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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ROMAN EMPERORS,
FROM
AUGUSTUS TO CONSTANTINE.

BY JOHN BAPTIST LEWIS CREVIER,
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC, IN THE COLLEGE OF BEAUVAIS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY JOHN MILL, ESQ.

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LIST

Of the Consuls and Years Included in this Volume



PERTINAX, EMPEROR.

Q. Sosius Falco.	A. R. 944.
C. Julius Erucius Clarus.	A. C. 198.

DIDIUS JULIANUS, EMPEROR.

Q. Socius Falco.	A. R. 944.
C. Julius Erucius Clarus.	A. C. 193.

SEVERUS, EMPEROR.

Q. Sosius Falco.	A. R. 944.
C. Julius Erucius Clarus.	A. C. 193.
L. Septimius Severus Augustus II.	A. R. 945.
D. Clodius Albinus Cæsar II.	A. C. 194.
Scapula Tertullus.	A. R. 946.
Tineius Clemens.	A. C. 195.
Cn. Domitius Dexter II.	A. R. 947.
L. Val. Mess. Thrasea Priscus.	A. C. 196.
—— Lateranus.	A. R. 948.
—— Rufinus.	A. C. 197.
Ti. Saturninus.	A. R. 949.
C. Gallus.	A. C. 198.
L. Cornelius Anullinus II.	A. R. 950.
M. Aufidius Fronto.	A. C. 199.

Ti. Claudius Severus II.	A. R. 951.
C. Aufidius Victorinus,	A. C. 200.
L. Annius Fabianus,	A. R. 952.
M. Nonius Mucianus,	A. C. 201.
L. Septimius Severus III. } Augg.	A. R. 953.
M. Aurelius Antoninus, }	A. C. 202.
Septimus Geta,	A. R. 954.
Fulvius Plautianus II.	A. C. 203.
L. Fabius Septimius Cilo II.	A. R. 955.
———— Libo,	A. C. 204.
M. Antoninus Augustus II.	A. R. 956.
P. Septimius Geta Cæsar.	A. C. 205.
Nummius Albinus,	A. R. 957.
Fulvius Æmilianus,	A. C. 206.
———— Aper,	A. R. 958.
———— Maximus,	A. C. 207.
M. Antoninus Augustus III.	A. R. 959.
P. Septimius Geta Cæsar,	A. C. 208.
———— Pompeianus,	A. R. 960.
———— Avitus,	A. C. 209.
Man. Acilius Faustinius,	A. R. 961.
Triarus Rufinus,	A. C. 210.
———— Gentianus,	A. R. 962.
———— Bassus,	A. C. 211.

CARACALLA, EMPEROR.

———— Gentianus,	A. R. 962.
———— Bassus,	A. C. 211.
C. Julius Asper,	A. R. 963.
— Julius Asper,	A. C. 212.
M. Aur. Ant. Augustus IV.	A. R. 964.
D. Coelius Balbinus II.	A. C. 213.
———— Messala,	A. R. 965.
———— Sabinus,	A. C. 214.
———— Lætus II.	A. R. 966.
———— Cereatis,	A. C. 215.
———— C. Attius Sabinus II.	A. R. 967.
———— Cornelius Anullinus,	A. C. 216.

C: Bruttius

C. Bruttius Præsens,	A. R. 968.
T. Messius Extricatus;	A. C. 217.

MACRINUS, EMPEROR.

C. Bruttius Præsens;	A. R. 968.
T. Messius Extricatus,	A. C. 217:
M. Op. Macrinus Augustus II.	A. R. 969.
——— Adventus,	A. C. 218.

HELIOGABALUS, EMPEROR.

M. Op. Macrinus Augustus II.	A. R. 969.
——— Adventus,	A. C. 218.
M. Aur. Ant. Augustus II.	A. R. 970.
——— Sacerdos,	A. C. 219:
M. Aur. Ant. Augustus III:	A. R. 971.
Eutygianus Comazon,	A. C. 220.
Gratus Sabinianus,	A. R. 972.
——— Seleucus,	A. C. 221.
M. Aur. Ant. Augustus IV.	A. R. 973:
M. Aurelius Alexander Cæsar,	A. C. 222.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS, EMPEROR:

M. Aur. Ant. Augustus IV.	A. R. 973.
M. Aur. Alexander Cæsar,	A. C. 222.
L. Marius Maximus II.	A. R. 974:
L. Rossius Ælianus,	A. C. 223.
——— Julianus II.	A. R. 975.
——— Crispinus,	A. C. 224.
——— Fuscus II.	A. R. 976.
——— Dexter,	A. C. 225.
M. Aur. Alex. Augustus II.	A. R. 977.
——— Marcellus,	A. C. 226:
M. Mummius Albinus,	A. R. 978.
——— Maximus,	A. C. 227:
Ti. Manilius Modestus,	A. R. 979.
Ser. Calpurnius Probus,	A. C. 228:
M. Aur. Alex. Augustus III.	A. R. 980.
Cassius Cocceianus Dio II.	A. C. 229:

L. Virius

L. Virius Agricola,	A. R. 981.
Sex. Catus Clementinus,	A. C. 230.
—— Pompeianus,	A. R. 982.
—— Pelignianus,	A. C. 231.
—— Lupus,	A. R. 983.
—— Maximus,	A. C. 232.
—— Maximus,	A. R. 984.
—— Paternus,	A. C. 233.
—— Maximus,	A. R. 985.
—— Urbanus,	A. C. 234.
—— Severus,	A. R. 986.
—— Quintianus,	A. C. 235.

MAXIMIN, THE TWO GORDIANS, AND MAXI-
MUS and BALBINUS, EMPERORS.

—— Severus,	A. R. 986.
—— Quintianus,	A. C. 235.
C. J. V. Maximinus Augustus,	A. R. 987.
—— Africanus,	A. C. 236.
—— Perpetuus,	A. R. 988.
—— Cornelianus,	A. C. 237.
Annius Pius or Ulpus,	A. R. 989.
—— Pontianus,	A. C. 238.

GORDIAN III. EMPEROR.

Annius Pius or Ulpus,	A. R. 989.
—— Pontianus,	A. C. 238.
M. Ant. Gordianus Augustus,	A. R. 990.
—— Aviola,	A. C. 239.
—— Sabinus,	A. R. 991.
—— Venustus,	A. C. 240.
M. Ant. Gord. Augustus II.	A. R. 992.
—— Pompeianus,	A. C. 241.
C. Vettius Aufidius Atticus,	A. R. 993.
C. Assinius Prætextatus,	A. C. 242.
—— Arrianus,	A. R. 994.
—— Papius,	A. C. 243.
—— Peregrinus,	A. R. 995.
—— Æmilianus,	A. C. 244.

CONTENTS

OF
VOLUME EIGHT.

BOOK XXI.

SECT. II. *THE conspirators agree to raise Pertinax to the empire. History and character of that senator, p. 2. The Prætorian Præfect Lætus, presents him to the Prætorians, who, very unwillingly, proclaim him Augustus, 4. Pertinax is elected by the senate, who confer upon him all the titles of the sovereign power, 6. Discontent of the Prætorians, which breaks out on the third day, 8. Pertinax appeases them with a largess. He sells the moveables of Commodus, 9. Tribute-money demanded back from the deputies of a barbarous nation, 10. Pertinax universally esteemed for his virtue, ibid. He governs like a wise and a good prince, 11. His modesty with respect to his own family, ibid. He is not less modest in relation to himself, ibid. Frugality of his table, 12. Public advantages resulting from his economy, ibid. Informers punished, 13. Impeachments for treason abolished, ibid. He gives the uncultivated lands to such as undertake to till them, 14. His zeal for justice ; and his endeavours to repair the evils done by Commodus, ibid. Hatred of the Prætorians, and of the old court, against Pertinax, 15. A conspiracy formed against him by the Prætorian Præfect Lætus, ibid. Pertinax is killed by the Prætorians, 17. Praise of Pertinax, 19. His faults, 20. The behaviour of Pompeianus a noble testimony in favour of Pertinax, 21. Praise of Pompeianus, 22.*

SECT. III. *The empire is put up to sale by the Prætorians, 23. Sulpicianus bids for it, ibid. Didius Julianus out-bids him, and has it, ibid. He is confirmed by the senate, 26. Dion Cassius seems to charge him unjustly with luxury and gluttony, 27. The people openly shew their indignation against him, 28. He endeavours*

endeavours to preserve the affection of the soldiers, and to gain that of the senate and people, 29. He is ruined by Severus, 30. Short account of his fall and death, ibid. He deserved his unhappy fate, 31.

BOOK XXII.

SECT. I. *Renewal of the civil wars in the empire, 38. Pescennius Niger called to the empire by the people. His extraction, &c. 38. His strict maintenance of military discipline, 39. He himself set the example, 41. His private character is problematical, 42. His design to reform the state, ibid. He causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by his troops, 43. He is acknowledged throughout all the East, 44. Loses himself by an ill-timed security, ibid. Extraction, rise, &c. of Severus, 45. He causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by the legions of Illyricum, which he commanded, 47. He prepares to march towards Rome. His speech to his Army, 48. He sets out; and is received in Italy without any opposition, 49. Feeble and vain efforts of Didius to maintain his ground, 51. Severus prevails with the Prætorians to abandon Didius, 54. Death of Didius. The senate acknowledges Severus emperor, 55. All Rome dreads Severus, ibid. Deputation of an hundred senators, who meet at him Interamna, ibid. He disbands the Prætorians, 56. Makes his entry into Rome, 57. He goes to the senate, and makes fine promises, which he does not keep, 58. He honours the memory of Pertinax, and causes his funeral rites to be performed with great magnificence, 59. Severus employs his time usefully during his stay at Rome, 61. New Prætorians, 62. Severus thinks of securing himself against Albinus, ibid. Rise, &c. of Albinus, 63. Severus gives him the title of Cæsar, 65. He prepares to attack Niger, 66. He sets out from Rome, without acquainting the senate or people with his design. Reason of this silence, 67. His soldiers mutiny, 68. Niger passes into Europe. His strength, 68. A skirmish near Perinthus, the first act of hostility. Niger declared a public enemy, 69. Insincere and fruitless negotiation, ibid. The battle of Cy-
zicus,*

vicus, in which Æmilianus, Niger's general, is defeated, 70. Byzantium besieged by Severus, 71. The battle of Nicæa, in which Niger is overthrown, ibid. The pass of Mount Taurus, fortified by Niger, stops Severus's army for some time, ibid. A violent storm throws down the fortifications, 72. A third and last battle near Issus. Niger defeated and killed, ibid. What judgment should be formed of Niger, 73. Severus's cruelty after his victory, 75. Byzantium taken after a siege of three years, 79. Severus's rigorous treatment of the Byzantines, 82. Severus makes war upon several of the East, 83. An out-law named Claudius laughs with impunity at Severus, 85. A violent storm deters an army of Scythians from attacking the Romans, 85.

SECT. II. *Rupture between Severus and Albinus, 85. Severus creates Cæsar his eldest son, whom we call Caracalla, 89. The armies of Severus and Albinus meet near Lyons, 90. Alarm, and diversity of sentiments at Rome upon the renewal of the civil war, 91. Pretended prodigies, ibid. First and least important operations of the war, 92. A decisive battle is fought near Lyons. Albinus, defeated, kills himself, 93. Remarks on the character of Albinus, 95. Cruelty of Severus after his victory, 96. His rage against the senate, 98. He makes the soldiery rank Commodus among the gods, 99. He returns to Rome, ibid. His menacing speech to the senate, 100. Twenty-nine, or forty-one senators put to death, ibid. Saying of Geta, while yet a child, with respect to this carnage, 101. Narcissus, the murderer of Commodus, thrown to the lions, 102. Severus endeavours to please the people and the subjects of the empire, but particularly the soldiery, ibid. He promotes his sons, 103. His indifference for his relations, ibid. Severus goes into the East, to make war upon the Parthians. His motives for this war, 104. Upon his arrival, he forces the Parthians to raise the siege of Nisibis, 105. The next campaign, he takes Babylon, Seleucia, and Ctesiphon, ibid. Caracalla declared Augustus, and Geta Cæsar, 106. Severus marches towards Armenia, the king of which*

which sues for peace and obtains it, 107. He besieges Atræ twice, but in vain, 108. Severus's cruelty toward the remains of Niger's party, and even towards his own friends, 110. War, of no great importance, against the Jews, 112. Caracacallu Consul, ibid. The fifth general persecution of the Christians, 113. Severus visits Egypt, 114. He returns to Rome, ibid. Games and shows, 115. Caracalla married to the daughter of Plautianus, 116. History of the rise and fall of Plautianus, ibid. Implacable hatred between the two brothers, 126. Geta declared Augustus, 128. Secular Games, ibid. Two Prætorian præfects, ibid. New cruelties of Severus, ibid. Punishment of Pollericus Sebennus, 131. Bulla Felix, captain of a band of six hundred robbers, ibid. Laudable qualities of Severus, 133. His care to administer justice, ibid. Daily distribution of his time, ibid. His love of simplicity, 134. His magnificence in what concerned the public, ibid. His kindness to his native country, 135. His desire to reform the morals of his subjects, ibid. His care to maintain military discipline, not always equal, 136. Severus sets out for Britain, ibid. Remarks upon the Caledonians and Maxatæ, ibid. They invade the territories of the Romans, 138. Severus drives them back beyond the gulphs of Glota and Bodotria, ibid. Severus's wall, 139. Caracalla's wicked designs against his brother, 140. He endeavours to raise a sedition in the army, ibid. He attempts to kill his father, 141. New revolt of the Britons, 142. Sickness and death of Severus, ibid. What judgment ought to be formed of the character and merit of Severus, 144. His taste for learning. He wrote memoirs of his own life, 146. The empress Julia was also a lover of the sciences and of learned men, ibid. Learned men who flourished in the reign of Severus, 147. Philostratus. The sophist Antipater, ibid. Diogenes Laertius, 148. Solinus, ibid. An eruption of mount Vesuvius, ibid. A sea monster, ibid. A comet, ibid.

BOOK XXIII.

SECT. I. *Origin of the name of Caracalla, 155. Geta was called Antoninus, as well as his brother, 156. Caracalla*

Caracalla, not being able to cause himself to be declared sole emperor, feigns a reconciliation with his brother, 156. Cruelties exercised by Caracalla, 157. He makes peace with the Barbarians, and returns to Rome with his brother, 157. The hatred between the two brothers breaks out again, ibid. Their entry into Rome, 158. The apotheosis of Severus, ibid. The two brothers seek to destroy each other, 159. A partition of the empire proposed, but without effect, ibid. Caracalla causes his brother to be killed in the arms of their mother, 160. He prevails upon the prætorians, by flatteries and gifts, to declare Geta a public enemy, 162. He endeavours to justify himself to the senate, and recalls all the exiles, 164. The apotheosis of Geta, 165. Slaughter of Geta's friends, ibid. The death of Papianus, 166. Fabius Cilo treated outrageously, 168. Julius Asper banished, ibid. Other great persons put to death, 169. A daughter of Marcus Aurelius, ibid. Pompeianus grandson of Marcus Aurelius, ibid. Severus cousin-german to Caracalla, ibid. The son of the emperor Pertinax, 170. Thrasca Priscus, ibid. Serenus Sammonicus, ibid. Caracalla's hatred of the memory of his brother, 171. His disturbance of soul, and remorse, ibid. Games and shews, in which he commits several acts of cruelty, ibid. He may be looked upon as a second Caligula, 172. Other instances of his cruelty, 173. Enormous extortions and rapines, 174. His prodigality to the soldiery, 175. To flatterers, and for games and shews, 176. He himself fought with wild beasts, and ran in the circus, 176. His contempt of learning, and his ignorance, ibid. He seldom administered justice. Disgustful manner in which he treated his assessors, 177. His inquisitiveness. Soldiers employed as spies, in every corner, to bring him an account of all that passed, 178. His ministers chosen from among the vilest of men, ibid. His debaucheries joined to an affectation of zeal for purity of manners, 179. Pretended zeal for religion, accompanied with a love of Magic and judicial Astrology, 180. Perpetual contradiction between his words and his actions, ibid. The current coin excessively debased, 181. He attacks the senate and the people with violence

violent invectives, 181. He would not be advised by any one, 182. He grants the privilege of Roman citizens to all the inhabitants of the empire, *ibid.* His extravagant fondness of Alexander, 185. He affects mixing with the soldiers in their military labours and exercises, 187. He goes into Gaul, and commits great violences there, *ibid.* He passes the Rhine, and makes war upon the Cenni and Alemanni, 188. Ferocious courage of the German women, 189. Caracalla, despised by the Barbarians, purchases peace of them, 190. He takes a liking to the Germans, and imitates their dress, *ibid.* He marches to the Lower Danube, gains some slight advantages over the Goths, and makes a treaty with the Dacians, *ibid.* He passes into Thrace, 191. He crosses the Hellespont, visits Ilium, and honours the tomb of Achilles, *ibid.* At Pergamus, he implores the assistance of *Æsculapius*, to be eased of his torments of body and of mind, 192. He spends the winter at Nicomedea, preparing for war against the Parthians, 193. He goes to Antioch. The king of the Parthians submits to his demands, and obtains peace, *ibid.* Caracalla's perfidy towards Abgarus king of Edessa. Orontes subdued, 194. Like perfidy towards the king of Armenia, 195. The Armenians take up arms, *ibid.* Caracalla vaunts his military toils and exploits, *ibid.* He goes to Alexandria, where he orders a most dreadful massacre, 196. The Alexandrians admitted into the senate, 199. Caracalla demands in marriage the daughter of the king of the Parthians; and, being refused, renews the war, *ibid.* His trifling exploits, 200. He takes the surname of Parthicus, *ibid.* Macrinus, incensed against Caracalla, and alarmed at his behaviour, conspires against him, 201. Caracalla is killed, 204. The uncertainty of human grandeur exemplified by the misfortunes of Severus's family, 205. False, or at least uncertain, imputations laid to the charge of Caracalla, 207. He was hated by all but the soldiery, 208. Works with which he embellished Rome, 209. He is said to have been the father of Heliogabalus, *ibid.* The Greek Poet Oppian lived in Caracalla's time, *ibid.*

SECT. II. *Macrinus causes himself to be elected emperor by the troops, 214. The beginning of his reign promises well, 215. He acquaints the senate with his election, and desires their confirmation of it, 216. The senate, who detested Caracalla, readily acknowledge Macrinus, ibid. The prætorian præfect Adventus loaded with honours, and removed from the army, 217. His incapacity for business, 218. Diadumenus, son of Macrinus, created Cæsar and named Antoninus, ibid. Caracalla ranked among the gods, 219. Actions of Macrinus, by which he indisposed the senate against him, 220. His respect for the laws, 221. His conduct with regard to informers, mixed with justice and cautious circumspection, 222. His timidity in war, 223. Worstèd twice by Artabanes, he purchases peace, 224. He ends the troubles of Armenia by giving up every thing in dispute, 225. He returns to Antioch, where he gives himself up to luxury and pleasure, ibid. His army inclined to revolt, 226. Origin of Heliogabalus, 227. A legion encamped near Emesa receives him in it's camp, and proclaims him emperor, 229. A body of troops sent against him by Macrinus, goes over to him, 230. Macrinus gives his son the rank and title of Augustus 232. Largesses on this occasion, ibid. He writes letters of complaint to the senate and city præfect, 233. Heliogabalus declared a public enemy by the senate, 234. Battle, in which Macrinus is conquered, 235. He flies to Antioch, and from thence crossing Asia Minor, is taken at Chalcedon, 236. The death of Diadumenus and of Macrinus, 237. Judgment concerning Macrinus, ibid. His wife Nonia Celsa had the title of Augusta, 238.*

SECT. III. *Inconveniencies of a military government, proved by the election of Heliogabalus, 243. He saves Antioch from being plundered, ibid. He writes to the senate, and addresses an edict to the people, 244. He assumes all the titles of the imperial power, without any decree of the senate, ibid. His rage against Macrinus, 245. He ridiculously appropriates to himself the consulate of Macrinus, ibid. He puts a great number of illustrious persons to death, 246. Divers conspiracies*

spiracies set on foot by low people, 247. Heliogabalus kills Gannys with his own hand, at Nicomedia, ibid. He puts all his confidence in Eutygianus, 248. Heliogabalus's second consulship. He despises the dress of the Romans, and substitutes in the room of it the luxury of Phœnicia, 249. He goes to Rome, 250. Mæsia sits in the senate, and performs the function of senator, ibid. A senate of women, 251. Mad zeal of Heliogabalus for the worship of his god, ibid. Indecency and extravagance of his marriages, 253. His monstrous debaucheries, 254. Other indecencies in his behaviour, 256. His mad luxury, ibid. All posts and places given to men of infamous characters, 260. Heliogabalus thinks of making war against the Marcomanni, ibid. Pretended presage of his fall, 261. Indignation of all the orders of the state, and particularly of the soldiery, against him, 262. Amiable character of his cousin Alexianus, the son of Mamæa, ibid. Mæsa prevails upon Heliogabalus to adopt his cousin, 264. He changes his name of Alexianus into that of Alexander. He wants to pervert his adopted son, but is hindered from so doing by Mamæa, 265. He takes an aversion to him, and endeavours to get rid of him by secret snares, 266. He attacks him openly, 267. A sedition of the prætorians obliges him to feign a reconciliation with him, ibid. He soon resumes his former designs, 268. He makes all the senators leave Rome, 269. The prætorians rise, and kill him and his mother, ibid. The colony of Emmaus re-established, 272.

