











T A C I T U S.

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TRANSLATED BY

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‘This is an excellent work, and supersedes all that has been done on this author. The lost portions of Tacitus are supplied by original compositions [by Brotier], and interstitial books are added to connect and complete the whole.’—

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MISCELLANY.

# ANNALS OF TACITUS.

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## ARGUMENTS.

### BOOK V.

SECT. I. The death and character of the empress Livia—  
II. Tiberius grows more oppressive than ever, and Sejanus rises to greater power—III. Tiberius, by a letter to the senate, accuses Agrippina and her son Nero; the populace in a tumultuous manner surround the senate-house; the fathers proceed no farther in the business; Sejanus incensed against their conduct—V. Tiberius writes in an angry style to the senate, and reserves the affair of Agrippina for his own judgment; the apology of the senate.

[In this place is a chasm of near three years; the Supplement begins with the sections marked with figures, instead of the Roman numeral letters.]

1. Designs of Sejanus against Agrippina and Nero—2. Violent prosecutions; Tiberius violent against all the friends of his mother—3. Tranquillity through all the Roman provinces—4. Remarkable letter from Tiberius to the senate—5. Agrippina and Nero voted public enemies; both taken into custody; she is confined near Herculaneum; a centurion beats out her eye; she is banished to Pandataria, and Nero to Pontia, where he is put to death; Sejanus plots the ruin of Drusus, the second son of Germanicus; he seduces Æmilia Lepida to join him against her husband—7. Drusus made a prisoner in the lower part of the palæe—8. Tiberius begins to suspect Sejanus, but amuses him with warm professions of friendship—10. Popularity of Sejanus; his statues erected at Rome; his birthday celebrated—11. Velleius Paterculus the historian; he is the creature of Sejanus, and sullies his history with adulation—13. Tiberius suspects Asinius Gallus and Lentulus Ge-

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[43. From the end of this section Tacitus goes on to the end of the book.]

VI. The speech of an illustrious senator, whose name is

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These transactions include three years.

Years of Rome.	Of Christ.	Consuls.
782	29	L. Rubellius Geminus, C. Fnsius Geminus.
783	30	Marcus Vinicius, L. Cassius Longinus.
784	31	Tiberius 5th time, L. Ælius Sejanus.
About the middle of May in the same year for three months.		Cornelius Sylla, Sexteidius Catullinus.
From the middle of August in the same year.		Memmius Regulus, Fulcinus Trio.

## BOOK VI.

SECT. I. The secret and libidinous passions of Tiberius in his solitary retreat at Capræ—II. The rage and violence of prosecutions; the statues of the younger Livia demolished, and the effects of Sejanus confiscated—IV. Latinus Latianus accused and condemned—V. Cotta Messalinus saved, by appealing to the emperor—VI. Remarkable expressions in a letter from Tiberius, painting the horrors of his mind—VIII. A spirited and noble defence made by Marcus Terentius—IX. Annus Pollio, Appius Silanus, Scaurus Mamercus, and others, accused; the hearing reserved for the emperor—X. A woman suffers for shedding tears for her son; the death of Lucius Piso, governor of Rome, and his excellent character—XI. The office of prefect, or governor of Rome; its origin, and progress—XII. Debates about the Sibylline books, and the restrictions to be observed in admitting them—XIII. Seditions on account of

the scarcity of corn—XIV. Roman knights charged with a conspiracy, condemned, and executed—XV. Two daughters of Germanicus married to Lucius Cassius and Marcus Vinicius—XVI. Prosecutions against usurers, and new regulations to repress them; by the liberality of Tiberius public credit restored—XVIII. Accusations on the law of majesty; a number of the confederates of Sejanus executed at once—XX. Caius Cæsar (otherwise Caligula) married to Claudia; his manners, dissimulation, and character; Tiberius foretels the reign of Galba; he studied the arts of prognostication under Thrasyllus; a remarkable story relating to that astrologer—XXIII. The tragic death of Drusus, son of Germanicus, and the violent end of his mother Agrippina—XXVI. Voluntary death of Nerva, the great lawyer, and his reasons; the fate of other illustrious men—XXVIII. A phœnix seen in Egypt, with an account of that miraculous bird—XXIX. Various accusations and executions—XXXI. Deputies from the Parthian nobility requesting a new king; Tiberius sends two, one after the other; the command in the east given to Lucius Vitellius; his character—XXXIII. War between the Parthians and Armenians; Artabanus driven from his throne by the Parthians; he seeks refuge in Scythia; Tiridates placed on the throne by the conduct of Vitellius—XXXVIII. Violent prosecutions at Rome, and numbers suffer; the death and will of Fulcinus Trio—XXXIX. Death and character of Poppæus Sabinus—XL. Vibulenus Agrippa poisons himself in the senate; Tigranes, formerly king of Armenia, is put to death, and also several others; Æmilia Lepida puts an end to her life—XLI. Revolt of the Clitæans, a people of Cappadocia; and their defeat; Tiridates deposed by the Parthians, and Artabanus once more restored—XLV. A dreadful fire at Rome, and part of the Circus consumed; the munificence of Tiberius on that occasion—XLVI. Deliberations of Tiberius about naming a successor; his knowledge of Caligula's character, and his prophetic words about his violent death—XLVII. The seeds of new prosecutions laid at Rome—XLVIII. The noble speech of Lucius Arruntius, and his voluntary death—L. The last illness, dissimulation, and death, of Tiberius—LI. His origin, progress, and character.

These transactions include near six years.

Years of Rome.	Of Christ.	Consuls.
785	32	Cneius Domitius Ænobarbus, M. Furius Camillus Scribonianus.
786	33	Ser. Sulpicius Galba, L. Cornelius Sylla.
787	34	Paulus Fabius Persicus, Lucius Vitellius.
788	35	C. Cestius Gallus, M. Servilius Nonianus.
789	36	Sext. Papinius Allenius, Quintus Plautius.
790	37	Cneius Acerronius Proculus, Caius Pontius Nigrinus.

BOOK XI.

SECT. I. The condemnation and death of Valerius Asiaticus and Poppæa by the artifices of Messalina—IV. Two Roman knights put to death for a dream—V. The iniquity of the public advocates; a motion in the senate to revive the Cincian law, which prohibited the taking of fees; debates on that subject; the legal fee ascertained, and beyond that all to be deemed guilty of extortion—VIII. Commotions among the Parthians; Bardanes put to death, and Gotarzes fixed on the throne—XI. The secular games exhibited at Rome, in the year eight hundred from the foundation of the city—XII. The criminal loves of Messalina and Caius Silius—XIII. Claudius ignorant of his wife's adultery; he discharges his censorial functions; he adds three letters to the Roman alphabet; an account of the origin of letters—XV. The college of augurs put under new regulations—XVI. The Cheruskans send from Germany to desire a king from Rome; Italicus, the nephew of Arminius, is sent, and well received; a party formed against him; a civil war ensues; he proves victorious—XVIII. Corbulo sent to command in Lower Germany; he introduces the strictest discipline; subdues the Chaucians, and meditates farther conquests; he puts Gannascus, a German chief, to death;

he receives orders from Claudius to repass the Rhine—XX. Curtius Rufus, for the discovery of a mine, obtains triumphal ornaments; an account of his origin, his rise, and character—XXII. Cneius Novius detected with a dagger in the prince's presence; his fortitude on the rack; the first institution of the Roman questor; the history of that office in its progress—XXIII. Debates about filling the vacancies in the senate; the nobility of Gaul claim to be admitted; speeches against that measure; the emperor's reply to the whole argument; the Gauls carry their point; Claudius refuses the title of Father of the Senate—XXVI. The frantic loves of Messalina and Silius; he proposes to marry the empress; she agrees; the nuptial ceremony, during the absence of Claudius, performed in the most public manner—XXIX. The freedmen bent on her destruction; two courtesans, by the direction of Narcissus, inform the emperor—XXXI. Messalina diverts herself, and celebrates the autumnal season in the highest gaiety; Claudius returns from Ostia; Narcissus, his freedman, leads him to the camp; Silius and his confederates put to death—XXXVII. Claudius at a banquet wavers in favor of Messalina; Narcissus orders her execution; her death in the gardens of Lucullus; the stupidity of Claudius; Narcissus obtains the ensigns of questorian rank.

These transactions include two years.

Years of Rome.	Of Christ.	Consuls.
800	47	Claudius, 4th time, Lucius Vitellius, 3rd time.
801	48	Aulus Vitellius, L. Vipsanius.

## BOOK XII.

SECT. I. The choice of a wife for the emperor divides the freedmen into parties; Lollia Paulina, Julia Agrippina, and Ælia Petina, are rival candidates—II. Claudius deliberates with Narcissus, Callistus, and Pallas—III. Agrippina, the emperor's niece, preferred by the interest of Pallas; Vitellius, the censor, moves the senate that all intermarriages between the uncle and niece shall be declared lawful; a decree passes for that purpose—VII. On the day of the



marriage Silanus kills himself; Calvina, his sister, is banished out of Italy; Seneca recalled from exile by the influence of Agrippina; her reasons for it—IX. Octavia, the emperor's daughter, promised in marriage to Nero, Agrippina's son—X. Deputies from Parthia, desiring that Meherdates may be sent from Rome to be king of that country; Meherdates set out accordingly; he gives battle to Gotarzes, and is conquered; death of Gotarzes; Vonones succeeds to the crown of Parthia, and soon after him Vologeses—XV. Mithridates tries to recover the kingdom of Pontus; he is defeated and sent to Rome; his unshaken fortitude, and behavior to the emperor—XXII. Lollia Paulina condemned to banishment by the intrigues of Agrippina; her death in exile; Calpurnia punished, but not with death—XXIII. The city enlarged by Claudius; the ancient boundaries, with an account of enlargements from time to time—XXV. Nero adopted by Claudius; Agrippina, to increase her fame, establishes a colony among the Ubians, at the place of her birth; the Cattians ravage and plunder the country; they are subdued—XXIX. Vannius, king of the Suevians, driven from his kingdom; lands allotted to him and his followers in Pannonia—XXXI. Publius Ostorius commands in Britain; his victory over Caractacus; Cartismandua delivers Caractacus into the hands of the Romans; he is sent to Rome; his fortitude, and his speech to Claudius; pardon granted to him, his wife, and his brothers—XXXIX. Ostorius dies, worn out in the service; Aulus Didius sent into Britain to take on him the command—XLI. Nero puts on the manly gown before the regular age; Britannicus slighted, and by the arts of Agrippina postponed to Nero; the attendants and tutors of Britannicus removed from his person, and new men appointed by Agrippina—XLIII. Portents and prodigies at Rome; the people distressed by a dearth of corn; the impolicy of depending for corn on Egypt and Africa—XLIV. War between the Iberians and Armenians; the Parthians and Romans involved in the quarrel; Rhadamistus sent by his father Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, to his uncle Mithridates, who reigns over the kingdom of Armenia; the treachery of Rhadamistus; by his father's orders he wages war against Armenia; Mithridates besieged in a

fortress under the command of Cælius Pollio, the governor of the garrison; the venality of Pollio; Mithridates betrayed by him, and murdered by Rhadamistus—LII. Furius Scribonianus driven into exile; the mathematicians driven out of Italy—LIII. A decree against women intermarrying with slaves; Pallas rewarded as the author of this regulation—LIV. Tranquillity restored in Judæa; Felix, the brother of Pallas, escapes unpunished, notwithstanding his misconduct, and Cumanus punished for the whole—LV. Commotions among the Clitæans quelled by Antiochus—LVI. Claudius exhibits a naval engagement on the lake Fucinus; a pass made through a mountain; the work ill executed at first, and completed afterwards; Narcissus blamed by Agrippina—LVIII. Nero pleads for the inhabitants of Ilium, and other cities—LIX. Statilius Taurus accused by Tarquitiu Priscus; the latter expelled the senate in spite of Agrippina—LX. The jurisdiction of the imperial procurators established in the provinces; observations on that subject—LXI. An exemption from taxes granted to the isle of Coos, and to the city of Byzantium a remission of tribute for five years—LXIV. Portents and prodigies; Domitia Lepida, the aunt of Nero, for endeavoring to ingratiate herself with her nephew, accused by the artifice of Agrippina; Narcissus endeavors to save her, but in vain; she is condemned to die—LXVI. Claudius taken ill; he removes to Sinuessa; Agrippina prepares a plate of poisoned mushrooms; Xenophon, the physician, puts a poisoned feather down the throat of the emperor, under pretence of making him vomit—LXVIII. Britannicus detained in the palace by Agrippina while Nero is proclaimed emperor by the army; the senate approve, and decree divine honors to the memory of Claudius.

These transactions passed in six years.

Years of Rome.	Of Christ.	Consuls.
802	49	Pomponius Longinus Gallus, Quintus Verannius.
803	50	Caius Antistius Vetus, M. Sullius Nervillianus.
804	51	Claudius, 5th time, S. Cornelius Orfitus.

Years of Rome.	Of Christ.	Consuls.
805	52	P. Cornelius Sylla Faustus, L. Salvius Otho Titianus.
806	53	Decimus Junius Silanus, Q. Haterius Antonius.
807	54	Marcus Asinius Marcellus, Manius Acilius Aviola.

BOOK XIII.

SECT. I. Silanus, proconsul of Asia, poisoned at the instigation of Agrippina; Narcissus, the emperor's freedman, destroyed, though favored by Nero on account of his vices—II. The characters of Burrhus and of Seneca; funeral of Claudius; Nero delivers the oration—IV. The beginning of Nero's reign promises well; the senate acts with independence—VI. The Parthians claim a right over the kingdom of Armenia; Corbulo sent to command the army against them; his message to Vologeses, king of Parthia, who delivers hostages; the senate proposes to make the year begin from the first of December, the month in which Nero was born; the prince rejects the proposal—XII. Nero's passion for Acte, an enfranchised slave; Agrippina's indignation; her power diminished—XIV. Pallas dismissed from court, and Nero's observation on it—XV. Britannicus poisoned, and his funeral in the dead of night—XVIII. Agrippina obnoxious to Nero, who removes her from his palace to another mansion; she is accused of designs against the state; Nero is for putting her to death; Burrhus goes to hear her defence; her haughty spirit; she punishes her enemies, and rewards her friends—XXIII. Pallas and Burrhus accused; both acquitted, and the prosecutor banished—XXV. Nero's debauchery and midnight riots—XXVI. Debates in the senate about the insolence of the freedmen; a proposal to make them subject to their original bondage—XXVIII. The jurisdiction of the tribunes and ediles restrained within narrower limits; short history of the administration of the revenue—XXX. Vipsanius Lenas condemned; Lucius Volusius dies at the age of ninety-three; his character—XXXI. The magistrates chosen for the provinces not to give public spectacles;

regulations for protecting the masters against their slaves ; Pomponia Græcina charged with embracing a foreign superstition, and acquitted by the judgment of her husband XXXIII. Publius Celer, Cossutianus Capito, and Eprius Marcellus, accused of extortion—XXXIV. Nero's bounty to Valerius Messala, and others ; new broils with the Parthians about Armenia ; Corbulo reforms his soldiers by the rigor of his discipline ; he enters Armenia ; his army suffers by the inclemency of the winter ; Tiridates, brother to Vologeses, king of Parthia, makes head against him, but in vain ; he flies before the Romans ; Corbulo takes the city of Artaxata, and burns it to the ground—XLII. Publius Sullius accused at Rome ; he rails bitterly against Seneca ; he is tried and condemned—XLIV. Octavius Sagitta, in a fit of love and fury, stabs Pontia because she is not willing to perform a promise of marriage ; the fidelity of his freedman ; Sagitta is condemned—XLV. Nero's passion for Sabina Poppæa ; her history, her beauty, and her artifices ; Otho seduced her from her husband, Rufus Crispinus ; Nero in love with her ; he sends Otho to the government of Lusitania—XLVII. Nero throws off the mask ; he sends Cornelius Sylla into banishment ; a sedition at Puteoli suppressed by military force—XLIX. Pætus Thrasea opposes a motion in the senate ; his enemies inveigh against his character ; his answer to his friends—L. The exorbitant practices of the tax-gatherers restrained ; Nero thinks of remitting all taxes whatever, but is dissuaded from it ; the revenue laws laid open to the public—LIII. The tranquillity of affairs in Germany ; the Frisians take the opportunity to settle on the banks of the Rhine ; their two leading chiefs go to Rome to solicit the emperor ; their behavior in Pompey's theatre ; by Nero's order the Frisians exterminated ; the Ansibarians, under Boiocalus, make the same attempt, and with no better success ; the spirited answer of Boiocalus to the Roman general—LVII. War between the Hermundurians and the Cattians ; both nations entertain superstitious notions about a river that produces salt ; their quarrel on that account more fierce and violent ; the Hermundurians conquer, and the Cattians almost cut to pieces—LVIII. The Ruminal tree that gave shade to Romulus and Remus begins to decay ; this was deemed

an ill omen, till the branches once more displayed their leaves.

These transactions passed in four years.

Years of Rome.	Of Christ.	Consuls.
808	55	The emperor Nero, L. Antistius Vetus.
809	56	Q. Volusius Saturninus, P. Cornelius Scipio.
810	57	Nero, 2nd time, L. Calpurnius Piso.
811	58	Nero, 3rd time, Valerius Messala.



# ANNALS OF TACITUS.

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## BOOK V.

SECTION I. DURING the consulship of Rubellius Geminus and Fusius,<sup>1</sup> who bore the same surname, died, in an advanced old age, the emperor's mother Livia,<sup>2</sup> styled Julia Augusta. Illustrious by her descent from

<sup>1</sup> Tillemont, in his History of the Emperors, fixes the passion of our Saviour in this year. Lactantius and many of the fathers are of the same opinion. The writers of modern date place that great event four years later, in the nineteenth of Tiberius, instead of the fifteenth, and their calculation is now generally adopted. See Brotier's Tacitus, i. 316, 4to edition. Tacitus, incidentally, mentions Jesus Christ, and his sufferings under Pontius Pilate, Annals, xv. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Augustus, by his last will, adopted her into the Julian family, under the additional name of Augusta, Annals, i. 8. Tacitus, after that time, calls her Julia, Julia Augusta, and frequently Augusta only. For the sake of uniformity she is always called Livia in the translation, and once or twice Empress Mother, though it must be acknowledged that the appellation is premature. The Romans had no title to correspond with empress, senatress, &c. See an Essay on the name of Augustus, Memoirs of the Academy of Belles Lettres, xix., 4to edition. Julia died, according to Pliny, xiv. 6, at the age of eighty-two. Her father was of the Claudian family, and, being adopted into the house of Livius, took the name of Livius Drusus Claudianus. He fought on the side of liberty at the battle of Philippi, and seeing the day lost, died by his own hand. For Livia, see the Genealogical Table, No. 66.

the house of Claudius, she was farther ennobled by adoption into the Livian and the Julian families. She was first married to Tiberius Nero,<sup>1</sup> and by him was the mother of two sons. Her husband, when the city of Perusia was obliged to surrender to the arms of Augustus, made his escape, and wandered from place to place, till the peace between Sextus Pompeius and the triumvirate restored him to his country. Enamored of the graceful form and beauty of Livia, Augustus obliged her husband to resign her to his embraces. Whether she had consented to the change, is uncertain; but the passion of the emperor was so ardent, that, without waiting till she was delivered of the fruit of her womb, he conveyed her, pregnant as she was, to his own house. By this second marriage she had no issue; but Agrippina and Germanicus<sup>2</sup> being joined in wedlock, Livia became allied to the house of Cæsar,

1 He was also, as well as his wife, of the Claudian family. He appeared in arms against Octavius (afterwards Augustus), on the side of Lucius Antonius, whom he considered as the last assertor of public liberty. Antonius was besieged at Perusia by Augustus, A. U. C. 714, and, after holding out till the garrison was reduced by famine, was obliged to capitulate. Tiberius Nero endeavored to collect the scattered remains of the republican party; but, his efforts proving fruitless, he was obliged to fly to Sextus Pompeius, then in possession of Sicily. His wife Livia attended him in his flight, being at that time pregnant; and bearing in her arms her infant son Tiberius, who was about two years old. Velleius Paterculus, ii. 75. The father afterwards made his peace with Augustus, and returned to Rome, A. U. C. 716; and his wife Livia, yielding to the emperor's embraces, sealed his pardon. Livia was then six months with child. Augustus, before he married her, was obliged to obtain a dispensation from the Pontifical College. In three months afterwards Livia was delivered of her second son, Drusus. Caligula, afterwards emperor, and great-grandson of Livia, used to say of her that she was another Ulysses in petticoats.

2 Germanicus, the son of Drusus, was grandson to Livia; and Agrippina, his wife, was grand-daughter to Augustus.



and the issue of that match were the common great-grand-children of Augustus and herself. Her domestic conduct was formed on the model of primitive manners: but by a graceful ease, unknown to her sex in the time of the republic, she had the address to soften the rigor of ancient virtue. A wife of amiable manners, yet a proud and imperious mother, she united in herself the opposite qualities that suited the specious arts of Augustus, and the dark dissimulation of her son. The rites of sepulture<sup>1</sup> were performed without pomp or magnificence. Her will remained for a long time unexecuted. The funeral oration was delivered from the rostrum by her great-grandson Caius Cæsar, afterwards Caligula, the emperor.

II. Tiberius did not attend to pay the last melancholy duties to his mother. He continued to riot in voluptuous pleasures; but the weight of business was his apology to the senate. Public honors were, with great profusion, decreed to her memory: Tiberius, under the mask of moderation, retrenched the greatest part,<sup>2</sup> expressly forbidding the forms of religious worship. On that point he knew the sentiments

<sup>1</sup> Tiberius, from the day of his accession to the imperial dignity, considered his mother as a woman of a politic and artificial character, proud, fierce, and overbearing; in appearance, plotting to aggrandise her son; in secret, wishing for nothing so much as to gratify her own ambition. She lived three years after Tiberius retired to the isle of Caprea, and, during that time, never had more than one short interview. In her last illness Tiberius did not condescend to visit her. He signified an inclination to attend the funeral ceremony; but he promised only to deceive, and delayed so long, that the body was in a state of putrefaction before it was committed to the flames. Suet. in Tib. § 51.

<sup>2</sup> The apotheosis of Livia is still to be seen on ancient medals: but we learn from Suetonius that divine honors were granted by the Emperor Claudius, and the medals were most probably struck during his reign. See Suet. in Claud. § 9.

of his mother ; it was her desire not to be deified. In the same letter that conveyed his directions to the senate he passed a censure on the levity of female friendship ; by that remark obliquely glancing at Fusius the consul, who owed his elevation to the partiality of Livia. The fact was, Fusius had brilliant talents. He possessed, in an eminent degree, the art of recommending himself to the softer sex. His conversation sparkled with wit. In his lively sallies he did not spare even Tiberius himself, forgetting that the raillery which plays with the foibles of the great is long remembered, and seldom forgiven.

III. From this time may be dated the era of a furious, headlong, and despotic government. The rage of Tiberius knew no bounds. While his mother lived his passions were rebuked, and in some degree controlled. He had been from his infancy in the habit of submitting to her judgment ; and to counteract her authority was more than Sejanus dared to undertake. By the death of Livia all restraint was thrown off. The prince and his minister broke out with unbridled fury. A letter was despatched to the senate, in bitter terms arraigning the conduct of Agrippina and her son Nero. The charge was generally supposed to have been framed, and even forwarded to Rome, during the life of Livia, but by her influence for that time suppressed. The violence of the proceeding, so soon after her death, gave rise to the opinion entertained by the populace. The letter was conceived in a style of exquisite malice, containing, however, against the grandson no imputation of treason, no plot to levy war against the state. The crimes objected to him were unlawful pleasures, and a life of riot and debauchery. Agrippina's character was proof against the shafts of malice. Her haughty carriage and unconquerable

pride were the only allegations that could be urged against her. The fathers sat in profound silence, covered with astonishment. At length that class of men, who by fair and honorable means had nothing to hope, seized the opportunity to convert to their own private advantage the troubles and misfortunes of their country. A motion was made that the contents of the letter should be taken into consideration. Cotta Messalinus,<sup>1</sup> the most forward of the party, a man ever ready to join in any profligate vote, seconded the motion; but the leading members of the senate, particularly the magistrates, remained in a state of doubt and perplexity. They saw no ground for proceeding in a business of so high a nature, communicated indeed with acrimony, but wanting precision, and ending abruptly, without any clear or definite purpose.

IV. Junius Rusticus, who had been appointed by the emperor to register<sup>2</sup> the acts of the fathers, was,

1 Cotta Messalinus was the son of Messala Corvinus, the famous orator, who was highly commended by Quintilian. See the Dialogue concerning Oratory, § 12. The son inherited a portion of his father's eloquence, but none of his virtues. He is again mentioned by Tacitus as the promoter of oppression and cruelty, *Annals*, vi. 5. He is recorded by Pliny the elder as a voluptuous epicure, and a great proficient in the art of cookery. He invented a new ragout, composed of the feet of geese and the combs of cocks. 'I relate this fact,' says Pliny, 'to the end, that the men who profess to study the pleasures of the table may enjoy all the praise due to their kitchens.' Some of Ovid's epistles, written in his exile, are addressed to Messalina.

2 Suetonius assures us that Julius Cæsar ordered acts of the senate, as well as of the people, to be daily committed to writing, and published, which had never been done before his time. See in *Jul. Cæs.* § 20. Augustus, a more timid, and, by consequence, a darker politician, ordered the proceedings of the senate to be kept secret. *Suet. in Aug.* § 36. Tiberius followed the same rule, but, as it seems, had the caution to appoint a senator to execute the office. Dio says

at that time, present in the assembly. From the nature of his employment he was supposed to be in the secrets of his master. He rose on a sudden, under the impulse of some emotion unfelt before: magnanimity it was not, since he had never, on any occasion, discovered one generous sentiment: perhaps he was deceived by his own political speculations, in the hurry of a confused and tumultuous judgment anticipating future mischief, but not attending to the combination of circumstances that formed the present crisis. Whatever might be his motive, this man joined the moderate party, and advised the consul to adjourn the debate. He observed, that, in affairs of the greatest moment, the slightest cause often produces events altogether new and unexpected. Grant an interval of time, and the passions of a superannuated emperor may relent. The populace, in the mean time, bearing aloft the images of Nero and Agrippina, surrounded the senate-house. They offered up their prayers for

that he also directed what should be inserted or omitted. These records were, in the modern phrase, the Journals of the House. In the early periods of the commonwealth, before the use of letters was generally known, the years were registered by a number of nails driven into the gate of the temple of Jupiter. Livy, vii. 3. But even in that rude age the chief pontiff committed to writing the transactions of each year, and kept the record at his house for the inspection of the people. This mode of keeping the records continued in use till the death of Mucius Scævola, A. U. C. 672. After that time the motions in the senate, the debates, and resolutions of the fathers, occasioned a multiplicity of business; and, of course, the ancient simple form was found insufficient. Under the emperors, four different records grew into use: namely, the acts of the prince; secondly, the proceedings of the senate; thirdly, the public transactions of the people; and fourthly, the games, spectacles, births, marriages, deaths, and daily occurrences of the city, called the *Diurna*. The last were sent into the provinces, and were there received as the Roman Gazette.

the safety of the emperor, and with one voice pronounced the letter a wicked forgery, fabricated without the knowledge of Tiberius; a black contrivance to ruin the imperial family. The senate came to no resolution.

When the assembly was adjourned a number of fictitious speeches, purporting to have been delivered by consular senators, in a strain of bitter invective against Sejanus, were immediately written, and dispersed among the people. In those productions the several authors, unknown and safe in their obscurity, gave free scope to their talents, and poured forth their virulence with unbounded freedom. The artifice served to exasperate the minister. He charged the fathers with disaffection: 'they paid no attention to the remonstrances of the prince: the people were ripe for tumult and insurrections. A new council of state was set up, and the decrees of that mock assembly were published with an air of authority. What now remains for the discontented but to unsheathe the sword, and choose for their leaders, and even proclaim as emperors, the very persons whose images had been displayed as the banners of sedition and revolt?'

V. Tiberius was fired with indignation. He renewed his complaints against Agrippina and her son, and, in a proclamation, reprimanded the licentious spirit of the populace. He complained to the fathers in terms of keen reproach that the authority of the prince was eluded, and by the artifice of a single senator despised and set at nought. He desired that the whole business, unprejudiced by their proceedings, should be reserved for his own decision. The fathers, without farther debate, sent dispatches to the emperor, assuring him, that though they had not pronounced final judgment, having no commission for that purpose, they were, notwith-

standing, ready to prove their zeal, and would have inflicted a capital punishment if the prince himself had not abridged their authority.

## SUPPLEMENT.<sup>1</sup>

SECT. 1. THE fathers, at all times pliant and obsequious, were in this juncture more willing than ever to debase themselves by every act of mean servility. Sejanus knew the inmost secrets of the prince, and the deep resentments that lay concealed, and nourished venom in his heart. Sure of a complying senate, he grew more aspiring, yet not bold enough to strike the decisive blow. His strength had hitherto lain in fraud and covered stratagem, and, having made an experiment of his talents, he resolved to proceed by the same insidious arts. Agrippina continued, with unabating spirit, to counteract his designs; and her two sons, Nero and Drusus, stood fair in the line of succession to the imperial dignity. The ambition of the

1 To the great loss of the literary world, the evil fate that attended the works of Tacitus is felt in this place, at a point of time when an important scene is to be opened; a scene in which Tiberius and Sejanus were the chief actors, each with the darkest policy contriving the other's ruin. The art of gradually unfolding the characters of men, in a course of action, was the talent of Tacitus, beyond any historian of antiquity; but the rest of the transactions of the present year of Rome 782, all of 783, and the greatest part of 784, have perished in the confusion of barbarous times. It is to be lamented that Sejanus has been snatched away from Tacitus, that is, from the hand of justice. The chasm can never be filled up; for what modern writer can hope to rival the energy of Tacitus? All that remains is to collect the facts from the most authentic historians, and relate them here in a continued series, rather than give the reader the trouble of finding them where they lie scattered in various authors.

minister required that all three should be removed. He began with Nero and Agrippina, well assured that, after their destruction, the impetuous temper of Drusus would lay him open to the assaults of his enemies.

2. Rome, in the mean time, knew no pause from the rage of prosecutions. During the life of Livia Tiberius felt some restraint; but, that check removed, he now broke out with redoubled fury. The most intimate friends of his mother, particularly those to whom she had recommended the care of her funeral, were devoted to destruction. In that number a man of equestrian rank, and of a distinguished character, was singled out from the rest, and condemned to the hard labor of drawing water<sup>1</sup> in a crane. By the disgrace of an infamous punishment the tyrant meant to spread a general terror. The cruelty of Sejanus kept pace with the exterminating fury of his master. His pride was wounded by the freedom with which the public spoke of his ambitious views. A band of informers was let loose, and by that hireling crew a civil war was waged against the first men in Rome. Spies were stationed in every quarter; the mirth of the gay, the sorrows of the wretched, the joke of innocent simplicity, and the wild rambling talk of men in liquor, served to swell the list of constructive crimes. Nothing was safe; no place secure: informers spread terror and desolation through the city, and all ranks were swept away in one common ruin.

3. While by these acts of oppression Rome was made a scene of ruin and dismay, every other part of the empire enjoyed the most<sup>2</sup> perfect tranquillity.

<sup>1</sup> The name of this Roman knight is not mentioned by Suetonius, who relates the fact, in *Tib.* § 51.

<sup>2</sup> For this profound tranquillity in all parts of the Roman empire, see *Vell. Paterc.* ii. 126.

It was the wish of Tiberius to have no war on his hands; and with that view, it was his policy to let the provinces feel the mildness of his government. He rewarded merit, but with a sparing hand; to guilt he showed himself inexorable; the delinquent in a post of trust was sure to be punished with unremitting severity. He dreaded superior merit; and though at Rome virtue was a crime, in the provinces he forgave it. To his choice of general officers and foreign magistrates no objection could be made: they were men of integrity, though seldom of distinguished talents. The jealousy of his nature would not allow him to employ the most eminent character; and from mediocrity, though he could not hope for glory, he expected to derive the undisturbed tranquillity of his reign.

4. Marcus Vinicius and Lucius Cassius Longinus were the next consuls.<sup>1</sup> By the management of Tiberius, things were now brought to a crisis, which in his heart he had long desired. The fathers had avowed their intention to pass a decree against Nero and Agrippina; but the clemency of the prince was supposed to hold that assembly in suspense. Tiberius, however, no longer hesitated. Sejanus represented to him the danger of irresolution or delay. ‘The time,’ he said, ‘called for sudden exertion. The guilty had thrown off the mask, and, from seditious discourses, proceeded to acts of open rebellion. The very senate began to waver; private views seduced them from their duty; the integrity of that body was no longer certain. The soldiers threatened a revolt, and Nero was already considered as the head of the empire.’

<sup>1</sup> The consuls for the year 783 were high in favor with Tiberius, and, accordingly, were afterwards married to two daughters of Germanicus; Drusilla, to Cassius Longinus; Julia, to Vinicius. See vi. 15.



Tiberius, indeed, reigned amidst the rocks of Capreæ ; but Agrippina and her son gave the law at Rome.' Inflamed by this reasoning, Tiberius sent a letter to the fathers, in substance declaring, ' that his mind was on the rack, and various apprehensions, like an inward fire,<sup>1</sup> consumed his peace. He knew by certain intelligence that Nero and Agrippina had formed a dangerous league ; and the storm, if not prevented, would ere long burst in ruin on their heads.'

5. The senate met in consternation. After a short debate, Agrippina and her son Nero were declared public enemies. This vote no sooner reached the ear of Tiberius than he sent orders to a party of the prætorian guards to take them both into custody. The unhappy prisoners were loaded with fetters, and conveyed from place to place in a close litter, which not a ray of light could penetrate. In this manner they proceeded towards the coast of Campania. A band of soldiers guarded them in their progress through the country. The crowd was every where kept at a distance, and the eye of compassion nowhere suffered to behold their misery. Agrippina was detained for some time in a castle near Herculaneum,<sup>2</sup> on the margin of the sea ; while Tiberius from his island beheld, with malignant joy, the place where his state-prisoner pined in bitterness of heart. But even that distressful

1 Tiberius had been, at this time, above three years in his recess at the isle of Capreæ, indulging himself in every vice, and planning deeds of cruelty and horror ; and yet Velleius asks Vinicius the consul, to whom he dedicates his work, what Tiberius had done to merit the worst agony of mind, and to be made miserable by his daughter-in-law and his grandson ?

2 For Herculaneum, see the Geographical Table. Seneca says, ' Caligula rased the castle to the ground, that no vestige might remain of the place where his mother suffered so much barbarity.' *De Ira*, iii. 32.

situation could not subdue the spirit of Agrippina. She did not forget that she was the grand-daughter of Augustus, and the widow of Germanicus. Burning with resentment, and by every insult fired with indignation, she launched out with vehemence against the savage cruelty of the emperor. The centurion who guarded her person had his private orders; and the ferocity of his nature made him ready to obey. With brutal violence he raised his hand, and at a blow struck<sup>1</sup> out one of her eyes. She wished for the hand of death to deliver her from the rage of her enemies. She resolved to die by abstinence; but even that last resource of the wretched was denied to her. Her mouth was opened against her will, and victuals were forced down her throat, in order to protract a life of misery. Such was the deep and studied malice of Tiberius: he destroyed numbers in his fury; and at times, with deliberate malice, refused to let others die in peace.<sup>2</sup> He kept them imprisoned in life; and made even his mercy the severest vengeance. To see those whom he hated in his heart stretched on the torture of the mind, invoking death, yet forced to linger in slow-consuming pain, was the delight of that implacable, that obdurate mind. With that envenomed malignity he chose to extend the life of Agrippina. She was removed, under the care of a centurion, to the isle of Pandataria, where Julia, her unfortunate mother, closed her life in the last stage of wretchedness. By confining the daughter in the same place, he hoped, by a subtle stroke of malice, to load her with the imputation of similar vices, and thereby blacken a character which he saw was purity itself.

<sup>1</sup> This fact is related by Suetonius, in Tib. § 53.

<sup>2</sup> For instances of this savage cruelty, see in this Supplement, § 41.

Agrippina perceived the drift of his inhuman policy, and no doubt felt it with anguish of heart. How she endured the barbarity of her enemies for three years afterwards we have now no means of knowing. Her death will be mentioned in due time and place.<sup>1</sup>

Nero was banished to the isle<sup>2</sup> of Pontia, not far from Pandataria. About a year afterwards the news of his death arrived at Rome, and spread a general face of mourning through the city. The current report was, that a centurion, sent by Tiberius, passed himself for an officer commissioned by the senate to see immediate execution performed. This man displayed to view his instruments of death, and the young prince, terrified at the sight, put an end to his life. It is said that, of the three sons of Germanicus, he was the only one who, by his graceful figure, and the elegance of his manners, recalled to the memory of men an image of his father.

6. Drusus and Caius (surnamed Caligula), as soon as their brother Nero was banished, were considered by Sejanus as the two remaining props of the empire. Drusus stood nearest to the succession, and for that reason was the most obnoxious. Seduced by the arts of Sejanus, and farther incited by his own inordinate ambition, that unhappy prince had joined in the conspiracy against his brother Nero; but what he thought would contribute to his elevation became the fatal cause of his ruin. He had been at an early period of his life contracted to Otho's<sup>3</sup> daughter, who was then

1 See the account of Agrippina's death, vi. 25.

2 For Pontia, see the Geographical Table. Nero was put to death on that island by order of Tiberius. Suet. § 54.

3 This was Otho, afterwards emperor. Suetonius says he had a daughter, whom he contracted to Drusus, son of Germanicus, before she was of age to marry. Life of Otho, § 1.

of tender years : but, without regarding that engagement, he married *Æmilia Lepida*,<sup>1</sup> a woman of illustrious birth, but fatally bent on mischief, and, by her pernicious talents, able to execute the worst designs. *Sejanus* saw the use to be made of such a character. He had chosen *Livia* for his instrument to cut off *Drusus*, the son of *Tiberius* ; and he now resolved, by the same execrable means, to destroy the son of *Germanicus*. With this design, the grand corrupter in a short time gained the affections of the wife. In the course of his adulterous commerce he instilled into her heart his own pernicious venom, and rendered her the implacable enemy of her husband. He promised to join her in the nuptial union, and with ideas of future grandeur so dazzled her imagination, that she undertook the detestable task of carrying to the ear of the emperor an accusation against her husband, who was then attending the court in the isle of *Capreæ*.

Instructed by her seducer, and urged on by the ardor of her own libidinous passions, she alarmed *Tiberius* every day with some new allegation : she renewed, with studied artifice, all that had been imputed to *Nero* and *Agrippina*, and in their guilt, with affected reluctance, involved *Drusus* as an accomplice. She pretended, at the same time, to plead in his behalf. His crimes, she hoped, would admit of some extenuation : but her apology served only to envenom the charge. The emperor consulted with his minister. That artful politician espoused the cause of the young prince ; he affected to disbelieve all that was alleged : but the proofs in time were too strong to be resisted ; he yielded to the force of truth, still attempting to

1 For her flagitious life, and an account of her death, see vi. 40.

palliate, but by feeble excuses making the whole appear still more atrocious.

7. Drusus, unheard and undefended, received orders to depart forthwith from the isle of Capreæ. He arrived at Rome, but not to live there in a state of security. He was pursued by the machinations of Sejanus. That artful and intriguing minister prevailed on Cassius Longinus,<sup>1</sup> the consul, to arraign the character and conduct of the young prince before the assembly of the fathers. Though high in office, this man was base enough to forget his own dignity, and become the infamous tool of a vile and designing favorite. He stated to the senate, ‘that the young prince, exasperated by his late disgrace, was pursuing violent measures; and, in order to cause a sudden revolution, was every day endeavoring by intrigue, by cabal, and popular arts, to increase the number of his partisans.’ These allegations were, in fact, suborned by Sejanus: but the fathers were persuaded that the whole business originated with the emperor. A vote was accordingly passed, declaring Drusus an enemy to the state. This proceeding was no sooner reported to Tiberius than he stood astonished at the measure; but his animosity to the house of Germanicus was not to be appeased. He gave orders, by letter to the senate, that his grandson should be confined a close prisoner in the lower part of the palace, with a constant guard over him, to watch his motions, to note his words, and keep a register of every circumstance, to be in time transmitted to Capreæ, for his private inspection. In that wretched condition Drusus was left to pine in misery, till, about three years afterwards, as will be mentioned in its place, he closed his dismal tragedy.

1 Dio says that the consul became the agent of Sejanus.

8. Tiberius saw, with inward satisfaction, the family of Germanicus well-nigh extinguished. The measures by which their ruin had been accomplished gratified the malice of his heart: but what motive induced Sejanus to be so active in the business was a problem which all his penetration was not able to solve. Did the minister mean to gratify the wishes of his sovereign? or was his own private ambition at the bottom? Tiberius was thrown into a state of perplexity. His jealousy took the alarm. From that moment he resolved to keep a watchful eye<sup>1</sup> on the conduct of the minister. His keen discernment and systematic dissimulation were, perhaps, never so remarkable in any period of his life. He began to nourish suspicion; and, in a mind like his, suspicion was sure never to work in vain. In the memoirs<sup>2</sup> of his own life, which were found after his death, it appears that the first cause that brought on the ruin of the favorite was his eagerness to destroy the sons of Germanicus.

9. Meanwhile, Sejanus grew intoxicated with his good fortune: he saw the imperial dignity tottering on the head of an aged prince, and not likely to be better supported by Caligula, a young man as yet unequal to the cares of empire. He thought himself near the summit of his ambition; but, to ensure success, resolved to plan his measures with care and circumspection. He addressed the prince in the style of a man

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius says it was more by cunning and sly management, than by his imperial authority, that he was able to cut off Sejanus. In Tib. § 65.

<sup>2</sup> These Memoirs were extant in Tacitus' time. Suetonius (in Tib. § 61.) refers to them for the fact here asserted; and in the Life of Domitian, 'that emperor,' he says, 'laid aside the study of the liberal sciences, and read nothing but the commentaries of Tiberius.' In Domit. § 20. The Memoirs written by Tiberius were probably the manual of tyranny.

who had no private views, no motive but the interest of his sovereign. Tiberius knew that his professions were false and hollow. He resolved, however, to retaliate with the same insidious arts. He called Sejanus his best friend; the faithful minister, by whose vigilance the public peace was secured, and the glory of the empire<sup>1</sup> maintained in its highest lustre. Not content with bestowing on him the warmest commendations, he added that the man who rendered such eminent services to the state ought to be, at least, the second in rank and dignity.

10. The minister, in consequence of this exaggerated praise, became the idol of the people. The fathers passed several votes in his favor, and sent their deputies to the isle of Capreae with addresses of congratulation.<sup>2</sup> In the forum; in the temples, and in private houses, statues were erected to Sejanus. His birthday was celebrated with religious ceremonies. The altars smoked with incense, and the city resounded with his praise. Men swore by the fortune of Tiberius and his faithful friend. Sejanus shared in all public honors with the emperor. Applauded by the senate, and adored by the multitude, he was now scarce inferior to his master.

11. It was in this juncture that Velleius Paterculus<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After all that Tacitus has hitherto disclosed of the character of Tiberius, one cannot read, without astonishment, the flattering account given by Velleius Paterculus (ii. 126 and 127) of the justice, equity, moderation, and every virtue, which, according to that sycophantic historian, distinguished the reign of Tiberius. The picture of a politic, dark, and cruel tyrant, is drawn in gracious colors. Pliny's Panegyric of Trajan is not more highly finished.

<sup>2</sup> The veneration paid to Sejanus is described at length by Dio, lviii.

<sup>3</sup> This writer's work is dignified with the title of a Roman history; but it is well observed by Lipsius and Vossius that

published his *Epitome of Roman affairs*, from the foundation of the city down to his own times. The work is dedicated to Vinicius, one of the consuls for the year. It is to be regretted that a writer of so fine a genius was thrown on that evil period, in which the Romans, formerly fierce with all the pride, and, perhaps, the excess of liberty, were fallen into the opposite extreme of abject slavery. The spirit of adulation debased the human character. This elegant author caught the infection of the times. He saw the senators, men of consular rank, the most illustrious of the Roman knights, and in short a whole people, prostrate at the feet of Tiberius and his favorite. He was carried away by the current, and hence we find him representing the Roman glory, that work of ages, and that toil of patriots, warriors, and legislators, resting at length on an emperor, who lived in voluntary exile, and a minister, who had all the vices, without the talents of his master. The panegyric bestowed on two such characters has survived the wreck of time; but it has survived to be the disgrace of the author; a monument of venal praise and servile flattery. The beauty

it deserves no such title, being, in truth, nothing more than a collection of the principal events that happened in the world from the Trojan war down to the sixteenth of Tiberius, A. U. C. 783. 'It is not,' says Lipsius, 'a compendium, or abridgement of history, though it must be allowed that the narrative proceeds in chronological order. It contains an account of eminent men, and characters well delineated; but the whole of the first book is a miscellaneous review of ancient times and foreign nations. The second book is a narrative of Roman affairs, written with ease and elegance, but, when it treats of the Cæsars, in a style of adulation. In the conclusion, the historian composes a fervent prayer, which must astonish all who are conversant in the history of Tiberius. He throws himself on his knees, and invokes the protection of Jupiter, Mars, and all the gods, to prolong the valuable life of Tiberius, and late, very late, to give to the Roman people a line of princes worthy of the succession to so great a prince.'



of the composition, and the graces of the style, are the work of a rhetorician, in whose hands History forgot her genuine character, and truth has been degraded. Paterculus stands at the head of those who have been willing to list in the service of corruption; and though the taste of the writer will not easily find a rival, the abject spirit of the man will be sure of having, in every age and country, a herd of imitators as long as the leaders of party and faction shall wish to see their ambition disguised, and their vices decorated with the colors and the garb of virtue.

12. That Paterculus threw a temporary lustre round the name of his patron there can be no room to doubt, since the varnish so well laid on almost deceives us at the present hour. But Sejanus found a more powerful support in his two friends Asinius Gallus<sup>1</sup> and Lentulus Getulicus. The former being, as has been mentioned, on bad terms with Tiberius, was the more ready to list in the faction of Sejanus. He became the zealous partisan of the minister, and drew to his interest the leading members of the senate. Getulicus was at this time appointed to the command of the legions in the Upper Germany. He owed this promotion to the influence of Sejanus, to whose son he had offered his daughter in marriage. This he knew would cement a closer union between him and his patron; and the patron, in the mean time, was not blind to the advantages which he himself might derive from that alliance. Lucius Apronius, the uncle of Getulicus, was at the head of the army on the Lower Rhine; and, by forming a connexion with that family, Sejanus saw that, in fact, he should have eight legions at his beck. This was a prospect that flattered his

1 Asinius Gallus, son of the famous Asinius Pollio, has been already mentioned, *Annals*, i. 12.

hopes, and gave new ardor to that spirit of enterprise which now began to hurry him on to the consummation of his wishes. Honors, dignities, all employments and places of trust, were granted at his will and pleasure, and to none but men ready to co-operate in his worst designs. The minister, thus supported, stood but one remove from the sovereign power; but his elevation placed him on the edge of a precipice, from which his fall would inevitably be sudden and terrible.

13. Tiberius, in the mean time, was ever on the watch. He observed all that passed with acute, but silent attention. Bending under the weight of years, and still a slave to his lewd desires, he was anxious to preserve his power to the last. With this view he continued to act with his usual policy: in appearance resigned to indolence, yet making use of his vices to shade his secret purposes. His whole attention was fixed on the conduct of Sejanus. The alliance projected between the minister and Getulicus,<sup>1</sup> who filled a post of such importance, alarmed his fears. The active zeal of Asinius Gallus was another cause of suspicion. He resolved to remove a man of so much weight; and, having formed that deep design, he soon seized his opportunity to carry it into execution.

14. Asinius Gallus, still persisting to exert himself in the interest of Sejanus, made a florid speech in the senate, concluding with a string of new honors to be decreed to the favorite. The motion succeeded to his wishes. He was deputed by the fathers<sup>2</sup> to know the

1 For more of Getulicus, see vi. 30.

2 Crevier, in his History of the Roman Emperors, says Asinius was deputed on some business, which cannot now be known; but the fact, as here stated, is confirmed by Dio, lviii.

emperor's pleasure. During his stay at the isle of Capreæ Tiberius sent a letter to the senate, representing him as a disturber of the public peace, and in direct terms requiring that he should be forthwith secured in the house of one of the consuls. The fathers knew that delay on their part would be considered as a crime. Having offended in the case of Agrippina, and not daring to provoke resentment a second time, they obeyed without hesitation. A pretor was despatched to the isle of Capreæ to take charge of the prisoner. Asinius, in the mean time, was ignorant of all that passed at Rome. He was well received by the emperor, a constant guest at his table, and a sharer in all his pleasures. In the gaiety of a social hour he was informed of the judgment pronounced against him by the senate. The first emotions of surprise overpowered his reason. In order to secure, by a voluntary death, his fortune for his children, he endeavored to lay violent hands on himself. Tiberius dissuaded him from his purpose, giving him at the same time strong assurances that he might safely rely on the protection of the prince and the favor of Sejanus. Asinius yielded to that advice. He was conveyed to Rome under a guard, and there, without being heard in his defence, thrown into close confinement, shut up from the sight of his friends, and debarred from all food, except what was necessary to prolong his life. His friend Syriacus,<sup>1</sup> a man distinguished by his talents and his eloquence, met with a gentler punishment. His intimacy with Asinius was his only crime, and for that he was put to instant death; happy to escape from the power of a tyrant, who, by

<sup>1</sup> Syriacus is mentioned by Seneca as an elegant orator. See *Controversiæ*, ii. 9.

a refinement in cruelty, made life itself the worst torture he could inflict.

15. Sejanus was now persuaded that the sovereign power was within his grasp. Dazzled by that glittering scene, he did not perceive that the ruin of Asinius was a blow aimed at himself. Tiberius still continued to watch the motions of the minister, weighing every circumstance, and brooding in silence over his own designs. He conversed in private with Sejanus: he perused his countenance: he explored his secret thoughts, and from what he saw and heard drew his own conclusions. A penetrating observer of mankind, he knew that prosperity is the surest discoverer of the human heart. He resolved therefore to ply Sejanus with marks of the warmest affection; he lavished his favors on him with unbounded generosity; he praised his unremitting labors in the service of his prince; and, to put him off his guard, determined to overwhelm him with a load of grandeur. The marriage with Livia,<sup>1</sup> the widow of his son Drusus, which he had formerly rejected, he knew would intoxicate the vanity of the ambitious minister. With that view he gave his consent to the match, resolved by acts of kindness to prove the secrets of the heart. Tiberius did not stop here. He was aware that Sejanus, while he remained at Capreæ, would act with circumspection; but if removed to a distance, would most probably drop the mask. In a solitary island the favorite had every thing in his power; the pretorian guards, stationed on the spot, were under his command, and all dispatches to the prince passed through their hands.

<sup>1</sup> This match was proposed by Sejanus, iv. 39, and rejected by Tiberius, § 40. That he afterwards consented to give Livia in marriage to Sejanus, see vi. 8, where Sejanus is expressly called the son-in-law of the emperor.

Sejanus was, by consequence, master of every thing. He could suppress or deliver what he thought proper. The court was filled with his creatures, all of them spies on the actions of the prince, and all devoted to the minister.

16. Tiberius felt these disadvantages, and accordingly devised an artful plan to free himself from the embarrassment. Under color of doing honor to his friend, but, in truth, to remove him from his presence, he proposed to make him joint consul with himself. The functions of that high office, he well knew, would require the constant residence of the magistrate at a distance from Capreae; and the emperor from his solitary rock, as from a watch-tower, might superintend all his measures. There was besides another advantage, of the first consequence to Tiberius. While the consul passed his whole time at Rome, the pretorian guards would be weaned from their former master, and, if necessary, Macro might be despatched to undertake the command, under a plausible promise to resign, whenever the minister should be at leisure from the duties of his magistracy to resume his station. Macro approved of this new arrangement. With the true spirit of a court sycophant, wishing for an opportunity to creep into favor, he professed himself devoted to the service of his prince, while in fact he was determined, by every sinister art, to supplant a proud and domineering favorite.

17. Sejanus, amidst all the dignities so liberally heaped on him, little suspected an underplot to work his ruin. He continued with every mark of a fawning spirit to ingratiate himself with the emperor; he was the sole fountain of court favor; he looked down with contempt on the young Caligula; and of the twin-born sons of Drusus, the one who still survived was

too young to alarm his jealousy. He received the homage of his creatures ; he distributed presents with magnificence, and still took care to keep the prince immersed in luxury. Tiberius saw, with inward pleasure, the towering spirit of the consul elect. Increasing honors, he had no doubt, would unprovide his mind, and in a short time produce the genuine features of his character.

18. We enter now on the fifth consulship of Tiberius, with Sejanus for his colleague. While the emperor remained in his solitary island,<sup>1</sup> Sejanus made his entry into Rome, with the pomp of a sovereign prince taking possession of his dominions. The streets resounded with peals of joy. The senators, the Roman knights, all ranks of men, pressed round the new consul with their congratulations. His house was crowded, his gates were besieged, and all were eager to pay their court. They knew the jealousy of a man raised to sudden elevation ; they dreaded the danger of neglect or inattention ; and all were willing to crawl into servitude. The prevailing opinion was, that Tiberius, worn out with age, and no longer equal to a weight of cares, would for the remainder of his days resign himself to his usual pleasures, content with the shadow of imperial grandeur, while the administration went on in his name, though conducted by the favorite. Tiberius seemed no more than the lord of an island, while Sejanus was considered as the vicegerent of the emperor, the actual governor of the Roman world. In this persuasion all bowed down before him ; they depended on his smiles ; they approached his presence with a degree of respect little short of adoration ; his statues were set up in every

<sup>1</sup> In this situation of things, Dio says, Sejanus was emperor of Rome, and Tiberius the lord of an island.

quarter: curule chairs were decorated with gold; victims were slain; and, in the honors offered to the minister, the prince was only mentioned for the sake of form, in conformity to the established usage. Religious worship was not yet offered to the ambitious magistrate; but the men who blushed to go to that extreme fell prostrate before his statues, and there poured forth their impious vows.

19. Tiberius had regular intelligence of all that passed; but the time was not arrived when the secrets of that dark designing mind were to transpire. He lay in wait for farther particulars. In the mean time, he addressed himself to Lucius Piso,<sup>1</sup> a man descended from a father of censorian rank, who possessed the happy art of knowing how to avoid the extremes of liberty and mean submission. Acting always with temper and with wisdom, he had recommended himself to the esteem and favor of Tiberius. He could mix in scenes of luxury, and yet retain his virtue. Being prefect of Rome, he was, by consequence, a confidential minister, intrusted with all the secrets of the court. Tiberius requested him, as a proof of his fidelity, to take careful notice of all that passed in the city, and to transmit to Capreæ an exact account of the proceedings in the senate, the language of the Roman knights, the discontents and clamors of the

1 L. Piso was prefect of the city, and in that office discharged his duty with great skill and equal integrity. Velleius Paterculus says no man was more fond of indolence, and yet no man transacted business with such ability. Seneca tells us that he was always drunk, and never out of bed before ten in the forenoon; and yet he contrived to execute his commission with uncommon diligence. He was the confidential magistrate of Augustus; and Tiberius, when he retreated into Campania, trusted all his most secret directions to the care of Piso. For an account of Piso's death, at fourscore years of age, see *Annals*, vi. 10.

populace, and, above all, the cabals, intrigues, and every action of the consul. Wishing still to deceive by fair appearances, he took care, in his letters to the senate, to make honorable mention of Sejanus, styling him, on all occasions, the prop and guardian of the empire; his associate in the administration; his dear, his well-beloved Sejanus.

20. Encouraged by these marks of favor, the new consul, to make his authority felt, resolved to let fall the weight of his power on all who scorned to bend before him with abject humility. He began with Geminius Rufus<sup>1</sup> on a charge of violated majesty. Rufus appeared before the senate. His defence was short, but delivered with magnanimity. 'The man,' he said, 'who stands accused of being an enemy to the prince has by his will made that very prince equal heir with his own children.' Having uttered those words he laid the will on the table, and withdrew to his own house. A questor followed to acquaint him with the sentence of the fathers. Rufus no sooner saw the messenger than he drew his sword, and, plunging it in his breast, 'Behold,' he said, 'how a man of honor can die: go and report what you have seen to the senate.' He spoke, and breathed his last. Prisca his wife was involved in the prosecution. She appeared before the fathers, determined to emulate the example of her husband. They began to interrogate her: in that instant she drew a dagger which she had concealed under her robe, and giving herself a mortal stab, expired on the spot.

