellished the hippodrome, or horse-course, taking into it the temple of Castor and Pollux, whose statues are still standing in the porticos of the hippodrome. He placed on one side of it the tripod that belonged to the Delphian Apollo, on which stood an image of the deity. |53 As there was at Byzantium a very large market-place, consisting of four porticos, at the end of one of them, to which a numerous flight of steps ascends, he erected two temples; in one of which was placed the statue of Rhea, the mother of the gods, which Jason's companions had formerly fixed on Mount Dindymus, which is near the city of Cyzicus. It is said, that through his contempt of religion he impaired this statue by taking away the lions that were on each side, and, changing the position of the hands. For it formerly rested each hand on a lion, but was now altered into a supplicating posture, looking towards the city, and seeming to observe what the people were doing. In the other temple he placed the statue of the Fortune of Rome. He afterwards built convenient dwellings for the senators who