BOOK XXIV.

SECT. I. Alexander is proclaimed emperor by the soldiers, 279. He receives from the senate all the titles of the Imperial power, ibid. Decree of the senate, forbidding any woman ever to be present at the deliberations of that assembly, ibid. Alexander refuses the name of Antoninus, which the senate desired him to take, 280. The whole authority of the government is in the hands of Mæsa and Mamæa, 281. Council of state composed of sixteen of the most illustrious of the senators, ibid. The worship of the god Elagabalus abolished,

abolished at Rome, 281. Bad men removed from the offices of the state, and good ones put in their places, 282. Ulpian made prætorian præfect, ibid. Death of Musa, ibid. Mama's care to train the young emperor up to virtue, ibid. Picture of Alexander's government and conduct, 283. He never shed innocent blood, ibid. His regard and deference for the senate ibid. He annexes the dignity of senator to the office of prætorian præfect, 284. Marks of his esteem for good governors of provinces, 285. For the pontiffs, ibid. For the people, ibid. Mildness, moderation, and goodness of his general behaviour, ibid. His clemency towards a senator who had conspired against him, 287. His firmness. He clears the palace of all the ministers of Heliogabalus's debaucheries, 288. His zealous endeavours to check all licentiousness of manners, 289. He makes a strict review of all the orders of the state, 290. His hatred against all robbers and oppressors of the public, ibid. and against those that were then called Sellers of Smoke, 292. The punishment of Turinus, 293. No excess in his severity, 294. He was liberal and beneficent, ibid. He knew how to ease the people, and to keep his finances in good order, 296. Wise economy of this prince, 297. Superior views of Alexander in the choice of those he employed, 301. Marks of his regard for them, 302. His care not to put them in danger of ruining themselves, ibid. He lessens the expences of the consulship, 303. Laws made with great judgment, ibid. Some regulations relative to the police of the city, 304. Alexander's veneration for the memory of great men, ibid. His distribution of the day, 305. He loved learning and learned men, 306. Reflection on the causes to which the wisdom of Alexander's government ought to be ascribed, 308. He has been blamed for his excessive deference for his mother, 309. for being too inquisitive and distrustful, 310. and for being too much inclined to vanity, 311. The first years of his reign little disturbed by foreign enemies, 312. Continual seditions of the prætorians. Ulpian falls a victim to them, ibid. The prætorians demand the death of Dion Cassius, who retires into Bithynia, 314. Reflection on these marks of weak-

ness in Alexander's government, compared with his vigour upon other occasions, 315. Disturbances and commotions. Several pretenders to the empire, 320.

SECT. II. Revolution in the East. Artaxerxes king of the Persians revolts against Artabanes king of the Parthians, and transfers the empire to his nation, 322. He prepares to make war upon the Romans, 324. Alexander charged with timidity by Herodian without cause, 325. He sends an embassy to Artaxerxes to exhort him to keep peace; but in vain, *ibid.* He prepares for war, and sets out for it, 326. The order of the march was given out two months before-hand, 327. He makes his troops observe an exact discipline upon their march, 328. He sends a second embassy to Artaxerxes, from Antioch, *ibid.* Arrogant answer of Artaxerxes, brought by an embassy of four hundred Persian lords, *ibid.* Slight commotions among the troops of Syria and Egypt, 329. Alexander forms a most judicious plan of war, *ibid.* The execution of it was not equal to the design, according to Herodian, 330. His account does not seem at all probable, 331. Different account given by Lampridius, who says that Alexander gained a great victory over the Persians, 332. Alexander returning to Rome, gives the senate an account of his exploits, *ibid.* He triumphs, 334. He sets out for the war against the Germans, 335. Arriving in Gaul, he endeavours to persuade the Barbarians to peace, 336. Origin of Maximin, 337. He cabals against Alexander, 341. and causes him to be assassinated by some of the soldiers, 342. Alexander is universally regretted, 344. Dreadful disorders which followed his death, *ibid.* How far he favoured the Christians, 345. The Civil Law ceases to flourish. Modestinus the last of the civilians, 345. No writer of distinguished eminence, 346. Marius Maximus, *ibid.* Dion Cassius, 347. Alexander's marriages, 350. His sister Theoclea, *ibid.*

BOOK XXV.

SECT. I. Maximin is proclaimed emperor by the whole army, 354. Is acknowledged by the senate, *ibid.* Gives his son the title of Cæsar, *ibid.* Hates all that are eminent in the state. Removes from about him
all

all who had been *Alexander's* friends, 355. His cruelty manifest'd on account of a conspiracy which he pretend- ed had been carried on against him, 356. Conspiracy of the *Osrhoenians*. They proclaim *T. Quarlinus* emperor, who is killed at the end of six days, 358. *Maximin* carries the war into Germany, and signalizes his valour there, 359. He boasts greatly of his exploits, 361. Behaves with the most odious tyranny towards the great men of the state and the people, 362. Revolt in *Africa*. The intendant is killed, 364. The authors of his death resolve to make *Gordian* emperor, 365. Who *Gordian* was, *ibid.* Character of his son, who was also his lieutenant-general, 369. They are both proclaimed emperors in *Africa*, 370. They are likewise acknowledged at Rome, and the *Maximins* are declared public enemies, 373.

SECT. II. The prætorians in Rome acknowledged the Gordians, 376. The multitude, intoxicated with joy, commit great disorders, *ibid.* The provinces, encouraged by the deputies of the senate, declare against *Maximus*, 377. Fury of *Maximin*, when informed of these events. Resolving to march against Rome, he harangues his soldiers, 378. He finds but little ardour in his army, and is for that reason forced to lose a very precious time, 379. The Gordians perish, after having reigned only about six weeks, *ibid.* Carthage and the other cities of *Africa* are ravaged by the conqueror, 381. *Maximus* and *Balbinus* are elected emperors by the senate, 382. What we know of them to the time of their election, *ibid.* The manner of their election, 385. *Gordian III.* named *Cæsar*, 386.

SECT. III. Dangerous situation of the two emperors, 388. Their first cares. *Maximus* sets out for the war, *ibid.* But first gives fights of gladiators, 389. Dreadful sedition at Rome, and battles between the people and the prætorians, *ibid.* The presence of the young *Cæsar Gordian* calms the riot, 392. Measures taken by the senate to prevent *Maximin's* entering Italy, *ibid.* Causes of *Maximin's* slow march, 393. Approaching towards Italy, he finds the city of *Æmona* deserted, 394. He passes the Alps, and arrives near *Aquileia*, 395.

Persecutions

Precautions of the senate to stop Maximin before that city, 395. Maximin endeavours in vain to persuade the inhabitants to open their gates to him, 396. He lays siege to Aquileia, 397. Brave defence of the inhabitants, 398. Maximin incurs the hatred of his troops, ibid. He and his son are killed by the prætorians, 399. Some particulars concerning his son, ibid. Persecution of the Church, under Maximin, 400. The army sends the heads of the Maximins to Maximus, 401. Hostilities cease between the army and the city of Aquileia, ibid. Maximus removes from Ravenna to Aquileia, ibid. His speech to the army, 403. He separates it, ibid. Great joy at Rome, ibid. Triumphant return of Maximus, 404. Discontent of the soldiery, 405. Wise government of the two emperors, ibid. Secret jealousy between them, 406. The prætorians fall upon them unexpectedly, and murder them, ibid.

SECT. IV. *Gordian Cæsar is proclaimed Augustus by the soldiery, and acknowledged by the senate and people, 412. Amiable qualities of the young emperor, ibid. He is governed at first by interested and corrupt ministers, who make a bad use of their power, 413. Revolt of Sabianus speedily quelled, 414. Mysithæus becomes father-in-law to Gordian, and prætorian præfect. Admirable conduct of this minister, 415. The Persians attack the Roman empire, 416. Gordian goes into the East, and distinguishes himself there in arms, 417. The death of Mysithæus. Philip is made prætorian præfect in his stead, 418. It is scarcely probable that Philip was a Christian, 419. He murders Gordian, and causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by the soldiers, ibid. He pretends to honour the memory of the prince he has killed, 421. Gordian's death was revenged, 422. His epitaph, ibid. He was rather mild and good-natured, than a man of shining parts, 423. Privilege granted to his family, ibid. Earthquakes in his reign, ibid. Incursion of Argunthis, king of the Scythians, ibid. First mention of the Franks in History, 424. Heroian wrote in the reign of Gordian, 425. Censorinus's work, De Die Natali, 426.*

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ROMAN EMPERORS,
FROM AUGUSTUS TO CONSTANTINE.

PERTINAX.

BOOK XXI.

SECT. II.

THE conspirators agree to raise Pertinax to the empire. History and character of that senator. The Prætorian Præfect, Latus, presents him to the Prætorians, who, very unwillingly, proclaim him Augustus. Pertinax is elected by the senate, who confer upon him all the titles of the sovereign power. Discontent of the Prætorians, which breaks out on the third day. Pertinax appeases them with a largess. He sells the moveables of Commodus. Tribute-money demanded back from the deputies of a barbarous nation. Pertinax universally esteemed for his virtue. He governs like a wise and good prince. His modesty with re-

spect to his own family. He is not less modest in relation to himself. Frugality of his table. Public advantages resulting from his economy. Informers punished. Impeachments for treason abolished. He gives the uncultivated lands to such as undertake to till them. His zeal for justice; and his endeavours to repair the evils done by Commodus. Hatred of the Prætorians, and of the old court, against Pertinax. A conspiracy formed against him by the Prætorian Prefect Lætus. Pertinax is killed by the Prætorians. Praise of Pertinax. His faults. The behaviour of Pompeianus a noble testimony in favour of Pertinax. Praise of Pompeianus.

A. R. 941.
A. C. 193.

Q. SOSIUS FALCO.
C. JULIUS ERUCIUS CLARUS.

The conspirators agree to raise Pertinax to the empire. History and character of that senator. **A**FTER the death of Commodus, the first care of those who had killed him was to secure their lives, by endeavouring to give him a successor who should owe to them his elevation to the empire. They cast their eyes on Pertinax, who, from the lowest condition, had raised himself, by his merit and the favour of Marcus Aurelius, to a rank above which there was nothing but the throne. That wise prince had made him consul, and invested him successively with several governments of provinces, or military commands. He was a long while a senator, and even a consular, without ever having seen the senate: for his employments kept him always at a distance, from Rome, and he was consul without so much as setting his foot within the city. He entered the senate-house, for the first time, in the reign of Commodus; and soon after, the hatred and jealousy of Perennius brought upon him, as we observed before, a disgrace, and exile of three years. After the fall of that minister, Pertinax came again into favour. The

The meanness of his birth might perhaps be a circumstance which recommended him to Commodus, by whom, from the time of his being recalled, he was constantly employed, and promoted to the highest posts; being made, first commander of the legions in Britain, afterwards superintendant of the provisions, then proconsul of Africa, and lastly consul for the second time, and governor of Rome: which last office he held when Commodus was killed.

The renown which Pertinax had acquired equalled, or even surpassed, the splendour of his dignities. Equally fit for civil or military affairs, brave, and intelligent in the art of war, his name was become the terror of the barbarians; and at the same time he had kept up a strict discipline amongst the mutinous troops. In the government of Rome, he behaved with such mildness, affability, and goodness, as made every one love him. Plain in his manners, and so modest as even then to acknowledge for his patron Lollianus Avitus*, whose equal at least he was become, Vi. l. Epit. but whom he always gratefully respected, as the first author of his fortune; an enemy to luxury, and a lover of frugality: History charges him with no other fault than being too great an economist, and too ready to promise more than he intended to perform, in order to pay with words those whom he could not satisfy with deeds.

No one was more worthy of the empire than Pertinax, and the conspirators did themselves an infinite honour in placing him upon the throne. If we believe Capitolinus and Julian the apostate, Jul. Cæs. he was privy to their conspiracy against the life of Commodus. Dion Cassius and Herodian suppose the contrary; and their opinion seems the most probable,

* Victor calls him *Lollius Gentianus*: but he is plainly the same senator whom Capitolinus, in his life of Pertinax, n. 1. calls *Lollianus Avitus*.

probable, if we consider how soon the design was put in execution after it was formed.

The prætorian præfect, Lætus, presents him to the Prætorians, who, very unwillingly, proclaim him Augustus.

The moment Commodus expired under the hand of Narcissus, Lætus and Eclectus, sensible of what consequence the least delay might be, hastened to Pertinax, acquainted him with what had passed, and invited him to take possession of the vacant throne. According to Herodian, Pertinax, on seeing them rush into his chamber, thought they were come to kill him by the emperor's command, and accordingly told them, that he had long expected not to be spared any more than the other friends of Marcus Aurelius, and looked upon each night as the last of his life; adding, that they might execute their commission. When they had explained themselves, he hesitated whether he should accept of their offer, until one of his domesticks, whom he had sent to see and examine the dead body, returned with a confirmation of what the prætorian præfect and the chamberlain had told him: upon which he went with Lætus to the camp of the prætorians.

Still he feared, and not without reason, that the soldiery, who loved Commodus, might not be favourably disposed towards him; and therefore he resolved to back his pretensions with the suffrages of the people. It was then mid-night; and, by his order, some of those that were about him ran to the different quarters of the city, crying aloud in the streets, that Commodus was dead, and Pertinax going to the camp to take possession of the empire.

This news occasioned a great commotion in Rome. The inhabitants rose hastily from their beds, left their houses, and congratulated each other, especially the great and the rich, on their deliverance from a cruel and insupportable tyranny. Some ran to the temples, to return thanks to the gods: but the greater number crowded round the camp, in order to intimidate the soldiers, who, they thought, would not easily relish so strict a government as that

that of Pertinax was like to be, after the licentiousness in which they had been indulged by Commodus.

In the mean time Pertinax and Lætus arrived at the camp; and the latter, having assembled the soldiers in virtue of his office of prætorian præfect, after acquainting them with the death of Commodus, and imputing it to the sudden effect of an apoplexy, added: “To fill the place of your deceased emperor, the Roman people and I present you a man of a venerable age, (Pertinax was then sixty-six years old) a spotless character, and of approved valour in war. Your good fortune gives you, not an emperor, but a father. You know him: his elevation will not be pleasing only to you; it will fill with joy the legions on the frontiers, all of which have been witnesses of his exploits. We shall no longer be obliged to purchase peace of the barbarians: the remembrance of what he has made them suffer will keep them in awe.”

Pertinax spoke next, and promised the prætorians* twelve thousand sesterces a man. This ^{about} £ 65. largess, the esteem they could not help having for him, and respect for their commander Lætus, who, bad as he was, seems nevertheless to have had both capacity and courage, inclined the soldiers to relish the proposal that was made to them. But a word which Pertinax let drop displeased them. He told, that he hoped, with their assistance, to remedy several abuses which had crept in during the late government. This the Prætorians looked upon as a menace aimed at them; because they were sensible that Commodus had granted them many things contrary to rule. They therefore hesitated, and were silent: but the people, who had broke into the camp in great numbers, proclaimed Pertinax *Augustus*, with loud shouts of joy, and the prætorians thereupon followed their example, rather out of decency and

a kind of necessity, than from any motive of love or affection.

Pertinax is elected by the senate, who confer upon him all the titles of the sovereign power.

From the camp, Pertinax repaired to the senate, which met before it was day. He appeared there without any mark of the imperial dignity; as if his fate had depended on the decision of that assembly. This modesty was right, and consistent with the true principles of the ancient government. But another motive for it was a secret anxiety which disturbed Pertinax. The affection of the soldiers for Commodus had alarmed him a few moments before: but now he feared lest the senate should look upon him with contempt, on account of the meanness of his birth. He even declared, that though the troops had named him emperor, he willingly renounced the splendour of the supreme power, too burdensome for a man of his age; and desired, first Pompeianus, son-in-law to Marcus Aurelius, and afterwards Acilius Glabrio, the most noble of the patricians, to take upon them that high rank, for which they were much better qualified. This declaration and offer came too late. Pertinax had already secured the suffrages of the soldiers, and the senate was too wise to quarrel with them. Glabrio answered Pertinax: "You think me worthy of the empire; I cede it to you; and the whole senate decrees you all the honours and prerogatives of the supreme power." The senate applauded. Pertinax was unanimously declared *Augustus*, and Commodus a public enemy: and to this particular time belong properly the invectives I mentioned before against the memory of that prince. His successor was at once honoured with all the titles of the imperial dignity, not excepting even that of Father of his country, which the emperors had not used to receive until after a certain time; and he himself desired the senators to add that of Prince of the senate, a popular title, which savoured of the ancient republic, but which was now almost forgotten

Capit. 3, c.
Dio. § 116.
106.

forgotten and disused. The senate likewise proposed giving the title of *Augusta* to his wife Flavia Titiana, and that of *Cæsar* to his son: but he refused the former; and declared with respect to his son, that he should stay until he came to riper years, and had deserved that honour.

It was not until after these preliminaries, in which we see all the formalities of an election, that Pertinax ascended the imperial throne, as if forced so to do by the desire of the senate, to whom he returned thanks; at the same time giving them to understand how much he feared the difficulties of the sublime station to which they had raised him. He promised, that his government should be agreeable to the laws, directed by the counsels of the senate, and rather aristocratical than monarchical: and, lastly, he expressed his acknowledgment to Lætus, author of the death of Commodus, and to whose friendship he owed the empire; for there was no farther occasion now to dissemble the truth of that affair.

Lætus was undoubtedly, on many accounts, very unworthy of being praised to the senate; and Q. Sosius Falco, a young and aspiring man, who entered upon the discharge of the consulship that very day, the first of January, catching at the encomiums given him, boldly said to Pertinax: "One may judge what sort of emperor you will be, by your praising the ministers of the crimes of Commodus." Pertinax coolly replied; "Consul, you are young, and do not know what it is to be forced to obey. It was against their wills that they executed the orders they received: but the first moment they could, they shewed what were their true sentiments."

If Pertinax spoke sincerely, he was much mistaken in Lætus, and ascribed to him motives far more noble than those he really had. However that may be, the murder of Commodus was universally approved of: for the Pagans made no doubt of its
being

being lawful, and even laudable, to kill a tyrant. The mildness of the gospel has alone the glory of having proscribed that doctrine, by which the life, even of the best of princes, is in danger.

Thus ended the meeting of the senate, from which the new emperor went directly to the capitol, to offer up his vows, and was conducted from thence, with great pomp, to the imperial palace. In the evening, he invited the magistrates and chief men of the senate to sup with him; renewing a custom which Commodus had interrupted: and, during the entertainment, he behaved with such ease, good humour, and affability, to all his guests, as made them love him; especially when they compared his manners with the haughty and disdainful carriage of his predecessor.

Discontent
of the præ-
torians,
which
breaks out
on the
third day.

The senate and the people gave a loose to joy, and conceived great hopes of happiness under the government of a wise and moderate emperor. But the prætorians, fond of licentiousness, and raised above the level of their fellow-citizens by the tyranny of Commodus, of which they had been the instruments, were much dissatisfied. They could not doubt but that Pertinax intended to re-establish good order among them, and to keep them to their duty. The first day, the word he gave the tribune was, *Militemus*, *Let us be soldiers*: giving thereby to understand, that discipline had been so much neglected by them for some time past, that they stood in need of serving a new apprenticeship. He forbid their abusing the common people, or striking any who should desire to approach his person. Dissatisfied with these beginnings, and fearful of what might follow, the prætorians regretted Commodus, and sighed when they saw his statues pulled down.