21. While Sejanus, to gratify his vengeance, laid waste the city of Rome, Tiberius looked on with calm

<sup>1</sup> The fate of this eminent man, and Prisca his wife, is related by Dio, lviii.



indifference. The destruction of men obnoxious for their virtue gratified his natural cruelty; and the public detestation he was sure would in the end fall on the minister. The senate, in the mean time, went on in a style of abject submission. Flattery was well-nigh exhausted; but the members of that assembly were determined to rack their invention for new proofs of sordid meanness. They lamented that the dignity of the consulship was lessened by the shortness of its duration, and therefore voted that Tiberius and his colleague should continue<sup>1</sup> in office for the space of five years. Sejanus was now at the pinnacle of his wishes. He saw the emperor near the verge of life, and sure of enjoying the consular authority after the death of his master, he made no doubt of succeeding to the sovereign power.

22. In due time the decree for extending the consulship to a longer term was communicated to Tiberius. Nothing could be more opposite to his intention. He was willing to let Sejanus, by his acts of cruelty, provoke the ill-will of the people; but to prolong his power was no part of his plan. He expressed his dislike of the measure, but in terms of gentle reproof, determined neither to discover his hidden purposes nor to irritate the pride of his colleague by an abrupt refusal. He observed to the senate, 'That their late decree was an infringement of the constitution. It had been the wisdom of the fathers to declare that the consulship should not, of necessity, last an entire year. By making it a quinquennial office they would withhold from men of eminence the reward due to their public services, and the provinces would be deprived of able governors. It was for the wisdom of

1 This decree of the senate is mentioned by Dio, lviii.

the senate to consider, not what would do honor to the prince and his dearly beloved colleague, but what would be most conducive to the happiness and good order of the empire. That, and that only, was the object which he and Sejanus had nearest to their hearts; and, in comparison with that great object, they disregarded public honors.' He despatched, at the same time, a private letter to Sejanus, advising him to abdicate his office; and, to induce him to it by his own example, he sent a letter of resignation. Sejanus felt the disappointment. Unwilling, however, to make known the wound which his pride had suffered, he complied with the emperor's directions; and, about the middle of May, went out of office, soon to have a more dreadful fall.

23. On the seventh of the ides of May Cornelius Sylla and Sexteidius Catullinus<sup>1</sup> succeeded to the consulship. They were appointed for three months. Tiberius continued to manage appearances, still mysterious, close, and impenetrable. Sejanus, on his part, was not free from anxiety. He saw a change in the affections of the emperor, and for that reason wished to revisit Capreæ. In the solitude of that place he had no doubt but he could again wind himself into favor; or, if necessary, he could there with better advantage pursue the road of his ambition. His ostensible reasons for desiring to return were, the ill health of Livia, who required a change of air; and, after a long separation, his own earnest wish to have

<sup>1</sup> During the time of the republic the consular office lasted for the year. The emperors changed this rule. In order to gratify the ambition of their favorites they appointed a new succession of different times in the year; but the names of such consuls do not appear in the *Fasti Consulares*.

an interview with his sovereign. Tiberius was not to be deceived. He returned for answer, that he also languished for a sight of his friend; but the service of the state required that so able a minister should remain at Rome. He intended shortly to visit the capital, and should there embrace Sejanus. In his letters to the senate he had the art to blend hints of dislike with marks of affection; and, though still equivocal, he gave some reason to think that he was weaning himself from his favorite. He mentioned him slightly, or hinted some exception, and occasionally passed him by in silence. He talked of himself as a superannuated prince, worn out with infirmities, and near his end. In his next letters he was perfectly recovered, and on the point of setting out for Rome. The people were the dupes of his fallacy, while he remained fixed in his retreat, content to reign in solitary grandeur.

24. Tiberius thought it time to unmask another battery against Sejanus. He had invited the young Caligula<sup>1</sup> to his court, and, having made him put on the manly gown, he desired that the senate would invest him with the dignities of augur and pontiff, both vacant by the banishment of his brother Nero. Of Claudius (afterwards emperor) he took no notice. That prince had never been adopted into the Cæsarean family. He lived at Rome neglected and despised by the court of Tiberius. Antonia, his mother, used to say, that Nature began to mould him, but had not finished her work. Perception and memory were faculties which he did not want; but judgment and elocution were withheld from him. In his private studies he made considerable acquisitions in literature; but in

1 See Suetonius, in Calig. § 10.

public he lost his recollection, and with it the power of thinking. When under the operation of fear, he seemed torpid and insensible; and sudden fear continued to haunt him in every stage of life, and even on the throne. No wonder that Tiberius held him in no kind of estimation; but the honors conferred on Caligula he knew would prove a mortal stab to the ambition of Sejanus. Still, however, to amuse the favorite with delusive hopes, he required a grant from the senate of two more pontificates, one for Sejanus, and the other for his eldest son. By this ambiguous conduct the people of Rome were held in suspense. Whether they were to expect an account of the emperor's death, or in a short time to see him in the city, was a point not to be ascertained. Meanwhile, the senate, overprone to flattery, passed a vote investing Sejanus with the title of proconsul; and at the same time declaring his conduct in his magistracy a model for the imitation of all future consuls.

25. Sejanus began to fluctuate between hope and fear; but the senate showing still the same obsequious behavior, he flattered himself that he should be able to reach the summit of his ambition. Religious worship continued to be offered to him. It is said that he assisted in person at the celebration of the rites, at once the god and the priest of his own altar. Tiberius knew the effect of superstition on the public mind. To deprive Sejanus of that advantage he wrote to the senate, complaining that, in direct opposition to the principles of religion and to common sense, the worship due to the gods alone was impiously transferred to mortal man. He ordered that no such honors should be paid to himself; and, by consequence, left Sejanus exposed to the contempt and derision of the people.

26. At Rome it was now understood that the emperor was alienated from the man who had been raised to such a height of power and grandeur. Sejanus began to open his eyes, and to see at length a reverse of fortune. He found that he had been the bubble of a politic prince, who had been during his whole life exercised in the arts of dissimulation, and was grown a perfect master in the arts of deceit and cruelty. The young Caligula was, in appearance, high in favor with his grandfather; and the hearts of the people were at all times ready to espouse the family of Germanicus. The disappointed minister saw, too late, the want of resolution which restrained him, during his consulship, when the whole power of the state was in his own hands. In the arts of fraud he saw that he was no match for a systematic politician, who planned his measures in the gloom of solitude, and never let his counsels transpire till in one and the same instant they were known and felt. Sejanus resolved to retrieve his loss, and by one vigorous effort to decide the fate of empire. He called together his friends and followers; he paid court to such as seemed disaffected; he held forth rewards and promises; and, having increased the number of his partisans, formed a bold conspiracy,<sup>1</sup> resolved by any means to seize the sovereign power.

27. A powerful league was formed with astonishing rapidity; and great numbers of all descriptions, senators, as well as military men, entered into the plot. Among these Satrius Secundus was the confidential friend and prime agent of the minister. We have seen this man let loose by Sejanus<sup>2</sup> against the life of

1 The particulars of this plot, and the detection of it by Antonia are related by Josephus.

2 Satrius Secundus was the accuser of Cremutius Cordus,

Cremutius Cordus, and now we are to see him, with the arts in which he had been trained, employed against his master. Whatever was his motive, whether fear, or views of interest, or ingratitude (for no principle of honor can be imputed to him), he resolved to betray the secret to Tiberius. For this purpose he addressed himself to Antonia, the daughter of Antony the triumvir, the widow of Drusus, and the mother of Germanicus. The character of this illustrious woman was honored by the court, and revered by the people. She lost her husband in the prime of life, when she had still the attractions of youth and beauty; and, though Augustus proposed to her several advantageous matches, she remained faithful to her vows, and declined every overture. Her dignity was free from pride; she had virtue without ostentation, and an elevation of mind without the ambition and haughty spirit of Agrippina her daughter-in-law. She saw her grandchildren cut off by the wicked arts of Sejanus, and in silent grief lamented the downfall of her family. When Nero was banished to the isle of Pontia, and Drusus lay confined in a dungeon, she took Caligula their brother under her protection, and hoped that her house would prove a sanctuary for the last surviving issue of Germanicus. Her conduct gave no umbrage to Tiberius. He respected her character; and, perhaps for that reason, was inclined at last to show some favor to Caligula.

Satrius, the conspirator, had no avenues of approach to Tiberius. He therefore made his advances to An-

Annals, iv. § 34. Seneca, speaking of that transaction, *De Consolatione ad Marciam*, says, Sejanus, meaning to enrich his creatures, gave Cordus, her father, as a largess to Satrius Secundus. See Annals, vi. 47, where Satrius is mentioned as the informer against Sejanus.

tonia ; concluding that, by a stroke of perfidy, he might promote his interest in that quarter. His design was no sooner conceived than executed. He gained access to Antonia, and made a full discovery of the whole conspiracy. That prudent woman heard the particulars ; and, without delay, sent dispatches to the emperor by one of her slaves, whose name was Pallas ;<sup>1</sup> the same who afterwards figured in a higher character under the Emperor Claudius.

28. Tiberius was astonished, but not dismayed. The danger pressed ; his habitual slowness was out of season ; the time called for vigor and decisive measures. He sent Macro to Rome, with a special commission to take on him the command of the pretorian guards. He added full instructions for his conduct in all emergencies. If he found that Sejanus and his party were able to stir up an insurrection, he desired that Drusus should be led forth from his confinement, and presented to the people as their leader. The son of Germanicus, he was aware, would triumph over an obscure native of Vulsinii. In the mean time Tiberius was determined to be prepared for all possible events. He ordered the fleet that lay at Misenum to assemble at the isle of Capreæ, with intent, if any disaster happened, to sail to some distant coast, and put himself at the head of such of the legions as still remained faithful to their prince. In order to obtain the quickest intelligence, he ordered signals to be disposed along the sea-shore, and the whole way from Surrentum to Rome.

1 Josephus, who was well informed in every thing that related to Tiberius, confirms what is here said. According to him, Antonia employed Cænis, who was afterwards the favorite mistress of Vespasian, to write the letters to Tiberius ; and Pallas, who became minister of state under Claudius, carried the dispatches to the isle of Capreæ.

29. The consuls at this time were Memmius Regulus and Fulcinius Trio, both appointed to fill the office from the middle of August to the end of the year. Trio had rendered himself infamous by the prosecution of Libo: he was, besides, known to be the tool and creature of Sejanus. Regulus was of a different mould; from his upright conduct derived great consequence; and, at that time, much esteemed by Tiberius. The pretorian bands, as already stated, were under the influence of Sejanus. With the cohorts that formed the city guard the case was different. Subject to the control of Piso, who was then prefect at Rome, they had no connexion with the minister. Under Piso, Græcinus Laco was their commanding officer; a man distinguished by his military talents and his firm integrity. In this posture of affairs Macro<sup>1</sup> arrived from Capreaë. He entered the city in a private manner, after the close of day, and went directly to Regulus the consul. He communicated the emperor's orders. Laco was called to the meeting. They consulted together, and settled their plan of operations for the following day. Tiberius, in this interval of suspense, took his station on the sharp point of a rock, surveying the deep that rolled beneath, and with an anxious eye gazing at the opposite shore for the earliest intelligence.

30. The fatal day arrived, namely, the fifteenth before the calends of November. Early in the morning, by order of Regulus, a report was spread that letters were arrived at Rome, in which the emperor signified his intention to associate Sejanus with himself in the tribunitian power. The senate was summoned to meet

1 The particulars of the fall of Sejanus, and the conduct of Macro, the principal actor in that business, are related at large by Dio, lviii.



in the temple of Apollo, near the imperial palace. Sejanus attended without delay. A party of the pretorians followed him. Macro met him in the vestibule of the temple. He approached the minister with all demonstrations of profound respect, and taking him aside, 'Be not surprised,' he said, 'that you have no letter from the prince: it is his pleasure to declare you his colleague in the tribunitian power; but he thinks that a matter of so much importance should be communicated to the fathers by the voice of the consuls. I am going to deliver the emperor's orders.' Sejanus, elate with joy, and flushed with his new dignity, entered the senate-house. Macro followed him. As soon as the consuls arrived he delivered the letter from Tiberius, and immediately went forth to the pretorian guards. He informed them that, by order of the prince, a large donative was to be distributed among the soldiers. He added, that by a new commission he himself was appointed their commanding officer; and, if they followed him to the camp, they would there receive the promised bounty. The lure was not thrown out in vain: the pretorian guards quitted their station. Laco, who stood near at hand, immediately surrounded the senate-house with a body of the city cohorts.

31. The letter to the consuls was confused, embarrassed, and with studied art drawn into length, in order to keep the minds of the fathers in suspense while Macro gained time to execute what had been concerted. Regulus read the letter:<sup>1</sup> it began with

<sup>1</sup> The letter is nowhere set forth, but the substance is reported by Dio. Juvenal says no direct charge was exhibited against Sejanus; no facts were stated; no witness was produced. A pompous letter arrived from Capreae, and that was sufficient.

general observations, expatiating at large on the state of the empire: a short expression glanced at Sejanus: new matter followed; and then, winding round with art, hints were thrown out against the minister, in a perplexed style, vague, and ambiguous. It went on in the same obscure manner, intermixing things wholly unconnected, but at each return more pointed against Sejanus, till at last the language of open invective left no room for doubt. The fathers were covered with astonishment. The change of men's minds, in the vicissitudes of human affairs, was never more remarkable. Those who a little time before congratulated Sejanus on his new dignities began to shun him as they would a contagion. The conclusion of the letter was like a stroke of thunder. The emperor ordered two senators<sup>1</sup> who had joined in the conspiracy to be put to death, and Sejanus to be thrown into prison. He signified, at the same time, his intention to return to Rome; and for that purpose desired that one of the consuls should be sent with a military guard as far as Capreæ, in order to conduct an infirm old man in safety to the capital.

32. Sejanus kept his seat like a man benumbed, senseless, stupified with amazement. His friends deserted him on every side. He remained in confusion, pale and trembling; left in solitude, till the pretors and tribunes of the people gathered round him. Regulus called to him, 'Rise, Sejanus, and follow me.' The ruined favorite looked like a statue of Despair. He gazed, but understood nothing; he remained torpid, motionless, as if he had lost the faculty of hearing. The consul raised his arm; and, in a tone of

1 The names of these two senators are nowhere mentioned.

menace, repeated his words no less than three times. Sejanus rose in consternation. The door of the senate-house was thrown open: Græcinus Laco entered, and secured his prisoner. Regulus did not think it prudent to put the question to the assembly; but, contenting himself with the voice of a single senator, ordered Sejanus to be loaded with irons, and in that condition, at the head of a numerous body of magistrates, conducted him to prison.

33. The downfall of Sejanus filled the city with exultation. The populace, who worshipped him in the hour of prosperity, rejoiced to see the sad catastrophe to which he was now reduced. They followed in crowds, rending the air with shouts, and pouring forth a torrent of abuse and scurrilous language. The prisoner endeavored to hide his face; but the mob delighted to see remorse and shame, and guilt and horror, in every feature of that distracted countenance. They reviled him for his acts of cruelty; they laughed at his wild ambition; they tore down his images, and dashed his statues<sup>1</sup> to pieces. He was doomed by Tiberius to suffer death on that very day; but, as he had a powerful faction in the senate, it was not thought advisable, for the mere formality of a regular condemnation, to hazard a debate. Private orders were given to Macro to despatch him without delay; but the consul, seeing the dispositions of the people, and the calm neutrality of the pretorian guards, judged it best to reassemble the fathers. They met in the temple of Concord. With one voice Sejanus was condemned to die, and the sentence was executed without delay. He was strangled in the prison.

<sup>1</sup> The behavior of the populace is well described by Juvenal.

His body was dragged to the Gemoniæ; and, after every species of insult from the populace, at the end of three days was thrown into the Tiber.<sup>1</sup> Such was the tragic end of that ambitious favorite. He fell, a terrible example to all who, in any age or country, may hereafter endeavor by their vices to rise above their fellow-citizens.

34. The execration with which the populace treated the ruined minister was perhaps nothing more than the variable humor of a giddy multitude.<sup>2</sup> In the zenith of his power Sejanus met with obsequious servility from all orders of men; and, had he continued to flourish in prosperity, there is too much reason to infer, from the temper of the times, that the same debasement of human character would have continued. The senate followed the example of the people. They passed a decree, by which it was declared ‘unlawful to wear mourning apparel for the deceased minister: his name was ordered to be erased out of the calendar and all public registers: the statue of Liberty was to be erected in the forum: a day of public rejoicing was appointed, and the anniversary of his execution was to be celebrated with solemn games and public spectacles, to be exhibited by the sacerdotal college and the sodality of Augustan priests.’ The fathers went still farther: that the state might never again be deemed a prey for the enterprising genius of every worthless upstart, it was declared, ‘that for the future no Roman citizen should be invested with extra-

1 Seneca differs from this account. He says Sejanus was torn in pieces by the populace, and nothing remained for the executioner to throw into the river.

2 Juvenal has described the humors of the mob: they saw Sejanus ruined, and they hated him. If fortune had favored his cause, they would have been ready to hail their new emperor with acclamations of joy.

vagant honors, and that public oaths should never be sworn on any name but that of the emperor.’

35. It is fatally too true, that when the public mind has been debased by shame and servitude, the genuine tone of liberty, and the firmness of an independent spirit are not easily recovered. That very senate, which in the late decree had shown some signs of life, was notwithstanding dead to all sense of public virtue. Adulation and time-serving flattery were grown inveterate. New honors<sup>1</sup> were to be invented for a prince who deserted his post, and left the seat of empire to hide himself from the world, the lord of a barren island, the shadow of an emperor. It was however decreed, that he should be styled ‘the father of his country, and that his birthday should be celebrated with equestrian games, and other demonstrations of joy.’ Macro and Græcinus Laco were considered as men who deserved to stand high in the estimation of the emperor. Flattery therefore was to prepare her incense for those exalted characters. Besides a large sum of money, to be paid as a reward for their services out of the public treasury, the ensigns of pretorian dignity were granted to Macro, and the questorian rank to Laco. The former was also complimented with a seat in the theatre among the senators, and the honor of wearing a robe bordered with purple at the celebration of the votive games. In this manner, after the downfall of one favorite, two new ones were to mount the scene. But, from the late event, those officers had learned a lesson of prudence: they declined the honor so lavishly bestowed on them.

36. Meanwhile Tiberius was apprised of all that

<sup>1</sup> Dio gives an account of the honors voted on this occasion.

passed at Rome. From the jutting eminence of a sharp-pointed rock he had seen the signals along the coast, and special messengers had been sent to give him the earliest information. Rome, in the mean time, was a scene of tumult and wild commotion. The pretorian guards beheld with a jealous eye the preference given to the city cohorts. Enraged to find that no confidence was reposed in themselves, the whole corps rushed with licentious fury into the city, and there bore down all before them, committing depredations in every quarter, and levelling houses to the ground. The populace were no less inflamed against the creatures of Sejanus. They seized on all who had been instruments of his cruelty, and, executing the summary justice of an enraged multitude, glutted their thirst of blood. Tiberius wrote to the magistrates, in the strongest terms, requiring them to quell all insurrections and restore the public peace. The fate of Sejanus filled him with emotions of joy too strong to be concealed; but in all other matters nothing could lay open the secret workings of that involved and gloomy spirit. He was never at any time more abstruse, dark, and unintelligible. He refused to see the deputies sent by the senate; he rejected the honors which had been decreed to him; and even Memmius Regulus, the consul who had served him so faithfully, was not admitted to his presence: hating the commerce of mankind, he retired with a sullen spirit to one of his mansions called the Villa of Jupiter,<sup>1</sup> and there continued ruminating in solitude for several months.

37. The deputies of the senate returned to Rome,

<sup>1</sup> The twelve villas which Tiberius occupied in the isle of Capreae have been already mentioned, iv. 67.

but with no pleasing account of their expedition. The behavior of the prince was a mystery which no man could explain. The fathers however concluded that, to satisfy the vengeance of the emperor, more work remained on their hands. The friends, relations, and followers of Sejanus were ordered into custody. His uncle Junius Blæsus was put to death. The charge against him cannot be stated; but he was a man of eminence, who to consummate military talents united great political wisdom: in the eyes of Tiberius that was a sufficient crime. The eldest son of Sejanus, though too young to be engaged in his father's plot, was also doomed a sacrifice. Apicata,<sup>1</sup> who, as already mentioned, had been repudiated by Sejanus, was not condemned by the senate; but the sight of her son's body, thrown into the common charnel, made life a load no longer to be endured. She drew up a memorial, containing a full detail of the wicked arts with which her husband and the younger Livia brought Drusus, the emperor's son, to an untimely death. Having finished her account of that black transaction, she sent it by a trusty messenger to the isle of Capreaë, and put a period to her days.

38. Tiberius was still in his villa, sequestered from the eyes of mankind; but the detection of that horrible murder roused him from his lethargy. He had till then believed that Drusus died of a disorder occasioned by his own intemperance: but being at length acquainted with that scene of villany, he sent dispatches to the senate, demanding vengeance on all who were in any way concerned in the murder of his son. Eudemus, the physician, and Lygdus, the eu-

<sup>1</sup> Sejanus had repudiated his wife some time before. See iv. 3; and see *ib.* 11.

nuch, were put to the rack, and with their dying breath confessed all the particulars of that horrible tragedy. Livia, the widow of Drusus, was taken into custody. According to some historians Tiberius gave her up to her mother Antonia;<sup>1</sup> and that good woman, who thought it the essence of virtue that guilt of so black a dye should not remain unpunished, left her to die by famine. But this account does not seem worthy of credit. In the case of a murdered son, why should Tiberius, a man by nature harsh and vindictive, hesitate to execute the stroke of justice on a woman of so abandoned a character? It is certain that he passed several days in close inquiry into all the circumstances of that transaction; and when the fact was proved beyond the possibility of a doubt; when the emperor saw his own immediate issue, the only one of his family for whom he retained a spark of affection, snatched away by the treachery of an unnatural mother; can it be supposed that he felt any compassion for the person who imbrued her hands in the blood of her husband, and was, besides, the sister of Germanicus?

39. Livia, the vile accomplice of Sejanus, was brought to condign punishment: and, after duly weighing the testimony of writers who lived near the time, it may be assumed as an historical fact that she suffered by the order of Tiberius. The man, who in the isle of Rhodes gave strong indications of his innate cruelty, and at that early period was called, by his rhetorical preceptor, ‘a composition of mud<sup>2</sup> mixed with blood;’ who became in time so hardened by repeated murders as to set no kind of value on the lives

<sup>1</sup> Dio relates the fact. For Antonia, see this Supplement, § 27.

<sup>2</sup> The name of the preceptor was Theodorus of Gadara. Suet. in Tib. § 57.



of the most upright citizens, was not likely to feel the smallest touch of compunction when revenge was prompted to strike the blow which justice warranted. It is well known that, in talking of the lot of Priam, he gave it as his opinion that the Asiatic prince did not know how to form a true estimate of human felicity. Priam's happiness, he said, consisted in the rare event of having survived all his race.<sup>1</sup> Tiberius was living fast to enjoy that portion of worldly bliss. Drusus, the son of Germanicus, languished in a dungeon, condemned never again to see the light of the sun; and if Caligula was to be spared, it was for the reason given by Tiberius himself, who used to say, 'I suffer that son of Germanicus to live that he may be, in time, a public calamity, and the fatal author of his own destruction. In him I nourish a serpent for the people of Rome, and another Phaeton for the world at large.'

40. It will not be unfit to mention in this place a few instances of that savage cruelty which the tyrant practised in his lone retreat; and which, though well authenticated, cannot now be referred to any particular year. The place of execution, where so many unhappy wretches died in misery, is still shown amidst the rocks of Capreæ. It stood on a jutting eminence; and from that fatal spot all who incurred his displeasure were, after enduring the most exquisite torments, thrown headlong into the sea, where a crew of mariners waited to receive them, with orders that no

<sup>1</sup> The man who, amidst the misfortunes of his family, 'wanted the natural touch,' might reason in this manner; but Priam thought otherwise. It was said of him, that all he gained by a long life was, that he wept oftener than his son Troilus. The sentiment of Tiberius is reported by Suetonius, in *Tib.* § 62.

spark of life might remain unextinguished, to break their limbs, and crush their mangled bodies.

Besides a number of his old friends and confidential intimates, whom he retained near his person, he drew from Rome no less than twenty<sup>1</sup> of the most eminent citizens, to be his chief advisers and to form his cabinet-council. Of those chosen favorites, if we except two or three at most, the whole number was, for different reasons, put to death. Sejanus was the most distinguished victim; a man taken into favor, at first perhaps with personal regard, and motives of real friendship; but, as there is now room to think, continued in office for political reasons. By raising this man to the summit of power, and styling him his associate in the administration, Tiberius probably meant to throw the odium of his worst and most oppressive deeds on the favorite minister: with his assistance, perhaps, he thought that the hated house of Germanicus would be more easily crushed, and, in consequence of that measure, that the succession to the imperial dignity might be secured for the surviving issue of his son Drusus. That point accomplished, a politic and designing prince, like Tiberius, would not be at a loss how to discard, or even ruin, the minister who had conducted his pernicious measures to the end desired. It is highly probable, that, when he conferred the greatest honors on Sejanus, he had even then planned his destruction. While he raised the superstructure he was secretly employed in sapping the foundation.

1 Machiavel has not been able to devise a plan of more profound and barbarous policy. By consulting their opinion, he made them believe that his friendship was sincere, because it was interest; by keeping near his person, he cut them off at his will and pleasure; and by setting them at variance among themselves, he made them the author of their own destruction. See Suet. in Tib. § 55.

Such was the genius of Tiberius: by nature subtle, dark, designing, and always mysterious, he had exercised his talents in the school of politics, and became, by constant practice, the great master of craft and dissimulation. What he could do by an act of power he chose rather to accomplish by the crooked means of deceit and stratagem. There never occurred a juncture in which he was not able to overwhelm Sejanus, by barely signifying his will and pleasure. An obsequious senate was ready either to pay homage to the favorite, or at a blow to despatch the man whom they beheld with envy and secret detestation. The charge against Sejanus was no sooner opened than the fathers, without farther inquiry, pronounced his final doom. The event showed the nature of that assembly.

41. In all cases of importance, when either a real delinquent was to be brought to justice, or an eminent citizen was to suffer for his talents and virtue, we have seen that Tiberius affected still to preserve the forms of a regular constitution, and to consider the senate as the supreme court of judicature. From the decision of the fathers he hoped to borrow some degree of sanction, to color the violence of his own proceedings. This policy, however, was confined to persons of high consideration in the state. In his solitary island he committed petty murders without remorse or ceremony. He had ordered a person, whom he suspected as an accomplice in the destruction of his son Drusus, to attend his presence in the isle of Capreæ; and it happened that he had invited, at the same time, a friend from Rhodes, on a visit of pleasure. The friend arrived first, and no sooner set his foot on the shore than he was seized by the guards, and as a delinquent hurried away and put to the rack. Tiberius heard of the mistake, but was no otherwise moved, than to

say, with calm composure, ‘ Since you have begun with him, you may finish your work, and put the man out of his pain.’ On another occasion when a funeral was passing by, a person of some pleasantry said to the corpse, ‘ Go and inform Augustus that the legacies which he left to the common people have not as yet been paid.’ Tiberius ordered the unfortunate wit to be brought before him, and, after paying him what was computed to be his share, sent him to immediate execution, saying at the same time, ‘ Go and tell Augustus that you have received your legacy.’ Not a day passed without some new proof of that sullen malignity, which he pampered in solitude, and converted, at length, into a rooted hatred of mankind. The most common occurrences irritated his passions, and discovered the rancor of his heart. In a few days after he arrived at Capreæ, as he was walking in a sequestered part of the island, a fisherman, eager to mark his respect for the emperor, made his way over rugged steeps and pointed rocks, to present a barbel of uncommon size. Alarmed by this intrusion on his privacy, Tiberius ordered the man’s face to be well rubbed with his own barbel. The astonished fisherman, as soon as he recovered from his fright, congratulated himself that he had not brought with him a large crab which he had taken on the coast. Tiberius called for the crab, and with the claws, and edge of the shell, cut and mangled the poor fellow’s features, till he made his countenance a woful spectacle.

These, it must be acknowledged, are minute particulars, and may be thought unworthy the historian’s pen: but, when they serve to produce strokes of character, and lay open the inward temper of the man, even such materials may be allowed to merit our attention. The merciless disposition of Tiberius, and

the unrelenting cruelty with which he took away the lives of the most illustrious citizens, have been seen in a variety of tragic issues, and, perhaps, will be placed in a conspicuous light by those smaller incidents, which the diligence of other writers has collected, and which, for that reason, deserve to be here recorded. Death was considered by Tiberius as the end of human sorrow, and, consequently, as the slightest punishment that he could inflict. Whenever the unhappy prisoner wished to die, and lay down at once his load of affliction, that relief was sure to be denied: he was condemned to groan in misery. It happened that a man, of the name of Carvilius, finding himself accused of some real or pretended crime, put a period to his days. Being informed of the fact, Tiberius exclaimed, 'That man has escaped from me.' On another occasion, he thought fit to make all his prisoners pass in review before him. One of them, harassed out with pain, petitioned for a speedy execution. 'No,' said Tiberius, 'I have not yet made up my quarrel with you.'

42. To give a minute and exact account of all his cruelties is not the purpose of this undertaking; and yet, nothing that affords an insight into the character of a deliberate and systematic tyrant, can with propriety be omitted. His band of astrologers, and the Greek philosophers, whom he retained at his court, did not meet with more kindness and humanity than the unhappy wretches whom he tortured in prison, and threw from rocks and precipices into the sea. He entered into conversation with Zeno, a man celebrated for his acquisitions in literature, and in all the various branches of science. The philosopher was curious in his choice of words, and spoke with a degree of elegance that bordered on too much refinement. Sur-

prised at one of his expressions, Tiberius asked him which of the Greek dialects supplied him with such nice and difficult phraseology? Zeno told him the Doric, which, it seems, was the language in use at the isle of Rhodes. Tiberius was enraged at the answer: he conceived it to be a sarcastic allusion to the time of his residence in that island, and, in his rage, banished the philosopher to the isle of Cinaria.

Seleucus the grammarian was also invited to enjoy the sweets of meditation in the solitary retreats of Capreæ. He found that the emperor came to his evening repast well provided with abstract questions, which he had gleaned from his morning studies. In order to be prepared for all difficulties, the philosopher made it his business to learn from the attendants of the emperor what authors their master chose for his amusement in the course of the day. In consequence of this intelligence no question came on him by surprise. Tiberius heard of the stratagem, and was fired with indignation. He thought it an attempt to pry into his actions with inquisitive eyes. The philosopher, now considered as a spy, received orders to appear no more at court, and, in a short time afterwards, was put to death.

Historians relate another transaction which, by a difference of opinion among themselves, they have rendered somewhat doubtful; but since they have transmitted it as a problem to exercise the judgment of posterity, it may, with propriety, be inserted in this place, and left to try its fortune with the reader. A man, whose name is not mentioned, but, as it seems, an architect by profession, was employed by Tiberius to repair an arch that was tottering to its fall. He succeeded in the work, to the surprise of all who beheld it; and, after receiving a reward for his skill and in-

genuity, was, by the jealous malignity of the emperor, sent into banishment. Addicted to the mechanic arts, and fond of useful inventions, this man found the method of manufacturing glass<sup>1</sup> to a degree of perfection unknown before. Having prepared his materials, and made a vase of the most beautiful composition, he went to present it to Tiberius in the isle of Capreæ, little doubting but that, for so fine a piece of workmanship, he should obtain his pardon. Tiberius had a circle of his courtiers round him. The transparent vessel excited the admiration of all. The artist received it from the hands of the emperor, and, to show the wonders of his skill, dashed it on the ground. The company was alarmed, but, in a short time, stood astonished to see that, instead of flying into fragments, it was only bent and flattened in the part that struck against the ground. Their surprise was still more increased when they saw the ingenious mechanic take out his hammer, and restore the glass

1 This account of malleable glass, and the fate of the manufacturer, are told by Dio, lvii. Pliny relates the same story, but seems to doubt the truth of it, xxxvi. 26. Petronius, whose romance, called *Satyricon*, is a disguised and pleasant satire on the private life of Claudius and Nero, has put the history of this transaction into the mouth of Trimalcion, a ridiculous character, who seems to be introduced to enliven the narrative, and divert the reader by his blunders. ‘Do not,’ says Trimalcion, ‘take me for an ignoramus; I know the origin of the Corinthian metal. At the sacking of Troy Hannibal, that sly freebooter, having gathered into a heap all the gold and silver statues, with the bronze and other rarities, caused them to be melted down into one enormous mass, which was afterwards shivered to fragments, and by the artists converted into dishes, plates, and statues. That is your Corinthian metal; neither this, nor that, but a mixture of all.’ After this pleasantry we have the anecdote of Tiberius and the glass-manufacturer, which, whether true or false, is told with an air of ridicule, and, consequently, brought into disrepute.

to its original form, as if it had the flexibility of a malleable metal. Tiberius desired to know whether he had communicated the secret of his art to any other person; and, being assured that no one knew it, he ordered him to be hurried to instant execution, giving for his reason, that a manufacture, which could transmute ordinary ingredients into so fine a form would lessen the value of brass, and gold, and silver, and ought for that reason to be abolished for ever.

43. Such were the repeated acts of fell and savage cruelty which Tiberius hoped to hide in the solitude of Capreæ. Rome, in the mean time, was a scene of slaughter, where superior talents, virtue, truth, and innocence, perished by the stroke of lawless power. The charge of violated majesty was the signal of destruction, and a letter from Capreæ was a warrant for execution. The senate obeyed the mandate; no rule of law prevailed; justice was trampled under foot; reason and humanity were never heard; and all who did not despatch themselves were sure to perish by the judgment of a corrupt tribunal. The islands were crowded with illustrious exiles, and the Tiber was discolored with blood. After the death of Sejanus the fury of the emperor rose to the highest pitch, and at Rome the people followed his example. Nothing could appease the spirit which had been roused against all who stood in any degree connected with the unhappy favorite. Men of the first distinction, senators as well as Roman knights, were seized by the tyrant's order; some hurried to a dungeon, and others detained in the custody of the magistrates. None escaped except such as stooped to the infamous trade of informing against others. Numbers, who had been formerly under prosecution, and, in the hour of danger, were protected by Sejanus, were now cited to ap-



pear, and executed without mercy. Neither rank, nor sex, nor age, was safe. Several to avoid a sentence of condemnation, and save their fortunes for their children, died by their own hands. Some had the courage to set their enemies at defiance, and with becoming magnanimity stood forth to assert their innocence, determined, since their fate was unavoidable, to preserve to the last the honor of a fair and upright character.

## THE ANNALS.

VI. IN the course of those prosecutions no less than four-and-forty speeches were made before the senate; some of them dictated by fear, and others by servile adulation, the epidemic vice of the times. Amidst the general wreck, a senator<sup>1</sup> of distinguished eminence, and superior dignity of mind, finding himself doomed to destruction, called a meeting of his friends, and spoke to the following effect: ‘There was a time, when no human prudence could foresee that the friendship which subsisted between Sejanus and me would either prove a reproach to him, or a calamity to myself. A reverse of fortune has changed the scene. And yet, even at this day, the great person who chose

1 The Supplement being brought to the point where it connects with the original, Tacitus goes from this place to the end of the book. The reader will observe that he stopped at the end of section five. The intermediate sections are marked with figures, instead of the Roman numeral letters. It is to be regretted that the name of the person who speaks in the present section with such dignity of sentiment cannot be traced in any historian of that age. The character of the man subsists, and will always claim respect. It is true that this excellent man destroyed himself; but suicide, at that time, was the only relief from cruelty and oppression. See what Tacitus says on this subject, *Annals*, vi. 29.

Sejanus for his colleague, and even for his son-in-law, does not condemn his own partiality. Numbers there were, who courted the minister in his meridian splendor, but in the moment of his decline turned against him, with treachery and base ingratitude. The first was their servility; the last was their crime. Which of the two evils is the worst, to suffer, on the one hand, for a faithful attachment, or, on the other, to blacken the character of the man whom we have loved, I shall not decide. The dilemma is dreadful. For myself, I will not poorly wait to feel either the cruelty or the compassion of any man. While I yet am free, while I enjoy the congratulations of my own conscience, I will act as becomes a man, and outstrip the malice of my enemies. To you, my friends, this is my last request: pursue me not with tears and vain regret: consider death as an escape from the miseries of life; and add my name to those heroic spirits who chose to die with glory, rather than survive to see the ruin of their country.'

VII. After this discourse he passed a considerable part of the day in calm serenity, receiving the visits of his friends, and taking leave of such as chose to depart. With a large circle round him, while all eyes beheld with admiration the undaunted courage which appeared in his countenance, and gave reason to hope that his end was not so near, he fell on the point of his sword, which he had concealed under his mantle. Tiberius waged no war against his memory. To Blæsus, when that officer could no longer speak for himself, he behaved with inveterate rancor; but this upright citizen was allowed to sleep in peace.

VIII. Publius Vitellius<sup>1</sup> and Pomponius Secundus

1 P. Vitellius was the faithful companion of Germanicus

were soon after cited to appear before the senate. Vitellius had been intrusted with the care of the public treasury and the military chest. He was charged with a design to surrender both for the service of the conspirators, with intent to overturn the government. The allegation against Pomponius was, his intimacy with Ælius Callus, who, immediately after the execution of Sejanus, fled to the gardens of the accused, deeming that place his safest sanctuary. This charge was supported by Confidius, a man of pretorian rank. In this distress, those two eminent men had no resource but the magnanimity of their brothers, who generously stood forth and gave security for their appearance. Vitellius, harassed out by various delays, and at length weary of alternate hopes and fears, called for a penknife, as if going to write, and opened his veins, but with so slight a wound, that he continued to linger for some time longer. He died of a broken heart. Pomponius, who was distinguished no less by his genius, than by the gaiety and elegance of his manners, supported himself in adversity with undaunted spirit, and survived Tiberius.

IX. The fury of the populace began to subside, the blood already spilt having well-nigh appeased their indignation. The fathers, however, did not relent. Two children of Sejanus, a son and daughter, still

in Germany and Asia. He afterwards prosecuted Piso for the murder of his friend, *Annals*, iii. 10 and 13. Suetonius relates that he was seized among the accomplices of Sejanus; and being delivered to the custody of his brother, he opened his veins, but, by the persuasion of his friends, suffered the wound to be bound up. He died soon after of a broken heart; *Suet. in Vetellio*, § 2. He was uncle to Vitellius the emperor. See *Velleius Paterculus*, ii. Pomponius Secundus was of consular rank. Quintilian praises his dramatic genius. See the *Dialogue concerning Oratory*, § 13.

survived the massacre of their family. They were both seized by order of the senate, and dragged to prison. The son was grown up to years of discretion; but the daughter, as yet a tender infant, was insensible of her sad condition. She was hurried through the streets, asking in a tone of simplicity, 'What fault she had committed? whither they were leading her? Tell her her offence, and she would be guilty of the like no more: they might chastise her, and she would promise to be good.' A virgin<sup>1</sup> sentenced to capital punishment was, at that time, a thing unheard of at Rome: but we are told by writers of good authority that, to satisfy the forms of law, a detestable artifice was employed. The executioner strangled her and her brother at the same time. Their bodies were thrown into the Gemoniæ, or the common charnel, where the vilest malefactors were exposed.

X. About this time a report was spread through Greece and Asia that Drusus the son of Germanicus had been seen in the island called the Cyclades, and afterwards on the continent. A young man, it seems, about the age of Drusus, assumed the name of that unfortunate prince. The emperor's freedom encouraged the impostor, intending to favor him at first, and betray him in the end. A name so celebrated as that of Drusus drew together a large conflux of the common people. The genius of the Greeks, fond of novelty, and at all times addicted to the marvellous, helped to propagate the story. 'The prince,' they

1 The original calls it the triumviral punishment, because (as appears in the Digest 1. tit. ii. § 30) it was the duty of the triumvir to see execution done on such as were condemned to die. The men who felt no compassion for an innocent child thought it right to be scrupulous about forms in order to commit a legal murder. Suetonius relates the fact as stated by Tacitus, in Tib. § 61.

said, 'had escaped from his confinement, and was then on his way to head the armies of Asia, formerly commanded by his father. With that force he intended to make himself master of Egypt, or of Syria.' Such was the tale dressed up by the lively genius of the Greeks. What they invented they were willing to believe. The hero of this romance had his train of followers, and the wishes of the multitude favored his cause. The impostor, flushed with success, began to anticipate his future grandeur.

Meanwhile Poppæus Sabinus, the proconsular governor of Macedonia and Greece, but engaged at that time in the former province, received an account of this wild attempt. He resolved to crush the adventurer without delay, and accordingly having passed the two bays of Toronis and Thermes, he crossed over to Eubœa, an island in the Ægean sea. From that place he sailed to Piræum, on the coast of Athens, and thence to Corinth and the adjoining isthmus. He there embarked on the opposite sea, and steered his course to Nicopolis, a Roman colony, where he was informed that the impostor, when interrogated by persons of skill and judgment, declared himself the son of Marcus Silanus. After this discovery, the number of his adherents falling off, he went on board a vessel, with intent, as he himself gave out, to pass over into Italy. Sabinus sent this account to Tiberius. The affair ended here: of its origin, progress, or final issue, nothing farther has reached our knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

XI. Towards the close of the year warm dissensions broke out between the two consuls. Their animosities, which had been festering for some time, were

<sup>1</sup> Dio says that the impostor was taken, and sent a prisoner to Tiberius. But Dio is at times either too credulous, or too much pleased with his own invention.

now gathered to a head. Trio was by nature restless, bold and turbulent. He had been formerly exercised in the practice of the bar,<sup>1</sup> and thence more ready to provoke hostilities. He charged his colleague with too much lenity towards the accomplices of Sejanus. Regulus was a man of moderation; if not insulted, modest; if provoked, neither stupid, nor unwilling to resent an injury. Not content with refuting his adversary, he threatened to arraign him as an accomplice in the late conspiracy. The fathers interposed their good offices to compromise a quarrel which was likely to end in the ruin of both; but the ill-will between the two consuls was not to be appeased. They continued at variance, provoking and threatening each other during the rest of the year.

<sup>1</sup> Trio has been mentioned, *Annals*, ii. 28, as a practised informer, a man of dangerous talents, and an infamous character.

## BOOK VI.

SECT. I. CNEIUS DOMITIUS<sup>1</sup> and Camillus Scribonianus succeeded to the consulship. They had not been long in office when Tiberius crossed the narrow sea that divides the isle of Capreæ from Surrentum, and sailing along the coast of Campania, made his approach towards Rome, in doubt whether to enter the city; or perhaps because he had determined otherwise, choosing to raise expectations which he never meant to gratify. He went on shore at various places; visited his gardens on the banks of the Tiber; and, at length, having amused the people with false appearances, went back to hide himself, his vices, and sensualities, amidst the rocks of Capreæ. In that place he gave a loose to his inordinate appetites, a tyrant even in his pleasures. New modes of sensuality were invented, and new terms for scandalous refinements in lascivious pleasure. Slaves were employed to provide objects of desire, with full commission to allure the venal with presents, and to conquer the reluctant by threats and violence. If friends interposed in the

1 Domitius, commonly called Domitius Ænobarbus, is the person whom we have seen married to Agrippina, the daughter of Germanicus, *Annals*, iv. 75. Suetonius draws his character in the blackest colors; and adds, that he was so sensible of his own depravity, as to say, when he was told of Nero's birth, 'Nothing can spring from Agrippina and myself but a monster of vice, and a scourge of humankind.' When Tiberius died he was confined in prison. He was saved by the change of the times, and not long after died of a dropsy at the town of Pyrgi, Suetonius in *Nero*, § 5 and 6. The other consul, Camillus Scribonianus, is the same who ten years after, in the reign of Claudius, was proclaimed emperor by the legions in Dalmatia, and in a few days murdered by the soldiers.

defence of youth and innocence, if a parent attempted to protect his child, ruffian force was exercised. Compulsion and captivity followed. Like slaves by conquest, all were at the mercy of a detestable crew, whose business it was to pander for the passions of their master.

II. At Rome, in the mean time, the guilt of the younger Livia,<sup>1</sup> as if she had not been sufficiently punished, was resumed with warmth and violence. The senate thundered forth decrees against her memory and her various statues. The property of Sejanus was ordered to be removed from the public treasury<sup>2</sup> to the coffers of the prince; as if, in either place, it would not have been equally at his disposal. The Scipios, the Silani, and the Cassii were the authors of this alteration. They proposed the measure, and enforced it with their best ability, but with little variance either in the language or the argument.

Togonius Gallus had the ill-timed ambition to mix his name, however obscure and insignificant, with men of the highest rank. He made himself ridiculous; and malignity for that reason was willing to listen to him. He proposed that out of a number of senators, chosen by the prince, twenty should be drawn by lot, to serve under arms as a guard to Tiberius whenever he should choose to honor the senate with his presence. This extravagant motion sprang from the folly of a man who was weak enough to believe that the emperor was in earnest when he desired, by letter,

1 This is Livia, who conspired with Sejanus against the life of Drusus her husband, and suffered for that crime in the manner already mentioned. See book five in the Supplement, § 38.

2 It will not be amiss to repeat that *ararium* was the public treasury, and *fiscus* the private treasury of the prince.



that one of the consuls should be sent to guard him on his way from Capreæ to Rome. Tiberius, according to his custom, mingling a vein of irony with serious business, thanked the fathers for this mark of their care. He desired to know ‘who were to be elected into the body guard, and who rejected? Was it to be an office for life, or by rotation? Were they to be draughted from the younger part of the senate, or to consist of such as had passed through the gradations of the magistracy? Must they be actually magistrates, or men in a private station? And again, when the senators, sword in hand,<sup>1</sup> were drawn up rank and file in the porch of the senate-house, what kind of scene would that motley appearance present to the people? A life which must be thus defended was not worth his care.’ In this strain of raillery he replied to Togonius, adding nothing harsh, and not a word of serious tendency to overrule the motion.

III. Junius Gallio<sup>2</sup> was not let off on the same easy terms. He had given his opinion that the soldiers of the pretorian band, having served the requisite time, should enjoy the privilege of sitting on the fourteen rows of the theatre<sup>3</sup> appropriated to the Roman

1 If Tiberius had seriously intended to enter the senate-house, he was a better politician than to be the dupe of a plan proposed by Togonius Gallus. None were admitted into the senate but the fathers, and those to whom they occasionally gave audience, or who were cited to their bar. If Tiberius was in fear of the senators, he knew better than to put arms in their hands. He would have desired to enter that assembly with a picked number of the pretorian guards.

2 Junius Gallio was the brother of Seneca. See Annals, xv. 73.

3 Roscius Otho, tribune of the people, was the author of a law called *Lex Roscia*, A. U. C. 685; by which fourteen rows in the theatre, next to the patrician order, were assigned to the Roman knights, with an express provision that no freedman, nor even the son of a freedman, should be admitted into

knights. Against the mover of this innovation Tiberius launched out with vehemence; and, though absent, with all the ardor of a personal expostulation. He asked, 'What business has Gallio to interfere with the military line? why intermeddle with those whose duty it is to receive their orders and the reward of their service from the emperor only? A new plan of policy, unknown to the wisdom of Augustus, has been broached by the superior genius of this able statesman! Perhaps it was the project of a man bred in the school of Sejanus, with a view to kindle the flame of discord, and, under color of dispensing military honors, to seduce the affections of the army, to the ruin of discipline and all good order.' Such were the wages earned by flattery. Gallio intended to pay his court; and, for his attempt, was expelled the senate, and banished out of Italy. He retired to Lesbos; but it being suggested that, in the charming scenes of that delightful island, what was intended as a punishment would be in fact a pleasing recompense, he was brought back to Rome, and ordered into close confinement in the house of a civil magistrate.

In the letter which directed this proceeding Tiberius marked out Sextius Paconianus, of pretorian rank, as another victim. The fathers received with pleasure the condemnation of a man whom they knew to be of a bold and turbulent spirit, willing to embark

the equestrian order. Horace describes a man who was grown suddenly rich taking his seat in those rows of the theatre, in contempt of Otho and his law. In the time of Augustus this law was falling into disuse; but the subsequent emperors, in order to give a distinguished preference to the freedmen whom they enriched, revived the *Lex Roscia* in all its force. Hence Juvenal says, 'Let the man who is not worth the sum by law required rise from the equestrian cushion, and make room for pimps and the sons of pimps.'

in any scheme of iniquity, and infamous for the pernicious talent of worming himself into the secrets of others. When Sejanus began to meditate the destruction of Caligula he chose this man for his confidential agent. That dark conspiracy being now laid open, every breast was fired with indignation; and if the miscreant had not prevented his fate, by offering to make important discoveries, the senate was ready to adjudge him to instant death.

IV. The person against whom he informed was the well-known Latinius Latiaris. The accuser and accused were objects of public execration; and the spectacle which they both presented diffused a universal satisfaction. Latiaris, the reader will remember, was the chief instrument in the ruin of Sabinus. Of the several actors in that foul transaction he was the first that paid the forfeit of his crimes. In the course of this day's debate Haterius Agrippa attacked the consuls of the preceding year. 'After mutual accusations, why did they now remain silent? Fear, and their own consciences, have made them compromise all matters in dispute. They are joined in bonds of the strictest union. But the senate heard their mutual accusations, and ought now to institute a serious inquiry.' Regulus replied, that in due time it was his intention to bring the business forward, but he waited for the presence of the emperor. Trio observed, that their hostilities were nothing more than the jealousy that often happens between colleagues in office; but such petty disputes ought not to be revived. This did not satisfy Agrippa. He still persisted, till Sanquinius Maximus, of consular rank, rose to allay the ferment. He intreated the fathers to be cautious how they multiplied the cares of the emperor. To be ingenious in framing new complaints

was not their province. They might rely on the wisdom of Tiberius, comprehensive as they knew it to be, and equal to the task of remedying every evil. In consequence of this conciliating speech Regulus remained in full security, and the ruin of Trio<sup>1</sup> was deferred to a farther day. As to Haterius Agrippa, the violence of his conduct made him more than ever an object of the public hatred. Too indolent for a life of business, he passed his days in sleep, and his nights in riot and debauchery. His vices made him an enervated sluggard, and at the same time screened him from the cruelty of a jealous and unforgiving tyrant. And yet this man, amidst the joys of wine, and in the harlot's lap, had the malevolence to plan the ruin of the most illustrious citizens.

V. Messalinus Cotta, the ready author of the most sanguinary measures, was the next person accused. This prosecution called forth a multitude of enemies. All were eager to have their full blow at a man long known and detested. The charge against him was, that to fix on Caius Cæsar<sup>2</sup> the imputation of unnatural vices, he had called the young prince by the female name of Caia; and, at a banquet given by the pontiffs, in honor of the birthday of Livia, he called that feast a funeral entertainment.<sup>3</sup> It was farther

1 For the end of Fulcinius Trio, see this book, § 88.

2 Caius Cæsar, more known by the name of Caligula. Brotier's edition has C. Cæsarem, and some have Caium Cæsarem. The last reading is adopted in this translation.

3 The original says, 'novemdialem cœnam,' because the grief of the Romans for the loss of a friend lasted nine days, and then concluded with a solemn feast in honor of the dead. Cotta's meaning was, that celebrating the birthday of an old woman ready to sink into her grave was nothing different from a *novemdial*, or mourning-festival. In the fragments of Cyrus there is a fine verse, importing that when an old woman laughs death grins a ghastly smile.

alleged, that in a lawsuit with Manius Lepidus and Lucius Arruntius he complained of the weight and influence of his adversaries, but said, at the same time, 'Let them boast of their interest with the senate, my little friend Tiberius will outweigh them all.' In support of this charge the first men in Rome were willing witnesses. Cotta knew how to baffle his enemies. He removed the cause by appeal to the emperor. Tiberius, in a letter to the senate, made the apology of Cotta: he stated the friendship which had long subsisted between them, and the obligations by which he himself was bound. He concluded with a request, that words casually spoken, and sallies of vivacity in the moments of convivial mirth, might not be converted into crimes.

VI. The letter sent by Tiberius on this occasion is too remarkable to be here omitted. His words were as follows: 'What to write,<sup>1</sup> conscript fathers; in what terms to express myself, or what to refrain from writing, is a matter of such perplexity, that if I know how to decide, may the just gods, and the goddesses of vengeance, doom me to die in pangs worse than those under which I linger every day!' We have here the features of the inward man. His crimes retaliated on him with the keenest retribution; so true is the saying of the great philosopher,<sup>2</sup> the oracle of

1 Suetonius has the same letter in the very words here reported, in Tib. § 67.

2 Socrates, here properly called the Oracle of Ancient Wisdom, says, in Plato's Republic, 'A tyrant is the worst of slaves. Were his heart and inward sentiments laid open to our view, we should see him stretched on the torture of the mind, distracted by his fears, and goaded by the pangs of guilt.' Tacitus had his eye on this passage. Possessed of the supreme power, Tiberius lives in misery. His grief is heard from the solitude and the rocks of Capreæ. His case was like that of Œdipus, as described by Statius, in

ancient wisdom, that if the minds of tyrants were laid open to our view, we should see them gashed and mangled with the whips and stings of horror and remorse. By blows and stripes the flesh is made to quiver; and, in like manner, cruelty and inordinate passions, malice and evil deeds, become internal executioners, and with unceasing torture goad and lacerate the heart. Of this truth Tiberius is a melancholy instance. Neither the imperial dignity, nor the gloom of solitude, nor the rocks of Capreæ, could shield him from himself. He lived on the rack of guilt, and his wounded spirit groaned in agony.

VII. Cæcilianus, the senator, had taken an active part in the prosecution of Messalinus Cotta. For that offence Tiberius left him to the discretion of the fathers, who thought fit to inflict the pains and penalties which they had pronounced against Aruseius and Sanquinius, the two informers against Lucius Arruntius. The decision was honorable to Cotta; a man, it is true, of illustrious birth, but beggared by his vices, and for the profligacy of his manners universally abhorred. The redress which he now obtained placed him on a level with the unblemished excellence that distinguished the character of Arruntius.

Quintus Servæus and Minutius Thermus were, in the next place, both arraigned. The former was of pretorian rank, and had been the companion of Germanicus in all his expeditions; the latter was a Roman knight, who had enjoyed the friendship of Sejanus, but with reserve and moderation. Their misfortunes excited compassion. Tiberius declared against them both. He called them the principal agents in that

a fine picturesque line, *Sæva dies animi, scelerumque in pectore diræ.*

dark conspiracy; and for proof of the fact desired that Cestius, a member of the senate, would give in evidence what he had written to the emperor. Cestius became their accuser.

Among the calamities of that black period the most trying grievance was the degenerate spirit with which the first men in the senate submitted to the drudgery of common informers; some without a blush, in the face of day, and others by clandestine artifices. The contagion was epidemic. Near relations, aliens in blood, friends and strangers, known and unknown, were without distinction all involved in one common danger. The fact recently committed, and the tale revived, were equally destructive. Words alone were sufficient; whether spoken in the forum or amidst the pleasures of the table was immaterial. Whatever the occasion or the subject,<sup>1</sup> every thing was a constructive crime. Informers struggled as it were in a race who should be first to ruin his man; some to secure themselves; the greater part infected by the general corruption of the times.

Minutius and Servæus were both condemned, but saved themselves by giving evidence against others. They accused Julius Africanus, a native of Gaul, and Seius Quadratus, of whose origin no account remains. Of the various dangers that threatened numbers, and

1 Seneca relates a curious attempt by an informer at a convivial meeting: One of the guests wore the image of Tiberius on his ring. His slave, seeing his master intoxicated, took the ring off his finger. The informer, in some time after, insisted that the owner, to mark his contempt of Tiberius, was sitting on the figure of the emperor. For this offence he drew up an accusation, and was getting it attested by subscribing witnesses, when the slave showed to the whole company that he had the ring in his hand all the time. Seneca asks, 'Was the servant a slave? and was the informer a bottle-companion?'

the execution of others, I am aware that no accurate account is to be found in the historians of the time. The writer sunk under the weight of his materials, and feeling himself oppressed by the repetition of tragic events, was unwilling to fatigue his readers with the uniformity of blood and horror. It has happened however that, in the researches which I have made, several facts have come to light, untouched it is true by the pen of others, yet not unworthy of being recorded.

VIII. In that dangerous crisis, when the creatures of Sejanus, denying their connexions, were making from the wreck, Marcus Terentius, a Roman knight, had the spirit to avow his friendship in a speech to the following effect: 'In my situation, conscript fathers, I know the danger of owning myself the friend of Sejanus; and I know that to disclaim him altogether would be the best mode of defence. Be that as it may, I am willing to declare my sentiments. I was the friend of that minister: I sought his patronage, and I gloried in it. I saw him associated with his father in the command of the pretorian bands: I saw him afterwards, not only at the head of the military department, but invested with the whole civil authority. His friends and relations rose to honors; and to be in his good graces was a sure road to the favor of the prince. On the other hand, all on whom the minister frowned were either crushed by the weight of power or left to languish in obscurity. I forbear to mention names. Speaking in my own defence, I plead the cause of all who, like myself, were connected with the favorite, and, like myself, were unconscious of his last designs.

'In paying court to Sejanus, it was not the Vulsi-  
nian citizen whom we endeavored to conciliate: it was



a branch of the Claudian and the Julian families; it was the son-in-law of Cæsar; it was his colleague in the consulship; it was his vicegerent in the administration to whom our homage was offered. Is it the pleasure of the emperor to raise a favorite above his fellow-citizens, it is not for us to estimate the merit of the man, nor ours to weigh the motives that determine the choice. The supreme power is in the hands of the prince, committed to him by the gods; and submission is the virtue of every citizen. Of the mysteries of state we see no more than what he is willing to reveal: we see who is raised to dignities, and who has power to distribute the rewards and the terrors of government. That the rays of majesty were collected and fell on Sejanus no man will deny. The sentiments of the prince are to us impenetrable. The secret springs of action it is not in our power to discover; the attempt were dangerous, and may deceive the ablest statesman.

‘When I speak of Sejanus, conscript fathers, I do not speak of the minister fallen from the height of power, undone and ruined. I speak of Sejanus, sixteen years in the meridian of his glory. During that time a Satrius Secundus and a Pomponius commanded our respect. And if his freedmen, or the porter at his gate, condescended to be gracious, we considered it as the highest honor. But to come to the point: shall this be the defence of all who followed the fortunes of Sejanus? By no means, conscript fathers: draw the line yourselves; let the enemies of the commonwealth, and the conspirators against the prince, be delivered up to public justice; but let the offices of friendship remain inviolate; and let the principle which justifies the choice of the prince be at least an apology for the subject.’

IX. The firmness of this speech, and the spirit of

the man who could boldly utter what others only dared to think, made such an impression that the prosecutors, for their former crimes added to their present malignity, were either driven into banishment or condemned to death. Tiberius soon after sent an accusation against Sextus Vestilius, of pretorian rank, and formerly high in favor with Drusus, the emperor's brother. Tiberius, for that reason, had received him with open arms, and ranked him in the number of his intimate friends. The crime now laid to his charge was a satirical piece against Caligula, for which Vestilius, the real or the supposed author, was excluded from the emperor's table. In despair he opened a vein, but with the trembling hand of age. The wound was slight, and he tied it up again, in order to try the effect of a petition. Having received an obdurate answer, he once more made use of his weapon, and bled to death.

The next prosecution was intended to make a sweep of a great number at once. Annius Pollio, Appius Silanus, Mamercus Scaurus, and Sabinus Calvisius, were grouped together in a charge of violated majesty. Vinicianus was added to his father Pollio. They were all men of the first rank, and some of them invested with the highest civil honors. The senate was struck with terror. Few in that assembly stood detached, either in point of friendship or alliance, from the persons accused. It happened that the evidence of Celsus, a tribune of the city cohorts, and one of the prosecutors, acquitted Appius Silanus and Calvisius. The trial of Pollio, Vinicianus, and Scaurus, was put off, by order of Tiberius, till he himself should think proper to attend in person. In the mean time, some pointed expressions in his letter plainly showed that Scaurus was the chief object of his resentment.

X. Not even the softer sex could find a shelter from

the calamity of the times. Women, it is true, could not be charged with designs to overturn the government; but natural affection was made a crime, and the parental tear was treason. Vitia, the mother of Fufius Geminus, wept for her son, and for that offence, in an advanced age, she was put to death. Such were the horrible proceedings of the senate. Tiberius in his island was no less vindictive. By his order, Vesularius Flaccus and Julius Marinus, his two earliest friends, who had followed him to the isle of Rhodes, and still adhered to him in the isle of Capreæ, were hurried to execution. In the ruin of Libo the first had been the active agent of the emperor; and in the plot, by which Sejanus wrought the downfall of Curtius Atticus, Marinus was the principal actor. The public saw with pleasure that the authors of destruction perished by their own pernicious arts.

About this time Lucius Piso, the prefect of Rome,<sup>1</sup> paid his debt to nature. He had lived his days with honor, and what was rare in that black period, though high in rank and authority, he died by mere decay. A man of principle, and never, of his own motion, the author of harsh or violent measures, he was able frequently to prevent or mitigate destructive counsels. Piso, the censor, as already mentioned, was his father. The son lived to the age of fourscore. By his services in the wars of Thrace he obtained triumphal ornaments; but his truest triumph, the glory of his character, arose from the wisdom with which he acted as governor of Rome; tempering, with wonderful address, the rigor of an office odious on account of its novelty, and rendered by its duration a galling yoke to the people.

<sup>1</sup> The passage in which L. Piso was mentioned by Tacitus is lost with other parts of the fifth book.

XI. The origin of this institution may be traced in the early ages of Rome. While the monarchy continued, and afterwards under the consular government, that the city might not be left during the absence of the king or consuls in a state of anarchy, a civil magistrate was invested with the whole executive authority. By Romulus, we are told, Romulus Denton was appointed; Numa Marcius by Tullus Hostilius; and Spurius Lucretius<sup>1</sup> by Tarquin the Proud. That precedent was followed by the consuls; and, even at this day, we find an image of the custom in the temporary magistrate who during the Latin festivals discharges the functions of the consul. In the time of the civil wars Augustus delegated the supreme authority, both at Rome and throughout Italy, to Cilnius Mæcenas, a Roman knight. When the success of his arms made him master of the empire, finding an unwieldy government on his hands, and a slow and feeble remedy from the laws, he chose a person of consular rank to restrain, by speedy justice, the slaves within due bounds, and to control the licentious spirit of the citizens, ever turbulent, and, if not overawed, prone to innovation. The first that rose to this important post was Messala Corvinus, who found himself unequal to the task, and resigned in a few days. Taurus Statilius succeeded; and, notwithstanding his advanced age, acquitted himself with honor and ability. Lucius Piso was the next in office. During a series of twenty years he discharged the duties of that difficult station with such an even tenor, and such constant dignity, that by a decree of the senate he was honored with a public funeral.

<sup>1</sup> He is mentioned by Livy in the character of prefect of the city.

XII. A report relating to a book of the Sibyls<sup>1</sup> was presented to the senate by Quintilianus, a tribune of

1 The history of the Sibylline books, as much of it at least as can be condensed into a note, is as follows: A woman, supposed to be the Cumæan Sibyl, presented to Tarquin the Proud three books, of which, according to the account of Pliny the elder, xiii. 13, three were burned by her own direction. Other authors, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, iv. 62, and Aulus Gellius, i. 19, mention nine books, six of which, they say, were committed to the flames, and three preserved with care. Whatever the number was, it perished in the conflagration that destroyed the capitol, not during the social war, as said by mistake in the original, but in the civil war between Marius and Sylla, A. U. C. 671. Those books had been always considered as a sacred deposit, containing prophetic accounts of the grandeur of Rome, and the certain means of propitiating the gods in the day of distress, or when portents and prodigies gave notice of some impending calamity. Tarquin committed this invaluable treasure to the care of two officers appointed for the purpose. The number, A. U. C. 387, was increased to ten. After the fire of the capitol, when the political and religious oracle of the state was lost, the senate ordered diligent search to be made in Italy, Asia, and Africa, for all kinds of Sibylline verses, and that compilation was given in charge to fifteen officers called *quindecimviri*. They, and they only, were to have access to those mysterious books, that contained the fame and fate of the Romans; but even they were not allowed to inspect the predictions without the special orders of the senate. As long as the pagan superstition lasted the Sibylline books continued to be the political creed of the emperor. In the reign of Honorius, Stilicho, the ambitious minister, and pretended convert to Christianity, ordered all the Sibylline books to be burnt. Paganism groaned and expired. It appeared that there had been in various places a great number of Sibylline women, whose verses were obtruded on the world by a pious fraud; but the Cumæan Sibyl, so called from Cumæ, a town on the coast of Campania, was the only genuine prophetess. It is well known that Virgil, not understanding what was foretold of the birth of Christ, applied the whole prediction to another purpose in his fourth eclogue, called the Pollio. The name of Sibyl was compounded of *σιος*, Æol. voce, pro *Θεος*, *Deus*, and *βουλη*, *consilium*. See Valpy's *Delphin Virgil*, vi. 36: and see the fine description of the Sibyl in her prophetic ecstasy, v. 46.

the people. Caninius Gallus, who was of the college of fifteen, considered this book as the undoubted composition of the Cumæan prophetess; and, as such, desired that, by a decree, it might be enrolled in the proper archives. The question was put, and carried<sup>1</sup> without opposition. Tiberius, by letter, condemned the whole proceeding. The youth of Quintilianus, he admitted, might be an apology for his ignorance of ancient customs; but he observed, and not without asperity, that it ill became a man like Gallus, versed in the science of laws and religious ceremonies, to adopt the performance of an uncertain author, without having first obtained the sanction of the quindecimviral college, and without so much as reading it, as had been the practice, at a meeting of the pontiffs. Besides this, the vote was passed by surprise in a thin meeting of the senate. He added farther, that since the world abounded with spurious productions, falsely ascribed to the venerable name of the ancient Sibyl, it had been the wisdom of Augustus to fix a stated day, on or before which all papers of the kind were to be deposited with the pretors, and none, after the limited time, to remain in private hands. For this regulation there was an ancient precedent. After the social war, when the capitol was destroyed by fire, diligent search was made at Samos, at Ilium, at Erythræ, in Africa, Sicily, and all the Roman colonies, in order to collect the Sibylline verses, whether the production of a single prophetess, or of a greater number; and the sacerdotal order had directions, as far as human sagacity could distinguish, to separate

<sup>1</sup> The senate had two ways of coming to a resolution: if there was no debate the house decided *per discessionem*. When there was an opposition the fathers were called on *seriatim* for their opinions. See Aulus Gellius, xiv. 7.

the fictitious from the genuine composition. In consequence of this letter the book in question was referred to the college of fifteen, called the quindecemviri.

XIII. During the same consulship the distress occasioned by a dearth of corn well-nigh excited a popular insurrection. For several days the clamor in the theatre was outrageous beyond all former example. Tiberius wrote to the senate, and, in terms of keen reproach, censured the inactivity of the magistrates, who suffered the mutinous spirit of the populace to rage without control; he stated the quantity of grain imported annually by his orders, and the provinces from which he drew his supplies, far exceeding the importation formerly made by Augustus. To restore the public tranquillity, the senate passed a decree in the style and spirit of the old republic. The consuls followed it with an edict of equal rigor. The emperor took no part in the business; but his silence gained him no popularity: he flattered himself with hopes that it would pass for the moderation of a republican prince; but it was deemed the sullen pride of a tyrant.

XIV. Towards the end of the year three Roman knights, by name, Geminius, Celsus, and Pompeius, were charged with a conspiracy, and condemned to suffer. Geminius had been a man of pleasure, and great prodigality. His taste for expense and luxury recommended him to the friendship of Sejanus, but a friendship merely convivial, leading to no serious connexion. Junius Celsus, at that time one of the tribunes, as he lay fettered in prison, contrived to lengthen out his chain, so as to wind it round his neck, and strangle himself.

About the same time Rubrius Fabatus, who had

fled from the city, with intent to seek among the Parthians a refuge from the disasters of the time, was apprehended by a centurion, near the straits of Sicily, and brought back to Rome. Being questioned, he was not able, with any color of probability, to account for his sudden departure on so long a journey. He escaped, however, though not by an act of clemency. He continued to live in safety, not pardoned, but forgotten.

XV. Servius Galba and Lucius Sylla were the next consuls. Tiberius saw his grand-daughters<sup>1</sup> in the season of life that made it proper to dispose of them in marriage. On that subject he had deliberated for some time. His choice at length fixed on Lucius Cassius and Marcus Vinicius. Vinicius was born at a small municipal town, known by the name of Cales. His father and grandfather were of consular rank; but the family, before their time, never rose higher than the equestrian order. Their descendant united to his amiable manners a vein of pleasing eloquence. Cassius was born at Rome, of a plebeian, but respected family. He was educated under the strict tuition of his father, but succeeded more through happiness than care and industry. To these two the daughters of Germanicus were given in marriage; Drusilla to Cassius, and Julia to Vinicius. Tiberius, in his letters to the senate, made honorable mention of the young men, but in the style of reserve. He touched on his long absence from the capital, and, after glossing it over with vague and frivolous reasons, talked in a more serious tone of the weight of government, and

1 As Germanicus was adopted by Tiberius, *Annals*, i. 3, his daughters were, consequently, the grandchildren of Tiberius.



the animosities which he was obliged to encounter. He desired that Macro, prefect of the pretorian guards, with a small number of tribunes and centurions, might have directions to guard his person, as often as he should attend the senate. A decree was passed in the amplest form, according to his desire, without limitation of rank or number. Tiberius, notwithstanding, never appeared in the assembly of the fathers, nor even entered the walls of Rome. He made feigned approaches, still retreating through devious roads, suspecting the people, and flying from his country.

XVI. The practice of usury was a grievance that distressed the whole community. Against such as sought to increase their wealth by placing out money<sup>1</sup>

1 The grievances of the people, laboring under the oppression of their creditors, occur so often in Livy, that it is needless to cite particular instances. The law of Julius Cæsar, mentioned in this passage, is explained by Suetonius. It was expected, he says, that all debts should be cancelled; but Cæsar ordered that all debtors should satisfy their creditors, according to a fair estimate of their estates, at the rates at which they were purchased before the commencement of the civil wars; deducting from the principal the interest that had been paid; and by those means about a fourth part of the debt was sunk, Suetonius, in *Jul. Cæs.* § 42. See also *Cæsar de Bell. Civ.* iii. 1. The late Sir W. Blackstone says, 'Many good and learned men perplexed themselves and other people by raising questions about the reward for the use of money, and by expressing their doubts about the legality of it in *foro conscientiæ*. A compensation for the loan of money is generally called interest, by those who think it lawful; and usury, by those who think otherwise; for the enemies to interest in general make no distinction between that and usury, holding an increase of money to be indefensibly usurious.' The arguments in support of that opinion are refuted by Sir W. Blackstone, who proves that the taking of a moderate reward for the use of money, is not only not *malum in se*, but highly useful to society. See his *Commentaries*, ii. 454-457. Brotier states the different rates of interest known at Rome, at different

at exorbitant interest actions were commenced. The money-lenders were accused under a law enacted by Julius Cæsar, whereby the terms of lending on land-security, throughout Italy, were defined and settled; a wise and salutary law, but fallen into disuse, the public good, as is too often the case, giving way to private advantage. Usury, it must be admitted, was an early canker of the commonwealth, the frequent cause of tumult and sedition. Laws were made to repress the mischief, while yet the manners were pure and uncorrupted. In the first ages of the commonwealth interest of money was arbitrary, depending on the will and pleasure of the opulent; but, by a law of the twelve tables, it was reduced to one for the hundred. More was declared illegal. In process of time a new regulation, proposed by the tribunes, lowered it to one half; and, finally, it was abolished altogether. It began however to revive, and, to suppress its growth, new sanctions were established by the au-

times. Some of them were usurious on account of their excess, as may be seen in the following table :

Fœnus	{	Semiunciarium, . . . .	Half per cent.
		Unciarium, . . . .	One per cent.
Usura	{	Triens, . . . .	Three per cent.
		Quadrans, . . . .	Four per cent.
		Quincunx, . . . .	Five per cent.
		Semis, . . . .	Six per cent.
		Bes, . . . .	Eight per cent.
		Deunx, . . . .	Eleven per cent.
		Centesima, . . . .	Twelve per cent.
Centesima quaterna, . . . .	Forty-eight per cent.		
Anatocismus, . . . .	Interest on interest.		

When the sum for the use of money is excessive, or what is now deemed usurious, Tacitus calls it *versura*; and so the word is used by Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, v. 21. See an Essay on the subject of Roman Usury, *Memoirs of the Academy of Belles Lettres*, xxviii. See also Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*, xxii. 22.

thority of the people: but fraud found new expedients, often checked, and as often reappearing in different shapes. In the reign of Tiberius, at the point of time now in question, the complaint was brought before Gracchus the pretor, who was empowered, by virtue of his office, to hear and determine. That magistrate, however, seeing numbers involved in the question, submitted the whole to the consideration of the senate. In that order few were exempt from the general vice. Alarmed for themselves, and wishing to obtain a general immunity, the fathers referred the business to the emperor. Tiberius complied with their request. A year and six months were granted, that men in that time might adjust and settle their accounts, according to law.

XVII. The want of current money brought on a new scene of distress. Creditors pressed to have their accounts balanced, and judgment was signed against such as stood indebted. Their effects were sold, and all the specie was either carried to the public treasury, or swallowed up in the coffers of the prince. To alleviate this inconvenience, the senate ordered, by a decree, that two-thirds of each man's debt should be secured on lands in Italy. But still the creditors claimed the whole of their demand, and the debtor, by consequence, was reduced to the brink of ruin. He wished to save his honor; the necessity pressed; meetings were held; supplications were tried; but the law took its course. The tribunal of the pretor resounded with complaints, and noise, and lamentations. The project of obliging the debtor to sell his lands, and the creditors to purchase, instead of healing the mischief, made it worse. The usurers lay in wait to buy at a reduced price, and, for that purpose, hoarded up their money. The value of lands sunk in propor-

tion to the number of estates on sale, and the debtor was left without resource. Whole families were ruined: their credit was destroyed, and every prospect vanished. Tiberius interposed with seasonable relief. He opened a fund of one hundred thousand great sesterces, as a public loan, for three years, free from interest, on condition that the borrower, for the security of the state, should mortgage lands of double the value. By this salutary aid public credit was revived. The money which had lain in private hands began to circulate; and the order of the senate, directing the sale of land property, fell into disuse. Like most plans of reformation, it was embraced at first with ardor; but the novelty ceased, and the scheme ended in nothing.

XVIII. The rage of prosecutions, from which Rome had an interval of rest, broke out again with collected fury. The first that suffered was Confidius Proculus, on a charge of violated majesty. On his birthday, while he was celebrating that annual festival, he was seized, in the moment of joy, and conducted to the senate-house, where he was tried, condemned, and hurried away to execution. His sister, Sancia, was interdicted from fire and water. The prosecutor who appeared against her was Quintus Pomponius, a fierce and turbulent spirit. To curry favor with the prince, and thereby save his brother, Pomponius Secundus, was the pretence with which this man endeavored to palliate his iniquity. The senate proceeded next against Pompeia Macrina. She was condemned to banishment. Her husband, Argolicus, and Laco, her father-in-law, both of distinguished rank in Achaia, had before this time fallen victims to the cruelty of Tiberius. Macrina's father, an illustrious Roman knight, and her brother, who was of pretorian rank,

to avoid a similar sentence, put an end to their lives. The crime alleged against them was, that their ancestor, Theophanes of Mitylene, had been the confidential friend of Pompey the Great; and that divine honors were paid to the memory of Theophanes by the flattering genius of the Greek nation.

XIX. Sextus Marius, who held the largest possessions in Spain, was the next victim. Incest with his own daughter was the imputed crime: he was precipitated down the Tarpeian rock. That the avarice of Tiberius was the motive for this act of violence was seen beyond the possibility of a doubt, when the gold mines of the unfortunate Spaniard, which were forfeited to the public, were known to be seized by the emperor for his own use. He was now so far plunged in blood, that executions served only to whet his cruelty. At one blow, he ordered all who were detained in prison for their supposed connexion with Sejanus to be put to instant death. A dreadful carnage followed: neither sex nor age was spared; the noble and ignoble perished without distinction; dead bodies in mangled heaps, or scattered up and down, presented a tragic spectacle. Neither friend nor relation dared to approach: none were permitted to soothe the pangs of death, to weep over the deceased, or to bid the last farewell. Guards were stationed to watch the looks of afflicted friends, and to catch intelligence from their tears, till, at length, the putrid bodies were thrown into the Tiber, to drive at the mercy of the winds and waves. Some were carried away by the current; others were thrown on shore: but to burn or bury them was allowed to no man. All were struck with terror, and the last office of humanity was suppressed. Cruelty went on increasing, and every sentiment of the heart was smothered in silence.

XX. About this time Caligula, who paid close attendance on his grandfather in the isle of Capreae, was married to Claudia, the daughter of Marcus Silanus. This young prince had the art to conceal, under the veil of modesty, the most detestable of human characters. Neither the condemnation of his mother, nor the banishment of his brother, could extort from him one word of compassion. He studied the humors of Tiberius; he watched the whim of the day, and set his features accordingly, in dress and language the mimic of his grandfather. Hence the shrewd remark of Passienus, the famous orator; 'There never was a better slave, nor a more detestable master.' A prophetic expression that fell from Tiberius concerning Galba, who was this year in the office of consul, may not unaptly be inserted in this place. Having called him to an audience, in order to penetrate his inmost thoughts, he tried him on various topics, and, at length, told him in Greek, 'You too, Galba, at a future day, will have a taste of sovereign power;' alluding to his elevation late in life, and the shortness of his reign. To look into the seeds of time was the early study of Tiberius. In the isle of Rhodes judicial astrology was his favorite pursuit. In the acquisition of that science he there employed his leisure, under Thrasullus, whose abilities he tried in the following manner.

XXI. Whenever he chose to consult an astrologer he retired with him to the top of the house, attended by a single freedman, selected for the purpose, illiterate, but of great bodily strength. This man conducted the soothsayer whose talents were to be tried along the ridge of the cliff on which the mansion stood; and as he returned, if the emperor suspected fraud, or vain affectation of knowlege, he threw the

impostor headlong into the sea. Tiberius was, by these means, left at ease, and no witness survived to tell the story. Thrasyllus was put to the same test. Being led along the precipice, he answered a number of questions; and not only promised imperial splendor to Tiberius, but opened a scene of future events, in a manner that filled his imagination with astonishment. Tiberius desired to know ‘whether he had cast his own nativity? Could he foresee what was to happen in the course of the year? nay, on that very day?’ Thrasyllus consulted the position of the heavens, and the aspect of the planets: he was struck with fear; he paused; he hesitated; he sunk into profound meditation; terror and amazement shook his frame. Breaking silence at last, ‘I perceive,’ he said, ‘the crisis of my fate: this very moment may be my last.’ Tiberius clasped him in his arms, congratulating him both on his knowledge and his escape from danger. From that moment he considered the predictions of Thrasyllus as the oracles of truth, and the astrologer was ranked in the number of the prince’s confidential friends.

XXII. When I reflect on this fact, and others of a similar nature, I find my judgment so much on the balance, that, whether human affairs are governed<sup>1</sup> by fate and immutable necessity, or left to the wild rota-

1 This whole passage about Fate and Chance shows, after all the philosophy of Plato and Cicero, that nothing but revelation could disperse the mist in which the best understandings were involved. The reasoning of Tacitus calls to mind the passage in Milton:

Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
 In thought more elevate, and reason’d high  
 Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
 Fix’d fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,  
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

tion of chance, I am not able to decide. Among the philosophers of antiquity, and the followers of their different sects among the moderns, two opposite opinions have prevailed. According to the system of one party, 'in all that relates to man, his formation, his progress, and his end, the gods have no concern; and, by consequence, calamity is often the good man's portion, while vice enjoys the pleasures and advantages of the world.' In opposition to this hypothesis, another school maintains 'that the immutable law of fate is perfectly consistent with the events of the moral world: that law,' they tell us, 'does not depend on the course of wandering planets, but is fixed in the first principles of things, supported and preserved by a chain of natural causes. Man, notwithstanding, is left at liberty to choose his sphere of action; but the choice once made, the consequences follow in a regular course, fixed, certain, and inevitable.' By this sect we are farther taught 'that good and evil are not always what vulgar error has so defined: on the contrary, many, whom we see struggling with adversity, are yet perfectly happy; while others, in all the pride and affluence of fortune, are truly wretched. The former, by their fortitude, tower above the ills of life; and the latter, by their indiscretion, poison their own felicity.'

Sublime as this theory may be, there is still a third opinion, which has taken root in the human mind, and cannot be eradicated. According to this doctrine, the color of our lives is fixed in the first moment of our existence; and, though what is foretold, and the events that follow, may often vary, the fallacy is not to be imputed to the art itself, but to the vanity of pretenders to a science, respected by antiquity, and in modern times established by undoubted proof. In



fact, the reign of Nero was foretold by the son of this very Thrasyllus: but this, to avoid a long digression, shall be reserved for its proper place.

XXIII. During the same consulship the death of Asinius Gallus<sup>1</sup> became publicly known. That he died by famine, no man doubted; but whether through compulsion, or wilful abstinence, is uncertain. Application was made for leave to perform his funeral obsequies; nor did Tiberius blush to grant as a favor what was the common right of man. He regretted, however, that a criminal, before he could be convicted in his presence, had escaped the hand of justice; as if in the three years since the charge was laid there was not sufficient time to proceed against a man of consular rank, and the father of consuls.

The death of Drusus followed.<sup>2</sup> By order of Tiberius he was to be starved to death. By chewing the weeds that served for his bed the unhappy prince lingered nine days in misery. At the time when Macro received his orders to act with vigor against Sejanus Tiberius, as some writers assert, gave directions, if that desperate minister had recourse to arms, that Drusus, then confined in the palace, should be produced to the people, and proclaimed emperor. In consequence of this report an opinion prevailed that the prince was on the point of being reconciled to his grandson and his daughter-in-law. But to relent was not in the temper of Tiberius: he was supposed to be mercifully inclined, and he chose rather to display his cruelty.

XXIV. The death of Drusus was not sufficient to

<sup>1</sup> Asinius Gallus was thrown into prison three years before.

<sup>2</sup> Drusus, the son of Germanicus. See an account of his imprisonment in the lower part of the palace, Supplement, v. 7.

satisfy the vengeance of Tiberius. He persecuted the memory of the prince with unextinguished hatred; he imputed to him unnatural passions, and represented him as a person who had not only lost all family affection, but, being possessed of an aspiring genius, was actually employed in concerting measures to overturn the government. He ordered a day-book to be read before the fathers, in which the words and actions of Drusus were carefully recorded. In the annals of history is there any thing to match this black, this horrible inquisition? For a length of time spies of state were appointed to keep a register of words, to interpret looks, and note the groans that issued from the heart. That the grandfather could countenance a plot so black and detestable; that he could listen to the whispered tale; read a clandestine journal, and not only read it in secret, but produce it in the face of day; appears too atrocious to be believed, if the fact was not authenticated by the letters of Actius the centurion, and Didymus the freedman. In the narrative left by those men we find the names of the slaves employed about the prince's person. One struck him, as he came forth from his chamber, another overpowered him with terror and dismay.

The centurion, as if brutality were a merit, boasts of his savage expressions. He relates the words of the prince, in the last ebb of life, spoken against Tiberius, at first perhaps in a feigned delirium, but when his end drew near, in a tone of solemn imprecation, imploring the gods, that he, who imbrued his hands in the blood of his daughter-in-law; who murdered his nephew; who destroyed his grandchildren, and in his own family laid a scene of slaughter, might not escape the punishment due to his crimes. 'Reserve him,' he said, 'reserve him, gods! for your

own just vengeance: let him fall a terrible example to the present age, and to all posterity!’ The fathers, affecting to shudder at imprecations so eager and emphatic, interrupted the reading; but they felt the impression at their hearts. With horror and astonishment they beheld a tyrant, who, with close hypocrisy, had hitherto concealed his crimes, but was now so hardened, that, without shame or remorse, he could throw open prison walls, and show his grandson under the centurion’s lash, exposed to common rufians, and, in the agony of famine, begging a wretched pittance to support expiring nature; but begging it in vain.

XXV. The grief occasioned by the melancholy death of Drusus had not subsided when the public received another shock from the tragic end of Agrippina. The fall of Sejanus afforded a gleam of hope, which, it may be conjectured, helped to support her spirits for some time; but when she saw no alteration of measures, worn out and tired of life, she resolved to close the scene. Her death was said to be voluntary; but if it be true that all nourishment was withheld from her, it is evident that an artful tale was fabricated, to give the appearance of suicide to a cruel and barbarous murder. Even after her decease Tiberius continued still implacable. He loaded her memory with the foulest imputations; he charged her with incontinence; he pronounced Asinius Gallus her adulterer; and when she lost her paramour, life, he said, was no longer worth her care. But the character of Agrippina was invulnerable. It is true that a mind like hers could not brook an equal. Ambition was her ruling passion; and in her views of grandeur the soft desires of her sex were lost. Tiberius added, as a circumstance worthy of being recorded, that she died on the anniversary of the day that freed the world from

Sejanus two years before. That she was not strangled and thrown into the common charnel-house, he thought fit to celebrate as an act of clemency. The senate thanked him for that tender indulgence, and ordained, by a decree, that the fifteenth before the calends of November (the day on which Sejanus and Agrippina both expired) should be observed as a solemn festival, with annual offerings on the altar of Jupiter.

XXVI. Soon after these transactions Cocceius Nerva, the constant companion of the prince, a man distinguished by his knowledge of laws, both human and divine, possessing a splendid fortune, and still in the vigor of health, grew weary of life, and formed a resolution to lay the burden down. Tiberius, on the first intelligence, paid him a visit: he entered into close conversation; he desired to know his motives; he expostulated, tried the force of intreaty, and declared, without reserve, that if a man, so high in favor, without any apparent reason, put an end to his life, it would be a stab to the emperor's peace of mind, and a stain indelible to his reputation. Nerva declined the subject. He persisted in wilful abstinence, and shortly after closed his days. From those who best knew his character and way of thinking we learn the reasons of his conduct. He saw the cloud that was ready to burst on the commonwealth, and struck at once with fear and indignation, he resolved, while yet his honor was unblemished, to escape with glory from the horrors of the time.

Extraordinary as it may seem, the death of Agrippina drew after it the ruin of Plancina. She was formerly the wife of Cneius Piso. The reader will remember the savage joy with which she heard of the death of Germanicus. When her husband perished the influence of Livia, and still more the enmity of

Agrippina, screened her from the punishment due to her crimes. But court favor and private animosity were at an end, and justice took its course. The charge against her was founded on facts of public notoriety. In despair she laid violent hands on herself, and suffered, at last, the slow but just reward of a flagitious life.

XXVII. Amidst the tragic events that covered the city of Rome with one general face of mourning, a new cause of discontent arose from the marriage of Julia (the daughter of Drusus, and lately the wife of Nero) with Rebellius Blandus, whose grandfather, a native of Tibur, and never of higher distinction than the equestrian rank, was fresh in the memory of men still living. Towards the end of the year the funeral of Ælius Lamia was celebrated with all the honors of the censorian order. He had been for some time the nominal governor of Syria, and having resigned that imaginary title was made prefect of Rome. Illustrious by his birth, he lived to a vigorous old age; and, not being suffered to proceed to the province of Syria, he derived from that very restraint additional dignity.<sup>1</sup> The death of Pomponius Flaccus,<sup>2</sup> propretor of Syria,

1 The name of this person was Cossus Ælius Lamia. He united in his character many excellent qualities, but was addicted to liquor, as we learn from Seneca, who says that Tiberius having experienced the good effects of Piso's administration, which succeeded notwithstanding his love of liquor, see Supplement, v. 19, and note 1, appointed Cossus to the office of prefect of the city; a man of wisdom and moderation, but fond of wine, and apt to drink deep. He obtained the province of Syria, but was not suffered to proceed to his government. This, we are told by Tacitus, was a state of suspense habitual to Tiberius. See i. 80, where we are also told why the detention of Lamia added to his dignity. Tiberius was afraid of eminent virtue.

2 Pomponius Flaccus was another of Tiberius' bottle-companions. Suetonius says that the name of the emperor being

which happened soon after the decease of Lamia, produced a letter from Tiberius to the senate, remonstrating, that officers of rank, who by their talents were fit to be at the head of armies, declined the service ; and, by consequence, the emperor was reduced to the necessity of requesting that the fathers would use their influence to induce men of consular rank to undertake the office. He forgot, however, that ten years before Arruntius was appointed to the government of Spain, but during the whole time never permitted to leave the city.

In the course of this year died Manius Lepidus, whose wisdom and moderation have been already mentioned. To say any thing of the nobility of his birth were superfluous, since it is well known that the house of the Æmilii, from whom he derived his pedigree, produced a race of eminent citizens. If any of the family degenerated from the virtue of their ancestors, they continued, notwithstanding, to support the splendor of an ancient and illustrious race.

XXVIII. Paulus Fabius and Lucius Vitellius<sup>1</sup> succeeded to the consulship. In the course of the year the miraculous bird, known to the world by the name of the phœnix,<sup>2</sup> after disappearing for a series of ages,

Tiberius Claudius Nero, he was nicknamed Biberius Caldius Mero ; and after he came to the empire he passed a whole night and two days in a carousing party with Lucius Piso and Pomponius Flaccus ; Suet. in Tib. § 42.

<sup>1</sup> Lucius Vitellius, the new consul, was the father of Vitellius, who was afterwards emperor. See more of him, § xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> The accounts given by the ancients of this wonderful bird, if collected together, would swell into a volume. Tacitus was aware of the decorations of fable ; but of the real existence of such a bird, and its periodical appearance in Egypt, he entertained no kind of doubt. It has been objected by some critics that he breaks the thread of his narrative for

revisited Egypt. A phenomenon so very extraordinary could not fail to produce abundance of curious speculation. The learning of Egypt was displayed, and Greece exhausted her ingenuity. The facts, about which there seems to be a concurrence of opinions, with other circumstances, in their nature doubtful, yet worthy of notice, will not be unwelcome to the reader.

That the phœnix is sacred to the sun, and differs from the rest of the feathered species, in the form of its head and the tincture of its plumage, are points settled by the naturalists. Of its longevity the ac-

the sake of a trifling digression: but it should be remembered, that what is now known to be a fable was formerly received as a certain truth. It was therefore in the time of Tacitus an interesting description, and even now curiosity is gratified with the particulars of so celebrated a fiction. La Bletterie observes that since the Christian era many learned and pious writers have been carried away by the torrent, and embraced the popular opinion. He says the word *φοινίξ*, signifying *palma*, the palm-tree, as well as the bird in question, Tertullian was so ingenious as to find the phœnix mentioned in Scripture. The Latin translators have said *Justus ut palma florebit*; he translates it, *Justus ut phœnix florebit*. Pliny the naturalist seems to dwell with pleasure on the particulars of the birth, the age, the death, and revival, of this wonderful bird. He says that a pretended phœnix was brought to Rome from Egypt, A. U. C. 800, and exhibited as a public spectacle in the forum; but the people considered it as an imposition. Pomponius Mela has given an elegant description of the phœnix. The substance of what he says is, when it has lived five hundred years it expires on its own nest, and, being regenerated, carries the bones of its former frame to Heliopolis, the city of the Sun, and there, on an altar covered with Arabian spices, performs a fragrant funeral; Mela, iii. 9. Mariana, the Spanish historian, who wrote in modern times, may be added to the Christian writers who have mentioned this bird with pious credulity. He considers the reappearance of the phœnix, towards the end of Tiberius, as a prognostic of the resurrection, because it revives out of its own ashes. See his History of Spain, iv. 1. See also Sir J. Mandeville.

counts are various. The common persuasion is that it lives five hundred years, though by some writers the date is extended to fourteen hundred and sixty-one. The several eras when the phoenix has been seen are fixed by tradition. The first we are told was in the reign of Sesostris; the second in that of Amasis; and in the period when Ptolemy, the third of the Macedonian race, was seated on the throne of Egypt, another phoenix directed his flight towards Heliopolis, attended by a group of various birds, all attracted by the novelty, and gazing with wonder at so beautiful an appearance. For the truth of this account we do not presume to answer. The facts lie too remote; and, covered as they are with the mists of antiquity, all farther argument is suspended.

From the reign of Ptolemy to Tiberius the intermediate space is not quite two hundred and fifty years. From that circumstance it has been inferred by many that the last phoenix was neither of the genuine kind, nor came from the woods of Arabia. The instinctive qualities of the species were not observed to direct its motions. It is the genius, we are told, of the true phoenix, when its course of years is finished, and the approach of death is felt, to build a nest in its native clime, and there deposit the principles of life, from which a new progeny arises. The first care of the young bird, as soon as fledged, and able to trust to its wings, is to perform the obsequies of his father. But this duty is not undertaken rashly. He collects a quantity of myrrh, and, to try his strength, makes frequent excursions with a load on his back. When he has made his experiment through a long tract of air, and gains sufficient confidence in his own vigor, he takes up the body of his father, and flies with it to the altar of the sun, where he leaves it to be consumed in



flames of fragrance. Such is the account of this extraordinary bird. It has no doubt a mixture of fable; but that the phœnix, from time to time, appears in Egypt, seems to be a fact sufficiently ascertained.

XXIX. Rome continued to stream with the blood of eminent citizens. Pomponius Labeo, who had been, as already mentioned, governor of Mysia, opened his veins and bled to death. His wife Paxæa had the spirit to follow his example. Suicide was the only refuge from the hand of the executioner. Those who waited for the sentence of the law incurred a forfeiture, and were, besides, deprived of the rites of sepulture; while to such as died by their own hand funeral ceremonies were allowed, and their wills were valid. Such was the reward of dispatch!<sup>1</sup> Self-destruction was made

1 Tacitus seems here to make the apology of suicide. It was fear of the executioner that hurried men on self-destruction. A second reason was, the accused, who died before sentence of condemnation by their own hands, saved their effects for their relations, and were allowed the rites of sepulture. The idea of being strangled and thrown into the Tiber was shocking to the imagination. It is remarkable that a law against suicide was unknown to the Romans in every period of their history. The motives for embracing a voluntary death continued, as stated by Tacitus, till the reign of Antoninus. That emperor, A. U. C. 965, of the Christian era 212, confiscated the effects of all who put an end to their lives to avoid final judgment. In other respects suicide was not restrained; it was rather countenanced. If no prosecution was commenced, the estate of the person who in a fit of insanity destroyed himself passed by his will, or descended to his heirs. So far was right: but the same rule was extended to those who were weary of life, and for that reason put an end to their days. See the Code, ix. tit. 1. It was a maxim of the stoic school that there was nothing better in human life than the power of ending it; Pliny, xxviii. 1. The impious tenets of a dogmatical sect were able to silence the law of nature. Socrates was of a different opinion; that best of philosophers says, in the Phædo of Plato, that we all are placed by Providence in our proper stations, and no man has a right to desert his post. Aristotle calls suicide the act

the interest of mankind. On the subject of Labeo's death Tiberius wrote to the senate. He observed, 'That in ancient times, when all ties of friendship were to be dissolved, it was the custom to give notice to the discarded party that his visits were no longer agreeable. In that manner he had acted with Labeo; all connexion was at an end. But that unhappy man, finding himself charged with the iniquity of his government, and pressed by the weight of other crimes, made a show of injured innocence, with intent to throw the odium of his death on the emperor. The example was fatal to his wife. She took the alarm, and perished with her husband. She might have quelled her fears; for, though her guilt was manifest, she might have lived in safety.'

A new prosecution was commenced against Mamerus Scaurus,<sup>1</sup> a distinguished senator, famous as well for his eloquence as the nobility of his birth, but a libertine in his conduct. He had been connected with

of a timid, not of a noble mind. It was the maxim of Pythagoras, that without leave from the commander-in-chief, that is, from God, it is unlawful to quit our post; and Cicero, who records that excellent doctrine (*De Senectute*), says, in another place, that it is the duty of the good and pious to keep the soul in its tenement of clay; and, without the order of him who gave it, no one should rush out of this life, lest he incur the guilt of rejecting the gift of Providence; *Somnium Scipionis*, § 7. Since the law of nature, speaking in the human heart, was not attended to, no wonder that the voice of a few philosophers was not heard. The Pagans required the light of revelation.

1 We have seen Mamerus Scaurus marked as a victim, this book, § 9. Seneca says he was designed by nature for a great orator, but he fell short, owing to his own neglect. Dio informs us that the tragedy for which he was accused was founded on the story of Atreus; and that Tiberius, thinking himself glanced at, said, 'Since he makes me another Atreus, I will make him an Ajax; meaning, that he would force him to destroy himself; Dio, lviii.

Sejanus, but on that account no danger threatened him. The enmity of Macro, who practised the wiles of Sejanus, but with deeper policy, was the cause of his ruin. A tragedy written by Scaurus was the ground of the charge. Some lines were cited from the piece, and, by a strained construction, said to point obliquely at Tiberius. But to make sure work, Servilius and Cornelius, two informers by profession, accused him of adultery with the younger Livia, and of secret practices in the magic art. Scaurus, with a spirit worthy of the ancient Æmilii, from whom he was descended, resolved not to linger for a public sentence. His wife Sexitia exhorted him to an act of bravery, and died herself, with the courage which she recommended.

XXX. Amidst these acts of violence, the informers, in their turn, were abandoned to their fate. Servilius and Cornelius, who, by their conduct to Scaurus, had brought on themselves the public detestation, were charged with taking a bribe to compound a prosecution commenced by themselves against Varius Ligor. They were both interdicted from fire and water, and transported to the islands. A similar fate attended Abudius Rufo. This man had discharged the office of edile, and also served, at the head of a legion, under Lentulus Getulicus. He turned informer against his commanding officer, alleging that he had projected a match between his daughter and one of the sons of Sejanus. He construed this into a crime, and for the attempt was banished from Rome. At the time when this prosecution was set on foot Getulicus commanded the legions in Upper Germany. Distinguished by his clemency, and without rigor maintaining military discipline, he was the idol of the soldiers. By his interest with his father-in-law, Lucius Apronius, he was also

high in credit with the other army, which was stationed at a small distance. In this situation it is said, not without probability, that he had the courage to despatch a letter to Tiberius, to the following effect: 'The proposed alliance with Sejanus did not originate with himself: the emperor had recommended it. The meanest citizen is liable to error no less than the prince. To mistake with impunity cannot be the prerogative of the emperor, and, at the same time, a crime in others. For himself, his fidelity remained inviolate, and if no snare was laid for his ruin nothing could shake his principles. Should a successor be sent to supersede him in the command, he should understand it as the prologue to a sentence of condemnation. But there were conditions on which something like a treaty between both parties might be settled: he desired to remain unmolested in the government of the province, and Tiberius might give the law to the rest of the Roman world.' Incredible as this anecdote may appear, it gains an air of authenticity when it is considered that, of all the favorites of Sejanus, Getulicus was the only person who had the secret to preserve his life, and live in the good graces of the prince. The truth is, Tiberius knew that he had incurred the public hatred. Worn out with age and infirmities, he was wise enough to reflect, that fame and the opinion of mankind, rather than the exercise of power, must for the future be the pillars of his government.

XXXI. In the consulship of Caius Cestius<sup>1</sup> and

1 La Bletterie in his note, at the opening of this year, says, since Tacitus has given the history of the phoenix, he thinks an account of the extraordinary crow, that for a long time amused the people of Rome, will not be unacceptable to the reader. He gives the whole detail from Pliny the elder. The crow it seems belonged to a shoemaker, and was soon taught to articulate words. It went every morning to the

Marcus Servilius a deputation from the Parthian nobility, without the concurrence or privity of Artabanus, their king, arrived at Rome. While the arms of Germanicus filled the east with terror that monarch continued to adhere with good faith to the Romans, and to rule his own dominions with equity and moderation. He broke out afterwards with open violence; to Rome proud and arrogant; to his people fierce and unrelenting. The prosperous events of war with the neighboring nations inspired him with the pride and insolence of victory. He saw Tiberius in the decline of life, a feeble prince,<sup>1</sup> disarmed, and powerless. Armenia was the object of his ambition. Artaxias,<sup>2</sup> king of the country, was no sooner dead than he placed his eldest son Arsaces on the vacant throne. His arrogance did not stop there. By his ambassadors he demanded, in haughty and imperious terms, immediate restitution of the treasures left by Vonones<sup>3</sup> in Syria and Cilicia. He laid claim, besides, to all the territories formerly belonging to the Persians and Macedonians. He added, in a style of vainglory, that whatever was possessed by Cyrus, and afterwards by

rostrum, and there distinctly pronounced, 'Good day, Tiberius! Good day, Germanicus! Good day, Drusus!' This continued for several years. The bird was at last killed by another shoemaker in the neighborhood, who fell a sacrifice to the resentment of the populace. The bird was afterwards buried near the Appian road with the greatest parade, and a long procession of Roman citizens. See Pliny, x. 43.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius says Tiberius was severely lashed in a letter from Artabanus, king of the Parthians, upbraiding him with parricide, murder, cowardice, and luxury, and advising him to expiate his guilt by a voluntary death; in Tib. § 66.

<sup>2</sup> Artaxias III., who was seated on the throne of Armenia by Germanicus. See ii. 56 and 64.

<sup>3</sup> Vonones was deposed by the Armenians, and obliged to take refuge at Pompeiopolis, a maritime city of Cilicia; Annals, ii. 4 and 58.

Alexander, was his undoubted right, and he was determined to recover the same by force of arms.

The Parthians, in the mean time, by the advice of Sinnaces, a man of great opulence and noble birth, sent their secret embassy to Rome. The measure was supported by Abdus,<sup>1</sup> the eunuch. In the eastern nations the loss of manhood is no degradation: on the contrary, it leads to power and preferment. With those two leading chiefs the grandees of Parthia entered into a conspiracy. But still to wear the regal diadem, one only of the race of the Arsacides could be found. The greatest part of that family was cut off by Artabanus, and the survivors were too young to govern. The Parthians therefore desired that Tiberius would send Phraates,<sup>2</sup> son of the king of that name, to mount the throne of his ancestors. That title and the sanction of Rome would be sufficient. Let a prince of the house of Arsaces, under the protection of Tiberius, show himself on the banks of the Euphrates, and nothing more was necessary; a revolution would be the certain consequence.

XXXII. The enterprize was agreeable to the wishes of Tiberius. He despatched Phraates, enriched with presents, and every mark of splendor suited to the royal dignity. But still it was his fixed plan not to depart from his former resolution to work by stratagem, and, if possible, to avoid a war. The secret transpired at the Parthian court. Artabanus was thrown into a state of violent perplexity. Revenge and fear took possession of him by turns. In the idea of an eastern monarch, indecision is the mark of a

1 The custom of advancing eunuchs to the highest stations has been, in all ages, a custom with the princes of the east.

2 He was the son of Phraates IV., and had been sent by his father as an hostage to Augustus; *Annals*, ii. 1.

servile mind. Vigor and sudden enterprise are attributes of the royal character. In the present juncture those notions gave way, and his interest conquered prejudices. He invited Abdus to a banquet, and, by a slow poison, rendered him unfit for action. With Sinnaces he thought it best to dissemble. He loaded him with presents, and by employing him in state affairs, left him no leisure for clandestine machinations. Meanwhile Phraates arrived in Syria. Willing to conform to the customs of the east, he threw off the dress and manners of the Romans. The transition, however, was too violent; and his constitution proving unequal to so sudden a change, he was carried off by a fit of illness. Tiberius was unwilling to relinquish a measure which he had once approved. He named Tiridates, descended from the same stock with Phraates, as a fit rival to contend with Artabanus.

In order to recover the kingdom of Armenia, he entered into an alliance with Mithridates, a prince of the Iberian line, having beforehand contrived to reconcile him to his brother Pharasmanes, then the reigning monarch of Iberia. An important scene was now opening in the east. To conduct the whole, Tiberius gave the command to Lucius Vitellius.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> L. Vitellius was consul in the preceding year. See this book, § 28, and note 1. In his administration of Syria he conducted himself with integrity and wisdom; and on his return to Rome he thought it the best policy to atone for his virtues by the practice of every vice. He gave rise to the worshipping of Caligula as a god. He approached that emperor with his face veiled, and fell prostrate at his feet. Caligula received the impious homage, and forgave Vitellius all his merit in the east. He ranked him among his favorites. Caligula wished to have it thought that he was a lover of the Moon, and highly favored by that goddess. He appealed to Vitellius as an eye-witness of his intrigue. 'Sir,' said the courtier, 'when you gods are in conjunction, you are invisible to mortal eyes.' In the following reign, to secure the

character of this officer is well known. He showed himself in his true colors to the people of Rome, in-somuch, that his memory is held in detestation. In the east, however, his conduct was irreproachable. He acted in the province with the integrity of an ancient Roman. After his return he renounced that character altogether, a ready apostate from every virtue. His dread of Caligula, and his intimacy with Claudius, transformed him into an abject slave. He is now remembered as a model of the vilest adulation. What was praiseworthy in the beginning of his days changed to infamy in his riper years. The virtues of youth gave way to the vices of age.

XXXIII. Mithridates was the first of the petty kings of Asia who took a decisive part. He drew his brother Pharasmanes into the league, and engaged that monarch to employ both force and stratagem to promote the enterprise. By their agents they bribed the servants of Arsaces to end their master's life by poison. The Iberians, in the mean time, entered Armenia with a numerous army, and took possession of the city of Artaxata. On the first intelligence Artabanus despatched his son Orodes, at the head of the Parthian forces, to oppose the enemy, and, in the mean time, sent out his officers to negotiate for a body

favor of Claudius, who was the easy dupe of his wives, he requested it as the greatest favor of Messalina that she would be graciously pleased to let him take off her shoes. His petition was granted. Vitellius carried the shoes to his own house, and made it his constant practice to kiss them before company. He worshipped the golden images of Narcissus and Pallas, and ranked them with his household gods. When Claudius celebrated the secular games, which were to be at the end of every century (see xi. 11), he carried his adulation so far, as to say to the emperor, 'May you often perform this ceremony!' It may be said of him, that he left his virtues in his province, and at Rome resumed his vices. See Suet. in Vitell. § 2.



of auxiliaries. Pharasmanes, on his part, spared no pains to reinforce his army. He engaged the Albanians in this service. He listed the Sarmatians; but a part of that people, called the Sceptucians, were willing, according to the custom of the nation, to be hired by any of the powers at war, the ready mercenaries in every quarrel. They were at that time actually engaged on both sides, and of course divided against themselves. The Iberians, having secured the defiles and narrow passes of the country, poured down from the Caspian mountains a large body of their Sarmatian auxiliaries, and soon overran all Armenia. The Parthians were not able to advance. The enemy was in force at every post, one only road excepted, and that, extending between the Caspian sea and the mountains of Albania, was impassable in the summer months. In that season of the year the Etesian<sup>1</sup> winds blow constantly one way, and, driving the waves before them, lay the country under water. In the winter the wind from the south rolls the flood back into the deep, and leaves the country a dry and naked shore.

XXXIV. While Orodes saw his succors cut off, Pharasmanes with augmented numbers advanced against him. He offered battle, but the enemy declined the conflict. The Iberian rode up to the intrenchments; he endeavored to provoke the enemy; he cut off their forage, and invested their camp. The Parthians, not used to brook dishonor, gathered in a body round the prince, and demanded the decision of the sword. Their main strength consisted in their cavalry. Pharasmanes added to his horse a large body of infantry. His own subjects, and the forces

<sup>1</sup> The Etesian wind, or the north-east, begins in the beginning of July, and blows during the dog-days. The south-west continues during the winter.

from Albania, dwelling chiefly in wilds and forests, were inured, by their mode of life, to labor and fatigue. If we may believe the account which they give of their origin, they are descended from the people of Thessaly, who followed Jason when that adventurer, having issue by Medea, returned to Colchis, on the death of Æetes, to take possession of the vacant throne. Concerning the Greek hero, and the oracle of Phryxus,<sup>1</sup> various traditions are current amongst them. For the last their veneration is such, that in their sacrifices a ram is never offered as a victim, the people conceiving that Phryxus was conveyed across the sea by an animal of that species, or in a ship with that figure at the head. The two armies were drawn out in order of battle. Orodes, to animate the valor of his men, called to mind the glory of the eastern empire, and the race of the Arsacides. 'They were now to cope with a band of mercenaries, led by an Iberian chief, of mean extraction, ignoble, and obscure.' In the opposite army Pharasmanes pressed every topic that could inflame the ardor of his troops. 'They were men that never yielded to the Parthian yoke; they fought now for conquest: the more bold the enterprise, the greater would be their glory. If they gave ground, or turned their backs on the enemy, shame and ruin would pursue them. Look round,' he said, 'and view both armies. Behold on our side a dreadful front of war; on that of the enemy an unwarlike band of Medes, gay in their apparel, and glittering with gold. Here we have men and steel; there cowards, and booty to reward our valor.'

XXXV. In the Sarmatian ranks it was not the

1 Phryxus was the first that sailed to Colchis in pursuit of riches. Jason went afterwards on the same errand, which was called the Golden Fleece.

general only that harangued the men. By mutual exhortations, according to their custom, they roused each other's valor. They resolved to reserve their darts, and rush on to a close engagement. The field of battle presented an attack in different forms. The Parthians, skilled alike in the onset and the retreat, endeavored to open their ranks, in order to gain room for the discharge of their arrows. The Sarmatians threw their bows aside, determined with their swords and pikes to decide the fortune of the day. In one place was seen an engagement of the cavalry; they advanced to the charge; they wheeled about; they charged with sudden velocity. In another quarter the infantry fought hand to hand, and buckler to buckler. They attacked, and were repulsed; they wounded, and were wounded. The Iberians and Albanians grappled with the enemy; they pulled them by main force from their horses; they distracted them by two different modes of engaging. Their cavalry rushed on, and their infantry stood close embodied. The two adverse generals, Orodes and Pharasmanes, exerted every effort. They rushed into the heat of action; they encouraged the brave; they rallied the broken ranks, and signalled themselves in every part of the field. Conspicuous to all, at length they knew each other. At the sight, with instinctive fury, their horses at full speed, they rushed forward to the charge, bellowing revenge, and darting their javelins. Pharasmanes, with a well-directed weapon, pierced the helmet of Orodes; but, hurried on by the fury of his horse, he was not able to pursue his advantage. Orodes was sheltered by his guards, who fled to his assistance. A report that he was slain spread through the ranks. The spirit of the Parthians began to droop, and victory declared for the Iberians.

XXXVI. Artabanus, to repair the loss, marched with the whole strength of his kingdom. The Iberians knew the course of the country, and by their valor gained a second victory. The Parthian, notwithstanding, kept the field till such time as Vitellius advanced with his legions, intending, as was industriously given out, to enter Mesopotamia. To avoid a war with Rome, the Parthian king abandoned Armenia, and returned to his own dominions. From that time his ruin may be dated. Vitellius carried on a correspondence with the leading men of Parthia, and, to incite them to a revolt, represented Artabanus as a king cruel in time of peace, and in war disastrous to the whole nation. Sinnaces, at the head, as already mentioned, of a powerful faction, drew to his interest his father, Abdageses, and other malecontents, who were now, by the unprosperous events of war, determined to throw off the mask. A great number through fear, and not from principle, hitherto inactive, went over to the disaffected. Artabanus found himself deserted on every side. He had only one expedient left. He chose for his body-guard a band of mercenaries, men void of honor, the outcast of their country, to good and evil, vice and virtue, alike indifferent, and for their hire ready to perpetrate every crime. With these attendants the fugitive monarch sought the frontiers of Scythia. His ruined cause, he still hoped, would find support from the Carmanians, and the people of Hyrcania, with whom he was connected by ties of affinity. He relied, moreover, on the fickle temper of the Parthians. A wavering and inconstant people, always disgusted with the reigning prince, and, after his expulsion, prone to repent, might act towards himself with the same versatility, and once more declare in his favor.

XXXVII. The throne being in this manner vacant, and the Parthians, in their rage for innovation, appearing ready to embrace a new master, Vitellius thought it time to fire the ambition of Tiridates, and, to support him in the enterprise, marched with the auxiliaries, and the strength of his legions, to the banks of the Euphrates. In order to propitiate the river-god,<sup>1</sup> preparations were made for a solemn sacrifice. The Roman, according to the rites of his country, offered a swine, a ram, and a bull: a horse was the victim slain by Tiridates. While they were thus employed the people of the country came in with an account that the Euphrates, without any fall of rain, swelled miraculously above its banks, and the waves with a rapid motion turning round in circling eddies, the foam on the surface presented the form of a diadem. This was deemed a favorable omen. By others, who judged with more penetration, the prognostic was seen in a different light. According to their interpretation, it promised success at first, and a speedy reverse of fortune. In support of this opinion it was observed, that the earth and heavens hold forth unerring signals; but the omens collected from the appearance of rivers were, like the element from which they spring, always uncertain. They appear and vanish in a moment.