On the third of January, the day on which public vows were made every year for the prosperity of the emperors, they undertook to change the state of affairs; and to that end seized by force an illustrious

trious senator, named Triarius Maternus Lascivius, and attempted to carry him to the camp, in order to raise him to the empire. Triarius, who was not privy to their designs, resisted, escaped out of their hands, almost naked, and ran to the palace where Pertinax was, from whence he retired into the country.

Pertinax, sensible of the necessity of proceeding cautiously with men capable of so audacious a deed, set about satisfying them. To that end, he confirmed all the privileges and gifts which Commodus had granted them, and took effectual measures for the speedy payment of the largess which he himself had promised them. Finding only a million * of sesterces in the treasury, he resolved to sell all the apparatus of the mad luxury of his predecessor; and accordingly he put up to auction the statues, pictures, and rich furniture of the palace, together with the gold and silver plate set with jewels, the horses, the slaves destined to debauchery, and all that Commodus had made use of in his chariot-races and combats with gladiators. History mentions in particular carriages so artfully contrived, that their seats turned which ever way the rider pleased, either to avoid the sun, or enjoy the benefit of a fresh gale of wind; and others, which measured the way, and shewed the hour. The product of this sale enabled Pertinax to pay twelve † thousand sesterces a-piece to the prætorians, and four ‡ hundred to every citizen.

Besides this first and chief advantage arising from the sale of these costly effects, Pertinax had likewise another point in view. He was glad to depreciate the memory of Commodus more and more, by giving the public ocular proofs of the monstrous folly of that prince. Lætus seconded him admirably well in that design. He sought out all the vile ministers of Commodus's pleasures, and posted up their names, which, alone, implied infamy; and in the condemnations which he pronounced

Pertinax appears them with a largess. He sells the morsels of Commodus.

** About L. 5470. Capit. 7. § 3. Dio.*

*† L. 65
‡ L. 2:4:*

nounced against them, he took care to express the value of their forfeited estates, which often exceeded the fortune of the richest senators, whom Commodus had put to death for the sake of their spoils.

Tribute-
money de-
manded
back from
the depu-
ties of a
barbarous
nation.

Another step which he took, though of a different nature, tended to the same end. The deputies of certain barbarians to whom Commodus had agreed to pay a yearly tribute, on condition that they should not take up arms, had been at Rome, and received their money, but were not yet out of the territories of the empire when the revolution happened. Lætus sent after them, and demanded back what they had received. "Carry to your country," said he to them, "the news of the change which you have seen. Tell those who sent you, that it is Pertinax who now governs the empire." The difference between the two governments could not be more strongly expressed, than by this haughty message to nations to whom a tribute had so lately been paid. The effect answered. The barbarians were awed by the bare name of Pertinax.

Herod.

Pertinax
generally
etc. med
for his vir-
tue.

Herod. ap.
Herod.

Herod.

His virtue was universally esteemed. When the news of the death of Commodus, and of the election of Pertinax reached the provinces, the people doubted the truth of the report. They were afraid of its being a snare laid by Commodus, in order to have a pretence to exercise his cruelties and rapines. In this uncertainty, several governors resolved to wait until it should be confirmed, and in the mean time imprisoned the messengers who brought it, not doubting but that, if the news was true, Pertinax would readily forgive them a fault which did not proceed from any disaffection towards him. The allies of the empire held him in equally high esteem. His elevation filled them with joy, and they sent ambassadors to congratulate the senate and Roman people upon the happy choice of their new emperor.

The

The prætorians being quieted, Pertinax enjoyed some repose, during which, short as it was, he displayed all the virtues of a great and prudent prince.

He governs like a wise and good prince.

I have already spoken of his modesty with respect to his relations. The only thing he did for any of them, was his appointing his father-in-law, Flavius Sulpicianus, governor of Rome; an office of which Dion Cassius says he would have been highly worthy, even if he had not been father-in-law to the emperor.

His modesty with respect to his own family.

Dio. & Capitol. 6. & 13.

He refused, as I observed before, the title of *Augusta* for his wife, and that of *Cæsar* for his son. Several reasons induced him not to heap many honours upon a woman who had no regard for her own reputation, and who publicly carried on an intrigue with a musician. As to his son, modesty seems to have been the motive of his conduct towards him. He was yet very young, and Pertinax feared least the poisonous charms of grandeur should corrupt his tender years. He did not keep him in the palace, but, after emancipating him, and a daughter which he had, divided between them his paternal estate, and placed them under the care of the governor of the city, who was their grandfather by the mother's side. From thence the son of the emperor went to the public schools, without being in the least distinguished from others of his age. Pertinax saw him but seldom, and always without pomp, as if he had been only a private man.

Herod.

He observed the same modesty, as far as his rank would permit, in what concerned his own person. Far from forgetting himself in his high station, he with pleasure remembered his first condition, and often made Valerianus, who had been his companion in the public profession of letters, dine with him. He was easy of access to all, heard them with patience, and answered them with kindness. He was familiar with the senators, and in the common intercourse of life, treat-

He is not less modest in relation to himself.

Dio. Herod. & Cap. 1. 8. 9. 12. & 13.

ed them almost as his equals. His behaviour towards the senate, whose meetings he never failed to attend, was full of respect. He expressed the greatest regard for Pompeianus and Glabrio, of whom a less judicious prince would perhaps have been jealous : nor would he suffer any of the effects, furniture, or buildings, which he enjoyed as emperor, to be marked with his name, saying, that they belonged not to him, but to the empire.

Frugality
of his table.

Under Commodus, the expence of the emperor's table had been enormous. Pertinax reformed it, and reduced it within the bounds of a decent frugality. He often invited some of the senators to dine or sup with him, and sent to others of them dishes from his own table, not as rarities but as tokens of his remembrance. * The rich and voluptuous laughed at the homeliness of these presents : but those among us, says Dion Cassius, who esteemed virtue more than luxury, received them with joy and admiration.

Capit. 12.

Capitolinus, following the opinion of those lovers of ostentation whom Dion blames, accuses Pertinax of being sordidly covetous, and instances, among other things, his sending in this manner half a capon, or part only of any other dish. Such simplicity is, doubtless, not calculated to catch the eye ; and this emperor, by retrenching at once half the expence of his household, banished an idle pomp, with which vain men are pleased. But let that tinsel appearance be for a moment compared with the solid good arising from a prudent economy. In a reign of less than three months, Pertinax paid all the debts he had contracted at his accession to the empire ; secured rewards for military services ; established funds for public works ; found money to repair the highways ; paid old debts of the state ; filled

Public advantages
resulting
from his
economy.
Capit. 9.

* Καὶ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τούτῳ οἱ μὲν πλάσιοι καὶ μεγαλυνοὶ διεγίγαντο· οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι, οἱς ἀριτὴ ἀσελγείας προσημοτέρη ἦν, ἠπηνύμενοι. *Dio.*

filled the imperial treasury, which his predecessor had exhausted, and enabled it to answer all necessary demands. Such an administration deserves the greatest praises, and shews a prince who knew his duty, and was a true judge of real greatness.

Among the advantages which Rome owed to Capit. 8. the frugality of Pertinax, may likewise be reckoned the diminution of the luxury of private men, who were ashamed not to imitate the example of their prince. Thence arose a public good, cheapness of provisions, which, being no longer monopolized by the voluptuous and rich, fell to a price within the reach of the generality of the people.

It is proper to observe, that the immense sums which Pertinax stood in need of for the several uses before-mentioned, were not the fruit of injustice, or raised by tyrannical means. Far from Informers punished. encouraging informers, he punished severely those who had followed that infamous trade in former reigns, and abolished all accusations for pretended crimes of treason. He declared, that Impeachments for treason abolished. Herod. Capit. 7. Justin. l. II. tit. 17. he would not accept of any legacies from such as had lawful heirs of their own, and that instead of making the slightest cause a pretence for seizing the inheritances of others, as his predecessor had done, he would not receive any to which he was not called according to all the formalities of the laws; adding these remarkable words*: “It is better to leave the republic poor, than to enrich it by base and dishonourable means.” It is true, that Pertinax, contrary to the promise he had made somewhat too hastily, was obliged to levy with rigour certain taxes which Commodus had remitted. But the good use he made of the money arising therefrom, and the necessity there was for it, plead his excuse. These taxes were probably

* Sanctius est P. C. inopem rempublicam obtinere, quam ad divitiarum cumulum per discrimina & dedecoris vestigia pervenire. *Capit.*

probably old ones, confirmed by long custom : for as to the new imposts, which the tyranny of the publicans had introduced, Herodian assures us that Pertinax suppressed them, that the freedom of trade might not be cramped.

He gives the uncultivated lands to such as undertake to till them.

He designed to increase the revenues of the state, not by augmenting the imposts, but by rendering useful large tracts of land which lay uncultivated, both in Italy, and in the provinces. All these, not excepting even such as were part of the imperial demesne, he gave to whoever undertook to cultivate them ; and, the more to encourage and assist the new possessors, he exempted them from all taxes for ten years ; well knowing that, if his scheme succeeded, the republic would afterwards reap with ample interest what she seemed to lose for the present moment.

His zeal for justice ; and his endeavours to repair the evils done by Commodus.

Herod. Din. Capit. 8, 9, 13, 14.

Zealous for equity and the observation of the laws, he often administered justice in person. He restored the memory of those who had been unjustly condemned by Commodus, or, if they were still living, recalled them from exile : returning to these last, or to the heirs of such as were dead, their forfeited estates. And here I cannot believe, upon the bare word of Capitolinus, that he made them buy that justice of him. I have already said, that he punished informers. If they were slaves, he ordered them to be crucified. He restored to their masters such slaves as had run away from private families in order to enter into the prince's service. He suppressed the insolence of the imperial freed-men, who, under the late reign, had disposed of every thing with an absolute power ; and he stripped them of the immense riches they had acquired by purchasing at a low price the effects of those whom Commodus had condemned. His old acquaintance, the inhabitants of the town of Alba-Pompeia, where he was born, flocked to Rome as soon as they knew of his being upon the throne, big with expectation of mighty

mighty favours. They found their mistake : Pertinax not thinking it right for him to enrich with the public money persons who had only private connections with him.

By a conduct so perfect in every respect, he renewed the happy reign of Marcus Aurelius ; and, making all his subjects taste the sweets of a mild and just government, he filled with double joy those who found again in him that wise prince whose memory was infinitely dear to them.

Amidst this general satisfaction, two orders of men, the prætorians and the old court, who, under Commodus, had given an unbounded loose to all their insolence, and glutted their rapacious avarice at the expence of the public, vowed the death of a reformer who curbed their iniquitous desires. Pertinax had not yet displaced one of those to whom his predecessor had intrusted any part of the ministry. But they knew that he waited only for the twenty-first of April*, the anniversary of the foundation of Rome, as a day of renewal, on which he intended to alter the whole face of the court. To prevent this, they resolved his death ; and some of the freed-men proposed stifling him in the bath : but that project was laid aside, as too dangerous ; and the prætorian præfect Lætus undertook to get rid of him by other means.

This officer soon repented his having raised Pertinax to the throne. He had flattered himself with hopes of reigning under the name of a prince indebted to him for the sovereignty : but finding that Pertinax not only governed alone, but seldom consulted him, allowed him no power, and often taxed him with imprudence and wrong notions of things, he grew extremely dissatisfied. His private views which had induced him to take away the life of Commodus, and his giving him,

in

* Some make the foundation of Rome fall on the twentieth of April. This difference is of no consequence here.

in order to varnish over the heinousness of that deed, a virtuous successor, under whom he hoped to be able to gratify his own ambition, being now frustrated, he resolved to destroy his own work by a second crime still greater than the first. The troops under his command were ready to second him, and he took care to encourage in them that spirit of animosity and revolt. Accordingly he formed his plan, and determined to raise to the empire Sosius Falco, of whose daring boldness I have already mentioned an instance, and whose great birth and riches seemed to qualify him for the highest post.

Capit. 7.

Lætus, watching his opportunity while Pertinax was gone to the sea-coast (probably to Ostia), to give orders concerning the supplying of the city with provisions, a thing he was extremely careful of, thought to take advantage of his absence, to carry Falco to the camp of the prætorians. Pertinax, being informed of it, returned immediately, and thereby disconcerted the scheme. He complained to the senate of the treachery of the soldiers, to whom he had given a very great largess, though he had found the public treasury quite exhausted. Falco was arraigned, and on the point of being condemned by the senators, when Pertinax, interposing strongly in his behalf, cried out; “No senator, even though he be guilty, shall ever be put to death whilst I govern.” Some have pretended, that Falco was not privy to the plot by which he was to have been raised to the throne: but that is hardly probable, and the very words of Pertinax manifestly suppose the contrary. However, he lived some years after in peaceable possession of his fortune, and, at his death, bequeathed it to his son. It is still more surprising that Lætus was continued in his command. He must have played his cards so artfully, that Pertinax either did not suspect, or was able to convict him. Impunity,
far

far from mending his perfidious heart, served only to encourage him to plunge still deeper into guilt, and, under a false appearance of zeal, to incense the soldiers more and more against their sovereign.

Capitolinus intermixes with his account of this affair, a confused story of a slave, who, pretending to be the son of Fabia, daughter of Marcus Aurelius, claimed as such a right of inheritance to the empire. He was detected, whipped, and restored to his master. Lætus, laying hold of this pretence, caused several of the guards to be put to death, as accomplices of the mad designs of this wretch; giving out, that they were thus punished by the emperor's command. His aim was, to exasperate the prætorians to the utmost, by letting them see the blood of their comrades shed upon the deposition of a slave.

His black design succeeded. On a sudden *, three hundred of the most determined sallied forth from the camp, crossed the city at noon-day, and, sword in hand, marched towards the palace. They must have been very sure of not meeting with any opposition, either from the soldiers who were upon guard, or from the officers within the palace: for otherwise their attempt would have been as mad as it was criminal, and could not possibly have been expected to succeed. Pertinax, being informed of their coming, ordered Lætus to go out and meet them; so little was he acquainted with the intrigues of that traitor. Lætus, author of the plot, but unwilling to declare himself until the blow was struck, avoiding meeting the soldiers, and retired to his own house. The assassins arrived at the palace, of which they found all the gates open, and the avenues free. The guards let them pass; and the freed-men and chamberlains of the emperor, far from resisting, encouraged them to proceed.

Pertinax is killed by the prætorians. Dio. Herod. Capit.

IN

* *Dion Cassius says but two hundred.*

In this great danger, several advised Pertinax to secure his life by a speedy flight, which Dion Cassius assures us he might easily have done; adding, that if he had but avoided the first fury of the soldiers, he would have found a safeguard and a rampart in the affections of the people. But, relying too much upon his own courage, and flattering himself that there yet remained in the hearts of the prætorians some sense of honour, which the presence of their emperor would awaken in them, he advanced towards them with a stern look, and intrepid air. For a few moments, he had reason to think he had taken the right step; for, struck with awe, they let him speak. "What! said he to them, do you, whose duty it is to watch over the safety of your prince, and to guard him from foreign dangers; do you come here to murder him! Of what have you any cause to complain? Is it the death of Commodus that you want to revenge? I am innocent of it; and am ready to grant you every thing that you can reasonably desire from a good and prudent emperor."

These few words, pronounced with majesty, made an impression upon the mutinous band. With down-cast looks, most of them had already sheathed their swords, when one of them, by birth a Tongrian, more savage and intractable than the rest, upbraiding them with their faint-heartedness as he called it, darted his javelin at the emperor. This action roused all the fury of his companions, who instantly prepared to follow his example: upon which Pertinax, seeing no hope left, covered his head with his robe, and, invoking Jupiter the avenger, received their blows without attempting to resist.

One only person remained faithful to him in this last moment. This was the chamberlain Eclectus, one of the murderers of Commodus, who, full of courage,

courage, bravely fought the assassins, wounded some of them, and was killed by his master's side.

The prætorians cut off Pertinax's head, and sticking it upon a spear, carried that horrid trophy through the city to their camp.

This melancholy event happened on the 28th Capit. 15. of March of the year 193 of the Christian era. Pertinax was born the 1st of August of the year 126: consequently he was sixty-six years and near eight months old when he was killed, after having reigned somewhat less than three months. He left a son and a daughter, who lived like private persons, without ever claiming, or having imputed to them, any sort of right to the throne. This, with many other proofs, shews plainly, that the Roman empire was not hereditary.

Dion Cassius seems positive that Pertinax brought upon himself his untimely end, by being in too great a hurry to reform the state; not considering, with all his experience, that, in such cases, true policy proceeds slowly, first correcting one abuse, and then another; but never attacks them all at once. This reflection may be just: but, on the other hand, we must beg leave to observe, that it is easy to judge of a thing by the event; and that men are often very ingenious at pointing out the causes of misfortunes, after they have happened.

Pertinax was certainly one of the greatest princes Praise of Pertinax. Vict. Epit. that ever sat upon the throne of the Cæsars, though the shortness of his reign did not permit him to shew his talents. The senate and people were at liberty to say what they thought of him, in the reign of Severus; and they then made his eulogium, with acclamations proceeding from their hearts, and dictated by truth. "Under * Pertinax, cried they, we lived without uneasiness, and
2 " were

* Pertinace imperante, securi viximus, neminem timuimus. Patri pio, patri Senatus, patri bonorum omnium.

“ were exempt from fear. He was a good father
 “ to us, a father to the senate, and a father to all
 “ honest men.” The emperor Severus pronounced
 himself his funeral oration; and the following is,
 according to a fragment of Dion Cassius, which
Dia. ap. seems to have been extracted from that discourse,
Val. the picture which he drew of him. “ Military
 “ courage easily degenerates into ferocity, and
 “ political wariness into effeminacy. Pertinax
 “ possessed both those virtues, without any tinc-
 “ ture of the defects which frequently accompany
 “ them. He was prudently bold against our ene-
 “ mies abroad, and against the seditious at home;
 “ mild and just towards the citizens, and the pro-
 “ tector of all good men. His virtue was proof
 “ against the greatest height of grandeur; and he
 “ maintained with dignity the majesty of the su-
 “ preme power, without ever debasing it by mean-
 “ ness, or rendering it odious by pride. He was
 “ grave without austerity, gentle without weak-
 “ ness, prudent without artifice, just without ri-
 “ gour, frugal without avarice, magnanimous
 “ without haughtiness.”

His fault. This encomium includes all that can be wished.
 But the reader will remember that it is taken from
 a panegyrist, and that it requires some restriction
 with respect to two articles which I hinted at be-
 fore. In fact, it is difficult to clear Pertinax entirely
 of the imputation of avarice, of which Capitolinus
Capit. 3, 9, instances several minute details. He assures us, that
13. Pertinax, after having behaved with integrity and
 disinterestedness during the life of Marcus Aurelius,
 altered his conduct after the death of that virtuous
 prince, and shewed his love of money; that he grew
 rich on a sudden, by what means was not well
 known; that he extended his demesnes by usurpa-
 tions over his neighbours, whom he had ruined by
 his usury; that, when general of the army, he sold
 the preferments in it; and lastly, that, both before
 and after he was emperor, he carried on a sordid
 traffic,

traffic, more becoming his original station, than that to which his merit had raised him. Such a testimony as this seems to be of greater weight than the authority of Herodian, who says only in general, that Pertinax was poor under the reign of Commodus, and that he owed his safety to that poverty.

The second reproach laid to his charge is, that he was more liberal of words than deeds, and apt to suit his speeches to the present circumstances, rather than to the strict rules of sincerity and truth. This fault, which Capitolinus takes notice of, may possibly have deceived that historian himself, who tells us seriously, that Pertinax dreaded the imperial dignity, that he never put on the ornaments of it without a kind of fear and terror, and that he designed to abdicate it as soon as he could without danger. The manner in which Pertinax accepted the empire, gives no room to think that the weight of it was disagreeable to him. He seems rather to have been desirous and forward to obtain it. His intimations of fear, and of a desire to return to a private life, were, undoubtedly, in him, as in Augustus, a modest language, calculated to set off him that used it.

His morals were not better than those of his wife; and History mentions a certain Cornificia, whom he was passionately fond of, even at the expence of his reputation.

Notwithstanding these defects, Pertinax truly deserved great praise, and was the last of that series of good princes, which, beginning with Vespasian, was interrupted only by Domitian and Commodus. We shall find no other worthy of that name until we come to Alexander Severus.

I ought not to conclude this account of Pertinax, without mentioning, to his honour, the behaviour of Pompeianus son-in-law to Marcus Aurelius, the honour of the senate, and the Cato of his age. That illustrious senator, unable to bear

The behaviour of Pompeianus as a noble testimony in favour of Pertinax.

the

the sight of the horrid excesses of his brother-in-law Commodus, had retired from Rome under pretence of illness. The moment he knew that Pertinax was to be made emperor, he came back, and staid there all his reign; too short for the happiness of the empire. As soon as Pertinax was dead, Pompeianus's illness returned, and he was never more seen within the city.

Praise of
Pompeianus.

History takes very little farther notice of Pompeianus, though he was certainly one of the most shining characters of his age. Marcus Aurelius chose him for his son-in-law on account of his virtue. He was great in arms, inflexibly just, and the best of counsellors so long as Commodus thought proper to consult him; neither partaking in the crimes of that emperor, nor in the plots formed against him; and so sensible of the ties of affinity, that he could not help shedding tears for the death of a prince, under whom his life had never been safe a moment.

Capit. Pert.
13.

SECT. III.

DIDIUS JULIANUS.

THE empire is put up to sale by the Prætorians. Sulpicianus bids for it. Didius Julianus out-bids him, and has it. He is confirmed by the senate. Dion Cassius seems to charge him unjustly with luxury and gluttony. The people openly shew their indignation against him. He endeavours to preserve the affection of the soldiers, and to gain that of the senate and people. He is ruined by Severus. Short account of his fall and death. He deserved his unhappy fate.

A. R. P11.
A. C. 196.

Q. SOSIUS FALCO.
C. JULIUS ERUCIUS CLARUS.

THE

THE soldiers, after the death of Commodus, had disposed of the empire as if it had been their property. Now, they sold it. Intimidated by the crime they had been guilty of in murdering Pertinax, they shut themselves up in their camp, leaving the senate and people at liberty to vent either their indignation, or their grief, in complaints as bitter as they were impotent: whilst they, insulting over the misfortunes of the public, of which they were the cause, and thinking only how they might make most money by it, caused those among them who had the strongest voice to get upon the ramparts of the camp, and from thence proclaim, that the empire was to be sold, and should be given to whoever offered them the largest sum.

Flavius Sulpicianus, a senator, who until now had been generally esteemed, acted on this occasion a most unbecoming part. He was prefect of the city, and father-in-law to Pertinax, who, upon the first notice of the sedition of the prætorians, sent him to their camp, to try to pacify them. Whilst he was there, Pertinax was killed, and Sulpicianus was not ashamed to grasp at his bloody spoils. He bid for the empire; but soon met with a competitor.

When the news of the proclamation of the soldiery reached the city, all the honest part of the inhabitants were struck with horror, rightly judging it the utmost infamy to the Roman name, that the empire should be exposed to public sale, and that by the murderers of a prince whom they respected and esteemed.

Didius Julianus thought otherwise. He was descended from an illustrious family, especially by the mother's side, she being the grand-daughter of the famous Civilian Salvius Julianus, author of the perpetual edict under Adrian. His father, Petronius Didius, was originally of Milan. Didius Julianus

was educated in the house, and under the eyes of Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus Aurelius. He went through all the offices of the state, and was consul with Pertinax, whom he succeeded in the proconsulship of Africa, in which, as well as in several other employments, he acquired some reputation. I have already mentioned the chief transactions of his life, which was not without its mixture of adversity. He was involved in the accusation under which his uncle Salvius Julianus fell; but luckily escaped, Commodus, if we believe Spartian, having already shed so much illustrious blood, that he was weary of slaughter, and feared it might render him too odious. However, either for this, or some other affair of the same nature, Didius was banished to Milan, from whence his family first came; and, according to Dion Cassius, his restless ambition deserved that punishment. He was immensely rich, and added daily to his wealth by all sorts of means. The author we have just mentioned tells us, that he himself convicted him of injustice several times, in causes in which he pleaded for those whom Didius oppressed. As to his morals, I know not well what judgment to form, between the diametrically contrary testimonies of Dion Cassius and Herodian on one side, and Spartian on the other. The two first, who were his contemporaries, accuse him of the most unpardonable debaucheries, luxury, and intemperance. Spartian says quite the contrary; treats those reports as calumnies, and assures us, that Didius's table, was even sordidly frugal. If I were to say which of these characters I think the truest, I should readily give the preference to that of Spartian. It is plain, that Dion Cassius hated Didius, and that he takes a pleasure in speaking ill of him: and besides, it does not seem probable, that a man immoderately expensive in matters of voluptuousness, could be possessed of such immense treasures as enabled Didius to buy
the

the empire. But if he had not that vice, he is blameable in many other respects, and cannot be excused of great levity of mind, thirst after riches, rash ambition, and want of prudence, judgment, and courage.

He was at table, when news was brought him that the prætorians offered the empire to whoever would give them most money for it. The glittering prospect charmed him; and his wife and daughter exhorted him to seize the favourable opportunity. Accordingly, he left his house, and, after meeting by the way two officers who gave him great encouragement, presented himself before the walls of the camp. There he learned what sums was offered by Sulpicianus, who was within the camp; and immediately he bid above him. The two competitors, rising in their offers, contended some time without seeing each other. At length Sulpicianus promised to give each of the soldiers twenty thousand sesterces. Didius, thereupon, at once added five thousand more; and, by that extravagant offer, together with his telling the soldiers, that Sulpicianus would not fail to revenge the death of his father-in-law Pertinax, carried his point. At the same time he promised them, that if he was chosen, he would restore the memory of Commodus, re-erect his statues, and let the prætorians enjoy the same privileges, that is to say, the same licentiousness, in which that emperor had indulged them. Upon these conditions, he was admitted into the camp, and proclaimed Augustus by the soldiers. After offering the usual sacrifices, he took possession of the empire, thanked the soldiery for what they had done, and ratified all that he had promised them. At their request, he appointed Julius Flavius Genialis and Tullius Crispinus, commanders of the prætorian guards, and received their intercession in favour of Sulpicianus, who had disputed the empire with him. The only harm he did
this

this rival was removing him from his post of governor of the city, which he gave to his son-in-law, Cornelius Repentinus.

He is confirmed by the senate.

All this was done the very day that Pertinax was killed. Towards the evening, the new emperor left the camp, in order to proceed to the senate, surrounded by a numerous body of troops, completely armed, who marched, with trumpets sounding and colours flying, as if they had been going to battle. This precaution was not ill-judged; for the public resentment could not be greater, nor more justly founded, than on this occasion. Every one knew, that nothing but force could make the senate confirm so scandalous an election; and the people were so incensed at it, that the pratorians, when they crossed the city, were obliged to cover their heads with their shields, to keep off the stones and tiles that were thrown at them from the tops of the houses.

Dio. & Spart. 3, 4

Fear, which, on such occasions as this, always operates most strongly upon those who have most to lose, determined the senators to assemble. Didius addressed them with so extraordinary a speech, that one can hardly believe it, even upon the word of Dion Cassius, who was present. "I see," said he to them, "that you want a head, and I am the most worthy to command you. I would give you proofs of it, but that you know me, and I can appeal to your own consciences. I am therefore come with only a few troops, and appear alone among you, to demand your confirmation of what the soldiers have given me." If he really spoke in this manner, he must have lost all sense of shame. "For," as the above mentioned historian observes, "at the very time that he said he was alone, the senate-house was entirely surrounded by armed men, and he himself was guarded by soldiers who stood near him. Our knowledge of him, to which he appealed, served only to fill us with fear and ha-
" tred

“tred.” However, he obtained the decree he wanted. He was inscribed among the patrician families, and decorated with all the titles of the imperial power, as were his wife Manlia Scantilla, and his daughter Didia Clara, with that of *Augustæ*. After this, he dismissed the assembly, and was conducted to the palace by the prætorians.

Here our authors differ again, as I observed they did before, with respect to Didius. If we believe Dion Cassius, this emperor of a few hours thought the supper prepared for Pertinax too poor for him, and therefore ordered another extremely delicate and costly. He played at dice while the corpse of his predecessor was yet in the palace, and ordered a play to be acted, in which the pantomime Pylades was one of the performers. Spartian refutes this account, as founded only on false reports, maliciously spread by the enemies of Didius; and asserts, that the new prince did not eat until after the body of Pertinax had been buried; that he was very melancholy during his repast; and that he spent the night, not in mirth and jollity, but in serious reflections upon the critical situation he had brought himself into, and the steps most proper for him to take. It must be owned, that this last account seems by far the most probable; and Dion Cassius, as I before observed, was prejudiced against, and hated Didius, with whom he had had several disputes; whereas Spartian, who wrote an hundred years after, had no interest to favour this unhappy prince. The caution too with which Didius acted in whatever concerned the memory of Pertinax, is far from giving any sort of room to think he would insult him the very day of his death. He laid it down as a rule never to speak of him in public, either well or ill. To have praised him, would have displeased the soldiery, and consequently have been dangerous; and his respect for his virtues made him refrain from censures and invectives.

The

The day after that on which Didius took possession of the empire, the senators and knights waited on him with their compliments of congratulation, which, the more unwillingly they were paid, the more eager they were to express them. "We composed our looks," says Dion Cassius, "and affected to appear joyful, whilst our hearts were racked with sorrow." But the people, strangers to disguise, gave a loose to all their indignation. When Didius went out of the palace, they loaded him with invectives; and whilst he was sacrificing to Janus, according to custom, in the vestibule of the senate-house, they wished he might not find any favourable omens in the entrails of the victims, and openly called him an usurper and a parricide: for he was suspected, though without reason, as it appears, of being concerned in the murder of Pertinax; and some later writers have not scrupled to record that false report. Didius tried to appease the tumult by fair words, and even promised a largess: but the people cried out, "We will not have it; we will not accept any thing from you." They even went so far as to throw stones at him: so that he was obliged to order his guards to make use of their arms against the seditious. Some of them were killed: but their death did not stop the rest. On the contrary, they became more furious, and, with continual clamours, regretted Pertinax, heaped reproaches upon Didius, invoked the vengeance of the gods, and loaded the soldiers with bitter curses.

In the mean time Didius went in to the senate, and made a prudent and modest speech, thanking the fathers for the honours they had conferred upon him, his wife, and his daughter. He then received the title of Father of his Country, which had, doubtless, been offered him the evening before, and he had refused; as he now did a statue of silver which some of the senators proposed erecting to him.

From

The people
openly
show their
indigna-
tion against
him.

*Herod. &
Dion. &
Spart.*

*Eutrop.
Aurel. Vict.*

From the senate he directed his march towards the capitol. The people, in crowds, stopped up his way a second time; and it was again necessary to use violence, and even the sword, to disperse the exasperated multitude, who thereupon took up arms, ran to the circus, and staid there all that night and the next day, without eating or drinking, invoking, in the name of the city and the empire, the assistance of the generals who commanded the armies in the provinces, and particularly that of Pescennius Niger, who governed Syria. Didius rightly judged, that it would be in vain to attempt to expostulate with men capable of such excess of rage, and that they would be most likely to cool if let to themselves. Accordingly, hunger and want of sleep soon had the desired effect. Every one returned to his own home, and tranquillity was restored in the city.

These actions of Didius would give one no bad opinion of him, if the means by which he obtained the empire could be justified: but they were by so much the more criminal and odious, as he had always been a favourite with Pertinax, who used frequently to call him *his colleague and his successor*, alluding, as I before observed, to his having been his colleague in the consulship, and his successor in the proconsulship of Africa; which was afterwards interpreted as a presage of his being succeeded by Didius in the empire. Spart. 2.

This first storm being over, Didius enjoyed a short calm; during which he tried every method to fix himself upon the throne. In the first place, he paid the prætorians, and * even gave them more than he had promised. Instead of twenty-five thousand sesterces, he gave each of them His endeavours to preserve the affection of the soldiers, and to gain that of the senate and people. thirty

* Herodian, on the contrary, assures us, that Didius was not able to make good his promise to the soldiery, and that his failing therein incensed them against him. As I do not find elsewhere any indication of this coolness of the prætorians for Didius, I have chosen rather to follow Spartan.

thirty thousand. Knowing how much the memory of Commodus was dear to them, he suffered them to give him his name; and restored several customs, or rather abuses, which that prince had introduced, and Pertinax had reformed: and, lastly, the better to resemble that worst of models, he was not ashamed to disgrace his old age by combats and other exercises of a gladiator, which he never had practised in his youth.

To regain, if possible, the affection of the senate and people, he affected great popularity in his behaviour, regularly attending all public shews, flattering the great, making himself familiar with the common people, bearing patiently reproaches and insults, and admitting the chief senators to his table, which was always magnificently served. But none were the dupes of his fawning caresses: for, as Dion Cassius observes *, whatever exceeds the proper bounds of things, though agreeable in itself, becomes suspicious to men of sense. Accordingly Didius, instead of appeasing the hatred of the senate and people, too justly incensed against him, added to it contempt of him by his meannesses.

He is ruined by Severus.

Dio. & Herod. & Spart. 5—9.

Short account of his fall and death.

This however, was not the immediate cause of his ruin: nor was he conquered or dethroned by Niger, whose assistance the people had implored in their first fury. A nearer and more formidable enemy pulled him down before he had time to settle himself upon the throne. Severus, who commanded the legions in Illyricum, vowing revenge for the death of Pertinax, caused himself to be proclaimed emperor by his troops, and, marching directly towards Rome, easily over-set the yet tottering fortune of Didius.

The particulars of this revolution belong to the history of the reign of Severus, who was the author

* Πᾶν γὰρ τὸ ἕξωθεν τῷ ἱκίῳ, κῆν χαρίζεσθαι τί σε δοκῆ, βολεθὸν τοῦ τῷ ἕχθρῳ ταμιζέσθαι.

author of it. I shall therefore only observe here in few words, that Didius, in the midst of his danger, shewed nothing but weakness, timidity, and perpetual irresolution; and that, being at last abandoned by the prætorians, whom Severus had gained over, he was deposed; and condemned to suffer death, by the senate. A tribune and some soldiers were sent to execute this order in the palace, where Didius endeavoured to conceal himself. The cowardly and unfortunate old man, who had paid so dear for so tragical an end, at the sight of the tribune burst into complaints, repeating several times with a mournful voice, "What crime have I committed? Whose life have I taken away?" His vain complaints were not heard: the soldiers massacred him, and his body was, with the senate's leave, given to his wife and daughter, who buried it in the tomb of his grandfather. He was at this time fifty-six, or, according to Dion Cassius, sixty years of age, and had reigned only sixty-six days. Consequently he was killed, either on the first, or the second of June.

Untimely as the fate of this emperor was, it cannot be denied but that he deserved it. ^{He deserved his unhappy fate} The scandalous means by which he obtained the empire, and his not only encouraging the soldiery in their insolence, but rewarding them for it, are crimes which will always blacken the memory of Didius, who had not one good quality to recommend him.

 BOOK XXII.

 PRINCIPAL EVENTS

OF THE REIGN OF

*SEVERUS.*A. R. 944.
A. C. 193.

Q. SOSIUS FALCO.

C. JULIUS ERUCIUS CLARUS.

PESCENIUS NIGER is proclaimed emperor at Antioch, and acknowledged in all the East.

Severus, proclaimed emperor in Illyricum towards the end of April, or in the beginning of May, marches immediately towards Rome.

Didius killed the second of June. Severus acknowledged at Rome.

He disbands the prætorians, and makes his entry into Rome.

Solemn funeral and apotheosis of Pertinax.

New prætorians, to the amount of four times the number of the former.

Before he sets out to war against Niger, he comes to an agreement with Albinus who commanded in Britain, and, fearing to have him for a rival, gives him the title of *Cæsar*.

First act of hostility between Niger and Severus near Perinthus in Thrace. Niger declared a public enemy by the senate.

A. R. 945.
A. C. 194.

L. SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS AUGUSTUS II.

D. CLODIUS ALBINUS CÆSAR II.

Battle near Cyzicus, in which Niger's general Emilianus is defeated.

Beginning

Beginning of the siege of Byzantium.

Second battle, between Nice and Cius, in which Niger, commanding his troops in person, is overthrown by Severus's general, Candidus.

He flies into Syria, and fortifies the pass of mount Taurus, which stops the victorious army for a while.

After having at length forced this pass, Severus's army enters Cilicia. Third and last battle near the Issus, in which Niger is irretrievably undone.

He endeavours to fly beyond the Euphrates: but is taken and killed.

Cruelties exercised by Severus upon the conquered party.

SCAPULA TERTULLUS.

A. R. 946.

TINEIUS CLEMENS.

A. C. 196.

Severus's expedition into Mesopotamia and the neighbouring countries. The possession of Nisibis secured to the Romans.

CN. DOMITIUS DEXTER II.

A. R. 947.

L. VALERIUS MESSALA THRASEA PRISCUS.

A. C. 196.

Byzantium taken after a siege of three years.

Rupture between Severus and Albinus, who causes himself to be proclaimed *Augustus*.

Albinus passes over into Gaul.

Severus returns from the East, and, arriving at Viminacium upon the Danube, declares his eldest son, Bassianus, *Cæsar*, and makes him take the name of Marcus-Aurelius-Antonnius. We call him Caracalla.

. LATERANUS.

A. R. 949.

. RUFINUS.

A. C. 197.

Battle between Severus and Albinus near Lyons, the nineteenth of February. Severus

VOL. VIII.

D

conquers.

conquers. Albinus kills himself, or makes one of his slaves kill him.

Severus behaves with still greater cruelty after this victory, than he had done before he conquèred Niger.

His rage against the senate, several members of which had seemed to incline towards Albinus. He ranks Commodus among the gods; calls himself his brother, and the son of Marcus-Aurelius. Twenty-nine, or, some say, forty-one senators put to death.

He returns into the East, to make war upon the Parthians.

A. R. 949.
A. C. 198.

TI. SATURNINUS.
C. GALLUS

He enters the territories of the Parthians, and takes Babylon, Seleucia, and Ctesiphon.

He declares Caracalla *Augustus*, and Geta, his second son *Cæsar*, making him likewise take the name of Antoninus.

War, of little importance, with the Jews.

About this same time Lupus buys peace of the Meati in Britain.

A. R. 950.
A. C. 199.

P. CORNELIUS ANULLNIUS II.
M. AUFIDIUS FRONTO.

The city of Atra besieged twice in vain by Severus.

A. R. 951.
A. C. 200.

TI. CLAUDIUS SEVERUS II.
C. AUFIDIUS VICTORINUS.

Fresh cruelties of Severus, even against his own friends. Death of Crispus and Lætus.

A. R. 952.
A. C. 201

L. ANNIUS FABIANUS.
M. NONIUS MUCIANUS

Severus

Severus gives the virile robe to his eldest son Caracalla, and appoints him consul with himself.

L. SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS III. }
M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS, } AUGG.

A. R. 953.
A. C. 202.

Edict of persecution against the Church.
Severus goes into Egypt, and visits all that country.

SEPTIMIUS GETA.
FULVIUS PLAUTIANUS II.

A. R. 954.
A. C. 203.

The first of these consuls was brother to Severus, and the other his minister.

Severus returns to Rome, and there celebrates his victories, his return, and the tenth year of his reign, with magnificent games and shews.

He gives the virile robe to his second son Geta Cæsar.

He marries his eldest son to Plautilla the daughter of Plautianus.

L. FABIUS SEPTIMIUS CILO II.
..... LIBO.

A. R. 955.
A. C. 204.

Eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Disgrace and death of Plautianus. His son and daughter banished to Lipari.

Secular games.

M. ANTONINUS AUGUSTUS II.
P. SEPTIMIUS GETA CÆSAR.

A. R. 956.
A. C. 205.

Consulship of the two brothers. Their implacable enmity.

NUMMIUS ALBINUS.
FULVIUS ÆMILIANUS.

A. R. 957.
A. C. 206.

Condemnation and death of several senators.

A. R. 958.
A. C. 207.

..... APER.
..... MAXIMUS.

Commotions of the Caledonians and Meati in Britain. Severus resolves to go thither.
Bulla Felix, a famous robber, taken.

A. R. 959.
A. C. 208.

M. ANTONINUS AUGUSTUS III.
P. SEPTIMIUS GETA CÆSAR.

Severus goes to Britain with his two sons.
Geta is declared Augustus.

A. R. 960.
A. C. 209.

..... POMPELIANUS.
..... AVITUS.

Severus's expedition into North Britain. He grants peace to the barbarians.

A. R. 961.
A. C. 210.

MAN. ACILIUS FAUSTINIUS.
TRIARIUS RUFINUS.

Severus's wall between the firths of Clyde and of Forth.
Caracalla attempts to kill his father.

A. R. 962.
A. C. 211.

..... GENTIANUS.
..... BASSUS.