A bridge of boats being prepared, the whole army passed over the Euphrates. While they lay encamped Ornospades, at the head of a large body of cavalry, amounting to several thousands, came in as an auxiliary. This man was a native of Parthia, formerly banished from his country; but for his services under

<sup>1</sup> Rivers were supposed to have their presiding deity, and were therefore worshipped by the Persians and the oriental nations as well as by the Romans.

Tiberius, during the war in Dalmatia,<sup>1</sup> admitted to the privileges of a Roman citizen. Being afterwards reconciled to his native prince, he rose to the first honors of the state, and was appointed governor of that whole region which lies between the Tigris and the Euphrates, for that reason called Mesopotamia. Sinaces, in a short time after, joined the army with a strong reinforcement. Abdageses, the pillar of the party, delivered up the royal treasure, and the richest ornaments of the crown. Vitellius considered the business as finished. The Roman eagles appeared on the banks of the Euphrates, and more was unnecessary. He gave his best advice to Tiridates and the authors of the revolution. Addressing himself to the prince, 'Remember,' he said, 'that you are the grandson of Phraates, and that you have been trained up by Tiberius: let that reflection be ever present to your mind: it will animate you in the career of glory.' He exhorted the grandees of Parthia to pay obedience to their king, and due respect to the Roman name. By being faithful to both, they would at once fulfil their engagements, and maintain their honor. Having made this arrangement, he returned with his legions into Syria.

XXXVIII. In relating these transactions, I have thrown together, in one connected series, the business of two campaigns; in order, by a view of Asiatic affairs, to relieve the attention of the reader, and give the mind some respite from domestic misery. From the death of Sejanus three years had elapsed, and yet neither time nor supplications, nor even a deluge of blood, could soften the cruelty of Tiberius. Things that mitigate the resentment of others made no im-

1 Tiberius ended the Dalmatic war A. U. C. 763.

pression on that unforgiving temper. Crimes of an ancient date were revived as recent facts, and charges without proof passed for demonstrations of guilt. The band of informers joined in a league against Fulcinius Trio.<sup>1</sup> That citizen, knowing that his fate was determined, put an end to his life. In his will he spoke in the bitterest terms of Macro and the emperor's freedmen. Nor did he spare Tiberius. 'His understanding,' he said, 'was reduced by years and infirmity to a state of dotage, and his long absence was no better than banishment from his country.' These reflections the heirs of Trio wished to suppress; but Tiberius ordered the will to be read in public; perhaps to show the world that he could allow full liberty of thinking, and despise the censure that pointed at himself; perhaps, having been for many years blind to the villany of Sejanus, he chose, at last, that invectives of every sort should be brought to light, to the end that truth, always warped by flattery, might reach his ear, though undisguised, and at the expense of his reputation. About the same time died by his own hand Granius Martianus, a member of the senate, who found himself attacked by Caius Gracchus on the law of violated majesty. Tattius Granius, who had served the office of pretor, was prosecuted in like manner, and condemned to suffer death.

XXXIX. The same fate attended Trebellienus Rufus<sup>2</sup> and Sextius Paconianus: the former despatched himself, and the latter for some sarcastic verses against

1 A virulent prosecutor. See ii. 28. He was consul with Memmius Regulus, from August to the end of the year 784. See Supplement, v. 29.

2 Trebellienus Rufus was made guardian to the children of Cotys, the Thracian king, ii. 67. For Paconianus, see this book, § 3 and 4.

the emperor, the production of his prison hours, was strangled in the jail. Of all these tragic scenes Tiberius had the earliest intelligence; not as before, by messengers that crossed the sea to the isle of Capræ; he heard the news in the very neighborhood of Rome, hovering about the city at so small a distance, that often on the same day, or, at most, a single night intervening, the consuls received his answers to their dispatches, and his final orders for immediate vengeance. He placed himself in a situation so near the theatre of horror, that he could almost see the blood that streamed in every family, and hear the stroke of the executioner.

Towards the end of the year died Poppæus Sabinus,<sup>1</sup> a man of humble birth, but, by the partiality of two emperors, raised to the consulship, and distinguished by triumphal honors. During a series of four-and-twenty years the government of considerable provinces was committed to his care, not for any extraordinary talents, but because he had a capacity of a level for business, and not above it.

**XL.** The next consulship was that of Quintus Plautius and Sextus Papinius. In the course of this year Lucius Aruseius and others died under the hand of the executioner: their fate, however cruel, passed unheeded among the common occurrences of the time. Scenes of blood were grown familiar, and made no impression. And yet the fate of Vibulenus Agrippa was attended with circumstances that struck a general panic. His trial came on before the senate. As soon as the prosecutors closed their case he swallowed a deadly poison which he had concealed under his robe,

<sup>1</sup> Poppæus Sabinus was consul in the time of Augustus, A. U. C. 762. He commanded in Mœsia, Achaia, and Macedonia, and obtained triumphal honors, i. 80.



and instantly expired. He was seized notwithstanding, and in that condition dragged to a dungeon, where the lictor fastened his cord<sup>1</sup> round the neck of a dead man. Even Tigranes,<sup>2</sup> who had formerly swayed the sceptre of Armenia, suffered without distinction. The title of royalty did not exempt him from the lot of a common citizen.

Caius Galba,<sup>3</sup> of consular rank, and the two Blæsi, embraced a voluntary death; Galba, because by letters from Tiberius, written in terms of acrimony, he was excluded from the usual mode of obtaining a province by lot; and the Blæsi, because the order of priesthood which had been promised in the day of their prosperity was, since they were no longer in favor, withheld from them, and to those vacant dignities others were appointed. A step so decisive they considered as nothing less than a signal to die; and they obeyed.

Æmilia Lepida, whose marriage with Drusus has been mentioned, remained during the life of Lepidus, her father, in perfect security, but detested by the public. Her protector being now no more, the informers seized their opportunity, and accused her of adultery with a slave. Of her guilt no doubt was entertained. She made no defence, but executed justice on herself.

XLI. About this time the Cliteans, a people subject to Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, impatient of being taxed according to the system practised in the Roman provinces, made a secession to the heights of

1 This was done that, under color of dying by the hands of the executioner, his goods might be confiscated. See in this book, § 29.

2 Josephus mentions this fact. He says Tigranes was grandson to Herod.

3 Caius Galba was brother to Galba, afterwards emperor.

Mount Taurus. Being there possessed of the advantage ground, they were able to defend themselves against their sovereign and his unwarlike troops. To quell the insurgents Vitellius, governor of Syria, despatched Marcus Trebellius, at the head of four thousand legionary soldiers and a select detachment of auxiliaries. The barbarians had taken post on two hills: the least was called Cadra, and the other Davara. Trebellius inclosed both with lines of circumvallation. All who dared to sally out were put to the sword; the rest were reduced by thirst and famine.

Meanwhile Tiridates was well-nigh established on the throne of Parthia. The cities of Nicephorium, Anthemusia, and other places, originally settled by the Macedonians, and from their founders deriving names of Greek termination, opened their gates to the new monarch. Halus and Artemita, two Parthian cities, followed the example, the people every where vying with each other in demonstrations of joy. A revolution, by which Artabanus, a tyrant bred among the Scythians, was driven from the throne, gave universal satisfaction to the Parthians. They knew that Tiridates had been educated among the Romans; and, from his arts of civilisation, expected a mild and equitable government.

XLII. The inhabitants of Seleucia declared for the new king in a style of flattery that exceeded all their neighbors. Seleucia is a fortified city of considerable strength. The barbarity of Parthian manners never gained admission amongst them. Being a colony planted by Seleucus, they still retained the institutions of their Grecian founder. A body of three hundred, chosen for their wealth or superior wisdom, gave the form of a senate. The people have their share in the government. When both orders act with

a spirit of union they are too strong for the Parthians. If they clash among themselves, and one faction looks abroad for support, the foreign prince who arrives as the friend of a party becomes the oppressor of all. In the reign of Artabanus this fatal consequence was actually felt. That monarch threw the whole weight into the scale of the nobles; and the people, in consequence, were surrendered as the slaves of a violent aristocracy. This form of government was agreeable to the ideas of eastern despotism. A regular democracy holds too much of civil liberty, while the domination of the few differs but little from absolute monarchy.

The reception of Tiridates at Seleucia was splendid beyond all example. To the homage which the practice of ages had established new honors were added by the inventive genius of flattery. Amidst the applause and acclamations of the people, reproaches loud and vehement were thrown out against Artabanus; a man related, by the maternal line only, to the house of the Arsacidæ, and by his actions a disgrace to the name. Tiridates sided with the people of Seleucia, and restored the democracy. A day for his coronation was still to be fixed. While that business was in agitation dispatches arrived from Hiero and Phraates, two leading men, and governors of extensive provinces. They desired that the ceremony might be deferred for a few days. A request from men of their importance came with weight, and was accordingly followed. The court, in the mean time, removed to Ctesiphon, the capital of the empire, and the seat of government. New delays were thrown in the way by the two grandees, and the business of the coronation was protracted from time to time. At length the regent of the coun-

try, called the surena,<sup>1</sup> proceeded, according to the national custom, to solemnise the inauguration of the king. In the presence of a numerous assembly, and amidst the shouts and acclamations of the people, he invested Tiridates with the regal diadem.

XLIII. If, after this ceremony, Tiridates had penetrated at once into the heart of the kingdom, and shown himself to the interior provinces, by that decisive step the minds of such as wavered had been fixed, and the prince had mounted the throne with the consent of the nation. He stayed, imprudently, to amuse himself with the siege of a castle in which were lodged the concubines of Artabanus, with all the royal treasure. The delay gave time for treachery and revolt. Phraates, Hiero, and others of the nobility who were not present at the coronation, turned their thoughts, with their usual love of innovation, towards the deposed king. For this conduct their motives were various. Some acted from their fears, and others from their ill-will to Abdageses, who had gained the supreme authority at court, and the intire ascendancy over the new monarch. The malecontents went in quest of Artabanus. He was found in Hyrcania, covered with wretchedness, and with his bow and arrow procuring his daily sustenance. On the first appearance of his friends he was seized with terror, suspecting nothing less than treachery, and a design against his life. Being assured of their fidelity, and their resolution to restore him to his dominions, he felt his hopes revived: 'Whence,' he said, 'this sudden change?' Hiero gave the answer: 'Tiridates is no

<sup>1</sup> The office of surena was in point of dignity next to the prince.

better than a boy; nor is the royal dignity vested in a prince descended from the line of the Arsacidæ. Enervated by the luxuries of Rome, the stripling contents himself with the shadow of authority, while the whole power of the state is in the hands of Abdageses.'

XLIV. The politic king, formed during a long reign in the school of experience, knew that men whose friendship is fallacious may notwithstanding be believed when they avow their hatred. Without loss of time he raised a supply of men among the Scythians, and marched forward with intent to give no time either to the arts of his enemies or the natural levity of his friends. The sordid habit in which he was found he still continued to wear; hoping, by his wretched appearance, to make an impression on the passions of the multitude. He omitted nothing that could serve his cause; by fraud, by intreaty, by every artifice, he tried to allure the wavering, and to animate the brave. By rapid marches he soon reached the neighborhood of Seleucia, at the head of a powerful army.

Tiridates, alarmed at the news of his approach, and soon after terrified at his actual presence, began to deliberate about the measures in that exigence fittest to be pursued. Should he try the issue of a battle, or draw the war into length? In his councils there was nothing like decision. The officers of warlike spirit were for a sudden blow; while the rash levies of Artabanus, out of heart, fatigued by their march, and not yet united by principle, had as yet no affection for a king whom they had so lately deposed. Traitors yesterday, they were now no better than pretended friends. Abdageses was of a contrary opinion. To retreat into Mesopotamia was, in his judgment, the safest measure. Having gained the opposite side of the river, Tiridates might there stand at bay till the

Armenians, the Elymæans, and other nations in their rear, had time to take the field. Succors might be expected from the Roman general. When their forces were all assembled, it would then be time to hazard a battle. This measure was adopted. Abdageses was high in authority, and the unwarlike genius of Tiridates shrunk from danger. Their retreat had the appearance of an army put to the rout. The consequences were fatal. The Arabs were the first to abandon Tiridates: a general defection followed. Some betook themselves to their native home, and others went over to the standard of Artabanus. Tiridates, with a handful of men, passed into Syria, and by his conduct made the apology of all who deserted his cause. None had reason to blush for betraying a man who betrayed himself.

XLV. In the course of this year a dreadful fire broke out at Rome, and laid Mount Aventine, with part of the adjoining circus, in ashes. Tiberius had the address to turn this calamity to his own glory. He ordered the value of the houses and insulated mansions<sup>1</sup> which were destroyed to be paid to the respective owners. The sum amounted to no less than one hundred thousand great sesterces. The munificence of the prince was the more applauded, as building for his own use was not his taste. The temple of Augustus and Pompey's Theatre were his only public structures. When both were finished, he did not so much as think of dedicating them; perhaps to show his contempt of fame; perhaps because old age had sunk his vigor. To estimate the damage sustained by each individual, his four sons-in-law were appointed; namely, Cneius Domitius, Cassius

1 Houses detached intirely, and contiguous to no other building, were called insulated houses.

Longinus, Marcus Vinicius, and Rubellius Blandus. At the desire of the consuls Publius Petronius was added to the commission. Public honors were decreed to the emperor with all the variety that adulation could suggest. Which were acceptable, and which rejected, is uncertain; since he was then near his end, and perhaps never declared his mind.

In a short time after Cneius Acerronius and Caius Pontius entered on the consulship, and it was their lot to close the reign of Tiberius. Macro was at this time in the zenith of his power. He had been assiduous in paying his court to Caligula; and now, when he saw the emperor declining fast, his zeal for the young prince became every day more conspicuous. In a short time after the death of Claudia,<sup>1</sup> who had been married to Caligula, he made his own wife, Ennia, throw out the lure for his affections, till she obtained a promise of marriage. In this she found no difficulty. Caligula wished for nothing so much as an opportunity to seize the sovereign power; and, to second his ambition, there was no project which he was not ready to embrace. The ferocity of his nature left him little time for reflection, and the violence of his passions clouded his understanding: he had studied under his grandfather, and in that school acquired the arts of dissimulation.

XLVI. The character of Caligula did not escape the penetrating eye of Tiberius. Hence his irresolution on the important point of naming a successor.<sup>2</sup> His grand-

<sup>1</sup> See this book, § 20. Suetonius says she died in childbed; life of Calig. § 12. The intrigue with Ennia is there related in a manner somewhat different.

<sup>2</sup> Hereditary succession was unknown to the Romans. Under color of preserving ancient forms, the senate was still supposed to be the depositary of the public mind, and, in case of a demise, the prince was elective. The legions soon

sons naturally were present to his mind. The heir of his son Drusus was the nearest in blood, and natural affection spoke in his favor; but the prince was still of tender years. Caligula had attained the prime of manhood; but he was the son of Germanicus, and for that reason a favorite of the people; both strong motives to excite the aversion of Tiberius. Claudius was not intirely overlooked. His time of life rendered him fit for that exalted station, and he had shown a taste for the liberal arts; but he wanted vigor of mind: nature had given him talents, but withheld the power of using them with any solid advantage. In this perplexity Tiberius weighed every circumstance, but still could form no resolution. To name a person who was not of the imperial family were to degrade the memory of Augustus, and leave the house of Cæsar exposed to the contempt of posterity. This, in all events, he was determined to avoid; not with á view to present fame, for that had long since ceased to be his passion; and yet he wished to preserve the glory of an illustrious line, and transmit it unimpaired to future ages.

At length, fatigued with thinking, and growing every day weaker, he left to chance what he had not vigor to decide. He had, notwithstanding, some foreknowledge of what was to happen after him. From certain expressions that fell from him this may be col-

usurped the right of naming a successor. The Cæsarean line, as long as it lasted, was respected by the army. After the death of Nero, the last of the Cæsars, wars fierce and bloody were the consequence. The states of Europe, during several centuries, experienced similar convulsions, till, in more enlightened times, the nature of civil government being better understood, hereditary succession was established for the benefit of mankind. See more on this subject, *Memoirs of the Academy of Belles Lettres*, vol. xix.



lected. His reproach to Macro, ‘that he turned from the setting to the rising sun,’ was neither dark nor equivocal. He said to Caligula, who on some occasion treated the character of Sylla with contempt and ridicule, ‘You will have the vices of that great man without one of his virtues.’ In a short time after, while with tears of affection he clasped in his arms the youngest of his grandsons,<sup>1</sup> he observed the stern countenance of Caligula, and calmly told him, ‘You will kill this boy, and fall yourself by some other hand.’ Tiberius was now declining fast; and yet, in that decay of nature, he abated nothing from his usual gratifications. Dissembling to the last, he endured every encroachment on his constitution with calm composure. Patience, he thought, would pass for vigor. To ridicule the practice of physic,<sup>2</sup> and make a jest of all who, after thirty, did not understand their own constitutions, had been long the bent of his humor.

**XLVII.** At Rome, in the mean time, prosecutions were set on foot to terminate in blood after the death of Tiberius. Acutia, formerly the wife of Publius Vitellius,<sup>3</sup> was charged on the law of violated majesty

<sup>1</sup> This was the son of Drusus, who had been cut off by Sejanus, iv. 8. He was afterwards put to death by Caligula; see Suet. in Calig. § 23. Caligula himself died by the assassin’s dagger, ib. § 58.

<sup>2</sup> It was a saying of Tiberius, that the man who at sixty wanted the advice of a physician, must be absurd and ridiculous. Tacitus, with greater probability, confines the maxim to the age of thirty; and he is confirmed by Suetonius, in Tib. § 68.

<sup>3</sup> For Publius Vitellius, see v. 8. The translator is sorry to find that by some inadvertence a mistake has crept into the text. It is said Vitellius and Otho became open enemies; but Vitellius was dead. It should be Balbus and Otho. Balbus was the accuser of Acutia, and he lost his reward by the intercession of the tribune.

by Lælius Balbus. She was condemned ; but the decree, by which the senate adjudged a recompense to the prosecutor, was suspended by the interposition of Junius Otho, the tribune of the people. From that moment Vitellius and Otho became open enemies. Fierce contentions followed, and at last ended in the banishment of Otho. Albucilla, a woman famous for the variety of her intrigues, and her marriage with Satrius Secundus<sup>1</sup> (the man who informed against Sejanus), was charged with a conspiracy against the prince. Cneius Domitius, Vibius Marsus, and Lucius Arruntius, were all three involved in the same prosecution, being, as was alleged, connected in a course of adultery with Albucilla, and in consequence accomplices in all her crimes. The illustrious birth of Domitius has been already mentioned. Marsus derived great splendor from his ancestors, and was, besides, in an eminent degree adorned with literature. In the state of the proceedings laid before the senate it appeared that Macro presided at the examination of the witnesses, and saw the slaves put to the question ; but no letter on the subject arrived from Tiberius. Hence a strong suspicion that Macro, taking advantage of the feeble state of his master, seized the opportunity to wreak his malice on Arruntius, whom he was known to prosecute with inveterate hatred.

XLVIII. Domitius, relying on his defence, employed himself in the necessary preparation. Marsus gave out that he was resolved to end his days by famine. The artifice saved both their lives. The friends of Arruntius tried all their influence and their best advice. They intreated him to protract the time

<sup>1</sup> Satrius Secundus had been the active agent of Sejanus ; see iv. 34. But he ruined his patron in the end ; see Supplement, v. 27, and iv. 8.

by studied delays. Arruntius answered with firmness : 'The same part cannot with propriety be acted by all characters. What is honorable in one may be unworthy in another. As to myself, I have lived long enough ; nay, too long, and to my own disgrace. For that, and that only, I now reproach myself. I have lingered in life amidst surrounding dangers : I have dragged a weary old age, exposed to the proud man's insult, and the malice of pernicious ministers : hated at first by Sejanus, and now by Macro : in every stage of life obnoxious to lawless power. My enemies had no crime to lay to my charge, unless it be a crime to detest evil men and evil measures. Life is no longer worth my care : it may indeed be prolonged beyond the term that seems to remain for Tiberius : but from a youthful tyrant, ready to seize the commonwealth as his prey, what shield can guard me ? In despotic power there is a charm that can poison the best understanding. Of this truth Tiberius is an example. And is it to be expected that Caligula, scarce yet arrived to the state of manhood, a novice in business, with a mind trained up in the most pernicious maxims, will, under such a guide as Macro, pursue better measures ? Macro will direct his councils ; that very Macro who, for his pre-eminence in guilt, was selected to work the downfall of Sejanus. Since that time, what has been his character ? he has been the scourge, the oppressor of the commonwealth. A period of calamity more dreadful than what we have seen is yet to come : from the memory of the past, and the pangs of future misery, I choose to make my escape.' Having in this prophetic strain delivered his sentiments, he opened his veins and bled to death. That he acted with wisdom as well as courage the times that follow will give ample proof.

Albucilla made an attempt on her own life; but the wound not proving mortal, she was, by order of the senate, hurried away to prison. The senate passed a decree against such as were connected with her in adulterous practices. By that sentence Grafidius Sacerdos, of pretorian rank, was banished to an island, and Pontius Fregellanus was expelled the senate. The like judgment was pronounced against Lælius Balbus, the fathers concurring with pleasure in the condemnation of a man whose pernicious talents and overbearing eloquence were ever ready to work the ruin of truth and virtue.

XLIX. About the same time Sextus Papinius,<sup>1</sup> a man descended from a family of consular rank, chose a mode of death both shocking and ignominious. He threw himself headlong from a precipice, and expired on the spot. The cause of this dreadful catastrophe was imputed to his mother. Having conceived an unnatural passion for her son, this woman, though often repulsed, still persisted to solicit his passions; and, at length, by alluring arts and the baits of luxury, reduced the young man to a situation in which an act of despair was his only remedy. Being cited to appear before the senate, she threw herself at the feet of the fathers, and tried by every art to awaken compassion. The anguish of a parent, she said, pierced her to the quick, and the weakness of her sex was unequal to such a load of misery. She omitted nothing that could touch the heart and mitigate resentment; but the fathers were inexorable. She was banished from Rome for ten years; that, in the mean time, her

<sup>1</sup> Brotier thinks he was one of the consuls for the preceding year; but as he is in this place said to be a young man, seduced by the arts of a wicked mother, it is not probable that he ever rose to the consulship.

second son might pass the season of life in which the young and tender mind is liable to seduction.

L. Tiberius now drew near his end: his strength declined, his spirits sunk, and every thing failed, except his dissimulation. The same austerity still remained; the same energy and rigor of mind. He talked in a decisive tone; he looked with eagerness; and even at times affected an air of gaiety. Dissembling to the last, he hoped by false appearances to hide the decay of nature. Weary, restless, and impatient, he could not stay long in one place. After various changes he stopped at a villa, formerly the property of Lucullus,<sup>1</sup> near the promontory of Misenum. It was here first known that his dissolution was approaching fast. The discovery was made in the following manner:—A physician of the name of Charicles, highly eminent in his profession, attended the train of Tiberius; not employed to prescribe, but occasionally assisting with friendly advice. Pretending to have avocations that required his attendance elsewhere, he approached the emperor to take his leave; and, respectfully taking hold of his hand, contrived, in the act of saluting it, to feel his pulse. The artifice did not escape the notice of Tiberius. It probably gave him offence, but for that reason he smothered his resentment. With an air of cheerfulness he ordered the banquet to be served, and, seemingly with intent to honor his departing friend, continued at table beyond his usual time. Charicles was not to be deceived. He saw a rapid decline, and assured Macro that two days at most would close the scene. For

<sup>1</sup> We are told by Plutarch that this villa, formerly the property of Caius Marius, was purchased by Lucullus at an immense price. Plutarch, life of Marius. Brotier says the ruins are still to be seen near the promontory of Misenum.

that event measures were immediately taken: councils were held in private, and dispatches were sent to the army and the several commanders at their respective stations. On the seventeenth before the calends of April Tiberius had a fainting fit: he lay for some time in a state of languor, speechless, without motion, and was thought to be dead. A band of courtiers surrounded Caligula, eager to pay their court, and all congratulating the prince on his accession to the imperial dignity. Caligula was actually going forth to be proclaimed emperor, when word was brought that Tiberius was come to himself, and called for a cordial to revive his fainting spirits. The whole party was struck with terror: the crowd dispersed; some with dejected looks, others with a cheerful mien, as if unconscious of what had happened. Caligula stood at gaze, astonished, and almost out of his senses. He had, but a moment before, one foot on the throne, and now was thrown from the summit of his ambition. He remained fixed in despair, as if awaiting the stroke of death. Macro alone was undismayed. With firmness and presence of mind he cleared the emperor's room, and gave orders that the remains of life should be smothered under a load of clothes. Such was the end of Tiberius, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

LI. He was the son of Tiberius Nero; by the paternal and maternal line of the house of Claudius, though his mother passed by adoption into the Livian, and afterwards into the Julian family. The beginning of his days was clouded with misfortunes, and exposed to various perils. In his infancy he was torn away from Rome, and forced to wander with his father, then on the list of the proscribed. When a marriage took place between Livia and Augustus he was introduced into the imperial house; but had to contend

with powerful rivals, as long as Marcellus, Agrippa, and the two Cæsars, Caius and Lucius, flourished at the court of Augustus. In the eyes of the people his brother Drusus overshadowed him. By his marriage with Julia his situation was rendered still more embarrassing. Whether he connived at her vices, or abandoned her in resentment, the dilemma was either way full of difficulty. Being recalled from the isle of Rhodes, he found Augustus deprived of heirs, and from that time continued for twelve years without a rival, the hope and pillar of the imperial family. He succeeded to the empire, and governed Rome near three-and-twenty years. His manners, like his fortune, had their revolutions and their distinctive periods; amiable,<sup>1</sup> while a private man; and, in the highest employments under Augustus, esteemed and honored. During the lives of Drusus and Germanicus he played an artificial character, concealing his vices, and assuming the exteriors of virtue. After their decease, and while his mother lived, good and evil were equally blended in his conduct. Detested for his cruelty, he had the art, while he loved or feared Sejanus, to throw a veil over his most depraved and vicious appetites. All restraint being at length removed, he broke out without fear or shame; and during the remainder of his life, hurried away by his own unbridled passions, made his reign one scene of lust, and cruelty, and horror.

<sup>1</sup> Velleius Paterculus has said the same thing with great elegance and equal truth, ii. 103. 106. 114. It is in his account of the reign of Tiberius that the adulation of that historian betrays a want of veracity.

BOOK XI.<sup>1</sup>

SECT. I. MESSALINA was convinced that Poppæa had been for some time engaged in a course of adultery with Valerius Asiaticus, who had enjoyed the honor of two consulships. She had, besides, an eye to the elegant gardens, formerly the pride of Lucullus, which Asiaticus had improved in the highest taste and magnificence. Bent on the destruction of Poppæa and her lover, she suborned Suilius<sup>2</sup> to carry on the prosecution. Sosibius, the tutor of Britannicus, entered into the conspiracy. This man had the ear of Claudius. In secret whispers, and under a mask of friendship, he alarmed the emperor with the necessity of being on his guard against the machinations of his enemies. ‘Overgrown wealth,’ he said, ‘in the hands of a private citizen is always big with danger to the reigning prince. When Caligula fell Asiaticus was the principal actor in that bloody tragedy. He owned

1 The former part of this book, comprising no less than six years, is lost, with other parts of Tacitus. Claudius succeeded to Caligula, who was put to death by Chærea and other conspirators, on the 24th of January, A. U. C. 794. The present book begins abruptly in the year of Rome 800, when Claudius had reigned six years. The very first sentence is imperfect. The historian, beyond all doubt, had been speaking of Messalina and Poppæa Sabina, but neither of them is mentioned in the mutilated text. To avoid beginning with a broken passage, the translator has added their names, and the sense will now be found complete. Valerius Asiaticus had been consul twice; the first time, for some months, to supply the place of the consuls who began the year A. U. C. 796; the second time, in conjunction with Marcus Junius Silanus, A. U. C. 799. Suetonius, in Claud. § 14.

2 Suilius has been already mentioned, Annals, iv. 31; and for the infamy of his character, see xiii. 42.



the fact in a full assembly of the people, and claimed the glory of the deed.<sup>1</sup> That bold exploit has made him popular at Rome: his fame is spread through the provinces; and even now he meditates a visit to the German armies. 'Born at Vienne,<sup>2</sup> he has great family interest and powerful connexions in Gaul. A man thus supported will be able to incite his countrymen to revolt.' The hint was enough for Claudius. Without farther inquiry he despatched Crispinus, who commanded the pretorian guards, with a band of soldiers. Their march resembled a body of soldiers going on a warlike expedition. Asiaticus was seized at Baïæ, and brought to Rome in chains.

- II. He was not suffered to appear before the senate. The cause was heard in the emperor's chamber, in the presence of Messalina. Suilius stood forth as prosecutor. He stated the corruption of the army, and accused Asiaticus as the cause of it. By bribes, by largesses, and by the practice of abominable vices, the soldiers were seduced from their duty: they were prepared for any enterprise, however atrocious. The crime of adultery with Poppæa helped to swell the charge; and, to crown all, the prisoner had unmanned himself by his unnatural passions. Stung to the quick by this imputation, Asiaticus turned to the prosecutor, 'And ask your sons,' he said; 'they will tell you that I am a man.' He went into his defence in such a

1 In the tumult occasioned by the death of Caligula, when the people were wild with contending passions, and the pretorian guards paraded the streets denouncing vengeance against the conspirators, Valerius Asiaticus (according to Josephus) rushed forward to meet them, proclaiming aloud, 'I wish the tyrant had fallen by my hand.' See Seneca, *De Constantia*, cap. 18.

2 Formerly the capital of the Allobroges; now Vienne in Dauphiné.

strain of pathetic eloquence, that Claudius felt the strongest emotions. Even Messalina dropped a tear. She left the room to wipe the gush of nature from her eyes; but first charged Vitellius not to suffer the prisoner to escape. In the mean time she hastened the destruction of Poppæa. She sent her agents to alarm her with the horrors of a jail, and drive her, by that dismal prospect, to an act of desperation. Her malice was unknown to Claudius. He was so little in the secret, that, a few days afterwards, having invited Scipio as his guest, he asked him, 'Why his wife was not of the party?'<sup>1</sup> Scipio made answer, 'She is dead.'

III. Claudius was for some time in suspense. He was inclined to favor Asiaticus, but Vitellius interposed. With tears in his eyes, he talked of the friendship which had long subsisted between the prisoner and himself; he mentioned their mutual habits at the court of Antonia, the emperor's mother; he stated the public merit of Asiaticus; and, in particular, the glory of his late expedition into Britain: he omitted nothing that could excite compassion; but, at last, concluded (with a stroke of treachery), that to allow him to choose his mode of dying was an indulgence due to so distinguished a character. This cruel species of clemency was adopted by Claudius. The friends of Asiaticus recommended abstinence as a mode of death easy and gradual. He scorned the pretended lenity, and betook himself to his usual exercises. He bathed and supped with alacrity of mind. 'To die,' he said, 'by the intrigues of an artful woman, or the treachery of a debauched and profligate impostor, such as Vitellius, was an ignominious catastrophe.'

<sup>1</sup> This was agreeable to the Roman manners. What man is ashamed, says Cornelius Nepos, to take his wife with him to a convivial meeting?

He envied those who perished by the systematic cruelty of Tiberius, or the headlong fury of Caligula.' Having declared these sentiments, he opened a vein, and bled to death. Before he gave himself the mortal wound he had the fortitude to survey his funeral pile. Perceiving that the flame might reach the branches of the trees, and hurt the shade of his garden, he ordered it to be removed to a more distant spot. Such was the tranquillity with which he encountered death.

IV. The senate was convened. Suiilius followed his blow. He preferred an accusation against two Roman knights of the name of Petra, both distinguished by their rank and character. The crime objected to them was, that they had made their house convenient to Poppæa when she carried on her intrigue with Mnes-ter. The charge against one of them imported, that, in a dream, his imagination presented to him the figure of Claudius crowned with a sheaf of corn, but the ears inverted downward. This vision was understood by the criminal as a prognostic of an approaching famine. Some will have it that the wreath consisted of vine-branches, with the leaves intirely faded; and this was deemed an omen of the emperor's death towards the end of the ensuing autumn. Whatever it might be, it is certain that it was held to be an act of treason. The two brothers died for a dream. By a decree of the senate, Crispinus was rewarded with fifteen thousand sesterces, and the pretorian dignity. On the motion of Vitellius, a vote of ten thousand sesterces passed in favor of Sosibius, the preceptor of Britannicus, and the faithful adviser of the emperor. In the debate on this occasion Scipio was called on for his opinion: he rose, and said, ' Since the conduct of my wife Poppæa must appear to me in the same light that it does to this assembly, let me be thought

to concur with the general voice ;' a delicate stroke of prudence, yielding to the necessity of the times, yet not forgetting the ties of conjugal affection.

V. From this time the rage of Suilius knew no bounds. A number of others followed in the same track, all rivals in iniquity. The constitution had been long since annihilated; the functions of the magistrates were wrested out of their hands; the will of the prince was the law; and, by consequence, the crew of informers grew rich by injustice and oppression. Their eloquence was put up to sale, like any other commodity at market. Samius, a Roman knight of distinction, has left a memorable instance. He had retained Suilius with a fee of ten thousand crowns; but finding that his cause was betrayed he went to the house of the perfidious orator, and fell on his own sword. To check this fatal mischief, a motion was made in the senate by Caius Silius, then consul elect. Of this man, his elevation, and his downfall, due notice will be taken hereafter. He represented, in strong colors, the avarice of the advocates. The fathers, with one voice, agreed to revive the Cincian law,<sup>1</sup> by which it was ordained in ancient times that no advocate, for a fee, or gratuity of any kind, should prostitute his talents.

VI. The informers opposed the motion. They saw that the blow was aimed at themselves. Silius grew

1 Marcus Cincius, tribune of the people, was the author of the Cincian Law, so called after his name, in the consulship of Sempronius and Cethegus, A. U. C. 550. It provided against the receipt of gifts and presents, but, in a course of time, fell into disuse, till Augustus, A. U. C. 732, thought fit to revive it, with an additional clause, by which the advocate, who pleaded for hire, was condemned to pay four times the sum. Claudius (as may be seen, § 7) softened the rigor of the law, allowing a certain fee, and ordaining that whoever took more should be obliged to make restitution.

more eager. He was at open enmity with Suilius, and, for that reason, pressed the business with his utmost vigor. He cited the orators of ancient times, men of pure and upright principles, who considered honest fame, and the fair applause of posterity, as the true reward of genius. ‘Eloquence,’ he said, ‘the first of liberal arts, if it condescended to be let out for hire, was no better than a sordid trade. If it became mercenary, and sold itself to the highest bidder, no truth can be expected; integrity is at an end. Take from venal oratory all its views of interest, and the number of suitors will of course be diminished. In the reigning corruption of the modern forum private feuds, mutual accusations, family quarrels, hatred, and animosity, are kept alive. The practisers live by the passions of mankind, as physicians thrive by an epidemic distemper. Call to mind Caius Asinius, Marcus Messala, and, among the names of more recent date, remember the Arruntii and the Æsernini; men who never set themselves up to auction; never made a bargain and sale of their talents, but rose by their integrity and their unbought eloquence to the highest honors of the state.’ This speech from the consul elect was heard with general approbation. The fathers were on the point of declaring by a decree that all who took the wages of oratory should be deemed guilty of extortion. Suilius and Cossutianus, with many others who were conscious of their evil practices, clearly saw, that if the decree passed the senate, it would be nothing less than a vote of pains and penalties against themselves. To ward off the blow, they pressed round the emperor, praying an indemnity for past transactions. Claudius seeming by a nod to assent to their petition, they took courage, and argued their case as follows :

VII. 'Where is the orator who can flatter himself that his name will reach posterity? The interests of society require advocates by profession, men versed in questions of right and wrong, and ready, as well as able, to protect the weak against the proud and affluent. But eloquence is not a gratuitous gift; it is acquired by toil and industry. To conduct the affairs of others, the orator neglects his own concerns. Life is variegated with different employments: some betake themselves to the profession of arms; others to the arts of husbandry; no man embraces a particular calling without having beforehand made an estimate of the profit. Asinius and Messala have been cited: but it was easy for men in their situation, enriched as they were in the civil wars between Augustus and Antony, to forego all farther views of emolument. It was easy for the Arruntii and the Æsernini, the heirs of great and opulent families, to act with an elevation of mind superior to the profits of the bar. And yet we are not now to learn what prodigious sums Publius Clodius and Caius Curio received as the reward of their eloquence. As to ourselves, we have not the advantage of fortune: in a time of profound tranquillity, it is but just that we should be allowed to live by the arts of peace. The case of men descended from plebeian families merits consideration. Without the career of eloquence, they have no way to emerge from obscurity. Take from men the just fruit of their studies, and learning will grow to seed.' This reasoning was far from honorable, but it had weight with Claudius. He took a middle course, and fixed the legal perquisite at the sum of ten thousand sesterces. All who presumed to transgress that line were to be deemed guilty of extortion, by law compellable to refund.

VIII. About this time Mithridates, who, as has been

mentioned, swayed the sceptre of Armenia, and was brought in chains to the tribunal of Caligula,<sup>1</sup> was released by the direction of Claudius. He set out from Rome to take possession of his kingdom, relying on the support of his brother Pharasmanes, king of Iberia. By advices from that monarch, it appeared that the Parthian state was convulsed by internal divisions, and, while the regal diadem was at stake, a people so distracted among themselves would not have leisure to engage in foreign wars. Gotarzes had seized the throne of Parthia, and spilt a deluge of blood. He had murdered his own brother Artabanus, with his wife and son, and by these and other acts of cruelty gave his subjects nothing to expect but slaughter and desolation. Determined to shake off the yoke, the people planned a revolution in favor of Bardanes, the surviving brother of Gotarzes. This prince was by nature formed for enterprise. In two days he made a march of no less than three thousand furlongs. He took Gotarzes by surprise, attacked him with sudden fury, and obliged him to consult his safety by flight. He pushed on with vigor to the adjacent provinces, and all, except Seleucia, submitted without resistance. The inhabitants of that city shut their gates. Fired with indignation against a people who had offered the same affront to his father, Bardanes yielded to the impulse of resentment, instead of pursuing the measures which prudence dictated. He stayed to amuse himself with the siege of a place strong by nature, well fortified, amply provided with stores, and on one

1 Mithridates, brother to Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, was appointed by Tiberius to sway the sceptre of Armenia, A. U. C. 788. See Annals, vi. 32. He was afterwards brought to Rome in chains, and thrown into prison by Caligula, A. U. C. 793. Tacitus says he had given an account of this transaction; but the history of Caligula is unfortunately lost.

side defended by a rapid river.<sup>1</sup> Gotarzes, in the mean time, having obtained succor from the Dahans and Hyrcanians, returned with a powerful army to renew the war. Bardanes was compelled to raise the siege of Seleucia. He retired to the plains of Bactria, and there pitched his camp.

IX. While the east was thus thrown into convulsions, and the fate of Parthia hung on the doubtful event, Mithridates seized the opportunity to invade the kingdom of Armenia. The Roman legions and the Iberians supported the enterprise. By the former all the forts and places of strength were levelled to the ground, and by the latter the open country was laid waste. The Armenians, under the conduct of Demonax, at that time governor of the country, hazarded a battle, and, being defeated, were no longer able to make a stand. The new settlement, however, was for some time retarded by Cotys,<sup>2</sup> king of the lesser Armenia. A party of the nobles had declared in his favor; but, being intimidated by letters from Claudius, they abandoned their project. Mithridates mounted the throne of Armenia, with more ferocity than became a prince in the opening of a new reign. Meanwhile the competitors for the Parthian monarchy, in the moment when they were going to try the issue of a decisive action, agreed on terms of peace. A conspiracy had been formed against them both; but being detected by Gotarzes, the two brothers came to an interview. The meeting was at first conducted with reserve on both sides. After balancing for some time,

1 The river here intended is the Tigris.

2 This is the same Cotys who has been already mentioned, as king of part of Thrace. See *Annals*, iv. 67; and see the note. Caligula added his division of that country to the dominions of Rhæmetalces, and made Cotys king of the Lesser Armenia, A. U. C. 791.



they embraced; and, taking each other by the hand, bound themselves by an oath before the altar of the gods to join with their united force in order to punish the treachery of their enemies, and on equitable terms to compromise the war. The people declared for Bardanes. Gotarzes accordingly resigned his pretensions; and, to remove all cause of jealousy, withdrew to the remotest parts of Hyrcania. Bardanes returned in triumph; and Seleucia threw open her gates, after having, during a siege of seven years, stood at bay with the whole power of the Parthian monarchy, to the disgrace of a people who, in such a length of time, were unable to reduce that city to subjection.

X. Bardanes, without delay, made himself master of the most important provinces. He intended to invade Armenia: but Vibius Marsus, the governor of Syria, threatening to repel him by force, he abandoned the project. Meanwhile Gotarzes had leisure to repent of his abdication. The Parthian nobility, who in peaceful times are always impatient of the yoke of slavery, invited him to return. Roused by the call of the people, he soon collected a powerful army. Bardanes marched to meet him as far as the banks of the Erinde. The passage over the river was warmly disputed. After many sharp engagements Bardanes prevailed. He pushed his conquest with uninterrupted success as far as the river Sinden, which flows between the Dahi and the territory of the Arians. His career of victory ended at that place. Though flushed with the success of their arms, the Parthians disliked a war in regions so far remote. To mark however the progress of the victorious troops, and to perpetuate the glory of having put under contribution so many distant nations, where the Arsacides had never penetrated,

Bardanes raised a monument on the spot, and marched back to Parthia, proud of his exploits, more oppressive than ever, and, by consequence, more detested. A conspiracy was formed to cut him off; and accordingly, while the king on a hunting party, void of all suspicion, pursued the pleasures of the chase, his enemies fell on him with sudden fury. Bardanes, in the prime and vigor of his days, expired under repeated blows. The glory of his reign, however short, would have eclipsed the few of his predecessors who enjoyed a length of days, if to gain the hearts of his people had been as much his ambition as it was to render himself the terror of his enemies. By his death the kingdom was once more thrown into commotions. The choice of a successor divided the whole nation into factions. A large party adhered to Gotarzes; others declared for Meherdates, a descendant of Phraates, at that time a hostage in the hands of the Romans. The interest of Gotarzes proved the strongest; but the people, in a short time, weary of his cruelty and wild profusion, sent a private embassy to Rome, requesting that the emperor would be graciously pleased to send Meherdates to fill the throne of his ancestors.

XI. During the same consulship, in the year of Rome eight hundred, the secular games were celebrated, after an interval of sixty-four years since they were last solemnised in the reign of Augustus. The chronology observed by Augustus differed from the system of Claudius; but this is not the place for a discussion of that point. I have been sufficiently explicit on the subject in the history of Domitian,<sup>1</sup> who

<sup>1</sup> The secular games were exhibited by Augustus, in the consulship of Caius Furnius and C. Silanus, A. U. C. 737. The famous *Carmen Sæculare* of Horace has made them universally known. In their first institution they were to be

likewise gave an exhibition of the secular games. Being at that time one of the college of fifteen, and invested with the office of pretor, it fell to my province to regulate the ceremonies. Let it not be imagined that this is said from motives of vanity. The fact is, in ancient times the business was conducted under the special directions of the quindecemviral order, while the chief magistrates officiated in the several ceremonies. Claudius thought proper to revive this public spectacle. He attended in the circus, and, in his pre-

celebrated at the end of every century; but that regulation, as we learn from Horace, was changed to every hundred and ten years.

The first secular games were in the consulship of Valerius and Virginius, A. U. C. 298.

The second, in the consulship of Valerius Corvinus and Caius Pætilius, A. U. C. 408.

The third, in the consulship of Cornelius Lentulus and Licinius Varus, A. U. C. 518.

The fourth, in the consulship of Æmilius Lepidus and Lucius Aurelius, A. U. C. 628.

The fifth, by Augustus, as above-mentioned, 737.

The sixth, by Claudius, A. U. C. 800.

Tacitus says Claudius differed from the computation of Augustus; and for an explanation of that matter he refers us to the history of Domitian, who also gave the secular games, A. U. C. 841. But the history of Domitian has not reached posterity. That monster has escaped the vengeance due to his crimes from the pen of Tacitus. The difference between the calculation of Augustus and that of Claudius appears to be a fallacy of the latter emperor. Suetonius says he exhibited the secular games under a pretence of their having been anticipated by Augustus; and yet Claudius, in his history, fairly owns that they had been neglected before the time of Augustus; but that emperor made an exact calculation of the time, and again brought the games to their regular order. For this reason, when the crier, by order of Claudius, invited the people, in the usual form, to games which no one had ever seen, and would never see again, the people could not refrain from laughing, as many then living had seen them in the time of Augustus, and some of the players who had acted on that occasion were now brought on the stage again; Suet. in Claud. § 21.

sence, the Trojan game<sup>1</sup> was performed by the youth of noble birth. Britannicus the emperor's son, and Lucius Domitius, who by adoption took the name of Nero, and afterwards succeeded to the empire, appeared, with the rest of the band, mounted on superb horses. Nero was received with acclamations, and that mark of popular favor was considered as an omen of his future grandeur. A story, at that time current, gained credit with the populace. Nero in his infancy was said to have been guarded by two serpents;<sup>2</sup> but this idle tale held too much of that love of the marvellous which distinguishes foreign nations. The account given by the prince himself, who was ever unwilling to derogate from his own fame, differed from the common report. He talked of the prodigy, but graced his narrative with one serpent only.

XII. The prejudice in favor of Nero rose altogether from the esteem in which the memory of Germanicus was held by the people at large. The only male heir of that admired commander was naturally an object of attention; and the sufferings of his mother Agrippina touched every heart with compassion.

1 The Trojan game, commonly ascribed to Æneas, is beautifully described by Virgil, *Æneid* v. 545. Suetonius says it was exhibited by Julius Cæsar, when two companies, one consisting of grown-up lads, and the other of boys of a lesser size, displayed their skill in horsemanship; Suet. in Jul. Cæs. § 39. This may account for the appearance of Britannicus and Domitius Nero, both at that time extremely young. Britannicus was born A. U. C. 794; Nero in the year 790.

2 Suetonius explains the origin of this fable. He says there was a report that certain assassins were hired by Messalina to strangle Nero in his bed, in order to remove the rival of Britannicus. The men went to execute their purpose, but were frightened by a serpent that crept from under his pillow. This tale was occasioned by the finding of a serpent's skin near Nero's pillow, which, by his mother's order, he wore for some time on his right arm, inclosed in a golden bracelet; Suet. in Neron. § 6.

Messalina, it was well known, pursued her with unremitting malice: she was even then planning her ruin. Her suborned accusers soon framed a list of crimes; but the execution of her schemes was for a time suspended. A new amour, little short of frenzy, claimed precedence of all other passions. Caius Silius<sup>1</sup> was the person for whom she burned with all the vehemence of wild desire. The graces of his form and manner eclipsed all the Roman youth. That she might enjoy her favorite without a rival, she obliged him to repudiate his wife, Junia Silana, though descended from illustrious ancestors. Silius was neither blind to the magnitude of the crime nor to the danger of not complying. If he refused, a woman scorned would be sure to gratify her revenge; and, on the other hand, there was a chance of deceiving the stupidity of Claudius. The rewards in view were bright and tempting. He resolved to stand the hazard of future consequences, and enjoy the present moment. Messalina gave a loose to love. She scorned to save appearances. She repeated her visits, not in a private manner, but with all her train. In public places she hung enamored over him; she loaded him with wealth and honors; and at length, as if the imperial dignity had been already transferred to another house, the retinue of the prince, his slaves, his freedmen, and the whole splendor of the court, adorned the mansion of her favorite.

XIII. Claudius, in the mean time, blind to the conduct of his wife, and little suspecting that his bed was

1 Silius was consul elect, as already mentioned in this book, § 5. Juvenal says,

Now Silius wants thy counsel; give advice;  
Wed Cæsar's wife, or die. The choice is nice.  
Her comet-eyes she darts on ev'ry grace,  
And takes a fatal liking to his face,—*Dryden.*

dishonored, gave all his time to the duties of his censorial office. He issued an edict to repress the licentiousness of the theatre. A dramatic performance had been given to the stage by Publius Pomponius,<sup>1</sup> a man of consular rank. On that occasion the author, and several women of the first condition, were treated by the populace with insolence and vile scurrility. This behavior called for the interposition of the prince. To check the rapacity of usurers, a law was also passed, prohibiting the loan of money to young heirs on the contingency of their fathers' death. The waters which have their source on the Simbruine hills<sup>2</sup> were conveyed in aqueducts to Rome. Claudius, at the same time, invented the form of new letters, and added them to the Roman alphabet, aware that the language of Greece, in its original state, could not boast of perfection, but received at different periods a variety of improvements.

XIV. The Egyptians were the first who had the ingenuity to express by outward signs the ideas passing in the mind. Under the form of animals they gave a body and a figure to sentiment. Their hieroglyphics were wrought in stone, and are to be seen at this day, the most venerable monuments of human

<sup>1</sup> Pomponius had been consul, but not in the beginning of the year, and therefore his name does not appear in the *Fasti Consulares*. Quintilian praises his dramatic genius, and admires his tragedies. See the *Dialogue concerning Oratory*, § 13.

<sup>2</sup> The Simbruine hills, according to Brotier and other commentators, are the hills that overlook the town, formerly called *Sublaqueum*, now *Subjaco*, about forty miles from Rome, towards the east, and not far from the Sacred Cave, now *Il Monastero del Sacro Speco*. The waters issuing from two fountains, known by the names of *Curtius* and *Ceruleus*, were, by the direction of Claudius, brought to Rome in canals made with great labor and vast expense. See *Pliny's Description*, xxxvi. 15.

memory. The invention of letters<sup>1</sup> is also claimed by the Egyptians. According to their account, the Phœ-

1 The invention of letters, one of the happiest exertions of the human mind, presents a subject of so curious and complicated a nature, that the discussion of it cannot be condensed into a note. Plato and Cicero were so struck with the wonderful artifice of alphabetical characters, as to conclude that it was not of human invention, but a preternatural gift of the immortal gods. Dr. Warburton has given a dissertation on the subject, in which profound learning and sound philosophy are happily united. After him, it may be stated, that man, being formed for society, soon found two ways of communicating his thoughts; namely, by sounds and significant action. But both were transient. Something permanent was still required; something by which the conceptions of the mind might be preserved and communicated at a distance. This was done by the images of things, properly called picture-writing. Sensible objects were easily represented, but abstract ideas demanded farther improvement. That difficulty was also conquered. Men conversant in matter wanted sensible images to convey the ideas formed by the operations of the understanding. For that purpose, every object, in which could be found any kind of resemblance or analogy, was introduced to represent the inward sentiment: as an eye, for knowledge; a circle, for eternity. This was the symbolic writing of the Egyptians, who attended chiefly to the animal creation, and thereby established the brute-worship of their country. The several animals and symbolic figures being carved on pyramids and obelisks, by direction of the sacerdotal order, the art of expressing ideas by analogous representation was deemed sacred, and thence called hieroglyphic. It had at first nothing in it of mystery: it was dictated by the necessities of man in social life. The Chinese in the east had their hieroglyphics. Picture-writing was known to the Mexicans, in a world then undiscovered; and, accordingly, Acosta tells us that the first account of a Spanish fleet on the coast was sent to Montezuma in delineations painted on cloth. The same writer adds, things that had a bodily shape were represented by their proper figures; and those that were invisible, by other expressive characters; and thus the Mexicans wrote or painted every thing they had occasion to express. The Peruvians made use of arbitrary marks. With their knotted cords of different colors, and various sizes, they contrived to convey their thoughts to one another. The Chinese proceeded from their hieroglyphics to the invention of a

nicians found legible characters in use throughout Egypt, and being much employed in navigation, carried them into Greece; importers of the art, but not intitled to the glory of the invention. The history of the matter, as related by the Phœnicians, is, that Cadmus, with a fleet from their country, passed into Greece, and taught the art of writing to a rude and barbarous people. We are told by others, that Cecrops the Athenian, or Linus the Theban, or Palamedes the Argive, who flourished during the Trojan war, invented sixteen letters: <sup>1</sup> the honor of adding to

significant mark for every idea. It is a mistake to say that they formed an alphabet, or letters to be the sign of simple sounds. Their characters do not stand for syllables, of which articulate words are composed; they express the idea, or the object itself; and it is said that they have no less than seventy thousand of such arbitrary characters. The confusion that must follow is obvious. Signs for words, not things, were still the grand desideratum. Some happy genius (who, it is not known) arose in Egypt. He had the sagacity to observe the formation of sounds by the human organs, and soon perceived that several were frequently united to constitute a word. By decomposing these, and fixing a mark for vowels and consonants, which might be afterwards blended and varied as the word required, the art of writing was reduced to simplicity, and finally established in its present form. Moses brought alphabetic letters, with the rest of his learning, from Egypt, and was therefore able to reduce his books to writing. Cadmus was of Thebes in Egypt, and passed from Phœnicia into Greece. His native country shows whence he derived his alphabet; though the Phœnicians were, by vulgar error, said to be the people who invented letters, and first taught the art of 'stopping the flying sound.' Pliny the elder gives the honor to the Assyrians, vii. 56. It is plain however that he was not rightly informed. See Warburton's *Div. Leg.* iii. 66, &c.; and see *Memoirs of the Acad. of Belles Lett.* xxxii. 212.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Warburton says the Hebrew alphabet, which Moses employed in the composition of the Pentateuch, is considerably fuller than that which Cadmus brought into Greece. Cadmus had only sixteen letters, and the Hebrew had two-and-twenty. *Divine Legat.* iii. 148. We find from Tacitus



the number, and making a complete alphabet, is ascribed to different authors, and in particular to Simonides. In Italy, Demaratus of Corinth and Evander the Arcadian, introduced the arts of civilisation: the former taught the Etrurians, and the latter the aborigines, or natives of the country where he settled. The form of the Latin letters was the same as the characters of the ancient Greeks: but the Roman alphabet, like that of all other nations, was scanty in the beginning. In process of time the original elements were increased. Claudius added three new letters, which, during the remainder of his reign, were frequently inserted, but after his death fell into disuse. In tables of brass, on which were engraved the ordinances of the people, and which remain to this day, hung up in the temples, and the forum, the shape of the three characters may still be traced.

XV. To regulate the college of augurs was the next care of Claudius. He referred the business to the consideration of the senate, observing to that assembly, 'That an ancient and venerable institution ought not to be suffered, for want of due attention, to sink into oblivion. In times of danger the commonwealth resorted to the soothsayers, and that order of men restored the primitive ceremonies of religion. By the nobility of Etruria the science of future events

that the Greek alphabet received considerable additions. As to the three letters added by Claudius to the Roman alphabet, Suetonius says he invented three new letters, concerning which he published a book, while he was yet a private citizen; and, after his elevation to the imperial seat, his authority introduced them into common use, and the same were still extant in books, registers, and inscriptions on buildings. See *Life of Claudius*, § 41. Brotier, in his edition of Tacitus, has given, from a brass table found at Lyons, a speech made by Claudius to the senate; but in that monument of antiquity no trace appears of those new letters,

was esteemed and cultivated. The authority of the senate gave additional sanctions, and those mysteries have ever since remained in certain families, transmitted from father to son. In the present decay of all liberal science, and the growth of foreign superstition, the sacred mysteries are neglected, and indeed almost extinguished. The empire, it is true, enjoys a state of perfect tranquillity; but surely for that blessing the people should bend in adoration to the gods, not forgetting, in the calm season of peace, those religious rites which saved them in the hour of danger.' A decree passed the senate, directing that the pontiffs should revise the whole system, and retrench or ratify what to them should seem proper.

XVI. In the course of this year the Cheruskans applied to Rome for a king to reign over them. They had been distracted by civil dissensions, and in the wars that followed the flower of their nobility was cut off. Of royal descent there was only one surviving chief, by name Italicus, and he at that time resided at Rome. He was the son of Flavius, the brother of Arminius; by the maternal line, grandson to Caturmer, the reigning king of the Cattians. He was comely in his person, expert in the use of arms, and skilled in horsemanship, as well after the Roman manner, as the practice of the Germans. Claudius supplied him with money; appointed guards to escort him; and, by seasonable admonitions, endeavored to inspire him with sentiments worthy of the elevation to which he was called. He desired him to go forth with courage, and ascend the throne of his ancestors with becoming dignity. He told him, that being born at Rome, and there entertained in freedom, not kept as a prisoner, he was the first who went clothed in the character of a Roman citizen to reign in Germany.

The prince was received by his countrymen with demonstrations of joy. A stranger to the dissensions which had for some time disturbed the public tranquillity, he had no party views to warp his conduct. The king of a people, not of a faction, he gained the esteem of all. His praise resounded in every quarter. By exercising the milder qualities of temperance and affability, and at times giving himself up to wine and gay carousals, which among barbarians are esteemed national virtues, he endeared himself to all ranks of men. His fame reached the neighboring states, and by degrees spread all over Germany.