Severus is taken ill.
The barbarians take up arms.
Severus dies at York, the fourth of February.
His sons perform his funeral obsequies at York, and carry to Rome the urn which contained his ashes.

SECT. I.

S E V E R U S.

Renewal of the civil wars in the empire. Pescennius Niger called to the empire by the people. His extraction, &c. His strict maintenance of the military discipline. He himself set the example. His private character is problematical. His design to reform the state. He causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by his troops. He is acknowledged throughout all the east. Loses himself by an ill-timed security. Extraction, rise, &c. of Severus. He causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by the legions of Illyricum, which he commanded. He prepares to march towards Rome. His speech to his army. He sets out; and is received in Italy without any opposition. Feeble and vain efforts of Didius to maintain his ground. Severus prevails with the Prætorians to abandon Didius. Death of Didius. The senate acknowledges Severus emperor. All Rome dreads Severus. Deputation of an hundred senators, who meet him at Interamna. He disbands the Prætorians. Makes his entry into Rome. He goes to the senate, and makes fine promises, which he does not keep. He honours the memory of Pertinax, and causes his funeral rites to be performed with great magnificence. Severus employs his time usefully during his stay at Rome. New Prætorians. Severus thinks of securing himself against Albinus. Severus gives him the title of Caesar. He prepares to attack Niger. He sets out from Rome, without acquainting the senate or people with his design. Reason of this silence. His soldiers mutiny. Niger passes into Europe. His strength. A skirmish near Perinthus, the first act of hostility. Niger declared a public enemy. Insincere and fruitless negotiation. The battle of Cyzicus, in which Amilianus, Niger's general, is defeated.
Byzan.

Byzantium besieged by Severus. The battle of Nice, in which Niger is overthrown. The pass of Mount Taurus, fortified by Niger, stops Severus's army for some time. A violent storm throws down the fortifications. A third and last battle near Issus. Niger defeated and killed. What judgment should be formed of Niger. Severus's cruelty after his victory. Byzantium taken after a siege of three years. Severus's rigorous treatment of the Byzantines. Severus makes war upon several nations of the east. An out-law named Claudius laughs with impunity at Severus. A violent storm deters an army of Scythians from attacking the Romans.

Renewal of
the civil
wars in the
empire.

THE three last emperors of whom we have spoken, were killed in the space of five months. A new scene, still more tragical and bloody, opens upon us now. The civil wars, so far ended by Vespasian's victory as to occasion only a few slight disturbances since that time, broke out again with fury in the times I am going to speak of, and, to the massacre of princes, added the carnage of battles.

These misfortunes were the inevitable consequence of the unbounded licentiousness of the soldiery, who arrogated to themselves the power of disposing of the empire. The prætorians had no more right to it than the armies in the provinces; and, in their last choice, they had carried this abuse to so enormous an height of insolence, that neither the commanders of the legions, nor the legions themselves, could possibly think of receiving masters from the hands of such vile electors.

Pescennius
Niger called to the
empire by
the people.
His traction,
etc.
Dio. l.
LXXIII.

I observed before, that, the very moment Didius took possession of the empire which he had bought, the people, fired with indignation, called out for Pescennius Niger, then governor of Syria, and, with repeated cries, invited him to come and vindicate the honour of the Roman name, by placing himself

himself upon the throne of the Cæsars, shamefully invaded by a vile purchaser. Niger deserved in many respects the esteem which the people expressed so strongly for him. He did not owe his elevation to his birth, which was honourable, but not great. He was descended of an equestrian family, and born, probably, at Aquinum, where his grandfather exercised the office of intendant of the Cæsars. After acquiring a slight tincture of learning in his youth, his courage and ambition being greater than his fortune, he entered into the army, and behaved so well in the several stations he served in, that Marcus Aurelius took notice of, and commended him. Under Commodus, he distinguished himself in a war against the barbarians bordering upon the Danube. He was also employed in the war of the deserters who had overrun Gaul, and succeeded therein so well, that Severus, who was then governor of the country of Lyons, gave the highest of characters of him to the emperor, called him a man necessary to the republic. He obtained the consulship by means truly honourable, that is to say, the recommendation of the officers who served under him: and Commodus, jealous as he was of this proof of esteem and affection given by an army to its general, did not dare to refuse it him. Niger was consul the same year as Severus, and ranked before him. He was afterwards made governor of Syria, and owed that post, one of the most important of the state, to the interest of Narcissus, the wrestler who strangled Commodus. Such were the channels through which all favours flowed.

Among his military qualifications, he is particularly commended for his strictness in maintaining the military discipline, which was such, that Severus himself, though his greatest enemy, and his conqueror, quoted him as a model to those to whom he gave the command of his troops. Niger's soldiers never dared to exact either wood, or oil, from a subject

Spart. Did.
4. & *Nig.*
2, 3.

Spart. Nig.
1.

Dio. l.
LXXII.
p. 320.

Spart. Nig.
3.

His strict
mainte-
nance of
the mili-
tary disci-
pline.
3, & 10.

a subject of the empire: or if any of them did at any time transgress that express command of their general, they were sure to be severely punished for it. Thus, he ordered ten soldiers to be beheaded, for having eaten of a fowl which one of them had stolen: but being prevented from putting this sentence in execution by the murmurs of the whole army, which was almost ready to mutiny, he spared their lives, ordered each of them to restore ten fowls in the room of the one which had been taken, forbade them the use of fire during the whole campaign, and commanded that they should eat nothing but cold victuals, and drink only water.

He was a declared enemy to whatever had the least tendency towards luxury and effeminacy in an army. Observing one day some soldiers drinking out of a silver cup while they were upon a march against the enemy, he forbade the use of all silver plate in the camp, saying, that vessels of wood were as useful, and that it was wrong to give the barbarians even a chance of boasting that they had taken the plate of the Romans, if the baggage of these last should at any time fall into their hands. He suffered no bakers to follow the army, but made both soldiers and officers be content with biscuit. He likewise proscribed wine, and reduced them to vinegar and water, which used to be the drink of the Roman troops in ancient times.

These regulations were highly displeasing to the soldiers; but Niger was inflexible: and when some of them, who guarded the frontiers of Egypt, petitioned him for wine, he answered; "What! Do you want wine, when you have the Nile to drink out of?" Another time, some of his troops having been beaten by the Saracens, and pretending to excuse themselves by saying that they had no wine, and therefore had not strength to fight; he silenced them with this answer: "Blush at your effeminacy. Your conquerors drink nothing but water." In effect.

effect, the Sarcens, through poverty and rusticity, observed then that abstinence from wine, which their false prophet, long after, made a part of their religion.

At the same time that Niger was thus severe to his troops, he was their constant protector against all injustice. The Roman soldiers were in a manner tributaries of those who commanded them; and a custom had been introduced, in consequence of which they paid their officers certain pretended dues, that were now become heavy and oppressive taxes. He put a stop to these exactions wherever he commanded; forbid the officers to receive any thing from their soldiers, and even caused two tribunes to be stoned for disobeying his orders in this respect. He often repeated a fine saying, which we find recorded in a letter of Severus; namely *, That an officer ought to make his soldiers fear and respect him; which he cannot do, if his character be not unexceptionable.

He himself set the example, and never suffered the soldiers to pay him any of those illegal perquisites which he forbid others to receive. In general, he required nothing of those that were under him, but what he practised himself. When he was in the field, his table, frugally served, was placed at the entrance of his tent, on the outside, without seeking any shelter either from the sun, or rain. In his marches, when, as every one knows, the Roman soldiers were greatly loaded, each of them carrying not only his arms and baggage, but also provisions for several days, Niger was particularly careful to give the heaviest burdens to his own slaves, in order thereby to comfort the troops, and not give them room to complain that their condition was worse than that of the meanest of mankind. In all things, he treated himself

as

* Scias id de Nigro, militem timere non posse, nisi integri fuerint tribuni & duces militum. *Spart. Nig. 3.*

He himself
set the ex-
ample. § 11.

as he did his soldiers ; and, one day, he protested with an oath, before a numerous assembly, that he never had indulged himself in any respect more than the lowest man in his army ; and that he should always act in the same manner, as long as he commanded. He was a true soldier : Marius, Camillus, Coriolanus, Hannibal, were the constant objects of his admiration and discourse.

2. The more gentle manners of the Scipios were less pleasing to him.

His private character is problematical.

1. His private character is problematical. Spartian contradicts himself in this respect. In one place, he says Niger gave a free loose to all his passions : and in another, he represents him as a pattern of chastity, to whom was decreed, by public consent, the honour of presiding over mysteries which both the law and custom reserved for those whose life was absolutely pure and undefiled. I make no account of the testimony of an enemy like Severus, who accused Niger of depravity of morals.
2. He likewise charged him with deceit and ambition ; he, who was himself the most deceitful and the most ambitious of men.

His design to reform the state.

3. Niger seems to have turned his thoughts towards the reforming of the state : and he ventured to give counsels of that kind, not only to Marcus Aurelius, a prince equally good and wise, but also to the brutal and blood thirsty Commodus.

His plan for extending to five years the duration of all commands, either civil or military, in the provinces, may be considered in two lights. In support of it, he alledged the injury that was manifestly done to the provinces by the frequent change of governors and magistrates, who were obliged, said he, to resign their authority before they had learnt how to make use of it. This reason has its weight. But in a state so unsettled as the Roman empire, where the first place seemed to be the reward of the most bold and daring, long commands might

might easily have endangered the safety of the prince.

His other plans, mentioned by Spartian, are certainly good and judicious. These were, that the important employments of the state should not be given to men unexperienced in them; that the chief magistrates in each province should be chosen out of those who had served the office of assessors; that no one should be an assessor in the province of which he was a native; and that, on the contrary, in Rome, on account of the eminent dignity of that capital of the empire, the administration of the public authority should be intrusted to none but Romans by birth. To the counsellors who composed the courts of justice, and who were now paid by the proconsuls or governors, he assigned stated salaries, saying, that a judge ought neither to give nor receive.

Such was Niger: by this short account of whose character and conduct we see how much the senate and people had reason to esteem him, and to desire him for their emperor.

He himself, seconding their desires, after sounding his principal officers and several of his soldiers, and finding them favourably disposed; knowing too, that he was beloved by the people of Syria, to whom, though so severe to his troops, he had always shewn great lenity and indulgence; He causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by his troops. Herod. l. II. he had always shewn great lenity and indulgence; assembled his legions near Antioch, in order to propose to them this great affair, or rather to have it finished at once by their ready acclamations. There, ascending his tribunal, he represented to the soldiers the deplorable state of the empire, shamefully put up to public sale, and bought by a man who had no sort of merit. “The Roman people,” continued he, “cry aloud for vengeance, and have already named their chief. What I propose to you is an arduous enterprise. But if, on one hand, it would be rash and imprudent to undertake it without cause;”

“ cause; on the other, it would be base and cowardly
 “ to reject the prayers of those who implore our
 “ assistance. I have therefore judged it necessary
 “ to consult you, and to know what you think
 “ most advisable to be done in this conjuncture.
 “ I shall be determined by your advice, and you
 “ shall share my fortune. For, if success crowns
 “ our undertaking, you will enjoy in common with
 “ me the glory and happiness resulting from it.”

The soldiers, and multitudes of the inhabitants of Antioch who had mixed with them, answered this speech with repeated acclamations, and immediately saluted him emperor and Augustus, and invested him with the purple and other ornaments of the imperial dignity, in the best manner that so hasty an election could admit of. The new emperor, attended by a numerous train, went directly to the chief temples of the city, to return thanks to the gods, and was conducted from thence to his house, which he found adorned with branches of laurel, civic crowns, and all the emblems of dignity which distinguished the habitation of the Cæsars.

He is ac-
 knowl-
 edg-
 e the au-
 thority
 over all the
 east.

This fortunate beginning was soon followed by still more promising events. All the provinces of Asia Minor, as far as the Ægean sea, approved the choice of the Syrian legions. The princes and satraps beyond the Euphrates and the Tigris congratulated Niger, and offered him their assistance. Ambassadors arrived daily at Antioch from various kings and nations, who sent to pay homage to their protector and master. Niger received their submissions, but refused their assistance, thinking himself firmly established, and making no doubt but that he should soon be acknowledged by the whole empire, without being obliged to draw his sword.

He sees him-
 self by an
 ill-timed
 security.

This security was the cause of his ruin. He ought immediately to have assembled all his forces, and have marched to Rome; there to enable the senate and people freely to display their sentiments

in his favour, and complete, by a solemn and authentic deliberation, and advantage which he had as yet only in the secret inclination of some, and the turbulent disposition of others. Instead of this diligence, absolutely necessary in his situation, Niger, with a negligence inconceivable in one who is said to have been so prudent and experienced a commander, remained quite inactive, and amused himself with giving games and shews to the Antiochians, who were mad after those diversions. We should be less surprised at this, if we relied upon the judgment of Dion Cassius, who represents Niger as a man of little genius and solidity; so intoxicated by prosperity, that he suffered himself to be called the new Alexander, and boasted that his right to the empire was at the point of his sword. But I have already observed that Dion is not a writer on whose impartiality we can depend. However that may be, Niger, by this negligence, gave an active and vigilant rival opportunity, first to prevent, and afterwards to destroy him. This rival was Severus, of whom history has transmitted the following account.

L. Septimius Severus, whom we shall call only by this last name, was born at Leptis, a city of Africa, on the eleventh of April in the year of Rome 897, and of Christ 146. His father, whose name was M. Septimius Geta, was of an equestrian family. His two uncles by the father's side, M. Agrippa and Septimius Severus, were consuls. Severus was educated with care, and acquired a great knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues. At the age of eighteen, he gave proofs of the progress he had made in his studies, by public declamations. But other objects soon engrossed his attention, and literature was sacrificed to ambition and the love of pleasure. He came to Rome in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, who made him a senator. His youth was licentious, and even criminal. He was accused of adultery, but escaped, certainly better

Dion. ep. Vol.

Extraction, rise, &c. of Severus. Spart. Sec. 1—4.

Aurel. 146 Spart.

than

than he deserved, by the means of Didius Julianus, president of the tribunal, whom he afterwards deprived of the empire and of life.

He obtained successively of the same emperor, Marcus Aurelius, the offices of quæstor, tribune of the people, and prætor; in all of which he behaved with great care and diligence. After his quæstorship, he was appointed lieutenant to the proconsul of Africa, and, in that employment, seemed extremely jealous of his rank: for one of his countrymen, a plebeian, meeting him preceded by his lictors, and offering to embrace him as his ancient comrade, Severus caused him to be whipt, and ordered the public crier to tell him, "That a plebeian, like him, ought not to presume to embrace a lieutenant of the Roman people *."

Upon the expiration of his prætorship, he was sent into Spain, and afterwards appointed commander of a legion. He quitted this employment to go to Athens, in order, says the historian, to finish his studies, visit the antiquities of that city, and be initiated in the mysteries of Ceres. This journey might perhaps serve to conceal a disgrace into which it is probable enough that Severus fell under Commodus, together with all those who had shared the esteem of Marcus Aurelius. During his stay at Athens, he experienced the common fate of those that are disliked at court. He was slighted and even received some affronts from the Athenians, which he revenged, when emperor, by depriving them of several of their privileges: a remarkable instance of his revengeful and dangerous temper.

As he was extremely artful and intriguing, he got into favour again, and was governor of the country of Lyons during the war of the deserters. He is said to have made the people of that province love him. He was afterwards raised to the consulship, and, by the interest of the prætorian præfect

Iætus,

* *Legatum populi Romani homo plebeius temere amplecti noli*

Lætus, obtained one of the finest commands in the empire, that of the legions employed to defend the banks of the Danube in Pannonia. This was his situation at the time of the death of Commodus, and of the revolutions which followed that event.

He acknowledged Pertinax. But when he saw the empire shamefully sold to Didius Julianus, and the indignation of the public thereby raised to the highest pitch, he judged that the time was come when he might satisfy his long concealed ambition: for he had always aspired at the throne, and historians are full of pretended presages of his future elevation, that is to say, of proofs of his desires and hopes. Of these, I shall mention but one instance. Upon the death of his first wife Marcia, Dis. l. LXXIV. he married the celebrated Julia, a Syrian, for no Herod. l. II. other reason, but because the astrologers had told Spart. Sco. 1, 2, 3. her, that she was to marry a sovereign.

The wished-for moment being at length come, Severus resolved not to miss it. He had every He causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by the legions of Illyricum, which he commanded. thing necessary for the execution of his enterprise. He was bold and artful, inured to fatigue, and accustomed to bear cold, hunger, and every Herod. l. II. hardship: to which we may add, a quick-sightedness hardly to be equalled; and, to execute what he had resolved, an activity which may be compared almost to that of Cæsar.

In the present crisis, he saw at once the means by which he was most likely to succeed. The memory of Pertinax was dear to all, but particularly to the legions of Illyricum, at whose head he had signalized himself, under the reign of Marcus Aurelius, by many glorious exploits, and by every moral and military virtue. Severus, who now commanded those very legions, judged that the best way to secure them in his interest was to express a strong desire to revenge the death of Pertinax, which had already filled them with horror and indignation. He shaped his discourse accordingly to the chief officers, and they communicated

nicated the same impressions to their subalterns and soldiers. All approved of the design, and, to enable their chief to put it in execution, resolved to make him emperor.

The people of the country we are now speaking of, says our historian, are as heavy of mind as they are of body, large of size, strong, and fit for battle; but unable to see through artifice and cunning. Severus, on the contrary, was the most subtle of men, exceedingly insinuating, fair spoken, and ever ready to say the very reverse of what he thought, minding neither promises nor oaths any longer than it was his interest to keep them. Less cunning than his would have brought the legions and people of Illyricum to his point. Their ardour was extreme to proclaim emperor the avenger of Pertinax: and Severus, to make them think him the more in earnest, took the name of him whose cause they thus embarked in. He knew that this name would recommend him as strongly to the Romans, as to his army. He was declared emperor at Carnuntum, or at Sabaria *, towards the end of April, or in the beginning of May. The governors and troops of the neighbouring provinces, as far as the Rhine, followed the example of those of Illyricum. Severus had taken care to secure them by proper negotiations. But what helped him most of all was, the quickness of his march, and the rapidity of his successes.

*Spart. 5.
Vict. Epit.*

Herod.

He pre-
pares to
march
towards
Rome.
His speech
to his
army.

The moment he was elected, he resolved to set out directly for Rome, at the head of his army: and accordingly, having assembled his troops, he made a speech to them to the following effect: “The just indignation with which the heinous
“crime committed at Rome by a set of men, un-
“worthy of the name of soldiers, now fires your
“breasts, is a proof of your fidelity to your em-
“perors, and of your religious respect for the oath
“you

* Both cities of Pannonia.

“ you take to them. I have always professed the
 “ same sentiments. You know it. Submissively
 “ attached to the heads of the empire, I never
 “ thought of the high rank to which your suf-
 “ frages have raised me : nor do I now feel with-
 “ in me any desire so strong as that of complet-
 “ ing speedily a revenge, as just in itself, as it
 “ will be pleasing to you.

“ The honour of the empire is likewise another
 “ motive which spurs us on. Not to retrieve it,
 “ would be forfeiting our own characters. For-
 “ merly, when governed by great and good prin-
 “ ces, its majesty was respected throughout the
 “ whole universe. Even the faults of Commodus
 “ seemed mitigated by his youth, the nobility
 “ of his birth, and the memory of his father’s
 “ actions. We pitied him, more than we hated
 “ and chose to impute to his ministers, and
 “ counsellors, all that was blameable in his con-
 “ duct. From the hands of Commodus, the em-
 “ pire passed into those of a venerable old man,
 “ whose virtues and great achievements are
 “ deeply imprinted in your hearts. This was the
 “ prince whom the prætorians could not bear,
 “ and whom they most infamously murdered.

“ He who has madly bought the sublime place
 “ vacated by that parricide, will certainly not be
 “ able to resist you. His money is his only merit ;
 “ he is hated by the people ; and all his defence
 “ is a few soldiers connected with him by mutual
 “ guilt, enervated by the pleasures of the city,
 “ and whom you surpass as much in number as
 “ you do in valour.

“ Let us then march boldly on : let us deliver
 “ Rome from the shameful yoke which tarnishes
 “ all her honours ; and when we are once masters
 “ of the capital and sanctuary of the empire, the
 “ rest of the world will submit with pleasure.”

This speech was received with great applause. The soldiers immediately gave Severus the names

in Italy
without
any oppo-
sition.
Dr. 1.
LXXIII.
Herod. 1.
II. Spart.
Did. 5—8.
& *Sev. 5.*

of Augustus and Pertinax, and declared their readiness to follow him: and he, unwilling to give them the least time to cool, ordered every thing to be got ready instantly for their march. After distributing among them provisions for several days, he put his troops in motion, marching himself at their head, attended by a guard of six hundred chosen men, who never lost sight of him, nor put off their cuirasses, until they were arrived at Rome. His diligence and activity were such, that he would have regretted the loss of a single moment. He stopt no where; scarcely allowing his men to halt, or to take a few minutes necessary rest. He himself set them the example; distinguishing himself in any thing from the rest of his soldiers, but readily assisting them in their most laborious toils. His tent was those of the common men, and his food the same as theirs. Soldiers so governed are capable of any thing. Their fatigue became a pleasure to them, when shared by their general. He soon crossed Pannonia and the Alps, and arrived in Italy before it was known there that he had begun his march.

Italy was then quite an open country. From the time of Augustus's changing the constitution of the state, all the forces of the empire were distributed in the frontier provinces; and Italy, in the center, enjoying a profound peace and uninterrupted tranquillity, had forgot the science of war. Severus entered it without opposition. The people were struck with terror at his approach, at the same time that they were pleased to see him come to revenge the death of Pertinax. He was received every where with joy, and the inhabitants of the cities near which he passed came out to meet him, crowned with flowers, and delivered to him the keys of their gates. Ravenna, in particular, immediately surrendered to him, and put him in possession of the fleet riding there.

Didius

Didius, whom the revolt of Niger had filled with terror, was still more alarmed when he learned that Severus had been proclaimed emperor: an event he no way expected. He saw at once, if we believe Spartian, what the consequence must be; and said, that neither he, nor Niger should reign long; but that the supreme power would fall to the lot of Severus, who would deserve, more than either of them, the hatred of the senate, and of every man in the empire. However, resolving to defend himself to the last extremity, he had recourse to the authority of the senate, of which he was master, and caused a decree to be published, by which Severus was declared an enemy to his country, as were also his soldiers, if they did not abandon him within a limited time. A solemn deputation of persons of consular rank was likewise sent, to try to persuade them to quit the party of their rebellious leader, and acknowledge the emperor whom the senate had approved of. A successor too was appointed to supersede Severus: as if it had been as easy to deprive him in fact of his command, as to declare him divested of it. Besides these public steps, Didius tried the more private means of assassination to get rid of his rival, employing to that end a centurion named Aquilius, who had already given proofs of his abilities by the murder of several senators.

Didius had no troops under his command but the prætorians, and perhaps the city guards, of which last historians make no mention, probably because they were generally directed by the prætorians, who were their superiors both in rank and number. We may indeed add the soldiers of the fleet at Misenum: but as they were not used to fight on land, their assistance could avail but little. In this situation, it would have been almost impossible for Didius to keep the field against Severus: and therefore I cannot look upon his shutting himself up in the city as an act of cowardice.

Feeble and
vain efforts
of Didius
to maintain
his ground.
Spart. Nig.
23.

He endeavoured to put it in a state of defence, repaired the fortifications, began to form a camp in one of the suburbs, and surrounded the palace with ditches and barricades, to secure a final retreat in case of need, and avoid falling into the same misfortune as Pertinax, who, probably, might not have perished as he did, if the assassins had not found so easy an entrance to him. Didius also thought to make use of the elephants which had been brought to Rome for the shews; and, with that view, he armed them as for war, hoping that the enemy's cavalry would be thrown into confusion by their smell and uncommon appearance.

These poor resources afforded matter of laughter to the people and senate, who saw with pleasure how vain they would prove. But the most ridiculous thing of all was, to see the wretched troops on which Didius founded all his hopes perform their exercise. Want of discipline, and idleness, had made the prætorians quite forget the operations of war; and if they were commanded for any works, as effeminate as they were ignorant, they hired others in their places. The marines, transported to an element they had not been used to, could not do what they never had learned. All Rome was in a bustle, and looked like a place of war: nothing was seen but horses, elephants, arms, soldiers of different corps and different kinds, and vast confusion, to very little purpose.

Didius himself was sensible of the great inequality of his forces compared to those of his adversary: and, to complete his misfortune, he could not depend upon the fidelity of the prætorians, though he loaded them with donations, and even plundered the temples to try to satisfy their greediness. He likewise thought to make them a pleasing sacrifice, by putting to death Lætus and Marcia, the chief authors of the murder of Commodus. He accused Lætus of favouring Severus, which might possibly
be

be true, and thought himself thereby released from all obligation to him for having saved him from being tried for treason in the reign of Commodus. But though he spared nothing to secure the affection of the prætorians, he found by experience that those who are connected only by mutual guilt are not to be relied on: for he was abandoned, as we shall see, by the very men whose favour he had bought so dear. The deputies from the senate to Severus's army gave the signal for desertion, by joining him they were sent to oppose.

Didius, unable to resign quietly a dignity he plainly saw he could no longer hold, tried every expedient that could be thought of. He had recourse to the abominable rites of magic, and sacrificed children to render the infernal gods propitious to him. He proposed to the senate to send out the vestals and colleges of priests to meet his enemy, and desired him to retire; as if their presence could have stopt an army rather of barbarians than Romans. But this was refused; and one of the augurs, a consular, told him to his face, "That he who could not resist his enemy by force of arms, was not fit to be emperor." Didius was so provoked at this answer, that he is said to have assembled his troops, with a design to massacre the whole senate, for having seemed to approve of it. But, upon cooler reflection, he thought it more advisable to enter into negotiation with Severus, and to offer him a share in the empire.

I cannot omit here an odd incident, which was looked upon as an omen of what now happened. One of Didius's names was *Severus*. When he was proclaimed emperor, the herald calling him only *Didius Julianus*, "Add *Severus*," cried he." The senators recollected this when he desired them to make Severus his colleague, and thought their complying therewith an accomplishment of that, as they understood it, prophetic expression.

Trivial

Trivial as this observation is, it seemed of consequence to those who made it.

Accordingly the senate declared Severus emperor jointly with Didius, who immediately sent Tullius Crispinus, one of his prætorian præfects, with the decree, to his rival, now his colleague; and at the same time he acknowledged for third prætorian præfect, the person whom Severus had nominated to that post.

All these steps were taken in vain. Severus was determined to reign alone, and a partner was what he by no means approved of. However, he consulted his soldiers, though sure before-hand that they would be of his mind, and by their advice, answered, that he would always be Didius's enemy, but never his companion. He thought too, or at least pretended to think, that this offer was only a pretence to cover a treacherous design, and that Crispinus was in reality sent to assassinate him. Upon this suspicion, well or ill grounded, he ordered him to be killed.

Severus
prevails
with the
prætorians
to abandon
Didius.

In the mean time Severus drew near Rome, and, like Sylla, who was both fox and lion together, and still more to be feared for his cunning than his strength, secretly undermined his adversary, and undertook so to corrupt the already wavering fidelity of the prætorians, as to become their master without opposition. With this view, he detached several of his soldiers, who, taking different roads, by his direction, entered Rome at different gates, with their arms concealed under the dress they used to wear in time of peace. These emissaries were privately instructed by Severus, to promise the prætorians in his name, that they should all be pardoned, provided they delivered up to him the murderers of Pertinax. The prætorians, believing them, seized those who had killed Pertinax, secured them in prison, and sent notice of it to Silius Messala, who was then consul.

Didius

Didius made a few more wretched attempts to extricate himself from the imminent danger that surrounded him on all sides. He convened the senate, but received no answer from them: he then ordered the gladiators at Capua to take arms; and wrote to Pompeianus, offering to make him his partner in the empire; but Pompeianus was too prudent to accept of his proposal: and at last, finding nothing succeed, he shut himself up in the palace with one of his prætorian præfects and his son-in-law, and, weary of struggling against his adverse fortune, resolved there to wait his fate.

The senate who had always hated him, seeing that thus abandoned by all, he likewise abandoned himself, met in consequence of a summons from the consuls, and unanimously declared Didius deposed from the empire, sentenced him to death, declared Severus emperor, and, by the same decree, appointed divine honours to Pertinax. I have already said how Didius was killed. Thus was Severus, conqueror without drawing a sword, proclaimed emperor at Rome, whilst he was yet at a considerable distance from it.

Though the Romans expressed great seeming zeal to honour Severus, and celebrate his accession to the throne, yet, in reality, they felt much more uneasiness than joy. All of them had cause to fear his anger. The senate had lately passed a furious decree against him: the people had plainly shewn their inclination for Niger; and the prætorians were conscious of the enormity of their crimes. Severus, on his side, was far from lessening their terror; for, though Didius was now no more, he still pursued his march towards Rome with all his troops in battle array, with the same precautions as if he had been in an enemy's country.

The senate sent a solemn deputation of an hundred of their members to carry him the decree of his election to the empire. They met him at Inter-

Death of Didius. The senate acknowledges Severus emperor.

All Rome trembles at Severus.

Spart. Hist. 6.

Deputation of an hundred senators, who wait on him at Interamna.

amna *, where he received them with a mixture of mildness and severity. For, on one hand, he ordered them to be searched before they were admitted to his presence, and then gave them audience surrounded by his guards, all armed, himself being likewise in armour: and on the other, he presented each of them with seventy-five pieces of gold, and gave them leave, either to depart immediately, or to stay, and return to Rome with him.

He dis-
bands the
prætorians.
Dio. l.
LXXXII.
Herod. l.
II.
Sept. Sev.
6, 7.

As to the prætorians, he resolved to do justice on them before he entered the city. To this end, he first ordered all those to be executed who had imbrued their hands in the blood of Pertinax; and afterwards, that their whole corps might be absolutely in his power, and not a man of them dare to resist, he had recourse to the following stratagem: After giving out that he intended to continue them in the service, he ordered them to come to him without their arms. As the Roman soldiers never wore arms but when it was expected there would be occasion to use them, the prætorians, not suspecting any design against them, readily obeyed. But when they were drawn up before the emperor's tribunal, the Illyrian legions, completely armed, surrounded them all at once.

Severus then, with a menacing look and angry voice, reproached them in most bitter terms for murdering Pertinax, selling the empire, and, like cowards and traitors, abandoning Didius. He concluded with telling them, that though no punishment could be adequate to the enormity of their crimes, yet, out of his great clemency, he spared their lives. But he broke them all with ignominy, and commanded them to retire directly an hundred miles from Rome, solemnly declaring, that whoever among them should be found within that distance of the city, should irremissibly be put to death.

The

* *now Terni, in the Duchy of Spoleto.*

The prætorians were thunder-struck: but being unable to resist, they suffered Severus's troops to strip them of all their military badges, and went away covered with shame, and half-naked.

Severus, who always guarded against every event, foreseeing that the incensed prætorians might possibly return to their camp, and recover their arms, ordered some of his own troops to take possession of it the moment they left it, and thereby deprived them of that resource, in case they had thought of attempting it.

After this act of justice and of policy, Severus ^{Makes his} made his entry into Rome in so formidable a ^{entry into} manner as filled every one with terror. It is true, ^{Rome.} he laid aside his military habit at the gate of the city, and, alighting from his horse, put on his gown, and walked on foot. But his army accompanied him in order of battle, with their colours flying, as if they had been entering a city taken by storm. Dion Cassius, who was present, says he never beheld a finer sight. The streets were hung with the richest tapestry, and strewed with flowers: every house was illuminated, and the whole city perfumed with sweet odours. The citizens, clad in white, made the air resound with shouts of joy, and vows for the prosperity of their new emperor. The troops marched in great order, and carried the standards of the prætorians reversed. The senators, cloathed with the ornaments of their dignity, surrounded the prince, whilst the greedy eyes of an infinite multitude of spectators were all fixed upon him. They shewed him to one another, and examined whether his high fortune had made any alteration in his deportment and behaviour. All praised his activity, his noble confidence, and his singular good luck in having done such great things without being obliged to draw his sword. The sight was, certainly, a very fine one. But sixty thousand soldiers, (for Severus's army could not be less than that number) who

who took whatever they liked without paying for it, and threatened to plunder the city if any one dared to resist, are terrible guests indeed.

Severus, thus accompanied, went up to the capitol, visited some other temples, and then retired to the palace. The soldiers took up their quarters in the temples and porticos, and particularly in the places that were nearest the emperor.

He goes to the senate, and makes fine promises, which he did not keep.

The next day Severus went to the senate, attended not only by his guards, but by a great number of his friends, whom he had armed, and who entered with him. His speech had nothing in it that savoured of his formidable military appearance. He set forth the motives which had determined him, said he, to take upon him the care of the empire, and alledged his desire to revenge the death of Pertinax, and the necessity he was under of guarding against the assassins employed by Didius to take away his life. He proposed an excellent plan of government, which, he said, was that he intended to follow, and promised to consult the senate in all things. Marcus Aurelius was to be his model, and he purposed not only to revive his name, but also the wise and modest conduct of Pertinax. He expressed a great abhorrence of all arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings, and protested, that he not only would never give ear to informers, but would punish them. He bound himself by an oath to respect the lives of the senators, and, as if he had intended to tie up his own hands in that important point, he ordered a decree to be passed, upon the motion of Julius Solo, of whom we have spoken elsewhere, by which it was said, that it should not be lawful for the emperor to put any senator to death without the consent of the senate; with the addition of this farther clause, that such emperors as acted otherwise, those who obeyed them therein, and their children, should be treated as public enemies.

This

This was saying and doing too much to be believed. Accordingly Herodian observes, that the discerning part of the senators, and those who had been long acquainted with Severus, gave no credit to his fair promises, knowing how deeply he could dissemble, and at any time put on the mask that best suited his interest. Their fears proved but too just: for no emperor ever put to death a greater number of senators than Scverus; and among them was that very Julius Solù, who, at his desire, moved for the decree which was to have secured their lives.

One of his first cares was to honour the memory of Pertinax. He had set out with declaring himself his avenger, and his demonstrations of zeal for that popular cause had greatly contributed to pave his way to the empire. When emperor, he pursued the same plan. He put in execution the decree of the senate, by which Pertinax was ranked among the gods, and consecrated to him a temple, and a college of priests. He ordered, that his name should be recited among those of the princes whose acts were annually sworn to; that his statue, of gold, should be carried to the circus in a chariot drawn by elephants; and that a throne enriched with gold should be placed for him at all public shews. As the last honours had not been paid him with the solemnity due to his rank, Severus celebrated his funeral obsequies with a magnificence of which Dion Cassius has left us a description, and which, though in the main like that of Augustus, of which I have given an account in the reign of Tiberius, was, in many respects, so different from it, that a relation of this can hardly be thought a mere repetition of the other.

He honours the memory of Pertinax, and causes his funeral rites to be performed with great magnificence.

Upon a tribunal of stone, erected in the middle of the forum, was raised another of wood, and over that was placed a kind of peristyle, adorned with gold and ivory, in which was a bed embellished in the same manner, surrounded with heads of terrestrial

terrestrial and aquatic animals, and covered with purple embroidered with gold. Upon this bed was laid the effigies of the prince, in wax, cloathed with the triumphal robe; and by it stood a beautiful child, who, with a fan made of peacocks feathers, kept off the flies, as if the prince had only been asleep. When the image was exposed to view, the emperor arrived, followed by the senators and their wives, all in mourning. The ladies were seated in the porticos round the forum, and the men in the open air.

Then began the procession, in which were carried, first, the images of all the illustrious Romans from the most ancient times. These were followed by choirs of children and youths, who sung plaintive hymns in honour of Pertinax. Next appeared representations of all the nations subject to the empire, characterized by their particular dresses. After these came the inferior officers of the courts of justice, the heralds, and public criers. The procession was opened, as I said just now, with the images of kings, magistrates, generals, and princes. Now came those of private persons who had distinguished themselves either by their actions, their doctrine, or inventions useful to society. After these marched in order the troops, both horse and foot, and the horses used at the games in the circus, followed by the offerings of spices, perfumes, rich stuffs, and other things, which the emperor, the senators and their wives, the most distinguished of the Roman knights, the cities and nations of the empire, and the several colleges of Rome, had destined to be burnt on the funeral pile with the body, or representation, of the prince: and, lastly, was carried an altar adorned with gold, ivory, and precious stones.

After this procession had crossed the forum, Severus ascended the tribunal for harangues, and read a funeral oration in honour of Pertinax. He was
often

often interrupted by the cries and groans of the assembly, expressing their love for him, and their grief for his death; and these lamentations increased as the discourse drew towards a conclusion; and still more when the funeral-bed began to be removed. All this was part of the ceremony.

The pontiff and magistrates took up the bed, and delivered it to the Roman knights who were to carry it. The senators marched before it, the emperor followed; and, during the whole procession, numbers of instruments, accompanied with voices, expressed the most melancholy sounds, which were intermixed with every action that could denote excess of grief. In this order they arrived at the field of Mars.

r A pile was erected there in the form of a square tower, decorated with statues and ornaments of gold and ivory. On the top of this pile was placed the gilded chariot which Pertinax had been wont to use on days of ceremony. In this chariot were put all the rich offerings mentioned before, and in the middle thereof was the funeral-bed. Severus and the relations of Pertinax went up to it, and kissed the effigies of the deceased prince. Afterwards, the emperor seated himself on a high tribunal, and the senators on other seats prepared for them, at a proper distance from the pile. The magistrates and Roman knights, in their proper dresses, together with the soldiery, both horse and foot, then performed several evolutions round about the pile, and dances varied according to their different stations: after which the consuls set fire to the pile, and at the same time an eagle was let fly from the top of it, which was supposed to carry to heaven the soul of the deceased emperor.

Severus made no long stay at Rome; the exigency of affairs, and the war with Niger requiring his presence elsewhere: but whilst he did stay there, he was not idle. He delivered himself from all fear of Didius's friends, by proscribing and putting them

to

to death. He endeavoured to gain the affections of the people and of the troops by donatives of money. He took effectual measures for supplying the city with provisions, of which there began to be a scarcity through the bad administration of the late times. He heard the complaints of those that were oppressed by the governors of their provinces, and punished the guilty with rigorous justice. He married his daughters to Ætius and Probus, both of whom he appointed consuls, and loaded them with riches. He chose out of his Illyrian legions the bravest and most comely men, and formed them into new prætorian cohorts, in the room of those he had cashiered. In this, he imitated the example of Vitellius, who, after his victory over Otho, did the same: and he had likewise a motive of prudence and policy, which was, to reward those to whom he owed the empire. However, this step was not approved of, as Dion Cassius testifies; it being a custom of so long standing as to be now become a law, not to admit into the body of the prætorians any but natives of Italy, Spain, Macedonia, or Noricum; the inhabitants of these countries being, both in their make and temper, most like the Romans: whereas the Pannonians and Illyrians, half-barbarians, terrified the people of Rome by their gigantic stature, frightful looks, and savage manners.

All that I have hitherto related was done almost instantly by this prince, than whom no one was more active, and whom the circumstances of things likewise obliged to use all the dispatch he could.

He had still another very important point to settle, before he could safely engage in the war with Niger. It was necessary that he should be sure of not being disturbed, whilst his forces should be fighting in the east, by Albinus*, commander

of

New prætorians.
Dio. § Herod.

Severus thinks of securing himself against Albinus.
Dio. l. LXXII.
Herod. l. II.

* Dion Cassius places the nomination of Albinus to the title of *Cæsar*, towards the beginning of Severus's taking up arms, and

of the legions in Britain, who was not unlikely to aspire at the empire. And here it may not be improper to give some account of the rise of Albinus, whom we shall soon see act a great part.

Decimus Clodius Albinus was born at Adrumetum in Africa, of a father, whose name was Ceionius Postumus, or Posthumius, remarkable for his virtues, but not rich. The name of Albinus was given him, because at his birth, he appeared whiter than new-born children generally are. His father's names, and his own, gave him room to derive his pedigree from the Ceionian family, which had produced Verus Cæsar, and the emperor Verus colleague of Marcus Aurelius; and also from the Posthumian family, illustrious even in the time of the republic. Whatever truth there may have been in this pretension, it is certain that he passed for a man of distinguished birth. But at the time I am now speaking of, when there were scarce any remaining of the ancient Roman nobility, a man might be reckoned very noble without going far back for his ancestors.

Albinus was instructed in the Greek and Latin languages, but made no great progress in them. From his infancy, his taste was for arms. However, the author of his life mentions two works of his writing, the one, a treatise on Agriculture, which he is said to have understood extremely well; the other, a collection of Milesian tales, a licentious performance, suited to the character of the author, who was excessively debauched with women.