His popularity, however, gave umbrage to the disaffected. The same turbulent spirit, who had before thrown every thing into confusion, and flourished in the distractions of their country, began to view the new king with a jealous eye. They represented to the adjacent nations that 'the rights of Germany, transmitted to them by their forefathers, were now at the last gasp. The grandeur of the Roman empire rises on the ruins of public liberty. But is the Cheruscan nation at so low an ebb, that a native worthy of the supreme authority cannot be found amongst them? Is there no resource left but that of electing the son of Flavius, that ignominious spy, that traitor to his country? It is in vain alleged in favor of Italicus that he is nephew to Arminius. Were he the son of that gallant warrior; yet, fostered as he has been in the arms and in the bosom of Rome, he is by that circumstance unqualified to reign in Germany. From a young man, educated among our enemies, debased by servitude, and infected with foreign manners, foreign laws, and foreign sentiments, what have we to expect? And if this Roman king, this Italicus, inherits the spirit of his father, let it be remembered that Flavius took

the field against his kindred and the gods of Germany. In the whole course of that war no man showed a spirit so determined; no man acted with such envenomed hostility against the liberties of his country.'

XVII. By these, and suchlike incentives, the malecontents inflamed the minds of the people, and soon collected a numerous army. An equal number followed the standard of Italicus. 'Their motives,' they said, 'were just and honorable: the young king did not come to usurp the crown: he was invited by the voice of a willing people.' His birth was illustrious, and it was but fair to make an experiment of his virtues. He might perhaps prove worthy of Arminius, his uncle, and of Catumer, his grandfather. Even for his father<sup>1</sup> the son had no reason to blush. If Flavius adhered with fidelity to the cause of Rome, he had bound himself by the obligation of an oath; and that oath was taken with the consent of the German nations. The sacred name of liberty was used in vain to varnish the guilt of pretended patriots; a set of men, in their private characters, void of honor; in their public conduct destructive to the community; an unprincipled and profligate party, who, by fair and honest means have nothing to hope, looked for their private advantage in the disasters of their country.' To this reasoning the multitude assented with shouts of applause. The barbarians came to action. After an obstinate engagement victory declared for Italicus. Elate with success, he broke out into acts of cruelty, and was soon obliged to fly the country. The Langoards reinstated him in his dominions. From that time Italicus continued to struggle with alternate vi-

<sup>1</sup> For an account of Flavius, the father, see Annals, ii. 9 and 10.

cissitudes of fortune, in success no less than adversity the scourge of the Cheruscan nation.

XVIII. The Chaucians, at this time free from domestic broils, began to turn their arms against their neighbors. The death of Sanquinius, who commanded the legions in Lower Germany, furnished them with an opportunity to invade the Roman provinces; and as Corbulo, who was appointed to succeed the deceased general, was still on his way, they resolved to strike their blow before his arrival. Gannascus, born among the Caninefates, headed the enterprise; a bold adventurer, who had formerly served among the auxiliaries in the Roman army. Having deserted afterwards, he provided himself with light-built shallops, and followed the life of a roving freebooter, infesting chiefly the Gallic side of the Rhine,<sup>1</sup> where he knew the wealth and the unwarlike genius of the people. Corbulo entered the province. In his first campaign he laid the foundation of that prodigious fame which afterwards raised his character to the highest eminence. He ordered the strongest galleys to fall down the Rhine, and the small craft, according to their size and fitness for the service, to enter the estuaries and the recesses of the river. The boats and vessels of the enemy were sunk or otherwise destroyed. Gannascus was obliged to save himself by flight.

By these operations Corbulo restored tranquillity throughout the province. The re-establishment of military discipline was the next object of his attention. He found the legions relaxed in sloth, attentive to plunder, and active for no other end. In order to make a thorough reform, he gave out in orders that no man should presume to quit his post, or venture to

1 The countries now called Zealand, Brabant, Flanders. In those parts there were several canals and inlets of the sea, between the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Rhine.

attack the enemy on any pretence, without the command of his superior officer. The soldiers at the advanced stations, the sentinels, and the whole army, performed every duty, both day and night, completely armed. Two of the men it is said were put to death, as an example to the rest; one because he labored at the trenches without his sword; and the other for being armed with a dagger only; a severity, it must be acknowledged, strained too far, or, perhaps, not true in fact: but the rigid system peculiar to Corbulo might, with some color of probability, give rise to the report. It may however be fairly inferred that the commander, concerning whom a story like this could gain credit, was, in matters of moment, firm, decided, and inflexible.

XIX. By this plan of discipline Corbulo struck a general terror through the army: but that terror had a twofold effect; it roused the Romans to a due sense of their duty, and repressed the ferocity of the barbarians. The Frisians, who, ever since their success against Lucius Apronius, remained in open or disguised hostility, thought it advisable, after giving hostages for their pacific temper, to accept a territory within the limits prescribed by Corbulo, and to submit to a mode of government which he judged proper, consisting of an assembly in the nature of a senate, a body of magistrates, and a new code of laws. In order to bridle this people effectually, he built a fort in the heart of their country, and left it strongly garrisoned. In the mean time he tried by his emissaries to draw over to his interest the leading chiefs of the Chaucian nation. Against Gannascus he did not scruple to act by stratagem. In the case of a deserter, who had violated all good faith, fraud and circumvention did not appear to him inconsistent with the dignity of the Roman name. Gannascus was cut off. His death

inflamed the resentment of the Chaucians; nor was Corbulo unwilling to provoke a war. His conduct, however, though applauded at Rome by a great number, did not escape the censure of others. ‘Why enrage the enemy? If he failed in his attempt the commonwealth must feel the calamity: if crowned with success, a general of high renown, under a torpid and unwarlike prince, might prove a powerful and a dangerous citizen.’ Claudius had no ambition to extend his dominions in Germany. He ordered the garrisons to be withdrawn, and the whole army to repossess the Rhine.

XX. Corbulo had already marked out his camp in the enemy’s country, when the emperor’s letters came to hand. The contents were unexpected. A crowd of reflections occurred to the general; he dreaded the displeasure of the prince; he saw the legions exposed to the derision of the barbarians, and in the opinion of the allies his own character degraded. He exclaimed with some emotion, ‘Happy the commanders who fought for the old republic!’ Without a word more, he sounded a retreat. And now, to hinder his men from falling again into sluggish inactivity, he ordered a canal, three-and-twenty miles in length, to be carried on between the Meuse and the Rhine, as a channel to receive the influx of the sea, and hinder the country from being laid under water. Claudius, in the mean time, allowed him the honor of triumphal ornaments: he granted the reward of military service, but prevented the merit of deserving it.

In a short time afterwards Curtius Rufus obtained the same distinction: the service of this man was the discovery of a mine in the country of the Mattiaci, in which was opened a vein of silver, of little profit, and soon exhausted. The labor was severely felt by the legions: they were obliged to dig a number of

sluices, and in subterraneous cavities to endure fatigues and hardships scarce supportable in the open air. Weary of the labor, and finding that the same rigorous services were extended to other provinces, they contrived with secrecy to despatch letters to the emperor, praying that when next he appointed a general he would begin with granting him triumphal honors.

XXI. Curtius Rufus,<sup>1</sup> according to some, was the son of a gladiator. For this I do not pretend to vouch. To speak of him with malignity is far from my intention, and to relate the truth is painful. He began the world in the train of a questor, whom he attended into Africa. In that station, while, to avoid the intense heat of the mid-day sun, he was sitting under a portico in the city of Adrumetum, the form of a woman, large beyond the proportions of the human shape,<sup>2</sup> appeared before him. A voice at the same time pronounced, ‘ You, Rufus, are the favored man, destined to come hereafter into this province with proconsular authority.’ Inspired by the vision, he set out for Rome, where, by the interest of his friends, and his own intriguing genius, he first obtained the questorship. In a short time after he aspired to the dignity of pretor; and, though opposed by competitors of distinguished rank, he succeeded by the suffrage of Tiberius. That emperor, to throw a veil over the mean extraction of his favorite candidate, shrewdly said, ‘ Curtius Rufus seems to be a man sprung from himself.’ He lived to an advanced old age, growing grey in the base arts of servile adulation, to his superiors a fawning sycophant,

1 Some of the commentators will have this person to be Quintus Curtius, the historian of Alexander the Great; but this opinion is without foundation. Tacitus would not omit a circumstance so very remarkable.

2 This story is related as a fact by the younger Pliny, vii. 27.



to all beneath him proud and arrogant, and with his equals surly, rude, and impracticable. At a late period of his life he obtained the consular and triumphal ornaments, and finally, to verify the prediction, went proconsul into Africa, where he finished his days.

XXII. About this time Cneius Novius, a man of equestrian rank, was seized in the circle at the emperor's court, with a dagger concealed under his robe: his motives were unknown at the time, and never since discovered. When he lay stretched on the rack he avowed his own desperate purpose, but, touching his accomplices, not a syllable could be extorted from him. Whether his silence was wilful obstinacy, or proceeded from his having no secret to discover, remains uncertain. During the same consulship Publius Dolabella proposed a new regulation, requiring that a public spectacle of gladiators should be exhibited annually, at the expense of such as obtained the office of questor. In the early ages of the commonwealth that magistracy was considered as the reward of virtue. The honors of the state lay open to every citizen who relied on his fair endeavors and the integrity of his character. The difference of age<sup>1</sup> created no incapacity. Men in the prime of life might be chosen consuls and dictators. The office of questor was instituted during the monarchy, as appears from the law Curiata,<sup>2</sup> which

1 In the consulship of Fulvius Flaccus and Lucius Manlius Acidinus, A. U. C. 575, Lucius Villius, tribune of the people, preferred a *rogatio*, or bill, which passed into a law, to settle at what age the different magistracies might be obtained; Livy, xl. 43. The questorship was the first office any person could bear in the commonwealth, and by the new regulation might be undertaken at the age of twenty-four or twenty-five years. Kennet's Rom. Antiq. 115.

2 The *Comitia Curiata* owe their original to the division

was afterwards put in force by Lucius Junius Brutus. The right of election was vested in the consuls, till at last it centered in the people at large; and, accordingly, we find that about sixty-three years after the expulsion of the Tarquins, Valerius Potitus and Æmilius Mamercus were the first popular questors created to attend the armies of the republic. The multiplicity of affairs increasing at Rome, two were added to act in a civil capacity. In process of time, when all Italy was reduced to subjection, and foreign provinces augmented the public revenue, the number of questors was doubled. Sylla created twenty: he had transferred all judicial authority to the senate; and to fill that order with its proper complement was the object of his policy. The Roman knights, it is true, recovered their ancient jurisdiction; but even during those convulsions, and from that era to the time we are speaking of, the questorship was either obtained by the merit and dignity of the candidates, or granted by the favor and free-will of the people. It was reserved for Dolabella to make the election venal.

XXIII. Aulus Vitellius and Lucius Vipsanius were the next consuls. The mode of filling the vacancies in the senate became the subject of debate. The nobility of that part of Gaul styled Gallia Comata<sup>1</sup> had

which Romulus made of the people into thirty curiæ, ten being contained in every tribe. They answered, in most respects, to the modern divisions of cities into parishes. Before the institution of the *Comitia Centuriata*, or assemblies of the people in their centuries, which were in number one hundred and ninety-three, instituted by Servius Tullius, all the great concerns of the state were transacted in the curias; such as the electing of magistrates, the making or abrogating of laws, and the decision of capital causes. Kennet's Rom. Antiq. 129.

<sup>1</sup> Gallia Comata, a general name for the whole country on this side of the Alps.

for some time enjoyed the privilege of Roman citizens: on this occasion they claimed a right to the magistracy and all civil honors. The demand became the topic of public discussion, and in the prince's cabinet met with a strong opposition. It was there contended, 'That Italy was not so barren of men, but she could well supply the capital with fit and able senators. In former times the municipal towns and provinces were content to be governed by their own native citizens. That system was long established, and there was no reason to condemn the practice of the old republic. The history of that period presents a school of virtue. It is there that the models of true glory are to be found; those models that formed the Roman genius, and still excite the emulation of posterity. Is it not enough that the Venetians and Insubrians have forced their way into the senate? Are we to see a deluge of foreigners poured in on us, as if the city were taken by storm? What honors and what titles of distinction will, in that case, remain for the ancient nobility, the true genuine stock of the Roman empire? And for the indigent senator of Latium what means will then be left to advance his fortune and support his rank? All posts of honor will be the property of wealthy intruders; a race of men whose ancestors waged war against the very being of the republic; with fire and sword destroyed her armies; and finally laid siege to Julius Cæsar in the city of Alesia.<sup>1</sup> But these are

<sup>1</sup> Alesia was besieged by Julius Cæsar. The town, situated on the ridge of a hill, was almost impregnable. It could not be taken by assault. Vercingetorix commanded the garrison. Cæsar formed his lines of circumvallation, and was obliged to sit down before the place for a considerable time. He has left a circumstantial account of all his operations, and also of the speech of Critognatus, a leading chieftain among the Gauls, when the garrison, pressed by famine,

modern instances: what shall be said of the barbarians who laid the walls of Rome in ashes, and dared to besiege the capitol and the temple of Jupiter? Let the present claimants, if it must be so, enjoy the titular dignity of Roman citizens: but let the senatorian rank, and the honors of the magistracy, be preserved unmixed, untainted, and inviolate.'

XXIV. These arguments made no impression on the mind of Claudius: he replied on the spot, and afterwards in the senate delivered himself to this effect:<sup>1</sup> 'To decide the question now depending, the annals of Rome afford a precedent; and a precedent of greater cogency, as it happened to the ancestors of my own family. Attus Clausus, by birth a Sabine, from whom I derive my pedigree, was admitted, on

debated whether they should capitulate, or sally out in a body, and die with glory, sword in hand. Cæsar records this man's speech, on account of its singular and nefarious cruelty. Critognatus opposed all terms of accommodation. 'To sally out,' he said, 'might be called an effort of brave despair; but it was in fact the pusillanimity of men who dreaded the hardships of an approaching famine. But what was the conduct of the ancient Gauls, when besieged by the Cimbri and Teutones? Reduced to the last distress, they devoured the bodies of all who were incapable of bearing arms, and held out to the last. That,' he said, 'was a glorious precedent; it deserved to be imitated, and transmitted to posterity.' Alesia, after an obstinate resistance, surrendered at discretion, and Vercingetorix was delivered up. Cæsar, *De Bell. Gall.* vii. 68-89.

<sup>1</sup> It has been mentioned, note 2, § 14, that a speech of Claudius, engraved on a tablet of brass, has been found at Lyons. It is set forth at length by Brotier, in his edition of Tacitus, ii. 4to, 349, and by Dotteville, iv. 422. This speech relates to the question stated by Tacitus, namely, the admission of the Gauls into the Roman senate. The historian has not given the argument in the form and words of the original speech. He has seized the substance, and expressed it with his usual brevity, in a style suited to an emperor, of whom he says, that in his prepared speeches he never wanted elegance.

one and the same day, to the freedom of Rome and the patrician rank. Can I do better than adopt that rule of ancient wisdom? It is for the interest of the commonwealth that merit, wherever found, should be transplanted to Rome, and made our own. Need I observe that to Alba we are indebted for the Julii, to Camerium for the Corruccani, and to Tusculum for the Portii? Without searching the records of antiquity, we know that the nobles of Etruria, of Lucania, and in short of all Italy, have been incorporated with the Roman senate. The Alps, in the course of time, were made the boundaries of the city; and by that extension of our privileges, not simple individuals, but whole nations, were naturalised at once, and blended with the Roman name. In a period of profound peace the people beyond the Po were admitted to their freedom. Under color of planting colonies, we spread our legions over the face of the globe; and, by drawing into our civil union the flower of the several provinces, we recruited the strength of the mother-country. The Balbi came from Spain, and others of equal eminence from the Narbon Gaul: o that accession to our numbers have we reason to repent? The descendants of those illustrious families are still in being; and can Rome boast of better citizens? Where do we see more generous ardor to promote her interest?

‘The Spartans and the Athenians, without all question, acquired great renown in arms: and to what shall we attribute their decline and total ruin? To what, but the injudicious policy of considering the vanquished as aliens to their country? The conduct of Romulus, the founder of Rome, was the very reverse: with wisdom equal to his valor, he made those fellow-citizens at night, who, in the morning, were his ene-

mies in the field. Even foreign kings have reigned at Rome. To raise the descendants of freedmen to the honors of the state is not, as some imagine, a modern innovation: it was the practice of the old republic. But the Senones waged war against us; and were the Volscians and Æqui always our friends? The Gauls, we are told, well-nigh overturned the capitol: and did not the Tuscans oblige us to deliver hostages? Did not the Samnites compel a Roman army to pass under the yoke? Review the wars that Rome had on her hands, and that with the Gauls will be found the shortest. From that time a lasting and an honorable peace prevailed. Let them now, intermixed with the Roman people, united by ties of affinity, by arts, and congenial manners, be one people with us. Let them bring their wealth to Rome, rather than hoard it up for their own separate use. The institutions of our ancestors, which we so much and so justly revere at present, were, at one time, a novelty in the constitution. The magistrates were, at first, patricians only; the plebeians opened their way to honors; and the Latins in a short time followed their example. In good time we embraced all Italy. The measure which I now defend by examples will, at a future day, be another precedent. It is now a new regulation: in time it will be history.'

XXV. This speech was followed by a decree, in consequence of which the Æduans, by way of distinction, were, in the first instance, declared capable of a seat in the senate. Of all the Gauls, they alone were styled the brethren of the Roman people, and by their strict fidelity deserved the honor conferred on them. About the same time Claudius enrolled in the patrician order such of the ancient senators as stood recommended by their illustrious birth and the merit of

their ancestors. The line of those families, which were styled by Romulus the first class of nobility, and by Brutus the second, was almost extinct. Even those of more recent date, created in the time of Julius Cæsar by the Cassian law, and, under Augustus, by the Sænian,<sup>1</sup> were well-nigh exhausted. This new distribution of honors was agreeable to the people, and this part of his censorial office Claudius performed with alacrity. A more difficult business still remained. Some of the senators had brought dishonor on their names; and to expel them, according to the severity of ancient usage, was a painful task. He chose a milder method. ‘Let each man,’ he said, ‘review his own life and manners; and, if he sees reason, let him apply for leave to erase his name. Permission will of course be granted. The list which he intended to make would contain, without distinction, those who retired of their own motion, and also such as deserved to be expelled. By that method the disgrace of being degraded would be avoided, or at least alleviated.’

For these several acts, Vipsanius the consul moved that the emperor should be styled the Father of the Senate. The title, he said, of Father of his Country would be no more than common; but peculiar merit required a new distinction. This stroke of flattery gave disgust to Claudius. He therefore overruled the

1 We read in Suetonius that Julius Cæsar filled up the vacancies in the senate, and advanced several commoners to the rank of patricians; Suet. in Jul. Cæs. § 41. It should seem, from what Tacitus says, that he was willing to give color to his proceedings, and therefore acted under a law called, after Cassius the consul for part of the year, the Cassian law. In like manner Augustus adopted the same measure, and carried it into execution, under the authority of a law enacted in the consulship of Lucius Sænius, who was appointed to the office towards the end of the year, and therefore does not appear in the *Fasti Consulares*.

motion. He then closed the lustre of five years, and made a survey of the people. The number of citizens amounted nearly to six millions.<sup>1</sup> From this time the emperor no longer remained in stupid insensibility, blind to the conduct of his wife. He was soon reduced to the necessity of hearing and punishing the enormity of her guilt; but the act by which he vindicated his own honor gave him an opportunity to sully it by an incestuous marriage.

XXVI. Messalina had hitherto found so ready a compliance with her vicious passions, that the cheap delight was grown insipid. To give a zest to pleasure she had recourse to modes of gratification untried before. Silius, at the same time, intoxicated with success, or perhaps thinking that the magnitude of his danger was to be encountered with equal courage, made a proposal altogether new and daring. 'They were not,' he said, 'in a situation to wait with patience for the death of the prince. Prudence and cautious measures were for the innocent only. In a case of flagrant guilt a bold effort of courage was the only remedy. If they undertook with spirit, their accomplices, apprised of their situation, would be ready to hazard all that was dear to them. As to himself, he was divorced from his wife; he was a single man; he had no children; he was willing to marry Messalina and adopt Britannicus for his son. After the nuptial ceremony, the power which Messalina then enjoyed would still continue in her hands, unimpaired, and undiminished. To insure

1 The number of Roman citizens mentioned in this place would be thought altogether incredible, if the estimate were to be understood to relate to the inhabitants of the capital: but the question was not, what number dwelt within the walls of the city; it extended to the whole body of the Roman people, wherever stationed.



their mutual safety, nothing remained but to circumvent a superannuated emperor; when unprovoked, stupid; but when roused from his lethargy, sudden, furious, and vindictive.' The proposition was not relished by Messalina. Motives of conjugal affection had no influence on her conduct: but she beheld her lover with a jealous eye. Raised to imperial dignity, he might despise an adulteress, and their guilty joys. Their mutual pleasures, endeared at present by the magnitude of the crime and the danger, might in the day of security appear in their native colors, and pall the sated appetite. The marriage notwithstanding had charms that pleased her fancy. It was a farther step in guilt and infamy; and infamy, when beyond all measure great, is the last incentive of an abandoned mind. She closed with the offer made by Silius, but deferred the carrying of it into execution till the emperor went to Ostia to assist at a sacrifice. During his absence the nuptial ceremony was performed with pomp and all the accustomed rites.

XXVII. The fact which I have stated, it must be acknowledged, carries with it an air of fable. That such a degree of self-delusion, in a populous city where every thing is known and discussed in public, should infatuate the mind of any person whatever, will hardly gain credit with posterity. Much less will it be believed that a consul elect, and the wife of an emperor, on a day appointed, in the presence of witnesses duly summoned, should dare to meet the public eye, and sign a contract with express provisions for the issue of an unlawful marriage. It will be a circumstance still more incredible, that the empress should hear the marriage ceremony pronounced by the augur, and in her turn repeat the words; that she should join in a sacrifice to the gods; take her place at the nuptial banquet;

and exchange caresses and mutual endearments with the bridegroom. The whole must appear romantic; but to amuse with fiction is not the design of this work. The facts here related are well attested by writers of that period, and by grave and elderly men, who lived at the time, and were informed of every circumstance.

XXVIII. The prince's family was thrown into consternation. The favorites who stood high in power were alarmed for themselves. Full of apprehensions, and dreading a sudden change, they disclosed their minds, not in secret murmurs, but openly, and in terms of indignation. 'While a stage-player enjoyed the embraces of Messalina the emperor's bed was dishonored, but the state was not in danger. At present, what had they not to fear from a young man of the first nobility, endowed with talents and with vigor of mind, in his person graceful, and at that very time designed for the consulship? Silius was preparing to open a new scene. The solemn farce of a marriage has been performed, and the catastrophe with which they intend to conclude the piece may be easily foreseen.' Their fears were still increased, when they considered the stupidity of Claudius, and the ascendant which the empress had obtained over him, to such a degree, that the best blood in Rome had been spilt to gratify her insatiate vengeance. On the other hand the imbecility of Claudius gave them hopes of success. If they could once impress that torpid mind with an idea of Messalina's wickedness, she might be condemned unheard, and, by the sudden violence of the emperor, hurried away to execution. The only danger was that she might gain an audience. Her defence might satisfy the emperor; and, even if she confessed her guilt, he might remain deaf to the

truth, insensible of disgrace, weak, stupid, and uxorious.

XXIX. Callistus,<sup>1</sup> who, as already mentioned, was a principal actor in the catastrophe of Caligula, held a meeting with Narcissus, the chief adviser of the murder of Appius, and, with Pallas, the reigning favorite at the court of Claudius. Their first idea was to address themselves at once to Messalina, and, without alluding to her other enormous practices, endeavor to break the connexion between her and Silius. This plan was soon deserted. The danger of provoking the haughty spirit of Messalina operated on the fears of Pallas. Callistus knew his own interest too well: a politician formed by the maxims of the preceding reign, he was not then to learn that power at court is preserved by tame compliance, not by honest counsels. Narcissus was left to act from his own judgment. To ruin Messalina was his fixed resolution; but the blow, he knew, must be struck before she could see the hand that aimed it. He laid his train with the deepest secrecy. Claudius continued loitering away the time at Ostia. Callistus employed the interval to the best advantage. He engaged in his plot two famous courtesans, at that time high in favor with the emperor. He allured them by presents and liberal promises. He convinced them both that by the ruin of Messalina

1 As the whole history of Caligula is lost the part which Callistus acted in the catastrophe of that emperor is not to be found in Tacitus. Cassius Chærea was the chief conspirator. He drew into his plot a number of leading men, and among them Callistus, a freedman enriched by the favors of Caligula. To apologise in some degree for his perfidy and ingratitude, the enfranchised slave gave out that he had orders from Caligula to administer poison to Claudius. By that story, whether true or false, he varnished over his treachery to his benefactor, and secured his interest with the next emperor.

they might rise to power and influence. He represented their interest in the strongest colors, and by those incentives induced them to prefer an accusation against the empress.

XXX. The plot being settled, one of the concubines (by name Calpurnia) obtained a private interview with Claudius. Throwing herself at the emperor's feet, she told him that Messalina had dishonored him by a marriage with Silius. Cleopatra, the other actress in the scene, was near at hand to confirm the story. Being asked by the accuser whether she did not know the truth of the charge, her testimony confirmed the whole. Narcissus was immediately summoned to the emperor's presence. He began with an humble apology for the remissness of his conduct. 'He had been silent as to Vectius and Plautius, whose criminal intrigues were too well known. Even in that very moment it was not his intention to urge the crime of adultery: nor would he desire restitution of the palace, the household train, and the splendors of the imperial house. Let Silius enjoy them all; but let him restore the emperor's wife, and give up his marriage-contract to be declared null and void. You are divorced, Cæsar, at this moment divorced, and you are ignorant of it. The people saw the marriage ceremony, the senate beheld it, and the soldiers knew it. Act with vigor; take a decisive step, or the adulterer is master of Rome.'

XXXI. Claudius called a council of his friends. Turranius, the superintendent of the public stores, and Lucius Geta, the commander of the pretorian bands, acknowledged the whole of her flagitious conduct. The rest of the courtiers crowded round the prince, with importunity urging him to go forth to the camp, and secure the pretorian guards. His own per-

sonal safety was the first consideration. Vindictive measures might follow in good time. The alarm was too much for the faculties of so weak a man as Claudius. He stood in stupid amazement. He asked several times, 'Am I emperor? Is Silius still a private man?'

Messalina, in the mean time, passed the hours in gay festivity, all on the wing of pleasure and enjoyment. It was then the latter end of autumn: in honor of the season an interlude, representing the vintage, was exhibited by her order at the palace. The wine-presses were set to work; the juice pressed from the grape flowed in copious streams; and round the vats a band of women, dressed after the Bacchanalian fashion, with the skins of tigers, danced in frolic measures, with the wild transport usual at the rites of Bacchus. In the midst of the revellers Messalina displayed the graces of her person; her hair flowing with artful negligence, and a thyrsus waving in her hand. Silius fluttered at her side; his temples crowned with wreaths of ivy; his legs adorned with buskins; and his head, with languishing airs, moving in unison with the music; while a chorus circled round the happy pair, with dance, and song, and lascivious gesture animating the scene. There is a current tradition that Vectius Valens, in a fit of ecstasy, climbed up among the branches of a tree, and being asked what he saw, made answer, 'I see a dreadful storm gathering at Ostia.' Whether the sky was then overcast, or the expression fell by chance, it proved in the end a true prediction.

XXXII. Meanwhile it became publicly known at Rome, not by vague report, but by sure intelligence brought by special messengers, that Claudius, fully apprised of all that passed, was on his way, deter-

mined to do justice on the guilty. Messalina withdrew to the gardens of Lucullus. Silius, endeavoring under an air of gaiety to hide his fears, went towards the forum, as if he had business to transact. The rest of the party fled with precipitation. The centurions pursued them. Several were seized in the streets, or in their lurking places, and loaded with fetters. In this reverse of fortune Messalina had no time for deliberation. She resolved to meet the emperor on his way; and, in a personal interview, to try that power over his affections which had so often served her on former occasions. In order to excite compassion she ordered her children, Octavia and Britannicus, to fly to the embraces of their father. She prevailed on Vibidia, the eldest of the vestal virgins, to address the emperor as the sovereign pontiff, and wring from him, by the force of prayers, a pardon for his wife. She herself traversed the city on foot, with only three attendants. Such, in the moment of adversity, was the solitude in which she was left. She mounted into a tumbrel, usually employed to carry off the refuse of the city gardens, and in that vehicle proceeded on her way to Ostia. From the spectators not a groan was heard; no sign of pity was seen. The enormity of her guilt suppressed every kind emotion of the heart.

XXXIII. Claudius, in the mean time, was thrown into violent agitations. Doubt and fear distracted him. He had no reliance on Geta, who commanded the pretorian guards; a man at all times fluctuating between good and evil, and ready for any mischief. Narcissus, seconded by his friends and associates, spoke his mind in terms plain and direct. He told the emperor that all was lost, if the command of the camp were not for that day vested in one of his freed-

men. He offered himself for that important office ; and lest Claudius, on the road to Rome, should be induced by the influence of Lucius Vitellius and Publius Largus Cæcina to alter his resolution, he desired to be conveyed in the same carriage with the prince. He mounted the vehicle, and took his place without farther ceremony.

XXXIV. Claudius, as he proceeded towards the city, felt himself distracted by contending passions. He inveighed against his wife ; he softened into tenderness, and felt for his children. During all that agitation of mind Vitellius, we are told, contented himself with saying, ‘The vile iniquity ! The infamous crime !’ Narcissus pressed him to be more explicit ; but his answers were in the oracular style ; dark, ambiguous, and liable to be interpreted various ways. Cæcina followed his example. It was not long before Messalina appeared in sight. Her supplications were loud and vehement. ‘Hear your unhappy wife,’ she said, ‘hear the mother of Octavia and Britannicus.’ To prevent any impression of tenderness the accuser raised his voice : he talked of Silius, and the wickedness of the marriage ; he produced a memorial, containing a full account of the whole proceeding ; and, to draw the emperor’s eyes from Messalina, gave him the papers to read. As they entered Rome Octavia and Britannicus presented themselves before the prince ; but, by order of Narcissus, they were both removed. Vibidia claimed to be heard : in a pathetic tone she remonstrated, that to condemn his wife unheard would be unjust and shocking to humanity. She received for answer that Messalina would have her opportunity to make her defence : in the mean time, it became a vestal virgin to retire to the functions of her sacred office.

XXXV. The silence of Claudius during the whole of this scene was beheld with astonishment. Vitellius looked aghast, affecting to understand nothing. All directions were given by the freedman. He ordered the adulterer's house to be thrown open, and proceeded thither with the emperor. He showed him in the vestibule the statue of Silius the father, which the senate had ordered to be destroyed : he pointed to the splendid ornaments, formerly the property of the Neros and the Drusi, now in the possession of the adulterer ; the reward of his profligacy. Claudius was fired with indignation. Before he had time to cool, and while with violent menaces he was denouncing vengeance, Narcissus took advantage of the moment, and conducted him to the camp. The soldiers were assembled in a body to receive him. Claudius, by the advice of his ministers, delivered a short harangue. On the subject of his disgrace it was impossible to expatiate ; shame suppressed his voice. The camp resounded with rage and clamor. The soldiers called aloud for the names of the guilty, threatening immediate vengeance. Silius was brought before the tribunal. He attempted no defence ; he asked for no delay ; instant death was all he desired. Several Roman knights followed his example, with equal firmness wishing to end their misery. In the number were Titius Proculus, whom Silius had appointed to guard Messalina ; Vectius Valens, who confessed his guilt, and offered to give evidence against others ; Pompeius Urubicus and Saufellus Trogus. By the emperor's order they were hurried to instant execution. The same fate attended Decius Calpurnianus, prefect of the night watch ; Sulpicius Rufus, director of the public games ; and Juncus Virgilianus, a member of the senate.



XXXVI. Mnester was the only person in whose favor Claudius was held in suspense. This man, in agony, tore his garments; and, 'Behold!' he said, 'behold a body seamed with stripes. Remember your own words, Cæsar; the words in which you gave me strict directions to obey the will and pleasure of Messalina. The rest acted for their reward; they had bright objects in view. If I have erred, I erred through necessity, not by inclination. Had Silius seized the reins of government I should have been the first victim to his fury.' Claudius hesitated: touched with compassion, he was on the point of granting the wretch his pardon; but after executing so many persons of rank, his freedmen told him that the life of a minstrel was of no value: whether the man offended from inclination or compulsion was not worth a moment's pause: his case deserved no favor. The defence made by Traulus Montanus, a Roman knight, availed him nothing. In the prime of youth, of ingenuous manners, and an elegant figure, he had the misfortune to be distinguished by Messalina. She invited him to live with her, but soon after dismissed him. Such was the caprice that ruled all her passions. A pardon was granted to Suius Cæsoninus and Plautius Lateranus: the last, in consideration of the great merit of his uncle,<sup>1</sup> was saved from execution. Cæsoninus was protected by his vices. In that society, with whom he had been lately connected, he had been obliged to suffer the utmost indignities; and that disgrace was deemed sufficient punishment.

1 Lateranus was nephew to Aulus Plautius, the famous general who commanded in Britain, A. U. C. 796, and subdued the southern part of the island. See the Life of Agricola, § 14 and 17.

XXXVII. Messalina remained, during this whole time, in the gardens of Lucullus. She still entertained hopes of prolonging her days. She began to write to the emperor in a style of supplication: her passions shifted, and she spoke the language of reproach: even in ruin her pride was not abated. If Narcissus had not hastened the execution, there is no doubt but the blow aimed at her would have recoiled on himself. Claudius, as soon as he returned to his palace, placed himself at his convivial table. Being refreshed, and in a short time warm with wine, he gave orders that a messenger should be sent to tell the unhappy woman (those were his words) that on the next day she should be admitted to make her defence. Narcissus took the alarm: he saw the resentments of his master ebbing fast away, and his former fondness flowing in on him. Delay was big with danger. The night, then coming on apace, might produce a change of sentiment; and his very bed-chamber, the scene of all his happiness, might melt him into tenderness and conjugal affection. Filled with these apprehensions, the freedman rushed out of the banqueting room, and in the emperor's name gave orders to the centurions, and the tribune on duty, to do immediate execution on Messalina. Evodus, one of the freedmen, was sent to superintend the execution. This man made the best of his way to the gardens. He found the empress stretched on the ground, and Lepida her mother sitting by. While Messalina flourished in prosperity the mother kept no terms with her daughter. In her present distress she felt the regret and anguish of a parent. 'Death,' she told the unhappy criminal, 'was her only refuge. To linger for the stroke of the executioner were unworthy and

ignoble. Life with her was over: she was in the last act, and nothing remained but to close the scene with dignity and a becoming spirit.' But in a mind like that of Messalina, depraved by vicious passions, every virtue was extinguished. She sunk under her afflictions, overwhelmed with grief, dissolved in tears, and uttering vain complaints, when the garden gate was thrown open. The tribune presented himself in sullen silence. Evodus, the freedman, discharged a torrent of opprobrious language, with all the malice of a servile spirit.

XXXVIII. Messalina was now for the first time sensible of her condition. She saw that all was lost: she received a poniard: she aimed it with a feeble effort at her throat: she pointed it to her breast, irresolute, and clinging still to life. The tribune despatched her at one blow. Her body was left to be disposed of by her mother. The emperor, in the mean time, had not risen from table. He was told that Messalina was no more: but whether she died by her own hand, or that of the executioner, was not mentioned; nor did it occur to him to ask the question. He called for wine, and pampered himself as usual with the luxuries of the table. On the following days he appeared unmoved, unaltered; without a symptom of anger, joy, or grief, or any other sensation of the human heart. Even amidst the exultations of Messalina's enemies, and the cries of her children, lamenting their unhappy mother, he remained sunk in stupid apathy. In order to blot her altogether from his memory, the senate decreed that her name should be effaced in all places, whether public or private, and that her images should be every where taken down. The ensigns of the questorian dignity were voted to Narcissus: a slender recompense, when it is consi-

dered that, though second in rank to Pallas and Callistus, he was the chief adviser in the whole proceeding against Messalina. The punishment inflicted by his means was undoubtedly just; but it proved the source of numberless crimes, and a long train of public calamities.<sup>1</sup>

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## BOOK XII.

SECT. I. THE death of Messalina threw the imperial family into a state of distraction. The freedmen were divided into contending factions. The emperor disliked a life of celibacy, and the uxorious disposition of his nature made him liable to be governed by the partner of his bed. Which of the favorites should make the fortune of a future empress was the point in dispute. Nor was female ambition less excited. Several candidates aspired to the vacant throne; all depending on pretensions that gave to each a decided title: such as nobility of birth, superior beauty, immoderate riches; and, in short, every claim to that great elevation. The contest however lay between Lollia Paulina, the daughter of Marcus Lollius the

<sup>1</sup> Claudius contracted an incestuous marriage with the daughter of his brother Germanicus: Agrippina destroyed the emperor's son Britannicus, and afterwards despatched Claudius himself, to open the road to empire for her son Nero, who it is well known was guilty of parricide: and Narcissus, the favorite freedman, ended his days in a dungeon; Annals, xiii. 1.

consul, and Agrippina, the immediate issue of Germanicus. Pallas espoused the interest of Agrippina, and Lollia was supported by Callistus. There was still a third rival; namely, Ælia Petina, descended from the family of the Tuberos. Narcissus declared in her favor. By the jarring counsels of the three favorites Claudius was distracted in his choice; by turns inclined to each, persuaded always by the last, yet determined by none. At length, to weigh their different propositions, and the reasoning in support of them, he called his confidential ministers to an audience.

II. Narcissus urged in favor of Ælia Petina,<sup>1</sup> that she was formerly the wife of Claudius, and by him was the mother of Antonia. By joining her again in the bands of wedlock no alteration would be made in the imperial family. A person with whom the prince had already experienced the tenderest union would be reinstated; and, since Octavia and Britannicus were so nearly allied to her daughter, she would embrace them both with sincere affection, free from the little jealousies of a stepmother. Callistus, on the contrary, was of opinion that a woman, disgraced by a long divorce, and suddenly restored to favor, would

1 Suetonius gives an account of the wives of Claudius in regular succession. His first wife was Plautia Urgulanilla. Being in a short time divorced from her, he married Ælia Petina, descended from a father of consular rank: by her he had a daughter named Antonia; for whom see the Genealogical Table, No. 105. For Ælia Petina, see No. 104. Claudius was divorced from his second wife. He then married Messalina, and by her had a daughter, Octavia, and a son named Britannicus. Lollia Paulina, who aspired on the present occasion to the imperial bed, had been married to Caligula, and was soon divorced. See for her the Genealogical Table, No. 99. Agrippina, the successful candidate, was the daughter of Germanicus, the brother of Claudius. For the whole transaction as here related by Tacitus, see Suet. in Claud. § 26.

bring with her the pride and arrogance of an actual conquest; but to Lollia no objection could be made: she had never been a mother, and by consequence her affections, not already engaged, would be reserved for the issue of the prince. Her whole stock of tenderness would be engrossed by Octavia and Britannicus. Pallas contended for Agrippina: by a match with her the grandson of Germanicus would be transplanted into the imperial family, and that union would be an accession of strength to the Claudian line. Agrippina was still in the prime of life, of a constitution that promised a numerous issue; and to suffer a woman of her rank and dignity to carry the splendor of the Cæsarean line into another family would be a measure highly impolitic.

III. This reasoning weighed with Claudius, and the beauty of Agrippina added force to the argument. She had, besides, the art of displaying her charms to the best advantage. The ties of consanguinity gave her free access to her uncle. She made use of her opportunities, and in a short time secured her conquest. Without waiting for the marriage rites she was able to anticipate the splendor and authority of imperial grandeur. Sure of her triumph over her rival, she enlarged her views; and by a projected match between Domitius,<sup>1</sup> her son by Cneius Ænobarbus, and Octavia, the emperor's daughter, began to plan the elevation of her family. The scene before her flattered her ambition, but without a stroke of iniquity could not be realised. The fact was, Octavia, with the consent of Claudius, was contracted to Lucius Silanus, a youth of noble descent; by triumphal honors rendered still

<sup>1</sup> Domitius, the son of Agrippina, was afterwards Nero the emperor.

more illustrious ; and by a spectacle of gladiators, given in his name, endeared to the people. But to a woman of high ambition and a politic character it was not difficult to mould to her purposes a man like Claudius, void of sentiment, without a passion, and without a motive, except what was infused by the suggestion of others.

IV. Vitellius saw the tide running with a rapid current in favor of Agrippina. He resolved to ingratiate himself without delay. His office of censor gave him the power of executing the vilest purposes, and at the same time served as a veil of iniquity. He made advances to Agrippina, and entered into all her measures. His first step was to frame an accusation against Silanus, whose sister, Junia Calvina, in her person elegant, but of a loose and lascivious character, had been, not long before, the daughter-in-law of Vitellius. He accused them both of an incestuous commerce. The charge, in truth, was without foundation ; but the folly of a brother and sister, who were so unguarded as to give to natural affection an air of criminality, afforded color for the imputation. Claudius listened to the story. Inclined to protect his daughter, he was easily incensed against an intended husband who had shown himself capable of so foul a crime. Silanus was at that time pretor for the year. He little suspected the treacherous arts by which his character and his fortune were undermined. By an unexpected edict, issued by Vitellius, he was expelled the senate, though that assembly had been lately reviewed and registered by the censor. Claudius declared the marriage contract void : he renounced all ties of affinity with Silanus, and obliged him to abdicate the pretorship, though but a single day remained

to complete the year. For that short interval Eprius Marcellus was appointed to fill the vacant office.

V. In the consulship of Caius Pomponius Longinus and Quintus Veranius, the fond endearments that passed between the emperor and his niece left no room to doubt but their criminal loves, most probably indulged already, would soon be followed by the nuptial ceremony. But the marriage of an uncle with his brother's daughter was, at that time, without a precedent. If they avowed an incestuous marriage the popular hatred might be inflamed against them, and some public calamity might befall the city of Rome. Claudius was held in suspense. Vitellius undertook to remove every scruple. He desired to know whether the emperor would make the sense of the people, and the authority of the senate, the rule of his conduct. Claudius replied, that he was one of the people, and an individual too weak to resist the public voice. Vitellius desired that he would remain in his palace, and went directly to the senate. He began with assuring the fathers that he came on business of the first importance; and, having obtained leave to speak out of his turn, he proceeded as follows: 'The office of supreme magistrate is at best a state of painful solicitude. The cares of a prince who superintends the government of the world require domestic comfort to sweeten anxiety, and leave him at leisure to think for the good of the whole. And where can he find a comfort so fit, so honorable, so consistent with his dignity, as in the arms of a wife, his partner in prosperity, and in affliction the balm of all his cares? With a faithful associate he may unload his inmost thoughts; to her he may commit the management of his children; and, in that tender union, unseduced by pleasure, undebauched



by riot and luxury, he may continue to show that reverence for the laws which distinguished the character of Claudius from his earliest youth.'

VI. After this artful introduction, finding that he was heard by the fathers with manifest symptoms of a complying spirit, he resumed his discourse. 'Since it seems to be the prevailing opinion that, to alleviate the cares of the emperor, an imperial consort is absolutely necessary, nothing remains but to recommend the choice of a person distinguished by her illustrious birth, a fruitful womb, and the purity of her morals. This point may be soon decided. Agrippina must, of course, present herself to every mind. Descended from a noble stock, she is the mother of children, and possesses, besides, all the virtues and all the graces of her sex. Nor is this all: by the special care of the gods, a prince, who has known no lawless pleasures, who has sought the modest enjoyments of connubial love, has now an opportunity of taking a widow to his arms, without injury to any private citizen, and without violating the rights of the marriage bed. By former emperors wives have been taken from the embraces of their husbands: we have heard it from our fathers; we have been eye-witnesses of the fact. But these acts of violence are now at an end. A precedent may be established to regulate the conduct of all future emperors. But it may be said, a marriage between the uncle and his niece is unknown to Roman manners. To this the answer is obvious: it is the practice of foreign nations, and no law forbids it. By the rule of ancient times cousins-german were restrained from marrying; but the change of manners has introduced a different custom. Such marriages are now grown familiar. Public convenience is the parent of all civil institutions: the marriage, which

to-day seems an innovation, in future times will be the general practice.'

VII. This speech was received with the general assent. Many of the fathers rushed out of the house, declaring aloud, that if the emperor hesitated they knew how to enforce compliance. The populace at the door echoed back the voice of the senate; and, with violent uproar, called it the wish of the people. Claudius delayed no longer: he showed himself in the forum, amidst shouts and acclamations. He proceeded to the senate, and there desired that a decree might pass, declaring marriages between the uncle and his niece legal for the future. The law was enacted, but little relished. Titus Alledius Severus, a Roman knight, was the only person willing to embrace such an alliance. He married his niece; but, as was generally believed, with a design to pay his court to Agrippina. From this time a new scene of affairs was opened. The government of a woman prevailed; but it was no longer a woman of loose and dissolute manners like Messalina, who meant to mock the people with a reign of lewdness and debauchery. Agrippina established a despotic system, and maintained it with the vigor of a manly spirit: in her public conduct rigorous, and often arrogant, she suffered no irregularity in her domestic management. Vice, when subservient to her schemes of ambition, might be the means, but never was her ruling passion. Her avarice knew no bounds; but the support of government was her pretext.

VIII. On the day of the nuptial ceremony Silanus put an end to his life. Till that time he had nourished delusive hopes; or it might be his intention to mark the day by a deed of horror. His sister Calvina was banished out of Italy. Claudius, to atone for her

offence, revived the ancient law of Tullus, the Roman king, and ordered a sacrifice and expiations by the pontiffs to be made in the grove of Diana. This provoked the public ridicule. It was observed that the time for inflicting penalties and performing solemn rites was chosen with notable judgment, when adultery was by law established. Agrippina was not willing to be distinguished by evil deeds alone: in order to grace her character she interceded for Annæus Seneca, who had been driven into banishment; and not only restored him to his country, but obtained for him the pretorian rank. The learning and brilliant genius of that philosopher, she had no doubt, would render the measure acceptable to the people; and, from the education of her son Domitius under such a master, she promised herself great advantages. She had still a deeper scheme in view: by the wisdom and advice of Seneca she hoped to make the road to empire smooth and level for her son. Motives of gratitude would have their influence on the mind of that eminent man, and fix him in her interest, a faithful counsellor, and her friend by sentiment; while a sense of former injuries would make him the secret enemy of Claudius.

IX. Having conceived this plan of ambition, she thought her measures could not be too soon concerted. She contrived, by large and generous promises, to gain over to her purposes Memmius Pollio, at that time consul elect. He moved in the senate an address to the emperor, requesting his consent to a contract of marriage between Domitius and Octavia. The match was suited to the age of the parties. Agrippina intended it as a prelude to greater scenes not yet disclosed. The speech of Pollio to the fathers was little more than a repetition of what had been urged by

Vitellius. The motion succeeded. Octavia was promised to Domitius ; and by this additional tie the young prince was raised to higher splendor. He was now considered as the son-in-law of the emperor. Supported by the intrigues of his mother, and not less by the enemies of Messalina, who dreaded the vengeance of her son, he began to vie with Britannicus, and even to dispute with him the point of precedence.

X. The deputies from Parthia, sent, as has been related, to demand Meherdates for their king, were admitted to an audience before the senate. They opened their commission in the following manner : ‘ The alliance between Rome and Parthia, and the subsisting treaties, are fully known to us ; nor is it a spirit of disaffection to the family of the Arsacides that brings us to this assembly. We seek the son of Vonones, the grandson of Phraates. In the present crisis he is our only refuge, our shield and best protection from the tyranny of Gotarzes, who is justly execrated by the whole Parthian nation. His reign is marked with blood. His brothers were the first victims to his fury. His kindred have been since cut off. No place is safe from devastation : neither age nor sex is spared ; parents and their children perish in one general massacre, and infants yet unborn are butchered in the mother’s womb. Such are the exploits of Gotarzes ; in peace a tyrant, and in war disastrous to his country. Cruelty, he hopes, will seem in the eyes of men a warlike spirit. The treaties subsisting between Rome and Parthia are of ancient date : they have been the basis of a lasting friendship ; and to prove that friendship sincere the fathers have now a fair opportunity. It is theirs to vindicate the rights of a nation which, though not inferior in point of strength and numbers, yields to Rome from motives of respect.

For this reason the sons of Parthian kings have been delivered up as hostages. The principle of that acquiescence is, that if domestic tyranny should prove a galling yoke, the people may have recourse to the emperor and the senate. They now claim, at your hands, a king trained up in Roman manners; and, by consequence, likely to bring with him to his native country the best notions of civil government.'

XI. Claudius answered the ambassadors in a style of magnificence. He set forth the grandeur of the Roman name, and the deference due from the Parthian nation. He placed himself on a level with Augustus; who, in like manner, had received the applications of a whole people; but he made no mention of Tiberius,<sup>1</sup> though that emperor had dealt out sceptres, and placed foreign kings on the throne of Parthia. After this brilliant harangue he turned to Meherdates, then present in the senate, and in a serious strain admonished him to remember that he was going forth, not the lord of slaves, but the governor of men; not the tyrant, but the chief magistrate of his fellow-citizens. He advised him to practise the virtues of justice and moderation: virtues, he said, unknown to savage life, but for that reason more likely to charm by their novelty. From the prince he turned to the Parthian ambassadors, and, in handsome terms, commended to their care the pupil of Rome; a young prince of ingenuous manners, and no stranger to the liberal arts. He added, that the Parthians would do well to temporise with the genius of their kings, and to overlook the failings of human nature. Frequent revolutions could give no solid advantage. Rome was at the highest

<sup>1</sup> Tiberius had given two kings to the Parthians, viz. Phraates and Tiridates; Annals, vi. 31, 32.

point of grandeur. Enough of glory had been gained by the progress of her arms; she therefore put a period to her victories, and the tranquillity of foreign nations was now the object of her care. Meherdates was committed to the Parthian deputies; and Caius Cassius, the governor of Syria, had it in command to conduct him to the banks of the Euphrates.

XII. Cassius, at that period, was the most eminent man of the age for his profound knowledge of the laws. In times of peace the military science falls into neglect. Between the warlike genius and the inactive sluggard no distinction remains. And yet the ardent mind of Cassius could not languish in a state of stupid indolence. Though there was no war on his hands to rouse the spirit of the legions, he resolved, by every method in his power, to maintain the rigor of ancient discipline. He kept the soldiers in constant exercise; he established new regulations, and practised every duty with as much zeal as if the enemy were actually in arms against him. This severity, he thought, became a man who had before his eyes the bright example of his ancestors; and, above all, the fame of the celebrated Cassius, which was diffused through all the eastern nations. Having pitched his camp near Zeugma, a city where the passage over the Euphrates is most practicable, he waited for a convention of the Parthian chiefs, who had made their application to Rome. As soon as they arrived, and with them Abgarus, king of the Arabs, he delivered Meherdates into their hands; having previously reminded the prince, that among barbarians the first impulse of their zeal is violent, but apt to relax, and end in treachery. His interest therefore called for vigorous measures. By the artifice of Abgarus that advice was rendered abortive. The prince, as yet without expe-

rience, suspecting no deceit, and weak enough to think that royalty consists in luxury and riot, was seduced to the city of Edessa, and there detained several days, the dupe of the wily Arabian. Carrhenes, in the mean time, pressed Meherdates to advance with expedition. By his messengers he promised certain success, if no time was lost in frivolous delay. All was ineffectual. Though Mesopotamia was at hand, they never entered that country; but, taking a wider circuit, marched towards Armenia, where the rigor of the winter was already begun.

XIII. After a toilsome march over craggy mountains, covered with a waste of snow, they descended at last into the open country. Carrhenes joined them at the head of his forces. Thus reinforced the army passed over the Tigris, and penetrated into the country of the Adiabeniens.<sup>1</sup> Izates, king of that people, in outward show favored Meherdates, but in his heart inclined to Gotarzes. In the course of their march they made themselves masters of the city Ninus,<sup>2</sup> formerly the seat of the Assyrian monarchy. They also took the castle of Arbela, memorable in story for the last battle between Darius and Alexander, by which the fate of the Persian monarchy was decided. Gotarzes, in the mean time, took post on the heights of Mount Sambulos.<sup>3</sup> He there offered up a sacrifice to the deities of the place, and chiefly to Hercules, the leading god. At stated periods, according to an ancient legend, Hercules inspired the dreams of the priests; and, in a vision, gave his orders 'That a set

1 A people who inhabited a part of Mesopotamia.

2 Ninus, formerly the celebrated city of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

3 This mountain, and the river Corma, are mentioned by Tacitus only.

of horses, ready for the chase, should be stationed near the temple. The hunters accordingly are drawn out, well equipped with quivers and a store of arrows.' Thus caparisoned, they stretch at full speed through the woods, and at the close of day return to the temple without an arrow left, weary, and panting for breath. The god appears again, in a midnight vision, to tell the priests the tracts of the forest where he pursued his game. After this information diligent search is made, and a large quantity of game, killed in the chase, is found in the woods.

XIV. Gotarzes had not as yet assembled all his forces, and the issue of a battle was what he wished to avoid. The river Corma served to cover him from the assaults of the enemy. He there stood at bay, devising various delays, encamping, and shifting his ground; and though provoked by various insults, and even by messengers challenged to the conflict, he contrived, notwithstanding, to protract the war, while his agents were busy in the adverse camp, by gifts and promises seducing the friends of Meherdates. Izates, king of the Adiabeniens, was the first to withdraw with all his forces. Abgarus the Arabian followed his example; both displaying the fickle disposition and the venality of barbarians. To sue for kings at the hands of Rome was their frequent custom; but experience shows that they petitioned only to betray. Weakened by desertion, and suspecting farther treachery, Meherdates resolved to try the issue of a battle. Nor was Gotarzes disposed to decline the conflict. A fierce engagement followed, with great slaughter on both sides. The victory was long held in suspense; till Carrhenes, having broke the enemy's lines, pursued his advantage with too much ardor. He was attacked in the rear by a body of reserve, and hemmed in on every side. Meherdates saw nothing but im-



pending ruin. In his distress he trusted to the advice of Parrhaces, one of his father's freedmen. By that traitor he was thrown into fetters, and delivered up to the conqueror. Gotarzes behaved with the pride and insolence of victory. He reviled his captive as a stranger to the blood of the Arsacides, a man of foreign extraction, and a slave to Rome. He ordered his ears to be cut off, and left him in that condition; a wretched proof of Parthian clemency, and a living disgrace to the Romans. Gotarzes was soon after carried off by a fit of illness. Vonones, at that time governor of Media, mounted the vacant throne. Of this prince, either in his distresses or his prosperity, nothing remains worthy of a place in history. After a short and inglorious reign he left the Parthian diadem to his son Vologeses.

XV. During these transactions a new alarm was raised by Mithridates,<sup>1</sup> king of Bosphorus, who had been lately driven out of his dominions. He continued, ever since his expulsion, wandering from place to place, forlorn and helpless. He learned at length that Didius, the Roman general, retired with the flower of his army, leaving the kingdom of Thrace in the hands of Cotys, a prince without experience, scarcely settled on the throne, and depending on the slender support of a few cohorts, under the command of Julius Aquila, a Roman knight. The news inspired Mithridates with sudden courage. He roused the neighboring nations, drew together a body of deserters, and, putting himself at the head of his tumult-

<sup>1</sup> Mithridates mentioned in this place was descended from the great Mithridates, who waged the long war with the Romans, called the Mithridatic war. Claudius, in a distribution of kingdoms among the princes bordering on the Euxine, made the descendant of Mithridates king of Bosphorus.

tuary levies, fell with impetuous fury on the king of the Dandaridæ,<sup>1</sup> and made himself master of his dominions. The invasion of Bosphorus was expected to be his next attempt. Cotys and Aquila did not think themselves in force to resist the attack; and Zorsines, king of the Siracians,<sup>2</sup> commencing hostilities in that critical juncture, added greatly to their fears. In this distress they looked round to the neighboring states for assistance; and, by their ambassadors, invited Eunones, king of the Aorsians, to join the Roman arms. In a war between a powerful nation and a ruined dismantled king, it was not difficult to form a new confederacy. The plan of their operations was soon settled. Eunones was to ravage the open country with his cavalry. The Romans undertook to lay siege to the towns and places of strength.