He was passionately fond of war, and liked no one line of Virgil so well as the following:

Arma

and before his leaving Pannonia. I here follow Herodian. It is easy to reconcile these two authors, by supposing that the negotiation between Severus and Albinus was begun at the time Dion speaks of, but that it was not concluded until after Severus was actually master of Rome.

Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis,
ÆN. ii. ver. 314.

With frenzy seiz'd, I run to meet th' alarms,
Resolv'd on death, resolv'd to die in arms.
DRYDEN.

He repeated incessantly with his school-fellows the first part of this verse, and, as soon as he was old enough, he entered into the service.

He succeeded therein, and merited the esteem of the emperor Antoninus. Having raised himself by degrees, he commanded the army in Bithynia when Avidius Crassus revolted against Marcus Aurelius. On this important occasion, he shewed his fidelity to his prince, and hindered the evil from spreading farther, as it would otherwise have done over all Asia. Under Commodus, he distinguished himself in several battles against the barbarians, both on the Danube and on the Rhine; and lastly, he was appointed commander of the legions in Britain.

As this employment was seldom given to any but persons of consular rank, I am inclined to think that Albinus had been consul. He seems to have gone through the offices of the civil magistracy somewhat late, but rapidly. He was excused from serving the quaestorship, and was edile but ten days, because it was necessary he should go to the army. His praetorship was illustrated with games and combats of gladiators which Commodus gave the people for him. I cannot say in what year he was consul: but, by the order of events, it should seem to have been towards the end of the reign of Commodus.

Whilst he governed Britain, he received a singular favour from Commodus, if Capitolinus may be credited. That emperor wrote to him, with his own hand, a letter by which he gave him leave to assume,

assume, if he saw occasion, the title of Cæsar, and all the ensigns of that dignity. Capitolinus gives at full length the pretended original letter of Commodus, and two harangues of Albinus to his soldiers, in which that general mentions the permission which had been given him, and the reasons why he had not made use of it. If the authenticity of this letter, and of these harangues, was properly attested, we could not well deny the fact, improbable as it is, and even notwithstanding the silence of Dion Cassius and Herodian. But they are tacked to such numbers of evident falsities, and contain so many things incompatible with history, that M. de Tillemont thinks they may very justly be suspected. All that can be supposed most favourable to them, and most capable of excusing Capitolinus, is, that Albinus, when he found himself engaged in a war with Severus, forged them himself to give his cause the better gloss, and then published them. But whoever considers attentively the history of the times in question, and is at the pains of laying together the several circumstances of things, will soon be convinced that these pieces are the work of some impostor.

We shall therefore only say with Dion Cassius and Herodian, that Severus, judging what Albinus would do, by what he saw he was able to do; and considering that a man who was skilled in war, at the head of a powerful army, his superior in point of birth, and his equal in dignity, might possibly take advantage of the present opportunity, to make himself master of the city of Rome and the empire, whilst he and Niger should be fighting in the east, undertook to amuse him with a pretended association, and, by decorating him with the title of Cæsar, to make him think that their interests were the same. Accordingly he wrote him a friendly letter, desiring him to share the weight of the government with him, adding, that, as he was old, worn

Severus
gives him
the title of
Cæsar.
Dion & He-
rod.

out by frequent fits of the gout, and had no children but what were very young, he stood in need of such a support as him, of an assistant illustrious by his birth and exploits, and whose yet vigorous age could bear the greatest toils and fatigue.

Scarce a word of all this was really true. Albinus was but little younger than Severus; and this last exaggerated his infirmities, to make the other fall the more readily into his snare. Albinus was taken in it. He was open, credulous, not given to distrusts, and thought himself happy in having thus offered to him without the least trouble or hazard, what must otherwise have cost him battles and great dangers. He therefore gladly accepted of Severus's proposal, who, on his side, omitted nothing that could give his deceitful favour an appearance of sincerity. He caused the agreement between him and Albinus to be ratified by a decree of the senate: coined money with the stamp and name of the new Cæsar: appointed him his colleague in the consulship for the next year: ordered statues to be erected to him; and, in short, granted him all the distinctions of honour that could flatter a vain and weak mind. These artifices having succeeded, Severus, free from all fear of Albinus, and having now but one affair to manage, turned all his thoughts and efforts against Niger.

He pre-
pares to at-
tack Niger.
Spart. Sev.
S. & Nig. 5.
¶ Herod.

He had already made very great preparatives. All Italy furnished him with soldiers. The troops left in Illyricum were ordered into Thrace. The fleets of Ravenna and Miscnum were employed to carry the armies of Italy over to Greece. Legions were sent into Africa, to guard that country, and prevent Albinus's invading it from Egypt and Cyrenaicum, of which he was master; lest by getting possession of that country, he should have it in his power to distress Rome for want of provisions. Severus neglected nothing, knowing that he had to deal with a powerful enemy, who, if he had suf-
fered

ferred himself to be lulled asleep at first by the seducing charms of an unexpected fortune, had soon been awakened, and was preparing for war with equal skill and activity.

It must seem odd that Severus, while he was making these formidable preparations against Niger, never once mentioned him, either in the senate, or before the people. This silence was, doubtless, political and affected, on account of the situation of affairs, which seemed to him to require great circumspection. His behaviour towards the wife and children of his competitor was equally cautious. He had found them at Rome when he arrived there: the suspicious Commodus having made it a rule always to keep as hostages, near his person, the families of those whom he entrusted with any great command. Severus took particular care to be master of Niger's wife and children: but, while the war lasted, he treated them with infinite distinction. He even carried his dissimulation so far, as to give out that, as both his sons were extremely young, he intended that Niger and Albinus should be his successors, in case he died before them: nor was he ashamed to record this barefaced lye, in his own life written by himself. All this seeming moderation was, in reality, the effect of fear. Severus did not rely much upon the fidelity of the Romans, nor did he take any great pains to deserve it. He knew that Niger had been called by the desires of the people, and was apprehensive that the same sentiments still subsisted in their hearts, especially as his rival had taken care to animate them by letters and edicts transmitted to Rome. He therefore set out, in order to attack Niger, without authentically notifying his designs, or getting them authorised by the senate. It must have been in the beginning of July that he left Rome, for he staid there but thirty days.

He sets out from Rome, without acquainting the senate for people with his design. Reason of this silence. *Spart, ibid. Herod. l. III.*

Spart. Nig. l. 4. & Capitol. Alb. 3.

Diog. ap. Val.

Spart. S. v. 6.

His soldiers mutiny.

Spart. Sev.
8. § 7. &
Dio. l.
XLVI.

* About
L. 55.

* L. 5: 10s.

Niger passes into Europe.
His strength.
J. ant. Sev.
6. § Nig. 5.

Dio. l.
LXXIII.
& *Herod. l.*
III. &
Spart. Sev.
8. & *Nig. 5.*

He had not marched above nine miles, when his soldiers mutinied on account of their first encampment. Seditions are the usual concomitants of civil wars. Severus had experienced one before, upon his arrival at Rome. The troops which entered that city with him pretended that they were intitled to ten * thousand sesterces a man, because, said they, Octavius Cæsar had given that sum to the troops that accompanied him to Rome, two hundred and forty years before. A small matter is sufficient for soldiers to found a demand on. However, Severus gave his men only the tenth part of what they demanded, *viz.* a thousand * sesterces. We are not told how he appeased this last sedition. Most probably it was by relinquishing some of his own rights as commander: for his behaviour towards the army was always weak and effeminate.

Severus, as we see, made great haste. His design was to carry the war at once into Asia: and with that view, even before he was master of Rome, he had sent Heraclius, one of his generals, to take possession of Bithynia. Niger saved Severus half his intended journey, by coming himself into Europe.

The whole east acknowledged him, as I said before, and he had under his command all the forces of the Romans in Asia minor, Syria, and Egypt. Æmilianus, proconsul of Asia, whose merit had been tried in the greatest employments and most important commands, was his chief general.

Niger, who thought at first that he should have no need of foreign succours, changed his mind when the danger drew near, and sent to desire auxiliaries of the kings of Armenia and Parthia, and of Atræ, a city of Mesopotamia, formerly besieged in vain by Trajan. The Armenian refused; declaring flatly that he intended to remain neuter. The Parthian, who had no regular troops, answered, that he would order his satraps to raise men and assemble forces

in their respective departments. Barsemius king of Atræ was the only person who sent any real assistance, and this consisted of a body of archers, but how many we are not told.

Niger, as we see, found but little help from the kings whom he had looked upon as his friends. But the Roman legions, the auxiliaries which always accompanied them, and the new levies raised in Antioch and Syria, the youth of which places enlisted eagerly under his banners, were sufficient to enable him to make even an offensive war. Accordingly, after giving orders for the safety and defence of all the passes and sea-ports of the countries under his obedience, he set forward, and arrived at Byzantium, where he was received with joy.

He purposed making his place of arms of that city, even then illustrious and powerful: and, if we believe the author of his life, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece submitted to his laws. The truth is, that he did not go beyond Perinthus*, and could not take even that city. By his advancing thither, it seems reasonable to suppose, that his design was to make himself master of all the European coast of Propontis, from Byzantium to the Hellespont, in order to command the two streights which are the nearest passage from Europe to Asia. But he missed his aim: for, meeting Severus's troops almost under the walls of Perinthus, he attacked them, but, not being able to get the better, he thought proper to retire to Byzantium. Thus Niger committed the first act of hostility: and, as several persons of distinction were slain on this occasion, Severus took advantage thereof to make the senate declare him a public enemy.

Notwithstanding this step, which plainly indicated an open rupture, a negotiation was set on foot between the two rivals; but in such manner as

shewed

* Afterward called *Heraclea*

A skirmish near Perinthus. the first act of hostility. Niger declared a public enemy.

Insecte and fruit. less neg. o. ciati m.

shewed their great inequality. Niger proposed that they should both reign as joint-emperors. Severus, on the contrary, assuming the stile of a superior, granted his adversary his life, but condemned him to banishment *. Probably, neither of them were sincere. The fate of arms could alone decide the quarrel.

The battle of Cyzicus in which Æmilianus Niger's general is defeated.

Severus, arriving in Thrace with the chief part of his forces, did not think proper to follow his enemy and besiege him in Byzantium, a place difficult to take, and which might have stopped him some time. He pursued his first design, which was to make Asia the seat of war : and accordingly he sent thither the best part of his troops, who landed safely near Cyzicus. There they met Æmilianus, who waited for them at the head of a numerous army. A battle ensued, in which Severus's generals gained the victory, Niger's army was destroyed or dispersed, and Æmilianus fled, first to Cyzicus, and afterwards to another city, where he was killed by order of the conquerors. They were authorized not to give him quarter, because he had been declared a public enemy, as well as his chief. His fate cannot be pitied, if it be true, as Herodian says it was reported, that he betrayed Niger, either out of some motive of family interest, and to save his children who were at Rome in the power of Severus ; or out of jealousy, and because he could not brook receiving orders from one who had been his equal. What might strengthen these suspicions, is, that Dion Cassius says he was too proud of his grandeur ; besides

*Pro. ap.
† al.*

* Spartian, who says this in his life of Severus, seems to suppose elsewhere, (Nig. 6, & 7.) that another plan of accommodation was proposed, by which Niger was to have been associated with Severus, but as his inferior in power ; and that it was Niger's fault that this agreement did not take place : not that he disliked it, but because he was ruled by the counsels of one Aurelian, whose interest it was to advise him not to recede from his first pretensions. This is plainly a contradiction in Spartian, and the whole of this account seems altogether improbable : for which reason I have not mentioned it in the text.

besides which he was related to Albinus, who then lived in good harmony with Severus.

Æmilianus's defeat seems to have obliged Niger to quit Byzantium, and repass the streights. We may reasonably suppose that Severus immediately invested the place his enemy had abandoned, and that the famous siege of that city, which lasted three years, began then.

Niger, putting himself at the head of the troops he found in Bithynia, sought revenge. Another battle was fought between Nicæa and Cius. Candidus commanded Severus's army, and Niger headed his own in person. The victory, more obstinately disputed than in the former engagement, was doubtful for some time, but was at last won by Severus's troops. The conquered Niger fled beyond mount Taurus.

He took care to fortify in the strongest manner he could the streights, or pass, of this mountain, which it was necessary to cross in order to go from Cappadocia into Cilicia. This pass was difficult by nature, the road being narrow, and bordered on one side by a high rock, and on the other by a steep precipice, down which heavy rains and torrents of water used to run. To these natural difficulties Niger added a new one, by building and throwing up works across the road, in such manner that a few soldiers posted there could easily stop an army. Depending on this barrier, at which he left a strong guard, Niger went to Antioch, to raise fresh troops, once more to try his fortune.

The victorious army of Severus, having over-run Bithynia, Galatia, and Cappadocia, without meeting with any resistance, was at once stopped short at the foot of mount Taurus. All their efforts to open themselves a passage were ineffectual. Their great numbers were of no service to them in a place where they could not spread in front; and the handful of men who defended it, by pouring down
thei;

Byzantium besieged by Severus.

The battle of Nicæa, in which Niger is overthrown.

The pass of mount Taurus, fortified by Niger, stops Severus's army for some time. *Herod. l. III.*

their darts, and rolling down great stones, repulsed their enemies as fast as they approached.

A violent storm throws down the fortifications.

After several fruitless attempts, Severus's men began to despair of success, when a violent storm fell suddenly in the night, and did what their arms were not able to effect. The torrents of water which descended from the mountain broke down all Niger's works, and his people, disheartened by this unexpected disaster, were so confounded, that they knew not what to do. They thought they had no resource left, that their post was no longer tenable, and that they were on the point of being surrounded and hemmed in. Guided by these fears, they fled. On the other hand, Severus's troops, persuaded that the gods were on their side, and removed all obstacles for them, took fresh courage, and, finding the pass unguarded, crossed the mountain at their ease, and entered Cilicia.

A third and last battle near Issus. Niger defeated and killed.

Upon this news Niger hastened to oppose the enemy with his new levies, among which were almost all the youth of Antioch. These troops were very zealous for him; but having neither been exercised nor experienced in the art of war, they were by no means comparable to the Illyrian army, which fought for Severus. Niger encamped near the city of Issus, on the very spot where Alexander the Great had formerly vanquished Darius. The event was again the same. On both occasions the troops of the West triumphed over the people of the East.

I shall not attempt to give the particulars of the battle which was now fought between Niger on one side, and Severus's generals, Anulinus and Valerius, on the other. Dion Cassius and Herodian differ much in their accounts of it: and, upon comparing them, it is difficult not to think that Dion, or his abbreviator, has, erroneously, blended together the passage of mount Taurus and the battle of Issus. However, they both agree that this battle was very bloody, and decisive. Twenty thousand
of

of Niger's men were killed upon the spot, and he had no resource left but to fly to Antioch. He found that city in such consternation, that, without stopping at all, he continued his route, with a design to take shelter among the Parthians: but a party of horse sent after him by the conquerors, overtook him before he had passed the Euphrates, killed him, and cut off his head, which they carried to Severus, who sent it to his army then before Byzantium, which still held out for Niger, with orders to stick it upon the point of a spear and shew it to the besieged, to let them see that all farther resistance would be vain and useless. From Byzantium it was sent to Rome, as the token and trophy of Severus's victory. Spart. Nig. 6.

The several events of the war between Severus and Niger are not dated in the original authors from whom we have taken this account. They followed one another closely, and, in all, did not take up two years. Severus left Rome, as I said before, in the month of July of the year of Christ 193, and Niger was killed in the beginning of the year 195. A. R. 914-916.

Various judgments have been formed concerning Niger's merit. Severus accused him of being greedy after fame, deceitful in his proceedings, infamous in his morals, and madly guided by a foolish ambition, which made him aspire to the empire at an age when he ought rather to have thought of retiring from the world. This is the character given him by an enemy. Dion Cassius and Herodian speak of him as a man of no genius, who had neither great vices, nor great virtues. Spartian is more favourable to him. Niger, says he, after going through every station in the army, was a good soldier, an excellent officer, a great general, and an unfortunate emperor. According to this writer, it would have been better for the republic if Niger had conquered. He would probably have reformed several abuses which Severus either could not, or would

would not, correct. His views were extensive; he was resolute, without being stubborn, and was capable of mildness; not of that kind which is the effect of a pusillanimous effeminacy, but of that which is animated and supported by a vigorous courage. In effect, we cannot well entirely reject this character of Niger, if we remember that he was at the same time resolute in the maintaining of military discipline, and mild as a civil governor; so that he made the soldiers fear him, whilst he was greatly beloved by the people under him.

Spartian likewise assures us, that Niger cherished and revered the memory of the great and good emperors, and that he proposed for his models Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius; calling the others either effeminate or bad men. The smiles of fortune did not intoxicate him, if we believe Spartian; and he knew how to despise the praises which flattery always lavishes upon the great. When he was saluted emperor, a wit of those days composed his panegyric, and was going to recite it to him. "Write," said Niger, interrupting him *, "the praises of Marius, of Hannibal, or of some other great commander who is dead; and tell us what he did, that we may imitate him: for to praise the living is an idle task; especially to praise an emperor, who can punish, reward, proscribe, and condemn. As for me, I desire to please while I live, and to be praised when I am dead." These sentiments are very fine; and it is a pity they were not put to the trial. For want of this, it may be doubted whether they would have been proof against the seducing allurements of an uninterrupted and lasting prosperity.

An

* *Scribe laudes Marii vel Annibalis, vel alicujus ducis optimi vita functi, & dic quid ille fecerit, ut eum nos imitemur. Nam viventes laudare irrisio est, maxime Imperatores, a quibus speratur, qui timentur, qui præstare publice possunt, qui possunt necare, qui proscribere. Se autem vivum placere velle, mortuum etiam laudari.*

An honour which must be allowed him in preference to his rival, is, that he was present at the battles that were fought on his account, and did not trust to his generals in a matter of such high import to him. In the battles of Nicæa and Issus, he fought in person at the head of his armies. It is odd enough, that Severus was not present at any one of the three battles which decided his fate. I confess I am at a loss how to reconcile this behaviour with what we are told in praise of his valour.

I shall conclude this account of Niger with two actions of his, which I could not so well take notice of before. Domitian had forbid keeping in the military chest at the standard of the legions the money saved out of the pay of the troops, lest any general, minded to revolt, should make a bad use of that fund. Niger revived the ancient custom, and even made it a law, in order that those small savings of the soldiers might not be lost to their families, if they were killed in battle; and also that they might not become the profit of their enemies, in case they were plundered by them. This was an act of kindness towards those whom it immediately concerned, and of zeal for the honour and interest of the state. 10.

But I do not see how it is possible to commend, or even to excuse, the cruelty of his answer to the inhabitants of Palestine, whether they were Jews, or others who came after them. Being excessively loaded with heavy imposts, they begged of him to afford them some relief: "You would have me," said he, "lessen the taxes on your lands; and I should be glad to extend them to the very air you breathe." The most rapacious republican could not have said more.

Severus, who had not appeared much in the operations of the war, proved terrible after his victory. He banished Niger's wife and children, for whom he had until then expressed a great regard: Severus's cruelty after his victory. Spart. Sev. 9. Dio. ap. Val.

gard : and this rigorous treatment was but the prelude to the vengeance which he meditated. Of those who had sided with his enemy, such as only lost their estates and were banished, had reason to think themselves well off. Not only the men, but also the cities which had furnished Niger with money, either voluntarily, or by force, were taxed fourfold ; and this pretence was made such a handle of, that numbers who had never seen, nor had the least connection with Niger, were most cruelly oppressed. Forfeiture of estates, and pecuniary punishments, were not the only penalties inflicted by Severus ; for, according to Spartian, he put to death all the senators who had served as officers under his rival.

Of these, one had the courage to tell him to his face what all the world thought, and by bravely reproving him for the many bloody executions he had ordered, forced him to put some stop to his cruelty. This was Cassius Clemens, who, being arraigned before the emperor's tribunal, as a partizan of Niger, defended himself in these words : " I knew not," said he, " either you, or Niger. Chancing to be in the countries which declared for him, I was forced to follow the general torrent ; and that, at a time when the question was, not to make war against you, but to dethrone Didius. So far then I am not guilty towards you, since I meant no more than what you yourself have since done. Neither can you impute to me as a crime, that I did not leave the party I was then engaged in, and come over to yours. For you certainly would not have liked, that those who are now sitting with you to judge me, should have betrayed you, and have gone over to your enemy. Consider then, not persons, nor names, but the nature of the cause. Whatever condemnation you pronounce against us, you pronounce at the same time against yourself and your friends. Say
" not

“ not to this, that you have no judgment to fear.
 “ The public and posterity are judges whose sen-
 “ tence you cannot avoid; if you condemn in
 “ others what you have done yourself.” The
 justness of this reasoning was evident to all that
 heard it; and Severus did a kind of half-justice:
 to the accused, by confiscating only half his es-
 tate, and leaving him the rest.