XVI. The combined forces took the field. On their march the Aorsians<sup>3</sup> led the van, and also brought up the rear. The centre consisted of the cohorts and the succors collected in Bosphorus, armed after the Roman manner. The enemy not daring to look them in the face, they marched without opposition to the town of Soza, in the country of the Dandaridæ. Finding the place abandoned by Mithridates they took possession; and, to guard against the treachery of the inhabitants, left it strongly garrisoned. They penetrated next into the country of the Siracians; and, having crossed the river Panda,<sup>4</sup> invested the city of Uspes, situated on an eminence, and defended by walls and a fosse. The walls, indeed, not being con-

1 The Dandaridæ inhabited a tract of country on the Euxine shore.

2 A people near the Palus Mæotis.

3 The Aorsians were mentioned in the former section.

4 Panda, a river not well known at present.

structed with stone, but with earth thrown up and bound with hurdles, could not long resist the operation of a siege. Towers of considerable height were advanced against the works, and from that elevation darts and flaming brands were thrown into the town with such incessant fury that, if the approach of night had not prevented a general assault, the siege had been begun and ended in a single day.

XVII. The besieged next morning sent a deputation with offers of an immediate surrender, and no less than ten thousand slaves, on condition that the freeborn should remain unhurt. The terms were rejected. After a capitulation, to put the inhabitants to the sword would be an act of inhumanity, and a violation of all the laws of war. On the other hand, to bridle such a number, an adequate force could not be spared from a scanty army. The besiegers therefore returned for answer that every thing must be left to the decision of the sword. The soldiers scaled the walls, and the signal was given for a general slaughter. The city was levelled to the ground. The adjacent nations saw that neither arms nor lines of circumvallation, nor places almost inaccessible, defended by nature and by rapid rivers, could withstand the vigor of the Roman arms. In this general consternation Zorsines, the Siracian king, began to waver. He now considered whether it was best to adhere to Mithridates or to provide in time for the security of his own dominions. Self-interest prevailed. He gave hostages, and humbled before the image of Claudius. Nothing could be more honorable to the Roman army. Victorious without the loss of blood, they traversed a vast tract of country, and were within three days of the Tanais. Their return was not so prosperous. They went back by sea, and some of the ships were

thrown by adverse winds on the coast of Taurus.<sup>1</sup> The barbarians poured down to the shore, and with savage fury murdered a considerable number, with the prefect of a cohort, and most of the centurions.

XVIII. Meanwhile Mithridates, undone and hopeless, began to consider where he might implore compassion. His brother Cotys had at first betrayed him, and then became an open enemy: on him no reliance could be had. If he surrendered to the Romans, there was not in the territory of Bosphorus any one officer of weight and authority to insure the performance of his promises. In this distress the unhappy monarch turned his thoughts to Eunones. That prince had no motive for personal animosity, and his late alliance with Rome gave him no small degree of influence. Mithridates resolved to apply at that court. With a dejected mien, and a garb that spoke his wretchedness, he entered the palace, and falling prostrate at the feet of the king, 'Behold,' he said, 'behold the man who for years has grappled with the whole power of Rome. Mithridates humbles himself before you; the persecuted Mithridates, whom the Romans have pursued by sea and land. My fate is in your hands: use your discretion: treat, as you shall think best, a prince descended from the great Achæmenes.'<sup>2</sup> The honor of that high lineage is all my enemies have left me.'

XIX. The appearance of a man so distinguished, the turns of fortune that attended him, and, even in ruin, the affliction that softened, but could not subdue his spirit, touched Eunones with generous sympathy. He raised the royal suppliant from the ground. He

1 Taurus, a chain of mountains in Asia.

2 Achæmenes was grandfather to Cambyses, and after him the Persian kings were called Achæmenidæ.

praised the magnanimity with which he threw himself into the power of the Aorsian nation, and with pleasure undertook to be mediator between Rome and the unfortunate monarch. He despatched messengers to Claudius with letters to the following effect: ‘In all treaties between the Roman people and foreign nations similitude of fortune was the basis of their alliance. The present union between Claudius and the Aorsians was founded on a participation of victory; and victory is then most honorable when mercy spares the vanquished. Of this truth Zorsines is a recent instance. He still retains his former possessions. But equal terms could not be expected in the case of Mithridates. His offence was of a more grievous nature. To restore him to his throne and kingdom is not the object of this application. Spare his life, and let him not walk in fetters, a public spectacle to grace the victor’s triumph.’

XX. Claudius was at all times disposed to act with moderation towards the nobility of foreign nations. In the present conjuncture, he doubted which were most expedient, to receive the royal prisoner under a promise of pardon, or to take him by force of arms. Resentment and the love of revenge were strong incentives; but still there were reasons of policy in the opposite scale. ‘A war must be commenced in a distant region, where the roads were difficult, and the sea had neither harbors nor stations for shipping; where the struggle would be with fierce and warlike kings, and a people by their wandering life inured to fatigue; where the soil was unproductive, and an army of course would be distressed for provisions. Campaigns drawn out into length would dispirit the soldiers: sudden operations might be attended with hazard: from victory no glory could redound to the Roman name;

and to be defeated were indelible disgrace.' For these reasons, it was judged advisable to accept the proffered terms. Mithridates, in that case, would remain a wandering exile, poor, distressed, and wretched. To protract his days were to protract his misery. Claudius returned an answer to Eunones: 'Mithridates,' he observed, 'had merited the utmost rigor, and the vengeance of Rome was able to reach him. But to subdue the proud, and spare the suppliant, had ever been a Roman virtue. It was by curbing the pride of kings, and by conquering an entire people, that Rome acquired renown in arms. Then, and then only, she had reason to triumph.'

XXI. In consequence of these dispatches Mithridates was delivered up to Julius Cilo, at that time imperial procurator of Pontus. He brought with him to Rome a mind unbroken by his misfortunes. In his language to Claudius he towered above his helpless condition. One sentence that fell from him was celebrated at the time: 'In me you see a man, not taken prisoner, but willing to surrender: I came of my own accord: if you doubt the fact, set me at liberty, and retake me if you are able.' He was conducted under a guard to the rostrum, and there presented as a spectacle to the people. He stood unmoved, with his natural ferocity pictured in his countenance. Cilo and Aquila were rewarded for their services; the former with consular ornaments, and the latter with the ensigns of pretorian dignity.

XXII. During the same consulship, the hatred of Agrippina, deep and implacable, broke out with gathered rage against Lollia, who had been guilty of the crime of contending for the imperial bed. An accusation was soon contrived, and a prosecutor suborned. The substance of the charge was, 'That in the late

contest for the emperor's choice Lollia held consultations with Chaldean seers; that she employed magicians, and sent to consult the Clarian Apollo.' She was condemned unheard. Claudius addressed the senate on the occasion. He mentioned the nobility of her birth: by the maternal line she was niece to Lucius Volusius, grand-niece to Cotta Messalinus, and formerly the wife of Memmius Regulus. He said nothing of her marriage with Caligula.<sup>1</sup> Having made that flourishing preface, he changed his tone, imputing to her dark designs against the state. To defeat her pernicious views, nothing remained but to confiscate her estates, and banish her out of Italy. The senate complied. Out of her immoderate wealth she was allowed to retain no more than five millions of sesterces. Calpurnia, another woman of high rank, was obnoxious to the resentments of Agrippina. It happened that Claudius, in accidental discourse,

1 Suetonius has given some particulars of the marriage of Caligula with Lollia Paulina. She was in a distant province with her husband Memmius Regulus, in whose consulship Sejanus met his fate. See Annals, in the Supplement, v. § 32. Regulus, in the time of Caligula, had the command of the army in Syria. Lollia Paulina, his wife, accompanied him to his government. Caligula called her back to Rome and married her; but was soon divorced; Suet. in Calig. § 25. Pliny the elder describes, with indignation, the immense and almost incredible wealth which she displayed in her dress, and the labored ornaments of her person at the banquet after the marriage ceremony. He says he saw her sinking under the load of diamonds that encumbered her robe, and sparkled in her hair, her ears, on her neck, her arms, and fingers. This profusion of riches was not the gift of a prodigal emperor; but the spoil of plundered provinces, acquired by her grandfather Marcus Lollius, while he commanded the Roman legions in the east. The emperor of Rome exhibited the plunder he had gained by proscriptions and the murder of Roman citizens; and a woman displayed more magnificence than ever entered into the imagination of the Curii and Fabricii; Pliny, ix. 35.

without any improper wish, praised the elegance of her figure. This gave jealousy to the empress. She considered, however, that the mere crime of beauty did not deserve to be punished with death. She sent a tribune to Lollia, with orders to make her put an end to her days. Cadius Rufus, at the same time, was found guilty of extortion at the suit of the Bithynians.

XXIII. As a mark of favor to the province of Narbon Gaul, and to reward the veneration in which the authority of the senate had ever been held by the people of that country, it was settled by a decree, that such of the natives as were Roman senators should be at liberty, without a special license from the emperor, to visit their estates in their native province, with as full and ample privileges as had been granted to the Sicilian senators. Sohemus and Agrippa, kings of Iturea<sup>1</sup> and Judea, being both dead, their respective territories were annexed to the province of Syria. An order was also made, that the auguries, relating to the public safety, which had lain dormant for five-and-twenty years, should be revived, and never again be suffered to fall into disuse. The limits<sup>2</sup> of the city were en-

1 Agrippa was the descendant of Herod the Great, who was made king of Judea by a decree of the senate, A. U. C. 714, and died in the year 750, about four years before the Christian era. Agrippa, his grandson, was thrown into prison by Tiberius, and restored to his kingdom by Caligula. He died A. U. C. 797. Sohemus, mentioned in the text, was descended from Sohemus king of Iturea, who was murdered by Herod, A. U. C. 726. See Josephus.

2 The precinct of the city of Rome was called the Pomærium, as the antiquarians say, from *ponere mœnia*. The Romans had not the *new lights* that taught the legislators of France to make atheism the foundation of a wild democracy. After a beginning so truly impious and detestable, no wonder that we saw no rule of justice, no moral rectitude, no order in their legislative assembly, and no power in their executive



larged by Claudius. The right of directing that business was, by ancient usage, vested in all such as extended the boundaries of the empire. The right however had not been exercised by any of the Roman commanders (Sylla and Augustus excepted), though remote and powerful nations had been subdued by their victorious arms.

XXIV. What was done in early times by the ambition or the public virtue of Roman kings cannot now be seen through the mist that hangs over distant

council to enforce obedience to the laws. They established civil and religious anarchy: rapine, murder, and every crime that shocks humanity, have been the consequence. The Romans had the good sense to set out with other principles. Even in that dark age they had an idea of a superintending Providence, and referred every thing to the immortal gods. The very walls of Rome were consecrated to tutelar deities, and accordingly considered as sacred. The vacant space on both sides of the wall was holy ground; 'quod neque habitari, neque arari fas erat.' As the city increased, the same religious ceremony was observed. 'In urbis incremento semper, quantum mœnia processura erant, tantum termini hi consecrati proferebantur;' Livy, i. 44. To enlarge the precinct of Rome was called 'jus proferendi pomœrii;' but that right was of such consequence that it was allowed to none but those who extended the boundaries of the empire. After the inclosure of the seven hills by the kings of Rome, 'septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces,' Sylla, the dictator, was the first who had the honor of widening the Pomœrium, A. U. C. 674. Seneca de Brevit. Vitæ, c. xiv. Julius Cæsar, after all his victories, claimed the same right, A. U. C. 710; and Augustus followed his example, A. U. C. 746; Dio, xliiii. The number of inhabitants, when Rome was in its flourishing state, Lipsius computes at four millions. Brotier has offered a more probable conjecture. He compares Paris and London with Rome; and his numbers, on a fair calculation, are:

Paris,	.	.	.	640,000
London,	.	.	.	768,000
Rome,	.	.	.	1,188,000

Brotier proceeds in his estimate to the Chinese empire, where he reckons two hundred millions of inhabitants; whereas the number in Europe is computed at one hundred and thirty millions. See Brotier's Tacitus, ii. 379, 4to.

ages. It may, however, be matter of some curiosity to mark out the foundation of the city, and the boundaries assigned by Romulus. The first outline began at the ox-market, where still is to be seen the brazen statue of a bull, that animal being commonly employed at the plough. From that place a furrow was carried on of sufficient dimensions to include the great altar of Hercules. By boundary-stones, fixed at proper distances, the circuit was continued along the foot of mount Palatine to the altar of Consus, extending thence to the old Curia, next to the chapel of the Lares, and finally to the great Roman forum. The capitol, it is generally thought, was added not by Romulus, but by Titus Tatius. From that period the city grew with the growth of the empire. With regard to the enlargement made by Claudius, the curious may be easily satisfied, as the public records contain an exact description.

XXV. In the consulship of Caius Antistius and Marcus Sullius, the adoption of Domitius was hurried on by the credit and influence of Pallas. Connected with Agrippina, whom he had raised to imperial splendor by ties of mutual interest, and still more so by the indulgence of criminal passions, this favorite advised his master to provide for the public safety, and, in aid to the tender years of Britannicus, to raise collateral branches in the Cæsarean line. For this measure Augustus had left a precedent. That emperor adopted the issue of his wife, though he had, in that very juncture, grandchildren to represent him. Tiberius copied the example, and to his own immediate offspring united Germanicus. It would therefore become the wisdom of Claudius to embrace, as his own, a young man who would in time be able to relieve the sovereign, and lighten the cares of government. Convinced by this reasoning, Claudius gave the pre-

cedence to Domitius, though but two years older than his own son. On this subject he made a speech to the senate, content to be the organ of what his freedman had suggested. It was observed by men versed in the history of their country that this was the first adoption into the Claudian family; an old patrician line, which, from the days of Attus Clausus,<sup>1</sup> had continued without any mixture of foreign blood, in one regular course of descent.

XXVI. The senate passed a vote of thanks to the emperor; but in a style of exquisite flattery their court was chiefly paid to Domitius. A law was also enacted, by virtue of which the young prince, under the name of Nero, was naturalised into the Claudian family. Agrippina was dignified with the title of Augusta. During these transactions, there was not a man so void of sentiment, as not to behold the case of Britannicus with an eye of compassion. His very slaves were taken from him. His stepmother interposed with officious civility. The young prince laughed at her kindness, aware of the underplot which she was carrying on against him. Want of discernment was not among his faults. It has been said that he was by nature penetrating: that, perhaps, was his true character; or, it may be, that men were willing to give him credit for talents, without waiting to make the experiment.

XXVII. Agrippina had now the ambition to display her weight and influence to the eyes of foreign nations. To this end she caused a body of veterans to be sent to the capital city of the Ubians, the place of her nativity, to be established there as a colony, called

<sup>1</sup> Attus Clausus, called afterwards Appius Claudius, has been mentioned, xi. 24, as the founder of the Claudian family.

after her own name.<sup>1</sup> When that people first passed over the Rhine, it happened that Agrippa, her grandfather, was the Roman general who received them as the allies of Rome. In the present juncture, when the new colony was to be settled, a sudden alarm broke out in the Upper Germany, occasioned by an irruption of the Cattians, who issued forth from their hive in quest of plunder. To check their progress Lucius Pomponius despatched a body of auxiliary troops, composed of the Vangiones and Nemetean, with a squadron of light horse, to make a forced march, and if they could not attack the front line of the barbarians, to fall on the rear. The ardor of the soldiers was not inferior to the skill of the general. They formed two divisions: one marched to the left, and came up with the freebooters, who had been committing depredations, and lay sunk in sleep and wine. The victory was cheap, but enhanced by the joy with which the conquering soldiers released, at the end of forty years, some of the prisoners who were taken in the massacre of Varus and his legions.

XXVIII. The second division, which had marched to the right, and by a shorter road, met with greater success. The barbarians ventured to give battle, and were defeated with prodigious slaughter. Elate with success, and loaded with spoils, the conquerors marched back to Mount Taunus, where Pomponius, at the head of his legions, lay in wait, expecting that the Cattians, prompted by a spirit of revenge, would return to the charge. But the barbarians, dreading the Romans on one side, and on the other their constant enemies, the Cheruscaus, sent a deputation to

1 For an account of the Ubians, originally a people of Germany, afterwards changed into a Roman colony, see the Manners of the Germans, § 28.

Rome, with hostages to secure a pacification. Triumphant honors were decreed to Pomponius; but military fame is the least part of the estimation in which he is held by posterity. He excelled in elegant composition, and the character of the general is now eclipsed by the genius of the poet.

XXIX. Vannius,<sup>1</sup> who had been formerly raised by Drusus to reign over the Suevians, was about this time driven from his kingdom. His reign at first was mild and popular; but the habit of commanding had corrupted his nature. Pride and arrogance had taken root in his heart. Domestic factions conspired against him, and the neighboring nations declared open hostility. Vibillius, king of the Hermundurians, conducted the enterprise. He was joined by Vangio and Sido, the nephews of Vannius by a sister. In this quarrel Claudius was determined not to interfere. Though often pressed to take a decided part, he observed a strict neutrality, content with promising the Suevian king a safe retreat from the rage of his enemies. In his dispatches to Publius Atellius Hister, who had the command in Pannonia, his orders were, that the legion and the troops of the province should be held in readiness on the banks of the Danube, to succor the vanquished, and repel the incursions of the barbarians, if they attempted to invade the frontier. A powerful confederacy was then actually formed by the nations of Germany. The Ligians,<sup>2</sup> and other states, were up in arms, attracted by the fame of an opulent kingdom, which Vannius, during a space of thirty

1 Maroboduus being expelled from his dominions, and, under an appearance of protection, detained as a state prisoner at Ravenna, Vannius was made king by Drusus, the son of Tiberius, A. U. C. 772; Annals, ii. 63.

2 Ligians, a people of Germany.

years, had made still richer by plunder and depredations. To make head against the forces combined against him was not in the power of the Suevian king. The natural strength of his kingdom consisted of infantry only; the Iazygians,<sup>1</sup> a people of Sarmatia, supplied him with a body of horse. Notwithstanding this reinforcement Vannius felt his inferiority. He resolved to keep within the strongholds and fastnesses of the country, and draw the war into a lingering length.

XXX. The Iazygians were not of a temper to endure the slow operations of a siege. They spread themselves, in their desultory manner, round the country, and by their rashness brought on a general engagement. The Ligians and Hermundurians fell in with their roving parties. Vannius was obliged to sally out to the assistance of his friends. He gave battle, and was totally overthrown. But the praise of valor could not be withheld from him. Covered with honorable wounds, he escaped to his fleet which lay in the Danube. His partisans followed him, and, with a proper allotment of lands, were settled in Pannonia. The dominions of the deposed king were divided between his two nephews Vangio and Sido, both from that time distinguished by their fidelity to Rome. In the beginning of their reign they flourished in the affections of the people; honored by all, while they struggled for power; when they obtained it, despised and hated. Their own misconduct was, perhaps, the cause; perhaps, the fickle temper of the people; or, it may be, that in the nature and genius of servitude, there is a tendency to innovation, always discontented, sullen, and unquiet.

1 Iazyges, a people of Sarmatia.

XXXI. Publius Ostorius was appointed governor of Britain, in the character of proprætor. On his arrival he found the province in commotion. A new commander, with an army wholly unknown to him, the barbarians imagined would not venture to open a winter campaign. Fierce with this idea, they made an irruption into the territory of the states in alliance with Rome, and carried devastation through the country. Ostorius, knowing how much depends on the first operations of war, put himself at the head of the light cohorts, and, by rapid marches, advanced against the enemy. The Britons were taken by surprise. All who resisted were put to the sword. The fugitives were pursued with prodigious slaughter. The rout was so complete, that there was no reason to apprehend a junction of their forces; but peace on those terms, the general knew, would be no better than disguised hostility. The legions would still be subject to perpetual alarms from a fierce and insidious enemy. He therefore resolved to disarm all who were suspected, and, by extending a chain of forts between the Nen and the Severn,<sup>1</sup> to confine the malecontents

1 As Tacitus' account of the six first years of Claudius is lost, the invasion of Britain under the command of Aulus Plautius has not occurred either in this book, or that which precedes it. It is therefore proper to mention in this place that, from the descent made by Julius Cæsar, A. U. C. 699, and after him, Aulus Plautius was the first Roman general that landed in Britain, A. U. C. 796. Vespasian, afterwards emperor, served in that expedition. The southern parts of the island were reduced to subjection. Claudius visited his new conquest, and at his return, having enlarged the Roman empire, entered Rome in triumph. We now find that Ostorius Scapula succeeded to Aulus Plautius. The sequel will show the spirit of liberty that inspired the Britons, and the consummate ability with which the Roman general triumphed over a fierce and warlike people. For the several officers who commanded in Britain, from this time to the

between those two rivers. To counteract this design the Icenians<sup>1</sup> took up arms; a brave and warlike people, who, at their own request, had lived in friendship with the Romans, and were, by consequence, unimpaired by the calamities of war. They formed a league with the adjacent states, and chose their ground for a decisive action. The place was inclosed with a rampart thrown up with sod, leaving an entrance in one part only, and that so difficult of access that the Roman cavalry would not be able to force their way. Ostorius resolved to storm the place. Though unsupported by the legions, he relied on the valor of the allied forces, and, having formed his disposition for the attack, ordered his cavalry to dismount and act with the foot soldiers. The signal being given, the assault began, and the rampart was carried by assault. The Britons, inclosed by their own fortifications, and pressed on every side, were thrown into the utmost confusion. Yet even in that distress, conscious of the guilt of rebellion, and seeing no way to escape, they fought to the last, and gave signal proofs of heroic bravery. In this engagement Marcus Ostorius, the general's son, saved the life of a Roman, and obtained the civic crown.

XXXII. The defeat of the Icenians drew after it important consequences. The neighboring nations, no longer balancing between peace and war, laid down

arrival of Agricola, A. U. C. 831, see the *Life of Agricola*, § 17. For the river Antona, now the Avon; Sabrina, now the Severn; and Aufona, now the Nen, see *Geographical Table*. Camden is of opinion that Antona, the Avon, has found its way into the text by mistake, and that the true reading should be Aufona, the Nen. See *Camden's Britannia*, by Gibson, 431. Camden's opinion has been followed in the translation.

<sup>1</sup> The Iceni inhabited Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire. See *Life of Agricola*, § 11.



their arms. Ostorius led his army against the Cangians,<sup>1</sup> and laid waste their country. The soldiers carried off a considerable booty, the enemy never daring to make head against them. Wherever they attempted to annoy the army by sudden skirmishes they paid for their rashness. The sea that lies between Britain and Ireland was within a short march, when Ostorius received intelligence of an insurrection among the Brigantes.<sup>2</sup> The news obliged him to return with expedition. Till every thing was secured in his rear it was his maxim not to push on his conquests. The Brigantes were soon reduced to subjection. Such as resisted were cut to pieces, and a free pardon was granted to the rest. The Silures<sup>3</sup> were not so easily quelled: neither lenity nor rigorous measures could induce them to submit. To bridle the insolence of that warlike race, Ostorius judged it expedient to form a camp for the legions in the heart of their country. For this purpose a colony, supported by a strong body of veterans, was stationed at Camelodunum,<sup>4</sup> on the lands conquered from the enemy. From this measure a two-fold effect was expected: the garrison would be able to overawe the insurgents, and give to the allied states a specimen of law and civil policy.

XXXIII. These arrangements settled, Ostorius marched against the Silures. To their natural ferocity that people added the courage which they now derived

1 The Cangi inhabited Cheshire, and part of Lancashire, opposite to Ireland.

2 Brigantes, the people inhabiting Yorkshire, Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland.

3 Silures; the people who occupied Herefordshire, Radnor, Brecknock, Monmouth, and Glamorgan, and in general South Wales.

4 Camelodunum, now Colchester.

from the presence of Caractacus.<sup>1</sup> Renowned for his valor, and for various turns of good and evil fortune, that heroic chief had spread his fame through the island. His knowledge of the country, and his skill in all the stratagems of savage warfare, gave him many advantages; but he could not hope with inferior numbers to make a stand against a well-disciplined army. He therefore marched into the territory of the Ordovicians.<sup>2</sup> Having there drawn to his standard all who considered peace with Rome as another name for slavery, he determined to try the issue of a battle. For this purpose he chose a spot<sup>3</sup> where the approach and the retreat were difficult to the enemy, and to himself every way advantageous. He took post in a situation defended by steep and craggy hills. In some places where the mountains opened, and the acclivity afforded an easy ascent, he fortified the spot with massy stones, heaped together in the form of a rampart. A river, with fords and shallows of uncertain depth, washed the extremity of the plain. On the outside of his fortifications a vast body of troops showed themselves in force, and in order of battle.

XXXIV. The chieftains of the various nations were busy in every quarter. They rushed along the ranks; they exhorted their men; they roused the timid; they confirmed the brave; and, by hopes, by promises, by every generous motive, inflamed the ardor of their troops. Caractacus was seen in every part of the field: he darted along the lines; he exclaimed aloud

1 Caractacus, according to Camden, reigned in the country of Cardigan.

2 Ordovices, the people of North Wales.

3 This spot, Camden says, was in Shropshire, where the Colunus, now the Clune, runs into the Temdus, now Temd, not far from a hill called *Caer-Carodoc*.

‘ This day, my fellow-warriors, this very day decides the fate of Britain. The era of liberty or eternal bondage begins from this hour. Remember your brave and warlike ancestors, who met Julius Cæsar in open combat, and chased him from the coast of Britain. They were the men who freed their country from a foreign yoke ; who delivered the land from taxations, imposed at the will of a master ; who banished from your sight the fasces and the Roman axes ; and, above all, who rescued your wives and daughters from violation.’ The soldiers received this speech with shouts of applause. With a spirit of enthusiastic valor, each individual bound himself by the form of oath peculiar to his nation to brave every danger, and prefer death to slavery.

XXXV. The intrepid countenance of the Britons, and the spirit that animated their whole army, struck Ostorius with astonishment. He saw a river<sup>1</sup> to be passed ; a palisade to be forced ; a steep hill to be surmounted ; and the several posts defended by a prodigious multitude. The soldiers, notwithstanding, burned with impatience for the onset. All things give way to valor, was the general cry. The tribunes and other officers seconded the ardor of the men. Ostorius reconnoitred the ground, and having marked where the defiles were impenetrable, or easy of approach, gave the signal for the attack. The river was passed with little difficulty. The Romans advanced to the parapet. The struggle there was obstinate, and, as long as it was fought with missile weapons, the Britons had the advantage. Ostorius ordered his men to advance under a military shell, and level the pile of stones that served as a fence to the enemy. A close

1 This river, according to Camden, was the Temd.

engagement followed. The Britons abandoned their ranks, and fled with precipitation to the ridge of the hills. The Romans pursued with eagerness. Not only the light troops, but even the legionary soldiers, forced their way to the summit of the hills, under a heavy shower of darts. The Britons, having neither breast-plates nor helmets, were not able to maintain the conflict. The legions, sword in hand, or with their javelins, bore down all before them. The auxiliaries, with their spears and sabres, made prodigious havoc. The victory was decisive. The wife and daughter of Caractacus were taken prisoners. His brother surrendered at discretion.

XXXVI. Caractacus fled for protection to Cartimandua, queen of the Brigantes. But adversity has no friends. By that princess he was loaded with irons, and delivered up to the conqueror. He had waged war with the Romans during the last nine years.<sup>1</sup> His

1 Aulus Plautius, as mentioned § 31, note 1, invaded Britain A. U. C. 796; an active and warlike chieftain in every campaign against the Romans. Tacitus is never better pleased than when he has an opportunity of doing justice to the chiefs of foreign nations who distinguished themselves by their virtue, their courage, and their love of liberty. See his character of Arminius, *Annals*, ii. 88. Caractacus, in like manner, is represented in the brightest colors; great in the field of battle, and not less so before the emperor Claudius, in the presence of the Roman people. Mr. Mason has formed a noble dramatic poem on the subject. He has made a fine use of Tacitus in many passages, but in none more than in the following lines, which the reader will see are a beautiful insertion from the real speech of Caractacus to the emperor Claudius:

Soldier, I had arms;  
 Had neighing steeds to whirl my iron car;  
 Had wealth, dominion. Dost thou wonder, Roman,  
 I fought to save them? What if Cæsar aims  
 To lord it universal o'er the world?  
 Shall the world tamely crouch at Cæsar's footstool?

fame was not confined to his native island: it passed into the provinces, and spread all over Italy. Curiosity was eager to behold the heroic chieftain who, for such a length of time, made head against a great and powerful empire. Even at Rome the name of Caractacus was in high celebrity. The emperor, willing to magnify the glory of the conquest, bestowed the highest praise on the valor of the vanquished king. He assembled the people to behold a spectacle worthy

AULUS DIDIUS.

Read in thy fate our answer. Yet if sooner  
Thy pride had yielded—

CARACTACUS.

Thank the gods I did not.  
Had it been so, the glory of thy master,  
Like my misfortunes, had been short and trivial,  
Oblivion's ready prey. Now, after struggling  
Nine years, and that right bravely, 'gainst a tyrant,  
I am his slave, to treat as seems him good.  
If cruelly, 'twill be an easy task  
To bow a wretch, alas! how bow'd already!  
Down to the dust. If well, his clemency,  
When trick'd and varnish'd by your glossing penman,  
Will shine in honor's annals.

If Mr. Mason has departed from the strict line of historical truth, he has done it with the privilege of a poet, and his poem is enriched by the fiction. The isle of Mona was not attacked till A. U. C. 814, when Suetonius Paulinus invested the place, ten years after Caractacus was led a prisoner to Rome; nor was that island finally reduced till the year 831. See the Life of Agricola, § 18. Virgil, it is well known, adorned his poem by bringing together Dido and Æneas. The same disregard of chronology may be allowed to the author of Caractacus, since by making his hero take sanctuary among the druids in Mona, he has produced the episodical incidents of a beautiful piece. But why the honor of taking Caractacus prisoner, and sending him to Rome, should be transferred from Ostorius to Aulus Didius, no good reason appears. Didius did not command in Britain till that event was past. On the death of Ostorius he was appointed governor; a tame inactive officer, who did not, as we are told by Tacitus, distinguish himself by one warlike exploit.

of their view. In the field before the camp the pre-torian bands were drawn up under arms. The followers of the British chief walked in procession. The military accoutrements, the harness and rich collars, which he had gained in various battles, were displayed with pomp. The wife of Caractacus, his daughter, and his brother, followed next: he himself closed the melancholy train. The rest of the prisoners, struck with terror, descended to mean and abject supplications. Caractacus alone was superior to misfortune. With a countenance still unaltered, not a symptom of fear appearing, no sorrow, no condescension, he behaved with dignity even in ruin. Being placed before the tribunal, he delivered himself in the following manner:

XXXVII. ' If to the nobility of my birth, and the splendor of exalted station, I had united the virtues of moderation, Rome had beheld me, not in captivity, but a royal visitor, and a friend. The alliance of a prince descended from an illustrious line of ancestors; a prince whose sway extended over many nations, would not have been unworthy of your choice. A reverse of fortune is now the lot of Caractacus. The event to you is glorious, and to me humiliating. I had arms, and men, and horses; I had wealth in abundance: can you wonder that I was unwilling to lose them? The ambition of Rome aspires to universal dominion; and must mankind, by consequence, stretch their necks to the yoke? I stood at bay for years: had I acted otherwise, where on your part had been the glory of conquest, and where on mine the honor of a brave resistance? I am now in your power: if you are bent on vengeance, execute your purpose; the bloody scene will soon be over, and the name of Caractacus will sink into oblivion. Preserve my life, and I shall be,

to late posterity, a monument of Roman clemency.' Claudius granted him a free pardon, and the same to his wife, his daughter, and his brother. Released from their fetters, they advanced to another tribunal near at hand, where Agrippina showed herself in state. They returned thanks to her, and paid their veneration in the same style as they had before addressed to the emperor. The sight was altogether new. A woman, stationed amidst the ensigns and the armies of Rome, presented a spectacle unknown to the old republic: but in an empire acquired by the valor of her ancestors Agrippina claimed an equal share.

XXXVIII. At the next meeting of the senate the victory over Caractacus was mentioned with the highest applause, as an event no way inferior to what had been seen in ancient times, when Publius Scipio brought Syphax in chains to Rome; when Lucius Paulus led Perseus in captivity; and when other commanders exhibited to the Roman people kings and princes at their chariot-wheels. Triumphal ornaments were decreed to Ostorius. That officer had hitherto seen his operations crowned with success. He began soon after to experience the vicissitudes of fortune. Perhaps the war, by the overthrow of Caractacus, was thought to be at an end, and in that persuasion military discipline was relaxed; perhaps the enemy, enraged by the loss of that gallant chief, fought with inflamed resentment. A camp had been formed in the country of the Silures, and a chain of forts was to be erected. The Britons in a body surrounded the officer who commanded the legionary cohorts, and, if succors had not arrived in time from the neighboring garrisons, the whole corps had been cut to pieces. The prefect of the camp, with eight centurions and the bravest of the soldiers, were killed on the spot. A foraging party, and the detach-

ment sent to support them, were soon after attacked, and put to the rout.

XXXIX. Ostorius, on the first alarm, ordered the light-armed cohorts to advance against the enemy. That reinforcement was insufficient, till the legionary soldiers marched to their support. The battle was renewed, at first on equal terms, but, in the end, to the disadvantage of the Britons. But their loss was inconsiderable. The approach of night prevented a pursuit. From that time the Britons kept up a constant alarm. Frequent battles, or rather skirmishes, were fought with their detached parties, roving in quest of plunder. They met in sudden encounters, as chance directed, or valor prompted; in the fens, in the woods, in the narrow defiles; the men, on some occasions, led on by their chiefs, and frequently without their knowledge, as resentment, or the love of booty, happened to incite their fury. Of all the Britons, the Silures were the most determined. They fought with obstinacy, with inveterate hatred. It seems the Roman general had declared that the very name of the Silures must be extirpated, like that of the Sigambrians, formerly driven out of Germany, and transplanted into Gaul. That expression reached the Silures, and roused their fiercest passions. Two auxiliary cohorts, whom the avarice of their officers sent in quest of plunder, were intercepted by that ferocious people, and all made prisoners. A fair distribution of the spoils and the captives drew the neighboring states into the confederacy. Ostorius at this time was worn out with anxiety. He sunk under the fatigue, and expired, to the great joy of the Britons, who saw a great and able commander, not indeed slain in battle, but overcome by the war.

XL. The death of Ostorius being known at Rome,



the emperor, aware that a province of so much importance ought not to remain without a governor, sent Aulus Didius to take on him the command. That officer set out with all possible expedition; but on his arrival found the island in a state of distraction. The legion under Manlius Valens had risked a battle, and suffered a defeat. In order to impress with terror the new commander, the Britons took care to swell the fame of their victory. Didius, on his part, was willing to magnify the loss. The merit of the general he knew would rise in proportion to the danger surmounted; and, if he failed, the difficulty would be an apology for his conduct. In the defeat of Valens, it was the nation of the Silures that struck the blow. Emboldened by success, they continued their predatory war till the arrival of Didius checked their operations. In this juncture Venusius was the British chieftain; a man, as already mentioned, born in the city of the Jugantes, and, since the loss of Caractacus, the first in fame for valor and military experience. He had married Cartismandua, the queen of the Brigantes; and while they lived on good terms his fidelity to Rome remained inviolate. Being afterwards driven from her throne and bed, he pursued his revenge by open hostilities, and even dared to wage war against the Romans.

The quarrel was at first a civil war amongst themselves. Cartismandua contrived to seize by stratagem the brother of Venusius, with the rest of his kindred. The Britons by that event were fired with indignation. They scorned to submit to a female government,<sup>1</sup> and,

<sup>1</sup> It is not to be inferred from this passage that it was a general principle with the Britons not to acquiesce under a female reign. Boadicea, as will be seen hereafter, was queen of the Iceni; and she, at the head of her army just going to

with the flower of their youth, attacked Cartismandua in the heart of her territories. The insurrection was foreseen, and a detachment from the cohorts was sent in time to counteract the motions of the enemy. An engagement followed, at first with doubtful success; but, after a struggle, victory inclined to the side of the Romans. In another part of the country the legion under the command of Cesium Nasica fought with equal success. Didius did not expose his person in any of these engagements. Impaired by years, and loaded with accumulated honors, he was content to act by his inferior officers; and while the enemy was kept in check, the honor of doing it was not his passion. These transactions, which happened in the course of different years, under the conduct of Ostorius and Didius, are here related in one connected series, to avoid breaking the thread of the narration. I now return to the order of time.

XLI. In the fifth consulship of Claudius, and the first of his colleague, Servius Cornelius Orphitus, the manly gown was assigned to Nero, before his time; that, though still under age, he might appear qualified to take on him a share in public business. The senate, in a fit of adulation, resolved that the young prince should be declared capable of the consulship at the age of twenty, and be considered, in the mean time, as consul elect, with proconsular authority out of the city, and the additional title of prince of the Roman youth. Claudius not only assented to those flattering decrees, but, in the name of Nero, gave a largess to

give battle, tells the soldiers: 'It is not the first time that the Britons took the field under the conduct of a woman;' xiv. 35. The fact was, the people saw a warlike chief oppressed by his wife, and therefore resolved to submit no longer to the tyranny of a woman.

the people, and a donative to the army. To conciliate the affections of the people, the Circensian games were likewise exhibited. During that spectacle Britannicus and Nero passed in review; the former clad in the pretexta, or the dress of his boyish days; the latter, with the triumphal ornaments of a Roman general. So glaring a difference struck the spectators, as a certain prelude of their future fortunes. Among the centurions and tribunes there were men of principle, who beheld the case of Britannicus with an eye of compassion. All such were removed from court; some under pretence of advancing them to higher offices, and the rest for plausible reasons. The policy was extended even to the freedmen. In that class, whoever was found to be above corruption, was dismissed from his place.

The two young princes met by accident. Nero saluted Britannicus by name, and in return was familiarly called Domitius. This incident gave umbrage to Agrippina. She flew to the emperor with her complaint: 'Contempt,' she said, 'was thrown on the adoption of Nero; what the senate decreed, and the voice of the people ratified, was repealed with contumacy in the very palace. If the men who taught those dangerous lessons were not repressed the mischief would increase, and perhaps prove fatal to the commonwealth.' Claudius was easily alarmed. He considered what was no more than bare surmise as a crime then actually committed, and, accordingly, either sent into banishment, or put to death, the best and ablest of his son's tutors. New men were appointed to superintend the prince's education, and the choice was left to the stepmother.

XLII. Agrippina had still greater objects in view: but Lusius Geta and Rufius Crispinus were first to be

removed from the command of the pretorian bands. They were both under obligations to Messalina, and by sentiment attached to her children. Men of their disposition might obstruct her measures. She represented to the emperor, that under two rival commanders the soldiers would be divided into factions; but if that important office centered in one person, all would act with a principle of union, and strict attention to military discipline. Claudius concurred in the same opinion. The command was given to Afranius Burrhus, an officer of great experience and a warlike character, but disposed to remember the friend that raised him to that elevation. Having succeeded in these arrangements, Agrippina thought it time to act without reserve: she claimed a right to be conveyed in her carriage to the capitol; a right, by ancient usage, allowed only to the sacerdotal order, the vestal virgins, and the statues of the gods. Being now communicated to Agrippina, it could not fail to raise the veneration of the people for a princess, in whom they saw the daughter,<sup>1</sup> sister, wife, and mother, of an emperor; a combination of illustrious titles never before that time united in one person.

In this juncture, Vitellius, the active leader of Agrippina's faction, after having stood high in the esteem of Claudius, was, at last, in an advanced age, involved in a prosecution, set on foot against him by Junius Lupus, a member of the senate. Such is the instability of human grandeur! The charge imported violated majesty, and a design to seize the reins of

1 Agrippina was the daughter of Germanicus, sister of Caligula, the wife of Claudius, and the mother of Nero. Racine, who has many fine insertions from Tacitus in his tragedy of Britannicus, has imitated this passage:

Moi, fille, femme, sœur, et mère, de vos maîtres.

government. Claudius was willing to listen to the story; but by the interposition of Agrippina, who scorned to descend to prayers and supplications, the blow recoiled on the prosecutor. He was interdicted from fire and water. To stretch resentment farther was not the wish of Vitellius.

XLIII. In the course of this year the people were kept in a constant alarm by a succession of portents and prodigies. Birds of evil omen infested the capitol; earthquakes were felt; houses were laid in ruin; and while the multitude in a general panic pressed forward to make their escape, the feeble and infirm were trampled under foot. A dearth of corn brought on a famine: this too was deemed a prodigy. The people were not content to murmur their discontents; they crowded to the tribunal, and gathering round the emperor, then sitting in judgment, they forced him from his seat, and pushed him to the extremity of the forum. The guards came to his assistance, and Claudius made his way through the crowd. Fifteen days' subsistence was the most that Rome had then in store. The winter, providentially, was mild and favorable to navigation; distress and misery must otherwise have been the consequence. In former times the case was very different. Italy was the granary that supplied foreign markets. Even at this hour the prolific vigor of the soil is not worn out; but to depend on Egypt and Africa is the prevailing system. The lives of the people are, by choice, committed to the caprice of winds and waves.

XLIV. In the same year the flame of war broke out between the Armenians and Iberians. The Romans and the Parthians were, by consequence, involved in the quarrel. The sceptre of Parthia was at that time swayed by Vologeses, with the consent of his brothers,

though his mother, by birth a Greek, was no higher than a concubine. Pharasmanes reigned in Iberia, confirmed on his throne by long possession. His brother Mithridates received the legal diadem of Armenia from the power of Rome. The former had a son named Rhadamistus, of a tall and graceful stature, remarkable for bodily vigor, and an understanding perfectly trained in the political school of his father. His talents were high in the esteem of all the neighboring states. He saw, with impatience, the old age of his father protracted to a length of years. To disguise his ambition was no part of his character. He expressed his discontent in a manner that alarmed Pharasmanes. That monarch saw the aspiring genius of his son; and, being in the decline of life, he dreaded the enterprising spirit of a young man, who had conciliated to himself the affections of the people. To change the tide of his passions, and find employment for him elsewhere, he held forth the kingdom of Armenia as a dazzling and inviting object: 'he himself,' he said, 'expelled the Parthians, and placed Mithridates on the throne.' Pharasmanes added, that it would not be advisable to proceed with open force. Covert stratagem might deceive Mithridates, and ensure success.

Rhadamistus made the best of his way to his uncle's court, as to a place of shelter from the displeasure of his father, and the tyranny of a stepmother. He met with a gracious reception. Mithridates treated him as his own son, with all the tenderness of a father. The young prince, in the mean time, drew to his interest the nobility of the country; and, while his uncle loaded him with favors, he was busy in forming a conspiracy against the crown and life of his benefactor.

- XLV. Having concerted his measures, he returned, under color of a family reconciliation, to his father's court. He there explained the progress of his treachery, the snares that were prepared, and the necessity of giving the finishing blow by force of arms. To find ostensible reasons for open hostility was not difficult to a politic genius like that of Pharasmanes. He alleged, that in the war between himself and the king of the Albanians, his application to the Romans for a reinforcement was defeated by the practices of Mithridates; and an injury of so heinous a nature could not be expiated by any thing less than the ruin of the man who did the mischief. To this end he gave the command of his forces to his son, who entered Armenia at the head of a numerous army. An invasion so unexpected filled Mithridates with consternation. He fled the field, and, leaving the enemy in possession of his camp, threw himself into the fort of Gorneas;<sup>1</sup> a place strong by nature, and defended by a Roman garrison, under the command of Cælius Pollio, the prefect, and Casperius, a centurion. The

1 Gorneas, a castle in Armenia, according to D'Anville, now called Khorien. For Artaxata and Tigranocerta, see the Geographical Table. The story of Rhadamistus and Zenobia, which is here related by Tacitus, furnished Crébillon, the celebrated French poet, a subject for one of his best tragedies. Pharasmanes and his son Rhadamistus are represented with historical truth in all the colors of their guilt; the former, as accessory to the death of his brother Mithridates; and the latter, as the murderer of his uncle. Rhadamistus, in the end, dies by the hand of his father. In fact, he was afterwards put to death by Pharasmanes; *Annals*, xiii. 37. The English tragedy of Zenobia deviates so far from Tacitus, as to represent Rhadamistus in an amiable light. The fable, or plot, is almost intirely new; and the catastrophe aims at the passions of terror and pity, instead of exciting horror: an emotion of the mind, to which the strong but sombre genius of Crébillon seems to have had a peculiar bias.

machinations of a siege, and the use of warlike engines, are things unknown to savage nations: the Romans have reduced that branch of the military art to a regular system. Rhadamistus attempted to carry the works by assault, but without effect, and with considerable loss. He formed a blockade, and, in the mean time, made his approaches to the avarice of the governor. By bribes and presents he bargained with that officer to betray his trust. The centurion protested against so foul a treachery, declaring, in a tone of firmness, that he would neither agree to give up a confederate prince, nor to barter away the kingdom of Armenia, which had been assigned to Mithridates by the Roman people.

Pollio, the commander-in-chief, affected to dread the superior force of the enemy; and Rhadamistus, pleading the orders of his father, still urged on the siege. In this distress, Casperius the centurion stipulated a cessation of arms, and left the garrison, in order to have an interview with Pharasmanes, and deter him from prosecuting the war. If his endeavors failed, he resolved to proceed with expedition to Ummidius Quadratus, who commanded in Syria, in order to make that governor acquainted with the state of affairs, and the iniquity of the whole proceeding.

XLVI. The centurion had no sooner left the place than Pollio felt himself at liberty to act without control. He advised Mithridates to compromise the quarrel, and end the war by a regular treaty. He urged the ties of natural affection between brothers, and the rights of seniority, which preponderated in favor of Pharasmanes. He added, that 'Mithridates was, in fact, the son-in-law of his brother, and, at the same time, uncle and father-in-law to Rhadamistus. The Iberians were superior in number, and yet willing to



accede to terms of pacification. The perfidy of the Armenians was become proverbial. Pent up in a fortress, ill supplied with provisions, he could not hope to hold out much longer. In that distress, what room was left for deliberation? Peace, on reasonable terms, was preferable to a destructive war.'

Such were the arguments urged by Cælius Pollio; but Mithridates suspected the counsels of a man who had seduced one of the royal concubines, and shown himself a venal tool, ready at the beck of the highest bidder, to commit any crime however atrocious. Meanwhile, Casperius reached the court of Pharasmanes. He expostulated with that monarch, and pressed him to raise the siege. The politic king amused the centurion with plausible answers. He talked in equivocal terms, and drew the business into a negotiation, while his secret dispatches urged Rhadamistus, by any means, and without delay, to make himself master of the place. Pollio raised the price of his treachery, and Rhadamistus complied with his terms. In consequence of their bargain, the governor, by corrupt practices, contrived to make the soldiers demand a capitulation, and, if not granted, to threaten one and all to abandon the place. Mithridates, in that extremity, fixed the time and place for a congress, and went out of the garrison.

XLVII. Rhadamistus advanced to meet him. He rushed to the king's embrace; he offered every mark of duty and respect to his uncle and his father-in-law; and, by a solemn oath, assured him that he would not at any time employ either sword or poison against his life. He decoyed Mithridates into a neighboring wood, where he said a sacrifice was prepared to ratify the treaty in the presence of the gods. Among the eastern kings, whenever they enter into mutual engagements

a peculiar custom prevails; the contracting parties take each other by the right hand, and with a ligature bind their thumbs together, till the blood is forced to the extremities, and with a slight puncture finds a vent. As it gushes forth the kings apply their mouths to the orifice, and suck each other's blood. The treaty, in this manner, receives the highest sanction, signed, as it were, with the blood of the parties. On the present occasion, the person whose office it was to tie the knot, pretending to have made a false step, fell at the feet of Mithridates, and laying hold of his knees, brought him to the ground. A crowd rushed in and bound the prostrate king with fetters. A chain was fastened to his foot, and in that condition (esteemed by those nations the highest disgrace) he was dragged along with brutal violence. The populace, resenting the grievances which they had suffered under an oppressive and despotic reign, insulted him with vulgar scurrility, and even blows. Thinking men beheld the sad reverse with compassion. The wife of the unhappy monarch followed with her children, and filled the place with shrieks and lamentations. They were all secured in covered carriages, apart from each other, till the pleasure of Pharasmanes should be known. Lust of power was the passion of that prince. For a brother and a daughter not one tender sentiment remained. He ordered them to be put to death; but, though inured to crimes, not in his sight. Rhadamistus observed his oath with a pious fraud, that added to his guilt. He had bound himself not to use either sword or poison; but he smothered his uncle under a load of clothes, and by that evasion satisfied the religion of a murderer. The children of the unhappy monarch bewailed the loss of their father; and, for that crime, were massacred.

**XLVIII.** This act of treachery, and the murders that followed it, were soon made known to Quadratus. He called a council of war, and, after stating that the enemies of the deceased king were in possession of his dominions, the point which he submitted to consideration was, whether, in that conjuncture, vindictive measures were advisable. Few at the meeting retained a sense of public honor. Maxims of policy and self-interest weighed with the majority. ‘The guilt,’ they said, ‘of foreign nations gave a solid advantage to the empire, and for that reason ought to be a source of joy. To foment divisions among the enemies of Rome was the truest wisdom; and, with that view, the crown of Armenia had been often, with a show of generosity, dealt out by the emperor as the special gift of the Roman people. Let Rhadamistus hold his illgotten power; he will hold it with infamy, and the execration of mankind: while he owes his elevation to his crimes, he will effectually serve the interests of Rome.’ This reasoning prevailed. The council however wished to save appearances. That they might not be thought to countenance a foul transaction, which might afterwards provoke the emperor to issue contrary orders, it was agreed to send dispatches to Pharasmanes, requiring him forthwith to evacuate Armenia, and recall his son.

**XLIX.** In that juncture Julius Pelignus, with the title of procurator, commanded in Cappadocia; a man whom all orders of the people beheld with contempt and derision. The deformity of his person excited ridicule, and the qualities of his mind corresponded with his outward figure. He had lived, notwithstanding, in the closest intimacy with Claudius, at the time when that prince, as yet a private man, passed the hours of a stupid and listless life in the company of buffoons.

Pelignus, in a fit of vainglory, undertook to recover Armenia. Having drawn together the auxiliaries of the province, he marched at the head of his forces, and in his route plundered the allies, as if the war was with them, instead of the Iberians. Harassed by the sudden incursions of the barbarians, and deserted by his followers, he was left without resource. In that distress he fled to Rhadamistus. Bribery soon purchased a man of his description. He advised the prince to assume the regal diadem, and assisted, under arms, at the coronation; at once the author of the measure, and the soldier to support it. A proceeding so vile and infamous could not be long unknown to the eastern nations. The character of the Roman generals might, by consequence, sink into contempt; and therefore to wipe off the disgrace Helvidius Priscus was sent at the head of a legion, with orders to act as exigences might require. That officer pressed forward with expedition. He passed Mount Taurus, and in the course of his march restored the public tranquillity, not so much by the terror of his arms as by the wisdom and moderation of his counsels. There was reason, however, to fear that his approach would give jealousy to the Parthians. To avoid a rupture with that people, Helvidius was ordered to return with his army into Syria.

L. Vologeses thought it a fair opportunity to recover the kingdom of Armenia. His ancestors had swayed the sceptre of that country, and now a foreign invader, by guilt and treachery, usurped the crown. The Parthian king saw his own brother Tiridates deprived of power. His pride could not brook that any part of his family should be left in that humble condition. Determined to dethrone the usurper, and invest his brother Tiridates with the regal diadem, he

put himself at the head of a powerful army. The Iberians, without hazarding a battle, fled before the Parthian monarch. Artaxata and Tigranocerta, the two principal cities of Armenia, opened their gates to the invader. The inclemency of the winter season, and the want of due attention to provide for the subsistence of an army, brought on a famine, and, by consequence, an epidemic disease. Vologeses was obliged to abandon his enterprise. Armenia was once more left defenceless. Rhadamistus seized his opportunity, and returned to his dominions, elate with pride, and fired with resentment against people who had already betrayed him, and with their national inconstancy were ready on the first occasion to repeat their treachery. He mounted the throne; but the people, though inured to servitude, grew impatient of the yoke. They resolved to depose the usurper, and in a body rushed forward, sword in hand, to invest the palace.

LI. Rhadamistus was obliged to consult his safety by flight. He escaped with his wife, and both owed their lives to the speed of their horses. The queen was far advanced in her pregnancy. Her dread of the enemy, conspiring with conjugal affection, served to animate her in the first hurry of their flight. She bore the fatigue with wonderful resolution. Her condition, however, was too feeble for the violence of so rapid a motion. Seized with pains, and unable to hold out longer, she entreated her husband to end her misery, and by an honorable death prevent the insults of impending bondage. Rhadamistus was distracted by the violence of contending passions: he clasped her in his arms; he supported her drooping spirits, and by every tender persuasion exhorted her to persevere. Her virtue charmed him, and the idea of leaving her to the embraces of another pierced

him to the quick. In a fit of despair and love, he drew his scimitar, and with a hand already imbrued in blood, wounded the idol of his heart. In that condition he dragged her to the margin of the Araxes, and dashed her into the river, that her body might be carried away by the current, and never fall into the hands of his enemies. Having thus disposed of his wife, he fled towards Iberia, and pursued his way to his father's court.

Meanwhile Zenobia (so the princess was named), floating gently down the stream, was seen by the shepherds on the smooth surface of the water, struggling in distress, and still with manifest signs of life. The elegance and dignity of her form announced a person of illustrious rank. They bound up her wounds, and gave her the physic of the field. Having soon after learned her name, and the story of her sufferings, they conveyed her to the city of Artaxata. From that place she was conducted, at the public expense, to the court of Tiridates, where she was graciously received, and treated with all the marks of royalty.

LII. During the consulship of Faustus Sylla and Salvius Otho an accusation was set on foot against Furius Scribonianus. He was charged with having consulted the Chaldeans about the length of the emperor's reign, and condemned to banishment. Junia his mother, who had been formerly driven into exile, was accused of harboring resentment, and still feeling with indignation the severity of her fate. Her husband Camillus, the father of Scribonianus, had levied war in Dalmatia, and obtained his pardon. From that circumstance, and, in the present case, from a second instance of clemency to a disaffected family, Claudius took occasion to boast of his moderation.

The unhappy exile did not long survive his sentence ; but whether he died by poison, or a natural death, cannot now be known. Reports were various at the time. The astrologers and mathematicians were banished out of Italy, by a decree of the senate, full of rigor, but ending in nothing. In a speech to the fathers Claudius bestowed great commendation on such of the members of that assembly as abdicated their rank on account of their narrow circumstances. Some were unwilling to withdraw their names ; but they were all degraded as obstinate men, who to their poverty added pride and insolence.

LIII. During these transactions a motion was made in the senate for a law to inflict certain penalties on such women as should disparage themselves by intermarrying with slaves. The senate decreed that all who descended to so mean an act, without the consent of the master of the slave, should be considered as persons who had forfeited their rank, and passed into a state of slavery : if the master consented, his approbation should operate as a manumission only. The honor of this regulation the emperor ascribed to Pallas ; and thereon Barea Soranus, consul elect, moved that the author of so wise a measure should be rewarded with pretorian ornaments, and a sum of fifteen millions of sesterces. By way of amendment to the motion, Cornelius Scipio proposed that public thanks should be given to a man who derived his origin from the ancient kings of Arcadia, and, notwithstanding the dignity of his rank, condescended to be classed among the ministers of the emperor. Claudius informed the senate that Pallas was content with honors, and felt no ambition to emerge from his state of poverty. A decree was engraved on brass,<sup>1</sup> exhibiting to the pub-

1 Suetonius says that the law, of which Pallas was the first

lic eye a panegyric on the moderation of a manumitted slave, who had amassed no less than three hundred millions of sesterces, and, with that sum in his pocket, could give so striking an example of ancient parsimony.

LIV. Pallas had a brother known by the name of Felix, who had been for some time governor of Judea. This man did not think it necessary to prescribe any restraint to his own desires. He considered his connexion with the emperor's favorite as a license for the worst of crimes. The Jews, it is true, with a spirit little short of open rebellion, had refused, in the reign of Caligula, to place the statue of that emperor in the temple. Intelligence of his death arrived soon after; but even that event was not sufficient to allay the ferment. Future princes might have the same ambition, and the dread of a similar order kept the province in agitation. Felix inflamed the discontents of the peo-

mover, was afterwards enforced by Vespasian, who caused a decree to pass, enacting that the woman who married the slave of another person should be deemed a slave; Suet. in Vesp. § 11. Pliny the consul says that he himself saw, on the Tiburtine road, near the first milestone, a monument erected to the memory of Pallas, with an inscription, importing that the senate voted to Pallas the pretorian ornaments, and a sum of fifteen millions of sesterces, as a reward for his fidelity, and regard for his patrons. See vii. 29. In a subsequent letter Pliny mentions the same fact again. He states the words of the inscription. Pliny adds that he had the curiosity to inspect the decree, and he found the inscription modest, in comparison with the lavish praise bestowed on an insolent upstart by the senate. Pallas refused the money; and to complete the farce, the senate voted that the emperor should request a manumitted slave to yield to the entreaty of the fathers. Pallas still persisted to reject the money, professing to have a soul above the love of wealth. It was decreed that the honors of that arrogant wretch, as well those which he refused, as those which he accepted, should be inscribed on brass, as a public and lasting monument. See the account at large; Pliny, viii. 6.



ple by improper remedies ; and Ventidius Cumanus, to whom a part of the province was committed, was ready to co-operate in any wicked project. The Galileans were under the control of Cumanus : Felix governed the Samaritans. Those two nations, always fierce and turbulent, were at variance with each other ; and now, when they despised their governors, their animosity broke out with redoubled fury.

They waged a predatory war ; laid waste each other's lands ; rushed from their ambuscade to sudden encounters ; and, at times, tried their strength in regular engagements. The plunder of the war was given up to their rapacious governors, who therefore connived at the mischief. The disorders of the province grew to an alarming height ; insomuch, that the two governors were forced at last to have recourse to arms in order to quell the tumult. The Jews resisted, and numbers of the Roman soldiers were massacred in the fray. Quadratus, who commanded in Syria, saw the danger of an impending war ; and, to restore the public tranquillity, advanced at the head of his forces. The insurgents who rose in arms against the Roman soldiers were punished with death. That measure was soon decided ; but the conduct of Felix and Cumanus held the general in suspense. Claudius, duly apprised of the rebellion, and the causes from which it sprung, sent a commission directing an inquiry, with power to try and pronounce judgment on the two provincial ministers. To make an end of all difficulties Quadratus placed Felix on the tribunal among the judges, and by that measure sheltered him from his enemies. Cumanus was found guilty of the crimes committed by both, and in this manner the peace of the province was restored.

LV. Cilicia was soon after thrown into convulsions.

The peasants of that country, known by the name of the Cliteans, a wild and savage race, inured to plunder and sudden commotions, assembled under Trosobor, a warlike chief, and pitched their camp on the summit of a mountain, steep, craggy, and almost inaccessible. From their fastnesses they came rushing down on the plain; and, stretching along the coast, attacked the neighboring cities. They plundered the people, robbed the merchants, and utterly ruined navigation and commerce. They laid siege to the city of Anemurium, and dispersed a body of horse sent from Syria, under Curtius Severus, to the relief of the place. With that detachment the freebooters dared to hazard battle. The ground being rugged, disadvantageous to cavalry, and convenient only to foot soldiers, the Romans were totally routed. At length Antiochus, the reigning king of the country, appeased the insurrection. By popular arts he gained the good-will of the multitude, and proceeded by stratagem against their leader. The confederates being ruined by disunion among themselves, Trosobor, with his principal adherents, was put to death. By conciliating measures the rest were brought to a sense of their duty.

LVI. It was about this time that, between the lake Fucinus and the river Liris,<sup>1</sup> a passage was cut through a mountain. That a work of such magnificence<sup>2</sup> should be seen to advantage, Claudius exhibited on the lake

<sup>1</sup> For the lake Fucinus, and the river Liris, see the Geographical Table.

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius says Claudius attempted the Fucine lake, as much with a view to the glory of the performance, as an expectation of advantage. He finished a canal three miles in length, partly by cutting through, and partly by levelling, a mountain; a work of prodigious difficulty, thirty thousand men having been employed in constant labor for eleven years together; Suet. in Claud. § 20.

a naval engagement, in imitation of Augustus, who formed an artificial basin on the banks of the Tiber, and gave a spectacle of the same kind, but with lighter vessels, and an inferior number of mariners. Ships of three and even four ranks of oars were equipped by Claudius, with no less than nineteen thousand armed men on board. To prevent a deviation from the fight the lake was fenced round with rafts of timber,<sup>1</sup> leaving the intermediate space wide enough to give free play to the oars; ample room for the pilots to display their skill; and, in the attack, to exhibit the various operations of a sea-fight. The pretorian guards stood on the rafts of timber, ranged in their several companies. In their front redoubts were raised, with proper engines for throwing up massy stones and all kinds of missive weapons. The rest of the lake was assigned to the ships. The mariners and combatants filled the decks. An incredible multitude of spectators from the neighboring towns, and even from Rome, attracted by the spectacle, or with a view to pay their court to the emperor, crowded round the borders of the lake. The banks, the rising ground, the ridge of the adjacent hills, presented to the eye a magnificent scene, in the form of an amphitheatre. Claudius and Agrippina presided at the show; the prince in a superb coat of mail, and the empress in a splendid mantle, which was a complete tissue of entire gold.<sup>2</sup> The fleet was manned with malefactors; but the battle, nevertheless, was fought with heroic bravery. After many

<sup>1</sup> Brotier says the circumference of the lake was six-and-twenty miles.

<sup>2</sup> Pliny the elder says he himself saw Agrippina, the wife of Claudius, at the naval spectacle, adorned with a magnificent robe wrought in pure gold, without any intermixture of other materials.

wounds, and a great effusion of blood, to favor a set of men who had performed feats of valor, the survivors were excused from fighting to destruction.

LVII. The whole of this magnificent spectacle being concluded, the channel through which the waters flowed was laid open, and then it appeared with what little skill the work was executed. The bed was not sunk deep enough to gain a level either with the middle or the extremities of the lake. It was found necessary to clear away the ground, and give the current a freer course. The work was finished with expedition; and, to attract a multitude of spectators, bridges were thrown over the lake, so constructed as to admit a foot engagement. On this prodigious platform a show of gladiators was exhibited. Near the mouth of the lake a sumptuous banquet was prepared; but the spot was ill-chosen. The weight of a vast body of water, rushing down with irresistible force, carried away the contiguous parts of the works, and shook the whole fabric. Confusion and uproar filled the place. The roar of the torrent, and the noise of materials tumbling in, spread a general alarm. Claudius stood in astonishment. Agrippina seized the moment to accuse Narcissus, who had the direction of the whole. She imputed the mischief to his avarice. The favorite made reprisals on the character of Agrippina, condemning without reserve the impotence of a female spirit, her overbearing pride, and boundless ambition.

LVIII. Decimus Junius and Quintus Haterius succeeded to the consulship. In the course of the year Nero, who had attained the age of sixteen, was joined in marriage to Octavia, the emperor's daughter. To grace his character with the fame of liberal science and the powers of eloquence, he undertook the cause

of the inhabitants of Ilium. The young orator began with the deduction of the Roman people from a Trojan origin. Æneas, the founder of the Julian family, and other passages drawn from antiquity, but in their nature fabulous, served to embellish his discourse. He succeeded for his clients, and obtained an intire exemption from imposts of every kind. He was advocate also for the colony of the Bolognians, who had lately suffered by fire. By the rhetoric of their pleader they obtained a grant of one hundred thousand sesterces. The Rhodians, in like manner, were obliged to his talents. That people, after many vicissitudes, sometimes in full possession of their privileges, and occasionally deprived of all, as they happened to be friendly or adverse to the Roman arms, had their rights confirmed in the amplest manner. The city of Apamea, which had been damaged by an earthquake, owed to the eloquence of their advocate a suspension of all dues for the term of five years.

LIX. In a short time after, the conduct of Claudius, under the management of his wife, presented a contrast of cruelty to all these acts of benevolence. Agrippina panted for the gardens of Statilius Taurus. He had been proconsul of Africa, and possessed a brilliant fortune. Tarquitiu Priscus had served him as his lieutenant. At the instigation of Agrippina this man preferred a charge against his superior officer, founded on some articles of extortion, but resting chiefly on the practice of magic arts. Taurus was fired with indignation at the perfidy of his colleague. Seeing himself devoted to destruction, he resolved not to wait the final sentence, and with his own hand delivered himself from the malice of his enemies. The prosecutor was expelled the senate. The members of that assembly, detesting the treachery of this vile informer, car-

ried their point, in spite of the arts and secret influence of Agrippina.

LX. In the course of this year the emperor gave to his favorite political maxim the force of a law. He had been often heard to say, 'that the judicial resolutions of the imperial procurators ought to be, in their several provinces, of as high authority as if they had been pronounced by himself.' To show that this was not spoken in vain, the doctrine was confirmed by a decree that carried the principle to a greater extent than ever. By a regulation made by Augustus, the Roman knights who ruled the provinces of Egypt were empowered in all cases to hear and determine with as full authority as the magistrates of Rome. The rule was afterwards extended to other provinces; and, even at Rome, the jurisdiction of the knights embraced a variety of questions, which till then were cognisable by the pretor only. Claudius enlarged the powers of his favorites, and finally vested in that body the judicial authority, which had been for ages the cause of civil commotions; for which the people had shed their blood; and which, in those memorable struggles, was given by the Sempronian law<sup>1</sup> to the equestrian order, till, in some time afterwards, the Servilian law restored it to the senate. In the wars between Marius and Sylla this was the cause of that fierce contention; but, in those turbulent times, the different orders of the state were engaged in factions against each other. The party that prevailed called itself the public, and

1 Caius Sempronius Gracchus was the author of a law in favor of the Roman knights, A. U. C. 632. He added three hundred of the equestrian order to the same number of senators, and vested in that body all judicial authority. The Servilian law, introduced by Quintus Servilius Cæpio, in his consulship A. U. C. 648, repealed the Sempronian institution, and restored the jurisdiction of the senate.

made laws in the name of the commonwealth. Caius Oppius and Cornelius Balbus, supported by Augustus, were the first who decided the rights of war and peace. To mention after them the names of Matius, Vedius, and others of the equestrian order, seems now intirely needless ; since we find the enfranchised slaves of Claudius, men no higher than mere domestic servants, raised to a level with the prince, and armed with the authority of the laws.

LXI. A grant to the people of Coos of a general immunity from taxes was the next measure proposed by the emperor. He introduced the question with a splendid account of their ancient origin. ‘The Argives, or at least Cœus, the father of Latona, first settled on the island. Æsculapius arrived soon after, and carried with him the invention of medicine. That useful science continued in his family through a long line of descendants.’ He mentioned by name the several persons in regular succession, and the period of time in which they flourished. He added that Xenophon, his own physician, was descended from that illustrious family. The exemption therefore now requested by a man of such distinguished eminence ought to be granted in favor of an island so famous in story, to the end that the inhabitants, free from every burden, might dedicate themselves altogether to the worship of their god. A more substantial plea of merit might have been urged in their favor. They could boast, with truth, of singular services done to the Romans, and could set forth the victories obtained by their assistance ; but Claudius, with his usual facility, chose to gratify the wishes of an individual ; and, in his opinion, the favor which he conferred ought not to be varnished with considerations of a public nature.

LXII. The deputies from Byzantium<sup>1</sup> were admitted to an audience before the senate. They prayed to be relieved from the heavy rates and duties under which they labored. They relied on the merit of having been for a length of time the faithful allies of Rome. They traced the history of their services from the war in Macedonia, when the king of that country, on account of his degenerate character, was called Pseudo-philippus, or Philip the False.<sup>2</sup> They alleged, moreover, the succors which they sent against Antiochus;<sup>3</sup> against Perses, and Aristonicus; the assistance which they gave to Antony<sup>4</sup> in the piratic war; and afterwards to Sylla, to Lucullus, and Pompey. Nor did they omit their zeal for the Cæsars at the time when they entered Byzantium, and found not only a free passage for their fleets and armies, but likewise a safe conveyance for their provisions and military stores.

1 Now Constantinople.

2 An obscure man of the name of Andriscus pretended to be the son of Perseus. He was found to be an impostor, and therefore called Pseudophilippus. He was defeated, and taken prisoner by Metellus, A. U. C. 606.

3 Antiochus III. king of Syria waged war against the Romans, and was conquered by Lucius Cornelius Scipio, A. U. C. 564. Perseus, king of Macedonia, was subdued by Paulus Æmilius, A. U. C. 586. Aristonicus invaded Asia, and was overthrown by Perpenna, A. U. C. 623.

4 The people of Cilicia fitted out a number of armed ships, and overran the Mediterranean. This was called the Piratic war. Marcus Antonius, son of the famous orator of that name, and father of Antony the triumvir, was sent, with extraordinary powers given to him in his commission, to clear the seas of those roving freebooters, A. U. C. 684. The war however was not brought to a conclusion. In the year 687 the same commission was given to Pompey, notwithstanding the strong opposition of Quintus Catulus, who thought that Pompey was growing too great for his country, and therefore entered his public protest against trusting the commonwealth to the hands of one man. See Vell. Paterculus, ii. 31; and see Cicero, Pro Lege Manilia.



LXIII. Byzantium, it is well known, stands at the extremity of Europe, on the narrow strait that separates Europe from Asia. The city was built by the Greeks, who were led to the spot by the Pythian Apollo. They consulted that oracle about the proper place for a new city, and received for answer, that they should choose a foundation directly opposite to the territory of the blind. The advice, though dark and mysterious, pointed at the people of Chalcedon,<sup>1</sup> the first adventurers in that part of the world, who had their opportunity to seize the best situation, and, through want of discernment, chose the worst. Byzantium enjoys many advantages: the soil is fertile, and the sea abounds with fish, occasioned by the prodigious shoals that pour down from the Pontic sea; and, to avoid the rocks which lurk beneath the waves on the Chalcedonian coast, make directly to the opposite shore, and fall into the bay of Byzantium. The fishery was at first a great branch of commerce. In process of time the trade was cramped by excessive impositions; and to be relieved, either by a total extinction, or at least a reduction of the duties, was now the prayer of their petition. Claudius was inclined to favor their cause: in the late wars in Thrace and Bosphorus they had suffered heavy losses; and it was therefore proper to grant them a compensation. They were accordingly freed from all duties for the term of five years.

LXIV. In the consulship of Marcus Asinius and

<sup>1</sup> Montesquieu makes an ingenious use of this passage: having bestowed his encomium on the British constitution, he observes that Harrington, in his *Oceana*, has strained his idea of liberty to so high a pitch, that it may amuse in theory, but never can exist in practice. He built Chalcedon, when he had Byzantium before his eyes; *Spirit of Laws*, i. 324.

Manius Acilius, a succession of prodigies kept the minds of men in constant dread of some violent convulsion in the state. The tents and ensigns of the soldiers were set on fire by a flash of lightning; a swarm of bees settled on the capitol; women were delivered of monstrous births; and a pig, as soon as farrowed, had the talons of a hawk. It happened at this time that every order of the magistracy was short of its proper number; the public having lost by death, within a few months, a questor, an edile, a tribune, a pretor, and a consul. This was reckoned among the prodigies. Amidst the consternation that covered the whole city no person whatever was so seriously alarmed as Agrippina. Claudius, it seems, had said in conversation that, by some fatality, it had been his constant lot to bear for a time the irregularities of his wives, and in the end to punish them. The expression fell from him in his liquor. Agrippina knew the force of it, and resolved to take her measures beforehand. But Domitia Lepida, whom she hated for female reasons, was to be the first devoted victim. She was the daughter of the younger Antonia, great-niece to Augustus, and sister to Cneius Domitius,<sup>1</sup> the first husband of the empress. Proud of these advantages, Lepida considered herself no way inferior to the im-

1 Domitia Lepida is said in the original to have been the daughter of the younger Antonia: but this, according to Suetonius, is a mistake. Antony the triumvir had two daughters, each called Antonia, by Octavia, the sister of Augustus. The eldest, Suetonius says, was married to Lucius Domitius Ænobarbus, and by him was the mother of Cneius Domitius Ænobarbus, the first husband of Agrippina, and by her the father of Nero. See the Genealogical Table, No. 32, 33 and 34. Antonia the younger was married to Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, and by him was the mother of Germanicus and the emperor Claudius. See her character; Annals, in the Supplement, v. § 27.

perial consort. Their age, their beauty, and their riches, were nearly on a level; both of dissolute manners, proud, fierce, lascivious, and in their vices, no less than their views of ambition, determined rivals. Which of them should have intire dominion over the mind of Nero, the aunt or the mother, was the point in dispute between them. Lepida made her approaches to the young prince by affability and softness of manners. Her liberality and endearing tenderness gained the affections of the prince. Agrippina behaved with the authority of a mother, eager to grasp the imperial dignity of her son, and when she gained it unwilling to own him for her sovereign.

LXV. A charge was framed against Lepida, importing, 'That by magic arts she aspired to the emperor's bed; and, by neglecting to bridle the insolence of her numerous slaves in Calabria, she showed herself an enemy to the peace of Italy.' She was condemned to die. Narcissus endeavored to avert the sentence, but his efforts were ineffectual. That minister had for some time beheld Agrippina with deep mistrust. He saw through her designs, and to his select friends did not scruple to declare, 'That whatever became of the succession, whether it devolved on Nero or Britannicus, the dilemma would either way be fatal to himself. He was bound however to the emperor by ties of gratitude, and in his service was ready to lay down his life. It was by his counsels that Silius and Messalina were both undone. Should Nero seize the sovereignty, the crimes of his mother might bring forward the same catastrophe; and if Britannicus succeeded to the empire, with that prince he had no claim of merit. At present, a stepmother plans the ruin of the imperial house. To look on in silence, and yield to her towering ambition, were a

more flagitious crime than to have connived at the vices of the emperor's former wife. But the vices of the former wife are now renewed by Agrippina. Her adulterous commerce with Pallas is too well known; and it is equally known 'that her modesty, her fame, her honor, and even her person, are all subservient to her ambition.' Such was the language of Narcissus. In the warmth of his emotions he embraced Britannicus; he hoped to see him grow up to man's estate; he fixed his eyes on the prince; he lifted up his hands to the gods, devoutly praying that he might live to crush the enemies of his father, even though all who took an active part against his mother should be doomed to perish with them.

LXVI. In the midst of these distractions Claudius was attacked by a fit of illness. For the recovery of his health he set out for Sinuessa,<sup>1</sup> to try the effect of a milder air and the salubrious waters of the place. Agrippina thought she had now an opportunity to execute the black design which she had long since harbored in her breast. Instruments of guilt were ready at her beck, but the choice of the poison was still to be considered: if quick and sudden in its operation the treachery would be manifest; a slow corrosive would bring on a lingering death. In that case the danger was, that the conspiracy might in the interval be detected, or, in the weakness and decay of nature, the affections of a father might return and plead in favor of Britannicus. She resolved to try a compound of new and exquisite ingredients, such as would make directly to the brain, yet not bring on an imme-

<sup>1</sup> For Sinuessa, see the Geographical Table. The waters of this place are recommended for their salubrity by Pliny the elder, xxxi. 2.

diate dissolution. A person of well-known skill in the trade of poisoning was chosen for the business. This was the famous *Locusta*; a woman lately condemned as a dealer in clandestine practices, but reserved among the instruments of state to serve the purposes of dark ambition. By this tool of iniquity the mixture was prepared. The hand to administer it was that of *Halotus*, the eunuch, whose business it was to serve the emperor's table, and taste the viands for his master.

LXVII. The particulars of this black conspiracy transpired in some time after, and found their way into the memoirs of the age. We are told by the writers of that day, that a palatable dish of mushrooms was the vehicle of the poison. The effect was not soon perceived. Through excess of wine or the stupidity of his nature, perhaps the strength of his constitution, *Claudius* remained insensible. An effort of nature followed, and gave him some relief. *Agrippina* trembled for herself. To dare boldly was now her best expedient. Regardless of her fame, and all that report could spread abroad, she had recourse to *Xenophon*, the physician, whom she had seduced to her interest. Under pretence of assisting *Claudius* to unload his stomach, this man, it is said, made use of a feather tinged with the most subtle poison, and with that instrument searched the emperor's throat. With the true spirit of an assassin he knew that, in atrocious deeds, a feeble attempt serves only to confound the guilty, while the deed, executed with courage, consummates all, and is sure to earn the wages of iniquity.

LXVIII. Meanwhile the senate was convened; and, though the emperor had breathed his last, the consuls and the pontiffs joined in vows and supplications for his recovery. Medical preparations were still applied

to the lifeless body, and the farce of attending the sick was continued, till proper measures were taken for the succession of Nero. Agrippina, with a dejected mien, affected to sink under the weight of affliction. She looked round for consolation, and seeing Britannicus, she folded him in her arms, and called him, with expressions of tenderness, the image of his father. She detained him with fond caresses, and never suffered him to leave the apartment. With the same deceitful arts she contrived to decoy his two sisters, Antonia and Octavia. The avenues of the palace were closely guarded, and at intervals favorable accounts of the emperor were issued; the better to keep every thing in suspense, and amuse the hopes and fears of the soldiers till the arrival of the propitious moment promised by the Chaldean astrologers.

LXIX. At length, on the third day before the ides of October,<sup>1</sup> about noon, the palace gates were thrown open. A pretorian cohort, as usual, was drawn up under arms. Nero, attended by Burrhus, made his appearance; and, on a signal given by the commanding officer, the soldiers received him with shouts and acclamations. He was immediately put into a litter. Some of the soldiers, we are told, even in that scene of joy and uproar, looked around for Britannicus, and asked in vain for that unfortunate prince. None of his party appearing, they yielded to the impulse of the moment. Nero was conveyed to the camp. He addressed the soldiers in a speech suited to the occasion, and promised a donative equal to the liberality of his deceased father. He was proclaimed emperor of Rome. The voice of the army was confirmed by the senate. The provinces acquiesced without reluctance.

<sup>1</sup> The thirteenth of October.

Divine honors were decreed to the memory of Claudius, and funeral ceremonies, not inferior to the magnificence that attended the remains of Augustus. In this article Agrippina was willing to vie with the pomp of her great-grandmother Livia. The will of the deceased emperor was, not read in public. The preference given to the son of his wife, in prejudice to the rights of his own immediate issue, might raise a spirit of discontent, and alienate the affections of the people.

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### BOOK XIII.

SECT. I. THE new reign opened with the murder of Junius Silanus,<sup>1</sup> proconsul of Asia. The deed was perpetrated by the contrivance of Agrippina, without the knowledge of Nero. In the character and conduct of Silanus there was nothing that could provoke his fate. Under the preceding emperors he had led a life so inactive, that he fell into contempt, and was called by Caligula ‘The Golden Calf.’ But Agrippina had cut off his brother Lucius Silanus, and lived in fear of the vengeance due to her crime. Her son Nero, not yet arrived at years of discretion, was raised to the sovereign power, and, in opposition to that measure, the public voice was loud in favor of Silanus, a man every way qualified, of an understanding matured by

<sup>1</sup> This was Marcus Junius Silanus, the son of Junius Silanus and Æmilia Lepida, the grand-daughter of Augustus.

years, an unblemished character, by his birth illustrious, and (what was then of great importance) descended from the house of Cæsar. Silanus, in fact, was the great-grandson of Augustus. These circumstances conspired to work his ruin. The actors in this dark transaction were Publius Celer, a Roman knight, and Helius, an enfranchised slave; both employed in Asia to collect the revenues of the prince. At a public feast those two conspirators administered a dose of poison to the proconsul with so little precaution, that secrecy did not seem to be worth their care. The murder of Narcissus, the freedman of Claudius, was despatched with as little ceremony. The quarrel between him and Agrippina has been already stated. He was thrown into prison, and there confined in close and rigorous custody, till, driven to the extremity of want, he put an end to his misery with his own hand. Nero wished to prolong his days. The secret vices of the prince, though they had not then broke out into action, inclined him, by a wonderful bias of nature, to favor a man in whose avarice and prodigality he saw the counterpart of himself.

II. A number of other victims were marked for destruction; and Rome would have been a theatre of blood, had not Afranius Burrhus and Annæus Seneca prevented the impending danger. The education of the emperor had been committed to those two ministers: both high in power, and yet (uncommon as it is) free from jealousy; possessing different talents, united by sentiment, and each, in his peculiar province, of great consideration. Burrhus gave the prince instructions in the military science, and the austerity of his manners added weight to his precepts. Seneca taught the principles of eloquence, and charmed by the suavity of his manners. The two preceptors exerted their



joint endeavors to fix in the prince's mind the principles of virtue, or if that could not be, to restrain his youthful passions, and, by moderate indulgence, infuse into his mind a taste for elegant, if not innocent pleasures.

Agrippina threw difficulties in their way. Fierce with all the passions that attend inordinate ambition, she was supported in her worst designs by Pallas, that pernicious favorite, who incited Claudius to an incestuous marriage, and advised the adoption of Nero; two fatal measures, by which that emperor was precipitated to his ruin. But it was not in the temper or genius of Nero to bend to the politics of a freedman: on the other hand, the arrogance of Pallas, who aspired above himself, gave disgust to the prince. Public honors in the mean time were bestowed with a lavish hand on the emperor's mother. To a tribune, who, according to the military practice, asked for the word, Nero gave 'The best of mothers.' Two lictors, by a decree of the senate, were ordered to attend her person. She was, at the same time, declared the priestess of Claudius. The funeral of that prince was performed with all the pomp of censorial obsequies. He was afterwards added to the number of the gods.

III. Nero pronounced the funeral oration. He represented, in the brightest colors, the illustrious birth of the deceased emperor, the number of his consulships, and the triumphal honors of his ancestors. On those topics he dwelt with propriety, and commanded attention. The taste of Claudius for the liberal arts, and the undisturbed tranquillity that prevailed throughout his reign, afforded ample room for panegyric, and the orator was heard with pleasure. But when the judgment and political wisdom of Claudius were mentioned with praise and decorations of language, the

ridicule was too strong, and none could refrain from laughter. And yet the speech was written by Seneca, in a style of elegance peculiar to that amiable writer, who possessed a vein of wit and fancy that charmed the taste of the age in which he lived. It was observed, on this occasion, by men advanced in life who love, at leisure, to compare the past with the present times, that of all the emperors, Nero was the first who was content to be the organ of another's eloquence. In Cæsar the dictator the most eminent orators found an illustrious rival. Augustus had a flow of language, easy, clear, and copious, well suited to the dignity of a prince. Precision was the talent of Tiberius; and if his meaning was sometimes obscure, it was when he chose to be dark and impenetrable. The confused and turbulent genius of Caligula did not transfuse itself into his discourse. Even in Claudius, when he came with a speech prepared and studied, there was no want of elegance. Nero, in the prime of life, took a different turn, and, with lively parts, applied himself to other objects. Engraving,<sup>1</sup> painting, music, and horsemanship, were his favorite pursuits. At intervals he was fond of poetry, and his verses showed that he had at least a tincture of letters.

IV. Having played the part of a public mourner, Nero made his appearance in the senate. He began with a florid compliment to the authority of the fathers, and the concurrent suffrages of the army, which raised him to the imperial dignity. He added, 'that he had many bright examples to excite emulation, and in his councils superior wisdom to direct his conduct. His

<sup>1</sup> Nero's passion for the elegant arts, had he known how to restrain it within due bounds, might have been not unworthy of a prince; but we shall see him in the sequel as ridiculous for his taste, as he was detestable for his vices.

youth had not been engaged in civil commotions, and to the rage of contending factions he was, by consequence, an utter stranger. He brought with him no private animosity, no sense of injuries, no motives to inspire revenge. He explained the system of government which he intended to pursue; the abuses which occasioned discontent and murmurings in the former reign were to be reformed altogether; and, in particular, the decision of causes, he was determined, should no longer depend on the authority of the prince. The practice of hearing in a chamber of the palace<sup>1</sup> the accuser and the accused, and thereby subjecting the lives and fortunes of men to the influence of a few favorites, was to be abolished. In his palace nothing should be venal; nothing carried by intrigue, by bribery, or secret influence. The revenues of the prince, and the public treasure, should be distinct and separate rights. The senate might retain the full exercise of the powers vested in that assembly by the spirit of the constitution. Italy and the provinces might, in all cases, address themselves to the tribunal of the consuls, and, through that channel, find their way to the senate. The executive power over the army was his peculiar province, and he claimed no more.<sup>2</sup>

V. The promise was fair, and for some time regularly observed. The fathers, of their own authority, made several regulations, and among other things or-

<sup>1</sup> See the trial of Valerius Asiaticus in the apartment of Claudius; Annals, xi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> This speech gave universal satisfaction. It was probably written by Seneca. While it promised a reign of moderation, it served to give the young prince a lesson on the true and popular arts of government. Dio tells us that the senate ordered it to be engraved on a pillar of solid silver, and to be publicly read every year at the time when the consuls entered on their magistracy; Dio, lxi.

dained, that no advocate should hire out his talents in any cause whatever. The law requiring<sup>1</sup> a spectacle of gladiators from such as were chosen to the office of questor was intirely abrogated. To these resolutions, tending in effect to repeal the acts of Claudius, Agrippina made a strong opposition. In order to carry her point, she caused the senate to be convened in the palace, where, at a convenient station at the door behind the arras, she might conceal her person, and overhear the debate. The fathers acted with a spirit of independence, and a decree was passed accordingly. On a subsequent occasion the ambassadors of Armenia were admitted to an audience before the prince. Agrippina advanced to the tribunal to take her seat, and preside with joint authority. All who beheld the scene were struck with terror and amazement, when Seneca, in the general confusion, had the presence of mind to bid the emperor step forward to meet his mother. Under an appearance of filial piety, the honor of the state was saved.

VI. Towards the end of the year a report prevailed that the Parthians had once more invaded Armenia, and that Rhadamistus, tired of a kingdom so often taken and retaken, declined to end the dispute by force of arms. At Rome, where public affairs were discussed with freedom, the popular opinion was, 'that Nero, young in life, just out of his seventeenth year, would not be equal to a conjuncture so arduous and important. What dependence could be had on the flexibility of a boy, still under the government of his mother? He had tutors, indeed; but would they undertake the command of armies, the conduct of sieges, and all the

1 This corrupt practice, which was nothing less than open bribery, was established by law in the reign of Claudius; Annals, xi. 22.

various operations of war?' It was argued on the other hand, 'that the situation of affairs was better than it could have been under a prince like Claudius, worn out with age, and sunk in sloth, the willing dupe of his favorite freedmen. Burrhus and Seneca were men of experience; and, with such advisers, why conclude that Nero, bordering on the season of manly vigor, was unequal to the task? Pompey, at the age of eighteen, and Octavianus Cæsar, having barely passed his nineteenth year, were both at the head of armies, in times big with danger, amidst the distractions of a civil war. It is by the wisdom of their councils, and not by personal valor, that princes are crowned with glory. Whether the cabinet of Nero was filled with evil counsellors, or with men of talents and integrity, would soon be evident. If the emperor, without regarding party connexions and court intrigue, chose a general, not on account of his wealth and interest, but for his military character, the question would be then fairly decided.'

VII. While these different opinions kept the public mind in agitation, Nero ordered levies to be made in the eastern nations; and the legions, thus recruited, to take post on the confines of Armenia. He desired at the same time that Agrippa<sup>1</sup> and Antiochus, two oriental kings, should hold their forces in readiness to enter the territory of the Parthians. For the convenience of his armies bridges were thrown over the Euphrates. The lesser Armenia<sup>2</sup> was committed to Aristobulus, and the country called Sophenes<sup>3</sup> to Sohemus: both

1 Agrippa was king of Judea; Antiochus, of Comagene.

2 The lesser Armenia was on this side of the Euphrates. Aristobulus was the son of Herod, who formerly reigned in Chalcis.

3 For the country called Sophene, see the Geographical Table.

princes were allowed to assume the ensigns of royalty. In this crisis a fortunate circumstance gave a sudden turn in favor of Rome. Vardanes, the son of Vologeses, became a competitor for the crown in opposition to his father. The Parthians were, by consequence, obliged to recall their armies, and under color of deferring, not of abandoning the war, Armenia was evacuated.

VIII. The fathers extolled these transactions with their usual strain of flattery. They voted that prayers and public thanksgivings should be offered to the gods, and that during the solemnity Nero, adorned with a triumphal robe, should enter the city with all the splendor of an ovation. It was farther resolved that in the temple of Mars the Avenger a statue should be erected to the prince, in form and dimension equal to that of the god. Amidst this servile adulation, the appointment of Domitius Corbulo to the command of the army in Armenia gave universal satisfaction. The road to preferment, men began to hope, would, from that time, be open to talents and superior merit. By the arrangement which was settled in the east, part of the auxiliaries, with two legions, were stationed in Syria, under the command of Ummidius Quadratus, the governor of that province. An equal number of legionary soldiers and allies, besides the cohorts and light troops that wintered in Cappadocia, were assigned to Corbulo. The kings in alliance with Rome had directions to co-operate with those generals as the events of war should happen to require. Corbulo was high in favor with the princes of the east. Aware that fame, in the beginning of all military operations, makes a deep impression, that general advanced by rapid journeys, and at *Ægea*, a city of Cilicia, met Quadratus, who chose an interview at that place, rather than

wait till Corbulo showed himself at the head of his army in the province of Syria, where he had reason to fear that the eyes of the people would be fixed on his rival in command. The fact was, Corbulo possessed many advantages: in his person manly, of a remarkable stature, and in his discourse magnificent, he united with experience and consummate wisdom those exterior accomplishments, which, though in themselves of no real value, give an air of elegance even to trifles.

IX. The two commanders sent a joint message to Vologeses, warning him to prefer the sweets of peace to the calamities of war, and, by sending hostages, to mark his respect for the Roman name. The Parthian monarch, intending to wait for a more favorable opportunity, or, perhaps, wishing to remove from his court his most dangerous enemies, gave up as hostages the most distinguished of the line of the Arsacides. Histerius, a centurion, sent by Quadratus with orders to travel with expedition, received the hostages under his care; but Corbulo, apprised of this artful project, despatched Arrius Varus, the commander of a cohort, to claim the care and custody of the Parthian nobles. The centurion resisted. A warm dispute ensued between the two officers, till at length, that they might not exhibit a ridiculous scene to foreign nations, the matter was referred to the decision of the hostages themselves, and the ambassadors who accompanied them. The Parthians, struck with the recent fame of the commander-in-chief, and, as often happens even among enemies, conceiving the highest respect for his person, gave the preference to Corbulo. Hence a new source of discord between the two generals. Quadratus complained that the honor which he had acquired was unfairly wrested from him. Corbulo maintained

his right, insisting that the idea of delivering up hostages had never occurred to Vologeses till such time as his hopes were humbled by the name of the superior officer who had the conduct of the war. To appease their jealousy, Nero issued an order, that on account of the prosperous events achieved by the conduct of both generals, the imperial fasces under each of them should be decorated with wreaths of laurel. These transactions happened in different years: but, for the sake of perspicuity, they are here related in one connected series.

X. In the course of the same year Nero desired that by a decree of the senate a statue might be erected to his father Cneius Domitius Ænobarbus, and that Asconius Labeo, his former tutor, might be honored with the consular ornaments. The senate proposed that statues of solid gold or silver should be erected in honor of the prince; but Nero had the modesty to reject the offer. A law was also in agitation, by which the year was to begin from December, the month in which Nero was born. This too was overruled. The emperor resolved to continue the old style, dating the year from the calends of January; a day rendered sacred by the established religion of the Romans. An attempt was made to arraign Carinas Celer, a member of the senate, and Julius Densus, of the equestrian order. The first was accused by his slave; the crime objected to the latter was his attachment to Britannicus. Both prosecutions were suppressed by order of the emperor.

XI. Nero and Lucius Antistius were the next consuls. During the solemnity of swearing the magistrates, according to custom, on the acts of the emperor, Antistius had it in command not to include in his oath the acts of the reigning prince; an instance of modesty



and self-denial, which the fathers thought could not be too highly commended. They were lavish of praise, in hopes that the sense of honest fame, even in matters of little moment, implanted early in the mind of a young man, might shoot up to a principle of honor and the love of solid glory. In a short time after Nero distinguished himself by an act of clemency in the case of Plautius Lateranus,<sup>1</sup> who for his criminal intrigues with Messalina had been expelled the senate. The emperor restored him to his rank. He even bound himself to observe throughout his reign the virtues of humanity. This promise he renewed in several speeches prepared for him by the pen of Seneca, and probably written to display the moral lessons which the philosopher taught, or to show the brilliant talents of that lively writer.

XII. The authority of Agrippina was now on the decline. An enfranchised female slave of the name of Acte<sup>2</sup> had gained an intire ascendant over the affections of the prince. To conduct this intrigue Nero chose Otho<sup>3</sup> and Claudius Senecio for his confidential friends; the former descended from a family of consular rank; the latter the son of a freedman belonging to the late emperor. They were both elegant in their persons. Their taste for debauchery and clandestine vices introduced them to the notice of their prince. Their first approaches to his friendship were unperceived by Agrippina: she endeavored afterwards to remove them from his presence; but her efforts were

1 For Plautius Lateranus, see Annals, xi. 36.

2 Acte was a purchased slave from Asia. Suetonius says that Nero, being at one time determined to marry her, suborned several men of consular rank to swear that she was of royal descent; Suet. in Neron. § 28.

3 Otho, afterwards emperor.

without effect. The emperor's friends, though famed for wisdom and the severity of their manners, made no opposition to his new intrigue. A courtesan, who gratified the ardor of a young man's passion, without injury to any person whatever, was thought an object of no importance. Nero, it is true, was married to Octavia; but neither the nobility of her birth, nor her unspotted virtue, could secure his affections. By some fatality, or perhaps by the secret charm of forbidden pleasures, his heart was alienated from his wife. The connexion with his favorite concubine served to restrain the prince from other pursuits; and there was reason to fear that, detached from her, he might riot in scenes of higher life, and destroy the peace and honor of the noblest families.

XIII. Agrippina was fired with indignation. She complained aloud that an enfranchised slave was put in competition with the emperor's mother, and a wretch of mean extraction was to be treated as her daughter-in-law. She stormed with all the rage of female pride, never reflecting that the prince might see his error, or that satiety and cold indifference might, in time, succeed to the vehemence of youthful passion. The haughty spirit of the mother served only to inflame the ardor of her son. He gave a loose to love, and threw off all regard for his mother, determined for the future to yield to no authority but that of Seneca. Among the friends of that minister was a man of the name of Annæus Serenus,<sup>1</sup> who pretended to admire the person of Acte, and, to throw a veil over the growing passion of Nero, conveyed to her, in his name, the presents sent by the secret gallantry of the prince. Agrippina thought it time to abate from her ferocity.

<sup>1</sup> Annæus Serenus was high in the esteem and friendship of Seneca, as appears, epist. 63.

She had recourse to art, and hoped by gentle methods to regain her influence. Her own apartment was now at her son's service. Love, at his time of life, was natural, and his superior rank demanded some indulgence. Under the care and management of his mother he might enjoy his secret pleasures. She apologised for the warmth with which she broke out at first, and even made an offer of all her treasure, little inferior to imperial riches. Her conduct was always in extremes; violent in the beginning, and in the end too complying.

A transition so sudden did not escape the observation of Nero. His confidential friends were alarmed. Dreading nothing so much as the return of Agrippina's influence, they cautioned the prince not to be the dupe of a woman, who, in reality, abated nothing from the pride and arrogance of her character, though now she played an humble but insidious part. It happened at this time that Nero examined a rich wardrobe, appropriated to the use of the mothers and wives of the emperors. He selected a splendid dress and a considerable quantity of jewels. These he ordered to be presented to Agrippina. The things were gay and magnificent, the kind of ornaments that please the taste and vanity of women, and being unasked and unexpected, they were sent with a better grace. Agrippina construed this civility into an affront. 'The design,' she said, 'was not to adorn her person, but to deprive her of the rest of those valuable effects. Her son affected to divide with his mother what he owed intirely to her protection.' Her words were reported to the emperor with additional malice.

XIV. In order by a sudden blow to humble Agrippina and her party, Nero dismissed Pallas<sup>1</sup> from all

1 Pallas was the person who prevailed on Claudius to

his employments. By the favor of Claudius this man had been raised to a degree of power that made him assume the air and importance of first minister, and sovereign arbiter of the empire. As he withdrew from court with his train of followers, Nero pleasantly said, 'Pallas is going to abdicate.' Before he retired it is certain that he had bargained for himself. It was agreed that no inquiry should be had into his conduct, and that all accounts between him and the public should be considered as closed and balanced. The

contract an incestuous marriage with his niece Agrippina. From that time his influence was beyond all bounds. Suetonius says he was the prince's treasurer. The decree of the senate in honor of this insolent freedman has been mentioned, *Annals*, xii. 53, and note. Suetonius says that Pallas and Narcissus plundered the public with such violent rapacity, that Claudius at length complained of the impoverished state of his exchequer, when it was archly said, his 'coffers would be full enough if his two freedmen would take him into partnership;' *Suet. in Claud.* § 28. The dismissal of such a man from court, and all his employments, was a fatal blow to Agrippina. The speech in which she gives vent to her indignation is finely imitated by Racine, in his tragedy of *Britannicus*:

Pallas n'emporte pas tout l'appui d'Agrippine,  
 Le ciel m'en laisse assez pour venger ma ruine.  
 Le fils de Claudius commence à ressentir  
 Des crimes, dont je n'ai que le seul repentir.  
 J'irai, n'en doutez point, le montrer à l'armée;  
 Plaindre aux yeux des soldats son enfance opprimée;  
 Leur faire, à mon exemple, expier leur erreur,  
 On verra, d'un côté, le fils d'un empereur  
 Redemandant la foi jurée à sa famille;  
 Et de Germanicus on attendra la fille:  
 De l'autre, l'on verra le fils d'Ænobarbus,  
 Appuyé de Senèque, et du tribun Burrhus;  
 Qui tous deux, de l'exil rappelés par moi-même,  
 Partagent à mes yeux l'autorité suprême.  
 De nos crimes communs je veux qu'on soit instruit;  
 On saura les chemins par où je l'ai conduit.  
 J'avoûrai les rumeurs les plus injurieuses:  
 Je confesserai tout, exils, assassinats,  
 Poison même . . . . .

indignation of Agrippina was not to be restrained: in a tone of menace she endeavored to intimidate her enemies; even in the emperor's hearing, she exclaimed aloud, 'Britannicus is grown up, the genuine issue of Claudius, and every way worthy of the succession to his father. The sovereignty has been wrested from him by an intruder, who owes his title to adoption only, and now presumes to trample on the rights of a mother who gave him all. But every thing shall be brought to light: the misfortunes which she herself had caused in the imperial family, her incestuous marriage with her uncle, and the poison that put an end to his life; all shall be disclosed, all laid open to the world. By the favor of the gods Britannicus is still alive: that resource still remains. With that young prince she would join the army: in the camp should be heard the daughter of Germanicus; Burrhus, and Seneca the famous exile, might present themselves before the pretorian soldiers; the first with his maimed hand, and the second, armed with his tropes and flowers of rhetoric; both worthy ministers, fit, in their opinion, to govern the Roman world.' In this strain she raved with vehemence, brandishing her hands, and pouring out a torrent of invective. She appealed to the deified Claudius; she invoked the manes of the murdered Silani, and of others who perished by her guilt, though now, in return for all, she met with nothing but treachery and ingratitude.

XV. These violent declarations made a deep impression on the mind of Nero. The birthday of Britannicus, when that prince was to enter on his fifteenth year, was near at hand. This gave rise to a number of reflections. The turbulent spirit of Agrippina, and the character of the prince, filled him with apprehensions. On a late occasion Britannicus had given a specimen

of early acuteness, slight indeed in itself, but such as disposed the people in his favor. It happened, during the Saturnalian festival,<sup>1</sup> that among the diversions usual among young people, the play, 'Who shall be king?'<sup>2</sup> became part of the amusement at court. The lot fell to Nero: he imposed his commands on the company, in no instance aiming at ridicule or inconvenience, till he came to Britannicus. He ordered the young prince to stand in the middle of the room, and sing a song to the company. By this device he hoped that a stripling, not yet accustomed even to sober conversation, much less to revelry and the joys of wine, would be exposed to derision. Britannicus performed his part without embarrassment. His song<sup>3</sup> alluded to his own case, expressing the situation of a prince excluded from the throne of his ancestors. The whole company felt a touch of compassion; and in the moment of gaiety, when wine and the midnight hour had thrown off all dissimulation, they expressed their feelings without disguise. Nero found that his pleasantry recoiled on himself. Hatred from that moment took possession of his heart. The furious and implacable spirit of Agrippina kept him in a constant alarm. No crime could be alleged against Britannicus, and, by consequence, there was no color to justify a public execution.

1 The Saturnalia began December 17th, and lasted fifteen days. Horace says to his slave, who wants to exercise the equality allowed during the festival,

———Age, libertate Decembri,

Quando ita majores voluerunt, utere; narra.

2 In this play of 'Who shall be king?' the boys threw dice to decide their chance. Horace alludes to this custom.

3 The commentators cite some verses of Ennius, which they suppose were sung by Britannicus on this occasion. But what they say is mere conjecture.

Nero resolved to act by covert stratagem. A preparation of poison was ordered, and Julius Pollio, a tribune of the pretorian cohorts, was called in as an accomplice. This man had in his custody the famous Locusta, a woman guilty of various crimes, and then under sentence for administering poison. She was made an instrument in the conspiracy. For some time before care had been taken to admit none to the presence of Britannicus but such as had long since renounced every principle of honor and of virtue. The first potion was given to Britannicus by his tutors; but being weak, or injudiciously qualified, it passed without effect. The slow progress of guilt did not suit the genius of Nero. He threatened the tribune, and was on the point of ordering the sorceress to be put to death. He railed at both as two cowards in vice, who wished to save appearances, and concert a defence for themselves, while they left a dreadful interval big with fear and danger. To appease his wrath, they promised to prepare a dose as sure and deadly as the assassin's knife. In a room adjoining the apartment of the emperor they mixed a draught, compounded of ingredients whose sure and rapid quality they had already experienced.

XVI. According to the custom at that time established at court, the children of the imperial family dined in a sitting posture, with nobility of their own age, in sight of their relations, at a table set apart, and served with due frugality. Whenever Britannicus was in this manner seated at his meal, it was a settled rule that an attendant should taste his food and liquor. To preserve this custom, and prevent detection by the death of both, an innocent beverage, without any infusion that could hurt, was tried by the proper officer, and presented to the prince. He found it too hot, and

returned it. Cold water, in which the poison had been mixed, was immediately poured into the cup. Britannicus drank freely: the effect was violent, and, in an instant, it seized the powers of life: his limbs were palsied, his breath was suppressed, and his utterance failed. The company were thrown into consternation. Some rushed out of the room, while others, who had more discernment, stayed, but in astonishment, with their eyes fixed on Nero, who lay stretched at ease on his couch, with an air of innocence, and without emotion. He contented himself with calmly saying, 'This is one of the epileptic fits to which Britannicus has been subject from his infancy. The disorder will go off, and he will soon recover his senses.' Agrippina was struck with horror. She endeavored to suppress her feelings; but the inward emotions were too strong; they spoke in every feature, plainly showing that she was as innocent as Octavia, the sister of Britannicus. By this horrible act the emperor's mother saw all her hopes at once cut off, and from so daring a step, she could even then foresee that her son would wade in blood, and add to his crimes the horror of parricide. Octavia, though still of tender years, had seen enough of courts to teach her the policy of smothering her grief, her tenderness, and every sentiment of the heart. In this manner the scene of distraction ended, and the pleasures of the table were renewed.

XVII. One and the same night saw the murder of Britannicus and his funeral. Both were preconcerted. Without expense, or any kind of pomp, the prince's remains were interred in the Field of Mars, under a shower of rain, which fell with such violence, that it passed with the multitude as the sure forerunner of divine vengeance on the authors of so foul a deed;



a deed, notwithstanding all its horrors, which many were inclined to think of with less severity, when they considered that, from the earliest times, a spirit of jealousy always subsisted between brothers, and that the nature of sovereign power is such as not to endure a rival. From the writers of that period there is reason to conclude that Nero, on various occasions, had taken advantage of the tender years of Britannicus, and offered many indignities to his person. If the anecdote be founded in truth, the death which delivered a descendant of the Claudian line from foul disgrace cannot be deemed premature or cruel. The prince, it is true, died in the hour of hospitality, without warning, without time allowed to his sister to take the last farewell; and his mortal enemy saw him in the pangs of death. After all his sufferings, the poisoned cup was mercy. The hurry with which the funeral was performed was justified by Nero in a proclamation, stating the practice of the ancient Romans, who ordained with wisdom, ‘That the bodies of such as died in the prime of life should, as soon as possible, be removed from the public eye without waiting for funeral orations, and the slow parade of pomp and ceremony. For himself, deprived as he was of the assistance of a brother, he depended altogether on the affections of the people, in full persuasion that the senate, and all orders of men, would exert their best endeavors to support a prince, who now remained the only branch of a family born to rule the empire of the world.’ After this public declaration, his next care was, by large donations, to secure in his interest all his most powerful friends.

XVIII. The conduct of such as were most distinguished by the munificence of the emperor did not pass uncensured. They were men who professed in-

tegrity, and yet did not blush to take palaces,<sup>1</sup> country-seats, and extensive lands, all equally willing to have share of the plunder. By their apologists it was argued, that they could not avoid submitting to the will of a prince, who knew the horror of his crimes, and hoped by his liberality to soften the public resentment. Agrippina continued implacable. Indignation like hers was not to be appeased by presents. She cherished Octavia with the tenderest regard: she had frequent meetings with the leaders of her party; and, with more than her natural avarice, she collected money in all quarters; she courted the tribunes and centurions; and to the thin nobility which then remained she paid every mark of respect, dwelling with pleasure on their names, applauding their virtues, with a view to strengthen her interest by a coalition of the first men in Rome. Nero was apprised of all that passed. By his orders the sentinels who guarded her gates (as had been done in the time of Claudius, and since his decease) were all withdrawn. The German soldiers, who had been added by way of doing honor to the emperor's mother, were likewise dismissed from her service. Nor did the matter rest here. To retrench the number of her adherents and visitors, Nero resolved to hold a separate court. He assigned to his mother the mansion formerly occupied by Antonia. He visited her in her new situation; but his visits were a state farce: he went with a train of attendants, and after a short salute, took his leave with cold civility.

XIX. In the mass of human affairs there is nothing so vain and transitory as the fancied pre-eminence which depends on popular opinion, without a solid foundation to support it. Of this truth Agrippina is

1 They took the palaces, villas, and estates of Britannicus.

a melancholy proof. Her house was deserted; no friend to comfort her; no courtier to flutter at her levee; and none to visit her, except a few women who frequented her house, perhaps with a good intention, or, more probably, with the little motives of female triumph. In the number was Junia Silana, formerly divorced, as has been mentioned, from Caius Silius, at the instigation of Messalina. Since that time she became the intimate friend of Agrippina; by her birth illustrious, distinguished by her beauty, and not less so by her lascivious conduct. Her friendship for Agrippina, soured afterwards by contentions between themselves, turned to bitter hatred. A treaty of marriage between Silana and Sextius Africanus, a citizen of illustrious rank, was rendered abortive by the ill offices of Agrippina. She told the lover, that his mistress, though no longer in the prime of life, was of a dissolute character, and still abandoned to her vicious pleasures. In this act of hostility love had no kind of share. Agrippina had not so much as a wish for the person of Africanus; but Silana enjoyed large possessions, and being a widow without children, her whole fortune might devolve to the husband.

Silana, from that moment, was stung with resentment. The season for revenge she thought was now arrived, and for that purpose she employed Iturius and Calvisius, two of her creatures, to frame an accusation against Agrippina, not on the ground of the old and threadbare story about her grief for Britannicus, and her zeal for Octavia; but with a deeper intent, that revenge might have its full blow. The head of the accusation was, that Agrippina had conspired with Rubellius Plautus, a descendant of Augustus, by the maternal line in the same degree as Nero, to bring about a revolution, and in that event, to marry the

usurper, and once more invade the commonwealth. With this charge, drawn up in form, Iturius and Calvisius sought Atimetus, one of the freedmen of Domitia, the emperor's aunt. A fitter person could not be chosen : he knew the enmity that subsisted between his mistress and Agrippina, and for that reason listened eagerly to the information. Having heard the particulars, he employed Paris the comedian (who had likewise received his freedom from Domitia), and by him conveyed the whisper to the emperor, with circumstances of aggravation.

XX. The night was far advanced, and Nero passed the time in riot and gay carousal, when Paris entered the apartment. In the prince's parties he had always been a pimp of pleasure ; but now, a messenger of ill news, he appeared with an air of dejection. He laid open the particulars of the charge. Nero heard him with dismay and terror. In the first agitations of his mind he resolved to despatch his mother, and Plautus, her accomplice. Burrhus was no longer to command the pretorian bands: he was the creature of Agrippina, raised at first by her influence, and in his heart a secret friend to her and her interest. If we may credit Fabius Rusticus, a commission was actually made out, and sent to Cæcina Tuscus ; but recalled at the request of Seneca, who interposed to save his friend from disgrace. According to Cluvius and Pliny, the honor of Burrhus was never called in question. To say the truth, the authority of Fabius Rusticus is not free from suspicion. He flourished under the protection of Seneca, and the gratitude of the writer embraces every opportunity to adorn the character of his patron.

The historical evidence is fairly before the reader, agreeably to the design of this work, which professes to

depend, at all times, on the testimony of authors, when they agree among themselves ; and when they differ, to state the points in dispute with the reasons on each side. Nero was distracted with doubt and fear. In the tumult of his thoughts, he determined to despatch his mother without delay. Nor was his fury to be restrained till Burrhus pledged himself, if the charge was verified, to see execution done on her ; but to be heard in answer to the accusation, he said, was the right of the meanest person, much more so of a mother. In the present case no charge was made in form ; no prosecutor appeared ; the whole was nothing but the whisper of a busy talebearer, who brought intelligence from the house of an enemy ; but the time chosen for the discovery makes the whole improbable. Paris the informer came in the dead of night ; and after many hours spent in carousing, what can be expected but confusion, ignorance, and fatal temerity ?

XXI. Nero was pacified by this reasoning. At the dawn of day proper persons were sent to Agrippina, to inform her of the allegations against her, and to hear her defence. The commission was executed by Burrhus in the presence of Seneca, and a number of freedmen, who were sent to watch the whole proceeding. Burrhus stated the charge : he named the informers, and, in a tone of severity, enforced every circumstance. Agrippina heard him undismayed, and, with the pride and spirit of her character, replied as follows : ‘ That Silana, who has never known the labors of childbed, should be a stranger to the affections of a mother, cannot be matter of surprise. A woman of profligate manners may change her adulterers, but a mother cannot renounce her children. If Iturius and Calvisius, two bankrupts in fame as well as fortune, have sold themselves to an old woman, is

it of course that I must be guilty of a crime which they have fabricated? And must my son, at the instigation of two such miscreants, commit a parricide? Let Domitia show her kindness to my son; let her vie with tenderness like mine, and I will forgive her malice; I will even thank her for it. But she is in league with Atimetus, who is known to be her paramour: Paris, the stage-player, lends his aid: the talents that figured in the theatre, he hopes, will be able to plan a real tragedy.

‘At the time when my cares were busy to make Nero the adopted son of Claudius; to invest him with proconsular dignity, and declare him consul elect; when I was laboring to open to my son the road to empire, where was Domitia then? Her ponds and lakes at Baiæ engrossed all her attention. Stand forth the man who can prove that I tampered with the city guards; that I seduced the provinces from their allegiance, or endeavored to corrupt the slaves and freedmen of the emperor. Had Britannicus obtained the imperial dignity, could I have hoped to live in safety? And if Rubellius Plautus, or any other person, had seized the reins of government, can it be supposed that my enemies would not have seized their opportunity to exhibit their charge, not for intemperate words thrown out in the warmth of passion, the effusion of a mother’s jealousy, but for real crimes; and those of so deep a dye, that no man can forgive them, except a son, for whom they were committed?’ Such was the language of Agrippina. The warmth and energy with which she delivered herself made an impression on all who heard her. They endeavored to soften affliction, and mitigate the violence of her feelings. She demanded an interview with her son, and the meeting was granted. In his presence she

scorned to enter into a vindication of herself. To answer the charge might betray too much diffidence: nor did she dwell on the service which she had rendered to her son; that were to tax him with ingratitude. Her object was to punish her accusers and reward her friends. She succeeded in both.

XXII. The superintendence of corn and grain was granted to Fenius Rufus. The public spectacles then intended by the emperor were committed to the care of Arruntius Stella. The province of Egypt was assigned to Caius Balbillus,<sup>1</sup> and that of Syria to Publius Anteius. But the last was the bubble of promises, and never suffered to proceed to his government. Silana was sent into exile. Calvisius and Iturius<sup>2</sup> shared the same fate. Atimetus was punished with death. Paris, the comedian, was of too much consequence: he had the art of ministering to the pleasures of the prince: his vices saved him. Rubellius Plautus was for the present passed by in silence.

XXIII. Soon after this transaction Pallas and Burrhus were charged with a conspiracy to raise Cornelius Sylla to the imperial seat, in consideration of his illustrious birth and the affinity which he bore to Claudius; being, by his marriage with Antonia, the son-in-law of that emperor. In this business a man

1 Seneca calls Balbillus the best of men, and a scholar of uncommon erudition.

2 The Romans had three ways of banishing a man from his country; namely, *exilium*, *relegatio*, and *deportatio*. The person condemned to exile lost the rights of a citizen, and forfeited all kinds of property. Sentence of relegation removed the person to a certain distance from Rome; but, if no fine was imposed, it took away no other right. Deportation was invented by Augustus. It was the severest kind of banishment. The person condemned was hurried away in chains, stripped of all property, and confined to some island or inhospitable place.

of the name of Pætus was the prosecutor; a busy pragmatical fellow, notorious for harassing his fellow-citizens with confiscations to the treasury, and on the present occasion a manifest impostor. To find Pallas innocent would not have been unpleasant to the fathers, if the arrogance of the man had not given disgust to all. In the course of the trial, some of his freedmen being mentioned as accomplices in the plot, he thought proper to answer, 'That among his domestics he never condescended to speak: he signified his pleasure by a nod, or a motion of his hand. If the business required special directions he committed his mind to paper, unwilling to mix in discourse with people so much beneath his notice.' Burrhus, though involved in the prosecution, took his seat on the bench with the judges, and pronounced his opinion. Pætus was condemned to banishment, and all his papers, which he preserved as documents to be used in the revival of treasury suits, were committed to the flames.

XXIV. Towards the close of the year the custom of having a cohort on duty at the exhibition of the public spectacles was intirely laid aside. By this measure the people were amused with a show of liberty; and the soldiers, being thus removed from the licentiousness of the theatre, were no longer in danger of tainting the discipline of the army with the vices of the city. From this experiment it was to be farther seen, whether the populace, freed from the control of the military, would be observant of decency and good order. The temples of Jupiter and Minerva being struck with lightning, the emperor, by the advice of the soothsayers, ordered a solemn lustration to purify the city.

XXV. The consulship of Quintus Volusius and Publius Scipio was remarkable for the tranquillity



that prevailed in all parts of the empire, and the corruption of manners that disgraced the city of Rome. Of all the worst enormities Nero was the author. In the garb of a slave he roved through the streets, visited the brothels, and rambled through all by-places, attended by a band of rioters, who seized the wares and merchandise exposed to sale, and offered violence to all that fell in their way. In these frolics Nero was so little suspected to be a party that he was roughly handled in several frays. He received wounds on some occasions, and his face was disfigured with a scar. It was not long however before it transpired that the emperor was become a night brawler. The mischief from that moment grew more alarming. Men of rank were insulted, and women of the first condition suffered gross indignities. The example of the prince brought midnight riots into fashion. Private persons took their opportunity, with a band of loose companions, to annoy the public streets. Every quarter was filled with tumult and disorder; insomuch, that Rome at night resembled a city taken by storm. In one of these wild adventures Julius Montanus, of senatorian rank, but not yet advanced to the magistracy, happened to encounter the emperor and his party. Being attacked with force he made a resolute defence; and finding, afterwards, that Nero was the person whom he discomfited in the fray, he endeavored to soften resentment by apologies for his behavior; but the excuse was considered as a reflection on the prince, and Montanus was compelled to die.

Nero persisted in this course of debauchery, and, for the safety of his person, took with him a party of soldiers, and a gang of gladiators. These men, in slight and accidental skirmishes, kept aloof from the fray; but if warm and active spirits made a stout re-

sistance, they became parties in the quarrel, and cut their way sword in hand. The theatre, at the same time, was a scene of uproar and violent contention. The partisans of the players waged a kind of civil war. Nero encouraged them, not only with impunity, but with ample rewards. He was often a secret spectator of the tumult; and at length did not blush to appear in the face of the public. These disturbances were so frequent that, from a people divided into factions, there was reason to apprehend some dreadful convulsion; the only remedy left was to banish the players out of Italy, and once more make the soldiers mount guard at the theatre.

XXVI. About this time the enfranchised slaves, by the insolence of their behavior to the patrons who had given them their freedom, provoked a debate in the senate. It was proposed to pass a law, empowering the patron to reclaim his right over such as made an improper use of their liberty. The fathers were willing to adopt the measure, but the consuls did not choose to put the question before due notice was given to the emperor. They reported the case, and the substance of the debate, requesting to know whether the prince would, of his own authority, enact a law that had but few to oppose it. In support of the motion it had been argued that the freedmen were leagued in a faction against their patrons, and had the insolence to think them answerable for their conduct in the senate. They went so far as to threaten violence to their persons; they raised their hands against their benefactors, and, with audacious contumacy, presumed to hinder them from seeking redress in due course of law. The patron, it is true, has peculiar privileges: but in what do they consist? In the empty power of banishing the freedman who proves unworthy of the favor be-

stowed on him to the distance of twenty miles from Rome ; that is, to send him by way of punishment to the delightful plains of Campania. In every other point of view the freedman is on a level with the highest citizen. He enjoys equal privileges. It were therefore a prudent measure to arm the patron with coercive authority, effectual for the purpose, and of force not to be eluded. The manumitted slave should ‘be taught to prolong the enjoyment of his liberty by the same behavior that obtained it at first. Nor could this be deemed an oppressive law ; since, as often as the freedmen showed no sense of duty or subordination, to reduce them to their primitive servitude would be the soundest policy. When gratitude has no effect coercion is the proper remedy.’

XXVII. In answer to this reasoning it was contended by the opposite party, ‘that, in all cases of partial mischief, punishment should fall on the guilty only. For the delinquency of a few the rights of all ought not to be taken away. The freedmen were a large and numerous body. From them the number of the tribes was completed, the magistrates were supplied with inferior officers, the sacerdotal orders with assistants, and the pretorian cohorts with recruits. Many of the Roman knights, and even the senators, had no other origin. Deduct the men whose fathers were enfranchised, and the number of freeborn citizens will dwindle into nothing. When the ranks of society were established at Rome, it was the wisdom of the old republic to make liberty the common right of all, not the prerogative of a few. The power of conferring freedom was also regulated, and two different modes<sup>1</sup> were established ; to the end that the

<sup>1</sup> The Romans had two different modes of enfranchisement, or of granting freedom to their slaves. The first was per-

patron, if he saw reason for it, might either revoke his grant or confirm it by additional bounty. The man enfranchised, without proper ceremonies before the pretor, was liable to be claimed again by his master. But it is the business of the patron to consider well the character of his slave; till he knows the merit of the man let him withhold his generosity; but when freedom is fairly bestowed there ought to be no resumption of the grant.' To this last opinion Nero acceded. He signified his pleasure to the senate that, in all causes between the patron and his freedman, they should decide on the particular circumstances of the case without derogating from the rights of the body at large. Soon after this regulation Paris, who had received his freedom from Domitia, the emperor's aunt, was removed from her domestic train, and declared to be a freeborn citizen.<sup>1</sup> The color of law was

formed by the pretor, who ordered the slave to turn round, and with a switch or cane struck him on the head or back, informing him that he was thereby manumitted. The second way of granting freedom was by writing under the master's hand, or by his voluntary declaration in the presence of a few friends. The most solemn mode of manumission was that by the rod, called *vindicta*: hence Perseus the satirist says, '*Vindicta postquam meus a prætore recessi.*' The person so enfranchised obtained all the rights of a Roman citizen. The second form of manumission conveyed to the slave a degree of liberty, but did not rank him in the class of citizens, nor allow him to be in any case a legal witness. The consequence was that the patron who granted freedom by his own private act had time to consider whether the slave whom he released was worthy of a farther favor. He might, if he thought proper, invest him with all the rights of a citizen by the more solemn mode of manumission before the pretor. See Heineccius, *Antiquit. Roman. Juris. i. tit. 4 and 5.*

<sup>1</sup> Paris the comedian was a slave belonging to Domitia, the emperor's aunt. He had paid a sum of money for the degree of liberty which her private act conferred, and still remained in her list of freedmen. Aspiring above that rank, he pretended to be ingenuous by his birth, and, by conse-

given to this proceeding ; but the judgment was known to be dictated by the prince, and the infamy therefore was all his own.

XXVIII. There remained, notwithstanding, even at this juncture, an image of ancient liberty. A proof of this occurred in a contest that took place between Vibullius, the pretor, and Antistius, tribune of the people. Certain partisans of the players had been, for their tumultuous behavior, committed to jail by the pretor. The tribune interposed his authority and released the prisoners. This conduct was condemned by the senate as extra-judicial and illegal. A decree passed, ordaining that the tribunes should not presume to counteract the jurisdiction of the pretor or the consuls ; nor to summon to their own tribunal men who resided in different parts of Italy, and were amenable to the municipal laws of the colony. It was farther settled, on the motion of Lucius Piso, consul elect, that it should not be competent to the tribunes to sit in judgment at their own houses ; and that the fines imposed by their authority should not be entered by the questor in the registers of the treasury before the end of four months from the day of the sentence, that, in the mean time, the party aggrieved might have the benefit of an appeal to the consuls. The jurisdiction of the ediles, patrician as well as plebeian, was defined and limited ; the sureties which they might demand were stated with precision ; and the penalties to be imposed by their authority were reduced to a certain sum. In consequence of these regulations Helvidius Priscus, tribune of the people, seized the

quence, intitled to all the rights of a Roman citizen ; and his plea we find was admitted. It is said that Domitia was obliged to repay to the pantomime actor the money which she had received for his freedom.

opportunity to proceed against Obultronus Sabinus, a questor of the treasury. He charged him with harassing the poor with unreasonable confiscations, and unmercifully seizing their effects to be sold by auction. To redress the grievance Nero removed the register out of the hands of the questor, and left the business to the care of prefects commissioned for the purpose.

XXIX. In this department of the treasury various changes had been made, but no settled form<sup>1</sup> was established. In the reign of Augustus the prefects of the treasury were chosen by the senate; but there being reason to suspect that intrigue and private views had too much influence, those officers were drawn by lot out of the list of the pretors. This mode was soon found to be defective. Chance decided, and too often wandered to men unqualified for the employment. Claudius restored the questors; and, to encourage them to act with vigor, promised to place them above the necessity of soliciting the suffrages of the people; and, by his own authority, to raise them to the higher magistracies. But the questorship being the first civil office that men could undertake, maturity of understanding was not to be expected. Nero, for that reason, chose from the pretorian rank a set of new commissioners of known experience and tried ability.

XXX. During the same consulship Vipsanius Lænas was found guilty of rapacity in his government of Sar-

<sup>1</sup> It has been already observed that *ærarium* was the treasury of the public; *fiscus* that of the prince. Pliny the elder says that in the time of the republic, when the private exchequer of the emperor was a thing unknown, the money in the treasury, A. U. C. 663, amounted to a prodigious sum. It was still greater when Julius Cæsar, in the beginning of the civil war, A. U. C. 705, made himself master of all the riches of the commonwealth. From that time the dissipation of the emperors, and the rapacity of their favorites, effectually drained the *ærarium*, and impoverished the state.

dinia. Cestius Proculus was prosecuted for extortion; but his accusers giving up the point, he was acquitted. Clodius Quirinalis, who had the command of the fleet at Ravenna, and by his profligate manners and various vices harassed the people in that part of Italy with a degree of insolence not to be endured by the most abject nation, was brought to his trial on a charge of rapine and oppression. To prevent the final sentence he despatched himself by poison. About the same time Caninius Rebilus, a man distinguished by his knowledge of the laws and his ample riches, determined to deliver himself from the miseries of old age and a broken constitution. He opened a vein and bled to death. The event was matter of surprise to all. The fortitude that could voluntarily rush on death was not expected from a man softened by voluptuous enjoyments, and infamous for his effeminate manners. Lucius Volusius, who died in the same year, left a very different character. He had lived in splendid affluence to the age of ninety-three, esteemed for the honest arts by which he acquired immense wealth, under a succession of despotic emperors, yet never exposed to danger. He found the art of being rich and virtuous with impunity.

XXXI. Nero, with Lucius Piso for his colleague, entered on his second consulship. In this year we look in vain for transactions worthy of the historian's pen. The vast foundation of a new amphitheatre,<sup>1</sup> built by Nero in the Field of Mars, and the massy timbers employed in that magnificent structure, might

<sup>1</sup> This amphitheatre was built intirely with wood. Suetonius says it was completed within the year; and that Nero, in the public spectacles which he exhibited, gave orders that none of the combatants should be slain, not even the criminals employed on that occasion; Suet. in Neron. § 12. See Pliny, xvi. 40.

swell a volume ; but descriptions of that kind may be left to grace the pages of a city journal. The dignity of the Roman people requires that these annals should not descend to a detail so minute and uninteresting. It will be proper to mention here that Capua and Nuceria, two Roman colonies, were augmented by a body of veterans transplanted to those places. A largess of two hundred small sesterces to each man was distributed to the populace ; and, to support the credit of the state, the sum of four hundred thousand great sesterces was deposited in the treasury. The twenty-fifth penny,<sup>1</sup> imposed as a tax on the purchase of slaves, was remitted, with an appearance of moderation ; but, in fact, without any solid advantage to the public. The payment of the duty was only shifted to the vender ; and he, to indemnify himself, raised his price on the purchaser. The emperor issued a proclamation forbidding the magistrates and imperial procurators to exhibit, in any of the provinces, a show of gladiators, wild beasts, or any other public spectacle. The practice of amusing the people with grand exhibitions had been as sore a grievance as even the grasping hand of avarice. The governors plundered the people ; and by displays of magnificence hoped to disguise, or in some degree to make atonement for their crimes.

XXXII. A decree passed the senate to protect, by additional terrors of law, the life of the patron from the malice of his slaves. With this view it was enacted that, in the case of a master slain by his domestics, execution should be done ; not only on such as re-

<sup>1</sup> A tax on all commodities exposed to sale was imposed by Augustus in the consulship of Metellus and Nerva, A. U. C. 755. Dio says it was at first the fiftieth penny, but we find that in time the sum was doubled.



mained in a state of actual servitude, but likewise on all who, by the will of the deceased, obtained their freedom, but continued to live under his roof at the time when the murder was committed. Lucius Varius, who had been degraded for rapacious avarice, was restored to his consular rank and his seat in the senate. Pomponia Græcina, a woman of illustrious birth, and the wife of Plautius,<sup>1</sup> who, on his return from Britain, entered the city with the pomp of an ovation, was accused of embracing the rites of a foreign superstition.<sup>2</sup> The matter was referred to the jurisdiction of her husband. Plautius, in conformity to ancient usage, called together a number of her relations, and, in their presence, sat in judgment on the conduct of his wife. He pronounced her innocent. She lived to a great age, in one continued train of affliction. From the time when Julia, the daughter of Drusus, was brought to a tragical end by the wicked arts of Messalina,<sup>3</sup> she never laid aside her mourning weeds, but pined in grief during a space of forty years, inconsolable for the loss of her friend. During the reign of Claudius nothing could alleviate her sorrow; nor was her perseverance imputed to her as a crime: in the end it was the glory of her character.

XXXIII. This year produced a number of criminal accusations. Publius Celer was prosecuted by the province of Asia. The weight of evidence pressed so

1 This was Aulus Plautius, who in the reign of Claudius made the first descent on Britain. See the life of Agricola.

2 Lipsius and other commentators are of opinion that what is here called a foreign superstition was the Christian religion.

3 Suetonius tells us that Claudius put to death the two Julias, the daughters of Drusus and Germanicus, without any proof of guilt, and without so much as hearing them in their defence, A. U. C. 796; Suet. in Claud. § 29.

hard that Nero, unable to acquit him, drew the cause into a tedious length. During that state of suspense the criminal died of old age. Celer, the reader will remember, was an instrument in the murder of Silanus, the proconsul. The magnitude of his guilt on that occasion so far surpassed the rest of his flagitious deeds that nothing else was deemed worthy of notice. The enormity of one atrocious crime screened him from punishment.

The Cilicians demanded justice against Cossutianus Capito, a man of an abandoned character, who at Rome had set the laws at defiance, and thought that with equal impunity he might commit the same excesses in the government of his province. The prosecution was carried on with such unremitting vigor that he abandoned his defence. He was condemned to make restitution. A suit of the same nature was commenced against Eprius Marcellus by the people of Lycia, but with different success. A powerful faction combined to support him. The consequence was that some of the prosecutors were banished for a conspiracy against an innocent man.

XXXIV. Nero entered on his third consulship; having for his colleague Valerius Messala, the great-grandson of Corvinus Messala,<sup>1</sup> the celebrated orator, who, in the memory of a few surviving old men, had been associated in the consulship with Augustus, the great-grandfather of Nero's mother, Agrippina. The prince granted to his colleague an annual pension of fifteen hundred thousand sesterces; and with that income Messala, who had fallen into blameless poverty, was able to support the dignity of his rank and cha-

<sup>1</sup> Corvinus Messala was joint consul with Augustus, A. U. C. 723. For more of him see the Dialogue concerning Oratory.

acter. Yearly stipends were also granted to Aurelius Cotta and Haterius Antoninus, though they were both, by dissipation, the authors of their own distress.

In the beginning of this year the war between the Romans and the Parthians, hitherto slow in its operations, grew warm and active on both sides. The possession of Armenia was the point still in dispute. Vologeses saw with indignation the crown, which he had settled on his brother Tiridates, withheld by force; and to let him receive it as the gift of a foreign power was a degree of humiliation to which his pride could not submit. On the other hand, to recover the conquests formerly made by Lucullus and Pompey was in Corbulo's judgment worthy of the Roman name. The Armenians balanced between the powers at war, and in their turn invited each. Their natural bias inclined them to the Parthians. Neighbors by situation, congenial in their manners, and by frequent intermarriages closely allied, they were willing to favor the enemies of Rome, and even inclined to submit to a Parthian master. Inured by habit to a taste of servitude, they neither understood nor wished for civil liberty.

XXXV. Corbulo had to struggle with the slothful disposition of his army; a mischief more embarrassing than the wily arts of the enemy. The legions from Syria joined his camp; but so enervated by the languor of peace, that they could scarce support the labors of a campaign. It is certain that there were amongst them veterans who had seen no service; who had never been on duty at a midnight post; who never mounted guard, and were such total strangers to a fosse and a palisade that they gazed at both as at a novelty. They had served the term prescribed in garrison towns, without helmets, and without breast-

plates; spruce and trim in their attire; by profession soldiers; yet thinking of nothing but the means of enriching themselves. Having dismissed all such as were by age and infirmity rendered unfit for the service, Corbulo ordered new levies to be made in Galatia and Cappadocia. To these he added a legion from Germany, with some troops of horse, and a detachment of infantry from the cohorts. Thus reinforced, his army kept the field, though the frost was so intense that, without digging through the ice, it was impossible to pitch their tents. By the inclemency of the season many lost the use of their limbs, and it often happened that the sentinel died on his post. The case of one soldier deserves to be mentioned. He was employed in carrying a load of wood: his hands, nipt by the frost, and cleaving to the faggot, dropt from his arms, and fell to the ground.

The general, during the severity of the weather, gave an example of strenuous exertion: he was busy in every quarter, thinly clad, his head uncovered, in the ranks, at the works, commending the brave, relieving the weak, and by his own active vigor exciting the emulation of the men. But the rigor of the season, and the hardship of the service, were more than the soldiers could endure. The army suffered by desertion. This required an immediate remedy. The practice of lenity towards the first or second offence, which often prevailed in other armies, would have been attended with dangerous consequences. He who quitted his colors suffered death as soon as taken; and this severity proved more salutary than weak compassion. The number of deserters, from that time, fell short of what happens in other camps, where too much indulgence is the practice.

XXXVI. Having resolved to wait the return of

spring, Corbulo kept his men within their intrenchments during the rest of the winter. The auxiliary cohorts were stationed at proper posts, under the command of Pactius Orphitus, who had served as principal centurion. The orders given to this officer were, that the advanced posts should by no means hazard an engagement. Orphitus sent to inform the general that the barbarians spread themselves round the country with so little caution that advantage might be taken of their imprudence. Corbulo renewed his orders that the troops should keep within the lines, and wait for a reinforcement. Orphitus paid no regard to the command of his superior officer. A few troops of horse, from the adjacent castles, came up to join him; and, through inexperience, demanded to be led against the enemy. Orphitus risked a battle, and was totally routed. The forces posted near at hand, whose duty it was to march to the assistance of the broken ranks, fled in confusion to their intrenchments. Corbulo no sooner received intelligence of his defeat than he resolved to pass the severest censure on the disobedience of his officer. He ordered him, his subalterns, and his men, to march out of the intrenchments,<sup>1</sup> and there left them in disgrace; till, at the intercession of the whole army, he gave them leave to return within the lines.

XXXVII. Meanwhile Tiridates, at the head of his vassals and followers, with a strong reinforcement sent by his brother Vologeses, invaded Armenia; not, as before, by sudden incursions, but with open hostility.

<sup>1</sup> This mode of punishment was established by ancient usage. Livy relates that the cohorts, which had lost their colors, were obliged to remain on the outside of the camp, without their tents, and were found in that condition by Valerius Maximus the dictator.

Wherever the people were in the interests of Rome he laid waste their lands: if an armed force advanced against him he shifted his quarters, and by the velocity of his flight eluded the attack. He moved with rapidity from place to place; and by the terror of a wild and desultory war, more than by the success of his arms, kept the country in a constant alarm. Corbulo endeavored, but without effect, to bring him to an engagement. He determined therefore to adopt the plan of the enemy; and for that purpose spread his forces round the country, under the conduct of his lieutenants and other subordinate officers. At the same time he caused a diversion to be made by Antiochus, king of Syria, in the provinces of Armenia that lay contiguous to his dominion. Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, was willing, in this juncture, to cooperate with the Roman arms. He had put his son Rhadamistus to death for imputed treason; and, to make terms with Rome, while in fact he gratified his rooted aversion to the Armenians, he pretended to enter into the war with the zeal and ardor of a friend to the cause. The Isichians also declared for Corbulo. That people were now, for the first time, the allies of Rome. They made incursions into the wild and desert tracts of Armenia, and by a desultory rambling war distracted the operations of the enemy.

Tiridates, finding himself counteracted on every side, sent ambassadors to expostulate, as well in the name of the Parthians as for himself. 'After hostages so lately delivered, and a renewal of friendship that promised mutual advantages, why was his expulsion from the kingdom of Armenia the fixed, the avowed intention of the Roman army? If Vologeses was not as yet in motion with the whole strength of his kingdom, it was because he wished to prevail by the jus-

tice of his cause, and not by force of arms. If the sword must be drawn, the event would show that the Arsacides had not forgot that warlike spirit which, on former occasions, had been fatal to the Roman name.' Corbulo heard this magnificent language; but being informed, by sure intelligence, that the revolt of the Hyrcanians found employment for Vologeses, he returned for answer, that the wisest measure Tiridates could pursue would be to address himself in a suppliant style to the emperor of Rome. The kingdom of Armenia, settled on a solid basis, might be his without the effusion of blood, and the havoc of a destructive war, if to distant and chimerical hopes he preferred moderate measures and present security.

XXXVIII. From this time the business fell into a train of negotiation. Frequent dispatches passed between both armies; but no progress being made towards a conclusive treaty, it was at length agreed that, at a fixed time and place, the two chiefs should come to an interview. Tiridates gave notice that he should bring with him a guard of a thousand horse: the number which Corbulo might choose for his own person he did not take on him to prescribe; all he desired was, that they should come with a pacific disposition, and advance to the congress without their breastplates and their helmets. This stroke of eastern perfidy was not so fine, but even the dullest capacity, not to mention an experienced general, might perceive the latent fraud. The number limited on one side, and to the opposite party left indefinite, carried with it a specious appearance; but the lurking treachery was too apparent. The Parthian cavalry excelled in the dexterity of managing the bow and arrow; and, without defensive armor, what would be the use of superior numbers? Aware of the design, but choosing to disguise

his sentiments, Corbulo calmly answered, that the business being of a public nature, the discussion of it ought to be in the presence of both armies. For the convention he appointed a place inclosed on one side by a soft acclivity of gently rising hills, where the infantry might be posted to advantage, with a vale beneath, stretching to an extent that gave ample space for the cavalry. On the stated day Corbulo advanced to the meeting, with his forces in regular order. In the wings were stationed the allies and the auxiliaries sent by the kings in friendship with Rome. The sixth legion formed the centre, strengthened by a reinforcement of three thousand men from the third legion, drafted in the night from the neighboring camp. Being embodied under one eagle, they presented the appearance of a single legion. Towards the close of day Tiridates occupied a distant ground, visible indeed, but never within hearing. Not being able to obtain a conference, the Roman general ordered his men to file off to their respective quarters.

XXXIX. Tiridates left the field with precipitation, alarmed at the various movements of the Roman army, and fearing the danger of an ambuscade, or, perhaps, intending to cut off the supplies of provisions then on the way from the city of Trebisond and the Pontic sea. But the supplies were conveyed over the mountains, where a chain of posts was formed to secure the passes. A slow and lingering war was now to be apprehended: to bring it to a speedy issue, and compel the Armenians to act on the defensive, Corbulo resolved to level their castles to the ground. The strongest fort in that quarter was known by the name of Volandum:<sup>1</sup> the demolition of that place he reserved for himself, and against the towns of inferior note he sent

1 Lipsius says this castle is mentioned by no other ancient author.



Cornelius Flaccus, a lieutenant-general, and Insteius Capito, prefect of the camp. Having reconnoitered the works, and prepared for the assault, he harangued his men in effect as follows: ‘ You have now to do with a dastardly and fugitive enemy; a vagabond race, always roving in predatory bands, betraying at once their unwarlike spirit and their perfidy; impatient of peace, and cowards in war. The time is arrived when the whole nation may be exterminated; by one brave exploit you may gain both fame and booty to reward your valor.’ Having thus inflamed the spirit of his men, he arranged them in four divisions; one close embodied under their shields, forming a military shell, to sap the foundation of the ramparts; a second party advanced with ladders to scale the walls; a third with their warlike engines threw into the place a shower of darts and missive fire; while the slingers and archers, posted at a convenient distance, discharged a volley of metal and huge massy stones.

To keep the enemy employed in every quarter, the attack was made on all sides at once. In less than four hours the barbarians were driven from their stations; the ramparts were left defenceless, the gates were forced, and the works taken by scalade. A dreadful slaughter followed. All who were capable of carrying arms were put to the sword. On the part of the Romans only one man was killed: the number of wounded was inconsiderable. The women and children were sold to slavery: the rest was left to be plundered by the soldiers. The operations of Flaccus and Capito were attended with equal success. In one day three castles were taken by storm. A general panic overspread the country. From motives of fear or treachery the inhabitants surrendered at discretion. Encouraged by these prosperous events, Corbulo was now resolved to lay siege in form to Artaxata, the

capital of the kingdom. He did not, however, think it advisable to march the nearest way. The river Araxes washes the walls of the city: the legions would have found it requisite to construct the necessary bridges in sight of the enemy, exposed to their darts and missive weapons. They took a wider circuit, and forded over where the current was broad and shallow.

XL. Tiridates was thrown into the utmost distress. Shame and fear took possession of him by turns. If he suffered a blockade to be formed, his weak condition would be too apparent; if he attempted to raise the siege, his cavalry might be surrounded in the narrow defiles. He resolved to show himself towards the close of day in order of battle, and next morning either to attack the Romans, or, by a sudden retreat, to draw them into an ambuscade. With this intent he made a sudden movement, and surrounded the legions. The attempt gave no alarm to Corbulo: prepared for all events, he had marshalled his men either for action or a march. The third legion took post in the right wing; the sixth advanced on the left; and a select detachment from the tenth formed the centre. The baggage was secured between the ranks: a body of a thousand horse brought up the rear, with orders to face the enemy whenever an attack was made, but never to pursue them. The foot archers, and the rest of the cavalry, were distributed in the wings. The left extended their ranks towards the foot of the hills, in order, if the barbarians advanced on that side, to hem them in between the front lines and the centre of the army. Tiridates contented himself with vain parade, shifting his ground with celerity, yet never within the throw of a dart, advancing, retreating, and, by every stratagem, trying to make the Romans open their ranks, and leave themselves liable to be attacked in

scattered parties. His efforts were without effect: one officer, who commanded a troop of horse, advanced from his post, and fell under a volley of darts. His temerity restrained the rest of the army. Towards the close of day, Tiridates seeing his wiles defeated, withdrew with all his forces.

XLI. Corbulo encamped on the spot. Having reason to imagine that Tiridates would throw himself into the city of Artaxata, he debated whether it would not be best, without loss of time, to push forward by rapid marches, and lay siege to the place. While he remained in suspense, intelligence was brought by the scouts that the prince set off at full speed towards some distant region, but whether to Media or Albania, was uncertain. He resolved therefore to wait the return of day, and in the mean time despatched the light-armed cohorts, with orders to invest the city, and begin their attack at a proper distance. The inhabitants threw open their gates, and surrendered at discretion. Their lives were saved, but the town was reduced to ashes. No other measure could be adopted: the walls were of wide extent, and a sufficient garrison could not be spared, at a time when it was necessary to prosecute the war with vigor; and if the city were left unhurt, the advantage, as well as glory of the conquest, would be lost. To these reasons were added an extraordinary appearance in the heavens. It happened that the sunbeams played with brilliant lustre on the adjacent country, making the whole circumference a scene of splendor, while the precinct of the town was covered with the darkest gloom, at intervals rendered still more awful by flashes of lightning, that served to show the impending horror. This phenomenon was believed to be the wrath of the gods denouncing the destruction of the city.

For these transactions Nero was saluted Imperator.

The senate decreed a solemn thanksgiving. Statues and triumphal arches were erected, and the prince was declared perpetual consul. The day on which the victory was gained, and also that on which the news arrived at Rome, and the report was made to the senate, were by a decree to be observed as annual festivals. Many other votes were passed with the same spirit of adulation, all in their tendency so excessive, that Caius Cassius, who had concurred with every motion, observed at last, that if, for the benignity of the gods to the Roman people, due thanks were to be voted, acts of religion would engross the whole year; and therefore care should be taken to fix the days of devotion at proper intervals, that they might not encroach too much on the business of civil life.

XLII. About this time a man who had suffered various revolutions of fortune, and by his vices had brought on himself the public detestation, was cited to answer a charge exhibited against him before the senate. He was condemned, but not without fixing a stain on the character of Seneca. Suius<sup>1</sup> was the person: in the reign of Claudius he had been the scourge and terror of his fellow-citizens; a venal orator, and an informer by profession. In the late change of government he had been much reduced, but not low enough to gratify the resentment of his enemies. His spirit was still unconquered. Rather than descend to humble supplications, he preferred the character of a convicted malefactor. To come at this man, a late decree of the senate, reviving the pains and penalties of the Cincian law<sup>2</sup> against such advocates as received a price for their eloquence, was thought to have been framed by the advice of Seneca.

1 For this man, Suius, see *Annals*, iv. 31; xi. 1.

2 For the Cincian law against the venality of orators, see *Annals*, xi. 5. 7.

Suilius exclaimed against the proceeding. At his time of life he had little to fear. To the natural ferocity of his temper he now added a contempt of danger.

He poured out a torrent of invective, and in particular railed with acrimony against Seneca. ‘The philosopher,’ he said, ‘was an enemy to the friends of Claudius. He had been banished by that emperor, and the disgrace was not inflicted without just reason. He is now grown old in the pursuit of frivolous literature, a vain retailer of rhetoric to raw and inexperienced boys. He beholds with an eye of envy all who, in the defence of their fellow-citizens, exert a pure, a sound, a manly eloquence. That Suilius lived with reputation in the service of Germanicus is a fact well known. He was questor under that prince while Seneca corrupted the morals of his daughter, and dishonored the family. If it be a crime to receive from a client the reward of honest industry, what shall be said of him who steals into the chamber of a princess to debauch her virtue? By what system of ethics, and by what rules of philosophy, has this professor warped into the favor of the emperor, and, in less than four years, amassed three hundred millions of sesterces? Through the city of Rome his snares are spread; last wills and testaments are his quarry; and the rich who have no children are his prey. By exorbitant usury he has overwhelmed all Italy: the provinces are exhausted, and he is still insatiate. The wealth of Suilius cannot be counted great; but it is the fruit of honest industry. He is now determined to bid defiance to his enemies, and hazard all consequences, rather than derogate from his rank and the glory of his life, by poorly yielding to a new man; an upstart in the state; a sudden child of fortune.’

XLIII. By a set of officious talebearers, who love to carry intelligence, and inflame it with the addition

of their own malevolence, these bitter invectives were conveyed to Seneca. The enemies of Suilius were set to work : they charged him with rapine and peculation during his government in Asia. To substantiate these allegations, twelve months were allowed to the prosecutors : but that put off their vengeance to a distant day. To shorten their work, they chose to proceed on a new charge, without going out of Rome for witnesses. The accusation stated, ‘ That by a virulent prosecution he had driven Quintus Pomponius into open rebellion ; that by his pernicious arts Julia, the daughter of Drusus, and Poppæa Sabina, were forced to put a period to their lives ; that Valerius Asiaticus, Lusius Saturninus, and Cornelius Lupus, with a long list of Roman knights, were all cut off by his villany ; and, in short, every act of cruelty in the reign of Claudius was imputed to him.’ To these charges Suilius answered, that he acted always under the immediate orders of the prince, and never of his own motion. Nero overruled that defence, averring, that he had inspected all the papers of the late emperor, and from those vouchers it plainly appeared that not one prosecution was set on foot by order of Claudius. The criminal resorted to the commands of Messalina ; but, by shifting his ground, his cause grew weaker. Why, it was argued, was he the only person who lent himself to the wicked designs of that pernicious prostitute ? Shall the perpetrator of evil deeds, who has received his hire, be allowed to transfer his guilt to the person who paid him the wages of his iniquity ?

Suilius was condemned, and his effects were confiscated, except a part allowed to his son and granddaughter, in addition to what was left to them under the will of their mother and their grandmother. He was banished to the islands called the Baleares. During the whole of the trial he behaved with un-

daunted firmness, and even after the sentence his spirit was still unbroken. He is said to have lived in his lone retreat, not only at ease, but in voluptuous affluence. His enemies intended to wreak their malice on his son Nerulinus, and, with that view, charged him with extortion. Nero checked the prosecution; the ends of justice being, as he thought, sufficiently answered.

XLIV. It happened at this time that Octavius Saggitta, tribune of the people, fell in love to distraction with a married woman of the name of Pontia. By presents and unbounded generosity he seduced her to his embraces, and afterwards, by a promise of marriage, engaged her consent to a divorce from her husband. Pontia was no sooner free from the nuptial tie than her imagination opened to her other prospects. She affected delays; her father made objections; she had hopes of a better match; and finally she refused to perform her contract. Octavius expostulated; he complained; he threatened; his reputation suffered, and his fortune was ruined. His life was all that he had left, and that he was ready to sacrifice at her command. His suit, however earnest, made no impression. In despair, he begged any small favor that should assuage his sorrows, and take the sting from disappointment. The assignation was made. Pontia ordered her servant, who was privy to the intrigue, to watch her bed-chamber. The lover went to his appointment. He carried with him one of his freedmen, and a poniard under his robe. The scene which usually occurs when love is stung to jealousy was acted between the parties; reproaches, fond endearments, rage, and tenderness, war and peace, took their turn.

Part of the night was passed together. At length, Octavius, in the moment of supposed security, when

the unhappy victim thought all violence at an end, seized his dagger, and sheathed it in her heart. The maid rushed in to assist her mistress. Octavius wounded her, and made his escape. On the following day the murder was reported abroad; and the hand that gave the blow was strongly suspected. Octavius, it was certain, had passed the night with the deceased; but his freedman boldly stood forth, and took the crime on himself. It was his deed; an act of justice due to an injured master. This generous fortitude from the mouth of an assassin was heard with astonishment, and for some time gained credit, till the maid, who had recovered from her wound, disclosed the particulars of the whole transaction. Pontia's father appealed to the tribunal of the consuls, and Octavius, as soon as his office of tribune ceased, was condemned to suffer the penalties of the Cornelian law against assassins.<sup>1</sup>

XLV. In the course of the same year another scene of libidinous passion was brought forward, more important than that which we have related, and in the end the cause of public calamity. Sabina Poppæa at that time lived at Rome in a style of taste and elegance. She was the daughter of Titus Ollius, but she took her name from Poppæus Sabinus,<sup>2</sup> her grandfather by the maternal line. Her father Ollius was, at one time, rising to the highest honors; but being a friend to Sejanus, he was involved in the ruin of that minister. The grandfather had figured on the stage of public business. He was of consular rank, and obtained the honor of a triumph. To be the known descendant of a man so distinguished flattered the vanity of Poppæa. Virtue excepted, she possessed all the qualities that

1 He was sent into banishment, History, § 44.

2 Probably the same who was consul A. U. C. 762.



adorn the female character. Her mother<sup>1</sup> was the reigning beauty of her time. From her the daughter inherited nobility of birth, with all the graces of an elegant form. Her fortune was equal to her rank; her conversation had every winning art; her talents were cultivated, and her wit refined. She knew how to assume an air of modesty, and yet pursue lascivious pleasures; in her deportment, decent; in her heart, a libertine. When she appeared in public, which was but seldom, she wore a veil, that shaded, or seemed to shade, her face; perhaps intending that her beauty should not wear out and tarnish to the eye; or because that style of dress was most becoming. To the voice of fame she paid no regard: her husband and her adulterer were equally welcome to her embraces. Love with her was not an affair of the heart. Knowing no attachment herself, she required none from others. Where she saw her interest, there she bestowed her favors; a politician in her pleasures. She was married to Rufius Crispinus, a Roman knight, and was by him the mother of a son; but Otho, a youth of expectation, luxurious, prodigal, and high in favor with Nero, attracted her regard. She yielded to his addresses, and in a short time married the adulterer.

XLVI. Otho, in company with the emperor, grew lavish in her praise. Her beauty and her elegant manners were his constant theme. He talked perhaps with the warmth and indiscretion of a lover; perhaps with a design to inflame the passions of Nero, and from their mutual relish of the same enjoyments to derive new strength to support his interest. Rising from Nero's table, he was often heard to say, 'I am going to the arms of her who possesses every amiable accomplishment; by her birth enno-

<sup>1</sup> Her mother Poppæa has been mentioned; Annals, xi. 1, 2.

bled ; endeared by beauty ; the wish of all beholders, and to the favored man the source of true delight.' Nero became enamored. No time was lost. Poppæa received his visits. At the first interview she called forth all her charms, and ensured her conquest. She admired the dignity of the prince. His air, his manner, and his looks, were irresistible. By this well-acted fondness she gained intire dominion over his affections. Proud of her success, she thought it time to act her part with female airs and coy reluctance. If Nero wished to detain her more than a night or two, she could not think of complying ; she was married to a man whom she loved. She could not risk the loss of a situation so perfectly happy. Otho led a life of taste and elegance, unrivalled in his pleasures. Under his roof she saw nothing but magnificence, in a style worthy of the highest station. She objected to Nero that he had contracted different habits. He lived in close connexion with Acte, a low-born slave ; and from so mean a commerce what could be expected but sordid manners and degenerate sentiment ? From that moment Otho lost his interest with the prince : he had orders neither to frequent the palace, nor show himself in the train of attendants. At length, to remove a rival, Nero made him governor of Lusitania. Otho quitted Rome, and till the breaking out of the civil wars continued in the administration of his province, a firm and upright magistrate, in this instance exhibiting to the world that wonderful union of repugnant qualities which marked the man ; in private life luxurious, profligate, and prone to every vice ; in his public capacity prudent, just, and temperate in the use of power.

XLVII. It was in this juncture that Nero first threw off the mask. He had hitherto cloked the vices of his nature. The person whom he dreaded most

was Cornelius Sylla; a man, in fact, of a dull and sluggish understanding; but his stupidity passed with Nero for profound thinking, and the deep reserve of a dangerous politician. In this idea he was confirmed by the malignity of one Graptus, a man enfranchised by the emperor, and from the reign of Tiberius hackneyed in the practice of courts. He framed an artful story. The Milvian bridge was at that time the fashionable scene of midnight revelry: being out of the limits of Rome, the emperor thought that he might riot at that place with unbounded freedom. Graptus told him that a conspiracy had been formed against his life, and the villains lay in ambush on the Flaminian way; but as fortune would have it, the prince, by passing through the Sallustian gardens, escaped the snare. To give color to this invented tale, he alleged the following circumstance: in one of the riots which were common in those dissolute times a set of young men fell into a skirmish with the attendants of the emperor. ‘This,’ he said, ‘was a concerted plot, and Sylla was the author of it, though not so much as one of his clients, nor even a slave of his, was found to have been of the party. Sylla, in fact, had neither capacity nor spirit for an undertaking so big with danger; and yet, on the suggestion of Graptus, which was received as positive proof, he was obliged to quit his country and reside, for the future, in the city of Marseilles.

XLVIII. During the same consulship the senate gave audience to the deputies from the magistrates and the people of Puteoli. The former complained of the licentiousness of the populace, and the latter retaliated, in bitter terms, against the pride and avarice of the nobles. It appeared that the mob rose in a tumultuous body, discharging volleys of stones, and threatening to set fire to the houses. A general mas-

sacre was likely to be the consequence. Caius Cassius was despatched to quell the insurrection. His measures, too harsh and violent for the occasion, served only to irritate the people. He was recalled, at his own request, and the two Scribonii were sent to supply his place. They took with them a pretorian cohort. By the terror of a military force, and the execution of a few ringleaders, the public tranquillity was restored.

XLIX. A decree of the senate, which had no other object than to authorise the people of Syracuse to exceed, in their public spectacles, the number of gladiators limited by law, would be matter too trite and unworthy of notice, if the opposition made by Pætus Thrasea had not excited against that excellent man a number of enemies. They seized the opportunity to traduce his character. ‘If he is, as he pretends to be, seriously of opinion that the public good requires liberty of speech and freedom of debate, why descend to things so frivolous in their nature? Are peace and war of no importance? When laws are in question; when tributes and imposts are the subject before the fathers, and when points of the first importance are in agitation, where is his eloquence then? Every senator who rises in his place has the privilege of moving whatever he conceives to be conducive to the public welfare; and what he moves he has a right to discuss, to debate, and put to the vote. And yet, to regulate the amphitheatre of Syracuse is the sole business of a professed and zealous patriot! Is the administration in all its parts so fair and perfect, that even Thrasea himself, if he held the reins of government, could find nothing to reform? If he suffers matters of the first importance to pass in silence, why amuse us with a mock debate on questions wherein no man finds himself interested?’

The friends of Thræsea desired an explanation of his conduct: his answer was as follows: when he rose to make his objections to the law in question he was not ignorant of the mismanagement that prevailed in all departments of the government; but the principle on which he acted had in view the honor of the senate. When matters of little moment drew the attention of the fathers, men would see that affairs of importance could not escape a body of men who thought nothing that concerned the public beneath their notice.

L. The complaints of the people, in the course of this year, against the oppressions practised by the collectors of the revenue, were so loud and violent, that Nero was inclined to abolish the whole system of duties and taxes, thereby to serve the interests of humanity, and bestow on mankind the greatest blessing in his power. To this generous sentiment the fathers gave the highest applause; but the design they said, however noble, was altogether impracticable. To abrogate all taxes, were to cut off the resources of government, and dissolve the commonwealth. Repeal the imposts on trade, and what would be the consequence? The tribute paid by the provinces must, in like manner, be remitted. The several companies that farmed the revenue were established by the consuls and tribunes of Rome, in the period of liberty, when the old republic flourished in all its glory. The revenue system, which has since grown up, was farmed on a fair estimate, proportioned to the demands of government. It would indeed be highly proper to restrain within due bounds the conduct of the collectors, that the several duties, which were sanctioned by the acquiescence of ages, might not, by oppression and rapacity, be converted into a grievance too rigorous to be endured.

LI. Nero issued a proclamation, directing that the revenue laws, till that time kept among the mysteries of state, should be drawn up in form, and entered on the public tables for the inspection of all ranks and degrees of men. It was also made a rule, that no arrear of more than a year's standing should be recovered by the tax-gatherers, and, in all cases of complaint against those officers, the same should be heard and decided in a summary way, by the pretor at Rome, and in the provinces by the propretors or proconsuls. To the soldiers all former privileges and immunities were preserved, with an exception of the duties on merchandise, if they entered into trade. Many other regulations were added, all just and equitable, and for some time strictly observed, but suffered afterwards to fall into disuse. The abolition, however, of the fortieth and the fiftieth penny, with many other exactions, invented by the avarice of the publicans, still continued in force. The exportation of corn from the provinces beyond sea was also put under proper regulations: the imposts were diminished; the shipping employed in commerce was not to be rated in the estimate of the merchant's effects, and of course stood exempted from all duties.

LII. Sulpicius Camerinus<sup>1</sup> and Pomponius Silvanus, who had governed in Africa with proconsular authority, were both accused of mal-administration, and acquitted by the emperor. The accusers of Camerinus were few in number, and their allegations were private acts of cruelty to individuals, not rapine or extortion, or any charge of a public nature. Silvanus was beset by powerful enemies. They prayed time to produce their witnesses: the defendant pressed for an immediate hearing. He was rich, advanced in

1 Sulpicius Camerinus, with his son, was afterwards put to death by Nero.

years, and had no children ; the consequence was, that a strong party espoused his interest. He triumphed over his enemies, and his friends went unrewarded. They hoped by their services to merit his estate, but he survived them all.

LIII. During this whole period a settled calm prevailed in Germany. The commanders in that quarter plainly saw that triumphal ornaments, granted, as they had been, on every trifling occasion, were no longer an honor. To preserve the peace of the provinces they thought their truest glory. Paulinus Pompeius and Lucius Vetus were then at the head of the legions. That the soldiery, however, might not languish in a state of inaction, Paulinus finished the great work of a bank, to prevent the inundations of the Rhine ; a project begun by Drusus sixty-three years before.<sup>1</sup> Vetus had conceived a vast design : he had in contemplation a canal, by which the waters of the Moselle<sup>2</sup> and the Arar were to be communicated, to the end that the Roman forces might be able, for the future, to enter the Rhone from the Mediterranean, and passing thence into the Arar, proceed through the new channel into the Moselle, and sail down the

1 Drusus, the father of Germanicus, died in Germany, A. U. C. 745. He had finished a canal, as mentioned Annals, ii. 8 ; and to prevent the overflowings of the Rhine, which often deluged the adjacent parts of Gaul, he laid the plan of a strong bank, by which the waters would have been thrown into a different course, and discharged into the lakes, now the Zuyder-zee. This great work was at length finished by Paulinus Pompeius.

2 The Arar is now the Soane. Brotier observes that this great undertaking, tending to communicate the Mediterranean and the ocean, often attempted, and as often abandoned, was at length accomplished, to the immortal glory of Louis XIV. That 'imperial work, worthy of a king,' is now called the Royal Canal, or the Canal of Languedoc.

Rhine into the German Ocean. This plan was on a great scale: fatiguing marches over a long tract of land would be no longer necessary, and a commodious navigation would be opened between the western and the northern seas.

*Ælius Gracilis*, who commanded in the Belgic Gaul, heard of this magnificent plan with the jealousy of a little mind. He gave notice to *Vetus* that he and his legions must not think of entering the province of another officer. 'Such a step,' he said, 'would have the appearance of a design to gain the affections of the people of Gaul, and by consequence might give umbrage to the emperor.' In this manner, as often happens, the danger of having too much merit laid aside a project of great importance to the public.

LIV. The barbarians, having seen the long inactivity of the Roman armies, conceived a notion that the generals had it in command not to march against the enemy. In this persuasion, the Frisians, having ordered the weak, through sex or age, to be conveyed across the lakes, marched with the flower of their young men through woods and morasses towards the banks of the Rhine, where they took possession of a large tract, vacant indeed at the time, but in fact appropriated to the use of the Roman soldiers. In this emigration the leading chiefs were *Verritus* and *Malorix*, both of them sovereign princes, if sovereign power may be said to exist in Germany. They had already fixed their habitations: they began to cultivate the soil, and the lands were sown in as full security as if they occupied their native soil; when *Vibius Avitus*, who succeeded *Paulinus* in the government of the province, threatened to attack them with his whole force, if they did not evacuate the country, or obtain a settlement from the emperor. Intimidated by these menaces, the German chiefs set out for Rome.



Being there obliged to wait till Nero was at leisure from other business, they employed their time in seeing such curiosities as are usually shown to strangers. They were conducted to Pompey's theatre,<sup>1</sup> where the grandeur of the people, in one vast assembly, could not fail to make an impression. Rude minds have no taste for the exhibitions of the theatre.<sup>2</sup> They gazed at every thing with a face of wonder: the place for the populace, and the different seats assigned to the several orders of the state, engaged their attention. Curiosity was excited: they inquired which were the Roman knights, and which the senators. Among the last they perceived a few who, by their exotic dress, were known to be foreigners. They soon learned that they were ambassadors from different states, and that the privilege of mixing with the fathers was granted by way of distinction, to do honor to men who by their courage and fidelity surpassed the rest of the world. The answer gave offence to the two chieftains. In point of valor and integrity, the Germans, they said, were second to no people on earth. With this stroke of national pride they rose abruptly, and took their seats among the senators. Their rough but honest simplicity diffused a general pleasure through the audience. It was considered as the sudden impulse of liberty; a glow of generous emulation. Nero granted to the two chiefs the privilege of Roman citizens, but at the same time declared that the Frisians must depart from the lands which they had presumed to occupy. The barbarians refused to submit. A detachment of the auxiliary horse was sent forward, with

1 Pliny the elder says that Pompey's theatre was large enough to hold forty thousand men; Pliny, xxxvi. 15.

2 The Germans had no idea of any kind of public spectacle but that which they had seen in their own country; Manners of the Germans, § 24.

orders to dislodge them. The attack was made with vigor, and all who resisted were either taken prisoners or put to the sword.

LV. Another irruption was soon after made in the same quarter by the Ansibarians,<sup>1</sup> a people respected for their own internal strength, and still more formidable on account of the general sympathy with which the neighboring states beheld their sufferings. They had been driven by the Chaucians from their native land, and having no place which they could call their country, they roamed about in quest of some retreat where they might dwell in peace, although in exile. Boiocalus, a warlike chief, was at the head of this wandering nation. He had gained renown in arms, and distinguished himself by his faithful attachment to the interests of Rome. He urged in vindication of his conduct, that in the revolt of the Cheruskans<sup>2</sup> he had been loaded with irons by the order of Arminius. Since that time he had served in the Roman armies; at first under Tiberius, and afterwards under Germanicus; and now, at the end of fifty years, he was willing to add to his past services the merit of submitting himself and his people to the protection of the Romans. 'The country in dispute,' he said, 'was of wide extent; and under color of reserving it for the use of the legions, whole tracts of land remained unoccupied, waste, and desolate. Let the Roman soldiers depasture their cattle; let them retain lands for that purpose; but let them not, while they feed their horses, reduce mankind to the necessity of perishing by fa-

1 The country into which the irruption was made is supposed to be the land between Wesel and Dusseldorf. The Ansibarians, before they were expelled by the Chaucians, inhabited between the river Amisia (the Ems), and the Rhine.

2 The revolt of the Cheruskans, in which Varus and his three legions perished; *Annals*, i. 10.

mine. Let them not prefer a dreary solitude to the interests of humanity. The affections of a people, willing to live in friendship with them, are preferable to a wide waste of barren lands. The exclusive possession of the country in question was by no means a novelty. It had been occupied, first by the Chamavians;<sup>1</sup> after them by the Tubantes; and finally, by the Usipians. The firmament over our heads is the mansion of the gods; the earth was given to man; and what remains unoccupied lies in common for all.' At these words he looked up to the sun, and appealing to the whole planetary system, asked with a spirit of enthusiasm, as if the heavenly luminaries were actually present, whether an uncultivated desert, the desolation of nature, gave a prospect fit for them to survey. Would they not rather let loose the ocean, to overwhelm in a sudden deluge a race of men who made it their trade to carry devastation through the nations, and make the world a wilderness?

LVI. Avitus answered in a decisive tone that the law of the strongest must prevail. 'The gods, whom Boiocalus invoked, had so ordained. By their high will the Romans were invested with supreme authority: to give, or take away, was their prerogative: they were the sovereign arbiters, and would admit no other judges.' Such was the answer given in public to the Ansibarians. To Boiocalus, in consideration of his former merit, an allotment of lands was privately offered. The German considered it as the price of treachery, and rejected it with disdain: 'The earth,' he said, 'may not afford a spot where we may dwell in peace; a place where we may die we can never want.' The interview ended here. Both sides departed with mutual animosity. The Ansibarians pre-

<sup>1</sup> For the Chamavians, the Tubantes, and Usipians, see the Manners of the Germans, § 32, 33.

pared for war. They endeavored to rouse the Bructerians,<sup>1</sup> the Tencterians, and other nations still more remote. Avitus sent dispatches to Curtilius Mancina, the commander-in-chief of the Upper Rhine, with instructions to cross the river, and show himself in the rear of the enemy. In the mean time he put himself at the head of the legions, and entered the country of the Tencterians,<sup>2</sup> threatening to carry sword and fire through their territories if they did not forthwith renounce the confederacy. The barbarians laid down their arms. The Bructerians in a panic followed their example. Terror and consternation spread through the country. In the cause of others none were willing to encounter certain danger.

In this distress the Ansibarians, abandoned by all, retreated to the Usipians and Tubantes. Being there rejected, they sought protection from the Cattians, and afterwards from the Cheruskans. In the end, worn out with long and painful marches, nowhere received as friends, in most places repulsed as enemies, and wanting every thing in a foreign land, the whole nation perished. The young, and such as were able to carry arms, were put to the sword; the rest were sold to slavery.

LVII. In the course of the same summer a battle was fought, with great rage and slaughter, between the Hermundurians and the Cattians. The exclusive property of a river, which flowed between both nations, impregnated with stores of salt,<sup>3</sup> was the cause of their mutual animosity. To the natural fierceness of barba-

1 For the Bructerians and Tencterians, see the Manners of the Germans, § 32, 33.

2 The country on the borders of the river Luppia, now the Lippe.

3 This was the river Sala, still known by the same name. It discharges itself into the Albis, now the Elbe.

rians, who know no decision but that of the sword, they added the gloomy motives of superstition. According to the creed of those savage nations, that part of the world lay in the vicinity of the heavens, and thence the prayers of men were wafted to the ear of the gods. The whole region was, by consequence, peculiarly favored; and to that circumstance it was to be ascribed that the river and the adjacent woods teemed with quantities of salt,<sup>1</sup> not, as in other places, a concretion on the sea-shore, formed by the foaming of the waves, but produced by the simple act of throwing the water from the stream on a pile of burning wood, where, by the conflict of opposite elements, the substance was engendered. For this salt a bloody battle was fought. Victory declared in favor of the Hermundurians. The event was the more destructive to the Cattians, as both armies, with their usual ferocity, had devoted the vanquished as a sacrifice to Mars and Mercury. By that horrible vow, men and horses, with whatever belonged to the routed army, were doomed to destruction. The vengeance meditated by the Cattians fell with redoubled fury on themselves.

About the same time a dreadful and unforeseen disaster befell the Ubians, a people in alliance with Rome. By a sudden eruption of subterraneous fire, their farms, their villages, their cities, and their habitations, were all involved in one general conflagration. The flames extended far and wide, and well-nigh reached the Roman colony, lately founded in that part of Germany. The fire raged with such violence, that neither the rain from the heavens, nor the river waters, could extinguish it. Every remedy failed, till the peasants, driven to desperation, threw in heaps of

<sup>1</sup> This method of producing salt is explained by Pliny in his Natural History, xxxi. 7.

stones, and checked the fury of the flames. The mischief beginning to subside, they advanced with clubs, as if to attack a troop of wild beasts. Having beat down the fire, they stripped off their clothes, and throwing them, wet and besmeared with filth, on the flames, extinguished the conflagration.

LVIII. This year the tree called Ruminalis,<sup>1</sup> which stood in the place assigned for public elections, and eight hundred and forty years before<sup>2</sup> had given shelter to the infancy of Romulus and Remus, began to wither in all its branches. The sapless trunk seemed to threaten a total decay. This was considered as a dreadful prognostic, till new buds expanding into leaf, the tree recovered its former verdure.

1 It was supposed that under the shade of this tree Romulus and Remus were nourished by the she-wolf, as beautifully described by Virgil.

*Rumen* was an old Latin word for *mamma*, or the dug of the she-wolf: thence the tree was called *ruminalis*.

2 Some of the commentators think that there is a mistake in the computation, and that it ought to be eight hundred and thirty years. The difference is not material.









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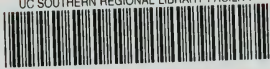
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