A motive of interest and policy likewise hin-
 dered him from treating as enemies all who had
 favoured Niger. He had still a rival to destroy
 in the person of Albinus, and did not think pro-
 per to run the hazard of making him friends, by
 rendering himself odious. This was doubtless the *Spart. Sev.*
 reason why, of all the senators who had favoured ^{9.}
 Niger, but without taking up arms or fighting for
 him, he put to death only one, who had probably
 been more busy than the rest.

Severus was very far from being a generous *Spart. Nig.*
 enemy: and if he would not suffer a pompous in- ^{12.}
 scription on the basis of a statue of Niger at Rome
 to be erased, though his ministers advised him to
 demolish it, vanity was his motive; as appeared
 by his saying: “ Let it remain, that the world
 “ may know what an enemy I have conquered.”

Even the common soldiers thought they had *He. J.*
 every thing to fear from such a conqueror: and ^{111.}
 accordingly they fled in great numbers to the
 Parthians. Severus, sensible how much the em-
 pire suffered by their desertion, published an am-
 nesty in order to bring them back: but, notwith-
 standing that, many of them remained with the
 Parthians, who learnt of them both how to use,
 and how to make, the same arms as the Romans.
 This proved a great advantage to the Orientals
 in the wars they had afterwards with the Ro-
 mans; and was, in Herodian's opinion, the chief
 cause of the victories they gained over the succes-
 sors of Severus.

The

Herod.

The cities which had shewn any zeal for Niger partook of his disaster. Several of them had espoused his cause with great warmth; animated by those ancient jealousies which always agitated the small republics of Greece, and which, after making them fall a prey first to the Macedonians, and afterwards to the Romans, were not yet entirely extinguished. After the defeat of Æmilianus at Cyzicus, Nicomedia declared for Severus; and, out of hatred to the Nicomedians, Nicæa shewed a new affection for Niger. Battles were fought between these two cities, for a quarrel in which neither of them ought to have meddled. When Niger himself was conquered near Nicæa, the cities of Laodicea in Syria, and Tyr, rivals and enemies, the one of Antioch, and the other of Berytus, proclaimed Severus emperor, and destroyed the honours of Niger. They were soon punished for it; Niger sending into both those cities, whilst his enemy's armies were stopped at Mount Taurus, numbers of Moors, who, by his order, put all to fire and sword. Antioch, in its

Spart. Sev.
9.*Herod.**Spart.**Till-m. Sev.*
art. 16.*Herod.*

turn, felt the revengeful hand of Severus, who, when fixed in his power, deprived it of the privileges and title of a city, and subjected it as a mere village to the authority of Laodicea. It can scarcely be doubted, though historians do not say it, but that he treated Berytus and Nicæa with the same severity. The city of Naplousa, or the ancient Sichem, in Palestine, was likewise disfranchised for its attachment to Niger. To weaken the government of Syria, Severus dismembered from it Palestine, over which he appointed a separate governor. The city of Tyr, one of the first that declared for him, became the metropolis of this new government. In general, he was grateful to the cities which had suffered on his account, and assigned them funds to restore them to their former splendour. He imitated Sylla, and, like him, prided himself on knowing better than.

than any other, both how to be revenged on his enemies, and how to reward his friends.

Severus's rigorous treatment of the cities which had incurred his wrath, could not conquer the obstinacy of the Byzantines, even though the death of Niger had put an end to all their hopes. Their uncommon resistance must certainly have had some extraordinary cause: but our historians have not acquainted us with it.

Byzantium taken after a siege of three years. Dio.

We observed before, that Severus, or his generals, invested Byzantium as soon as Niger had left it. Probably the siege was not carried on with any great vigour while the war continued, and the armies of both sides kept the field. But when the defeat and death of Niger had delivered Severus from all fears, the reduction of Byzantium became his only, or at least his most important care, and he employed to that end all the naval forces of the empire. Until then, it seems to have been only blocked up by land.

Every one knows the advantageous situation of Byzantium, now Constantinople, upon the Bosphorus, or channel by which the waters of the Euxine sea enter into the Propontis. The current sets in towards the coast on which this city is built, and which, in that place, forms a bay, which is filled by one part of the water, and makes a fine harbour, whilst the rest follows with rapidity the direction of the channel. The violence of the current is such, that whoever is in it is forced to approach Byzantium, and, friend or foe, must pass under the walls of the city.

The walls next the sea were not very high. The sea itself, and its rocks, were a sufficient barrier. On the land side, care had been taken to fortify the city with good walls, high and thick, built of hewn stones, fastened together with cramps of iron; and the whole circuit was flanked with towers built
in

in such manner, and at such distances, that they defended each other.

Before or during the siege, the Byzantines had provided themselves with various machines of war, some of which hurled great beams and huge stones upon the besiegers, when they approached pretty near, and others threw at them showers of darts and smaller stones when they kept at a greater distance. Strong iron hooks fastened to chains were sunk at the foot of the wall, and then dragged up whatever they laid hold of. Most of these machines were the work of one Priscus, a Bithynian, and a famous engineer, whose dexterity was very near costing him his life, and afterwards saved it. For, being sentenced to death by Severus's generals after Byzantium was taken, he obtained his pardon of the emperor, who, looking upon him as a valuable man, was unwilling to lose him, and, in effect, found him extremely servicable.

The entrance of the harbour of Byzantium was barred by a chain : and upon the piers which advanced on each side into the sea, were built towers to prevent the approach of an enemy.

The bason of this harbour contained five hundred small vessels, most of them armed with pointed prows of iron : and some of them had two rudders, one at each end of the ship, and double complement of men ; by which means they could, at a moment's warning, and without tacking about, either advance upon the enemy, or fall back, according as the occasion required.

During a siege of three years, there were doubtless many assaults, many sallies, and many events of various kinds. But Dion Cassius, or his abreviator, has not entered into any detail of them, and has collected only those occurrences which seemed to him extraordinary, and interesting on account of their having in them somewhat of the marvellous.

In the account which he gives us, no mention is made of any action by land. We only see that the city was closely surrounded by the besiegers, and deprived of all communication with any other place.

By sea, our author tells us of a stratagem which was practised with success by the Byzantines to take some of the enemy's ships, even while they lay at anchor at some distance from the shore. They set to work men expert in diving, who, swimming under water, cut the cable, and drove into the body of the ship a strong nail fastened to a rope, the other end of which was in a Byzantine vessel. This last, being put in motion, dragged after it the other, which seemed to go of itself, without the help of oar or wind.

The resistance of the besieged was incredibly obstinate. As they lost a great many of their ships, to build others they took the timber of houses which were pulled down on purpose for that end, and the women cut off their hair to make ropes of. When their stores of darts and common stones were exhausted by the length of the siege, they made use of the stones of the walls of their theatres, which they demolished; and the statues, even of brass, which adorned their city, were not spared. They put them into their machines, and threw them at the enemy.

Nothing less than an evil beyond the power of man to palliate, could at last surmount their obstinate resolution. Famine tormented them; and though they had from time to time received supplies of provisions by the lucky temerity of some merchants, who, tempted by the prospect of gain, loaded ships with all the necessaries of life, and then let them float with the current of the sea, on purpose that the Byzantines might take them; yet their distress became at length so great, that the wretched inhabitants were reduced to the necessity of soaking thongs of leather, to try to extract

some kind of nourishment out of them ; and afterwards, to the utmost excess of human misery, that of devouring one another.

In this most shocking situation, the besieged still made a last effort. Those among them who yet retained a little strength and vigour, taking advantage of a storm which happened opportunely for their design, embarked on board some of their ships, and, determined either to perish or bring their fellow-citizens some kind of food, abandoned themselves to the mercy of the angry winds and waves. They luckily reached the opposite shore, and, landing at a place where they were not expected, plundered and carried off whatever they could lay hands on, in such quantities that they overloaded their ships. Their return was not so fortunate. They put to sea again in the same stormy weather, which either continued or had begun anew. But the besiegers, seeing them come so heavily laden that their vessels were almost ready to sink, resolved not to let them escape. There was no need to fight. Some of the Roman ships attacked them, and, with ease, either overset or sunk them all. Of the whole convoy, not a single vessel escaped.

The unhappy Byzantines beheld from their walls this destruction of their only hope : and the next day, the sea being calm, they saw still more plainly how great was their disaster ; the whole surface of the water being covered with pieces of ships and dead bodies, which the waves brought into their haven, or cast upon the shore. Driven to despair, and sinking under their misfortune, they then opened their gates, and surrendered at discretion. The conquerors had no mercy on them ; but massacred all the soldiers, magistrates, and commanders, and sent to the emperor, who was then in Mesopotamia, to know his pleasure with respect to the city.

Severus received the news of the reduction of Byzantium with transports of joy. He immediately

* Severus's
vigorous
treatment
of the By-
zantines.

ately assembled his soldiers, and said to them: "At length we have taken Byzantium." But the infinite satisfaction which this great success gave him, did not render him at all more susceptible of sentiments of clemency. On the contrary, he exercised every kind of rigour upon this unhappy city; he confiscated the estates of its inhabitants; deprived it of the privileges of a free city, and even of the title of city; and reducing it to the condition of a mere village, subjected it and its territory to the jurisdiction of the Perinthians, who insolently abused their power. He dismantled it, and entirely demolished all its fortifications; by which, says Dion Cassius, he did a great injury to the empire, which he thereby deprived of one of its strongest bulwarks, which kept all Thrace in awe, and commanded Asia and the Euxine sea. I saw it, continues that historian, in such a state of ruin and desolation, as would have made any one think it had been conquered, not by Romans, but barbarians.

Dion. & Herod. l. III.

Severus was, however, so far soothed some time after in favour of the Byzantines, and likewise of those of Antioch, by the intreaties of his son Caracalla, then an infant, that he mitigated part of the punishment to which he had condemned those two cities. But he did not restore Byzantium to its ancient privileges: on the contrary, he confirmed the order by which he had subjected it to the Perinthians: for we find by ecclesiastical history, that until the time when Constantine rebuilt Byzantium, and gave it his name, the bishop of this city acknowledged the bishop of Perinthus, or Hieraclea, for his Metropolitan. Now it is well known, that the church always conformed to the civil order in the distribution of her provinces and metropolises.

Spart. C. l. v. c. 1. & in S. 276.

Euseb. Hist. Vol. III. b. XI.

I said before, that Severus was in Mesopotamia when he learned the news of the taking of Byzantium. Love of glory, according to Dion Cassius, and desire of conquest, had carried him into that

Severus makes war upon several nations of the East.

Dio. l.
l. XXV.
Herod.
Spart. Sev.
9.

that country, in order to make war upon the Arabians, Adiabeniens, Osrhoeniens, and Parthians. It is true, indeed, that he had a plausible pretence for attacking these people, some of whom had assisted or at least favoured Niger; and the others had taken advantage of the civil wars of the Romans, to invade what they possessed beyond the Euphrates, and had laid siege to Nisibis. The reader will remember that Mesopotamia, of which Nisibis was one of the chief cities, after being conquered by Trajan, and abandoned by Adrian, was ceded anew to the Romans by the treaty concluded between them and the Parthians, under Marcus Aurclius and L. Verus.

Severus's war in the east was neither long, nor remarkable for any great exploits. After a laborious march over the sandy plains of Mesopotamia, in which he and his army were near perishing with thirst, he arrived at Nisibis, and stopped there. From thence he sent his generals with detachments into the enemies countries, which they ravaged, and took some of their cities; but without making any conquests that they held long. Severus could not then go in person upon these expeditions. He had another enterprize more at heart. This was, the destroying of Albinus; that he might thereby possess alone and without a rival the whole extent of the empire. His design in the east was therefore only to revive in those parts the terror of the Roman arms, which had not been seen there for thirty years, and to secure the tranquillity of that frontier, whilst he should be at a great distance from it, making war at the other extremity of the world. He boasted however of having subdued a very extensive territory in his eastern expedition; and flattery lavished on him all sorts of honours for it. A triumph was decreed him, which he refused, that he might not seem to triumph over his fellow-citizen, Niger. He was likewise decorated with the titles of Arabicus, Adiabenicus, and Parthicus. Spartian says, that Severus would not receive this last sur-
name.

name for fear of provoking the Parthians. Yet it is found in inscriptions made at the time we are speaking of.

The greatest thing that Severus did in this expedition, was his securing to the Romans the possession of Nisibis, a place of great importance in those countries, and a barrier against all the barbarous nations of the east. He left in it a strong garrison, gave the command of it to a Roman knight, and distinguished it with titles and privileges. It is plain that he designed to make it his place of arms for the future wars he intended to carry on in those parts, when he should be more at leisure to attend to them. Dion Cassius blames Severus's conduct in this respect, on account of the great expence of keeping Nisibis. But we shall find that Severus was a better judge than Dion of the importance of this place.

Not to omit any part of what has been transmitted to us by that historian, I shall add here two facts, which are not very important in themselves.

Severus, elated with his successes, looked upon himself as superior to all mortals for courage and dexterity: yet he was laughed at with impunity by an out-law who infested Syria and Judæa, and who, for that reason, was sought after with great care by order of the emperor. Claudius, for that was the name of this out-law, disguised himself like an officer, had the impudence to present himself before Severus at the head of a troop of horse, saluted him, kissed him, and afterwards retired quietly without being discovered.

An army of Scythians, that is to say of some northern people, was preparing to invade the territories of the empire, and make war upon the Romans. Whilst they were assembled to deliberate, a dreadful storm happened, attended with thunder and lightning, which killed three of their principal commanders. Terror seized them all: superstition made them look upon this bad beginning as

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An out-law named Claudius, laugh with impunity at Severus. Dio

A violent storm destroys an army of Scythians from attacking the Romans.

an omen of much greater misfortunes if they proceeded farther; and they thereupon desisted from their enterprize.

S E C T. II.

Rupture between Severus and Albinus. Severus creates Cæsar his eldest son, whom we call Caracalla. The armies of Severus and Albinus meet near Lyons. Alarm, and diversity of sentiments at Rome upon the renewal of the civil war. First, and least important, operations of the war. A decisive battle is fought near Lyons. Albinus, defeated, kills himself. Remarks on the character of Albinus. Cruelty of Severus after his victory. His rage against the senate. He makes the soldiery rank Commodus among the gods. He returns to Rome. His menacing speech to the senate. Twenty-nine, or forty-one senators put to death. Saying of Geta, while yet a child, with respect to this carnage. Narcissus, the murderer of Commodus, thrown to the lions. Severus endeavours to please the people and the subjects of the empire, but particularly the soldiery. He promotes his sons. His indifference for his relations. Severus goes into the east, to make war upon the Parthians. His motives for this war. Upon his arrival, he forces the Parthians to raise the siege of Nisibis. The next campaign, he takes Babylon, Seleucia, and Ctesiphon. Caracalla declared Augustus, and Geta Cæsar. Severus marches towards Armenia, the king of which sues for peace and obtains it. He besieges Atræ twice, but in vain. Severus's cruelty toward the remains of Niger's party, and even towards his own friends. War, of no great importance, against the Jews. Caracalla consul. The fifth general persecution of the Christians. Severus visits Egypt. He returns to Rome. Games and

and shews. Caracalla married to the daughter of Plautianus. History of the rise and fall of Plautianus. Implacable hatred between the two brothers. Geta declared Augustus. Secular games. Punishment of Pollericus Sebennus. Bulla Felix, captain of a band of six hundred robbers. Laudable qualities of Severus. His care to administer justice. Daily distribution of his time. His love of simplicity. His magnificence in what concerned the public. His kindness to his native country. His desire to reform the morals of his subjects. His care to maintain military discipline, not always equal. Severus sets out for Britain. Remarks upon the Caledonians and Mæatae. They invade the territories of the Romans. Severus drives them back beyond the gulphs of Glota and Bodotria. Severus's wall. Caracalia's wicked designs against his brother. He endeavours to raise a sedition in the army. He attempts to kill his father. New revolt of the Britons. Sickness and death of Severus. What judgment ought to be formed of the character and merit of Severus. His taste for learning. He wrote memoirs of his own life. The empress Julia was also a lover of the sciences and of learned men. Learned men who flourished in the reign of Severus. Philostratus. The sophist Antipater. Diogenes Laertius. Solinus. An eruption of mount Vesuvius. A sea monster. A comet.

SEVERUS's motive for entering into an agree-^{Rupture}ment with Albinus, and giving him the title ^{between} of Cæsar, was, as I observed before, that he might ^{Severus} not have two enemies at once upon his hands ^{and Albi-} at the two extremities of the empire, in Syria ^{nus.} and in Britain. When he had conquered Niger, and re-established tranquillity in the east by the advantages he had gained over the barbarians of those frontiers, having no longer any reason to keep measures with his only surviving rival, he resolved to destroy him.

I know

*Herod. l.**III. Capit.**Alb. 7, § 8.*

I know not whether we ought to believe Herodian and Capitolinus, who assert that Severus, before he had recourse to open force of arms, tried the base and perfidious means of assassination; and that he sent Albinus a letter, full of protestations of friendship, by some of his soldiers, men of desperate resolution, who were ordered to demand a private audience, under pretence of communicating to him matters of great importance, but, in fact, to murder him when they should have got him at a distance from his guards. That any one should undertake to massacre a general in the midst of his troops, a Cæsar in the province where his authority was acknowledged, does not seem to me at all probable: and if Severus was wicked enough to conceive such a design, he had too much sense to think it practicable. Even according to the very authors of this story, the undertaking had not the least beginning of success. Albinus, suspecting some treachery, caused the assassins to be seized, and after having forced them by violent tortures on the rack, to confess the horrid commission they were charged with, ordered them to be executed, and resolved to be revenged on him that had set them to work. There certainly was no occasion for so strong a motive as this to occasion an open rupture.

*Dion. l.**LXXV.*

I prefer Dion Cassius's account, who says only that Severus, after his victory over Niger, would no longer grant Albinus the prerogatives annexed to the title of Cæsar, and that Albinus, on the other hand, pretended even to the title of Augustus. These few words explain the whole of this affair, and shew us plainly in an instant, how much a war was inevitable between two ambitious rivals whose pretensions were so widely different.

One may indeed wonder that Albinus did not declare himself sooner. But we have seen how he was at first the dupe of Severus's artifices, and we know not how long that illusion lasted. When his eyes were

were opened, he did not forget himself, though he did not immediately take openly any step of consequence: but he laboured privately to secure himself friends and partizans in the senate, to whom two things recommended him very strongly; the supposed nobility of his birth, and the mildness of his temper compared to the rigours of Severus. He won over to his interest all Gaul and Spain, and collected great forces in those countries. His views extended even to the remote provinces of the East, and he endeavoured to make himself friends there by his liberalities towards the cities which Niger's arms had ruined. At length, when he thought himself powerful enough to have no longer any need to dissemble his designs, he threw off the mask, and alledging, without doubt, Severus's injustice towards him as one of his motives, caused himself to be proclaimed Augustus. Our historians do not mention this last step: but it is recorded on medals of Albinus, where, through a remarkable singularity, he added the name of Septimius to the title of Cæsar, thereby declaring himself the son and the enemy of Severus.

This was what Severus waited for. His policy made him always try to have appearance on his side, and to make his adversary seem to be the aggressor. He was upon his march, as if with a design to return to Rome, and, if I mistake not, had already gone the greatest part of the way, when he learned the open defection of Albinus. Upon this news he assembled his soldiers, and laying hold of so fair an opportunity to inveigh against the ingratitude of his rival, easily made them declare him an enemy, and express great ardour to go and war against him. The emperor took care to animate their courage by distributing among them a large donation.

The sequel and connection of facts incline me to think, with M. de Tillemont, that it was in this

Severus creates Cæsar's first son,
VERY

whom we
call Carac-
alla.
Spart. Scr.
10

very assembly of the troops that Severus conferred the dignity of Cæsar upon his eldest son Bassianus, whose name he at the same time changed into those of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. This is the prince whom we commonly call Caracalla. His father, who affected to shew a great respect for the memory of Marcus Aurelius, whom he so little resembled, thought to give a high proof of his esteem for that wise prince, by calling by his names a son whom he intended for his successor. As to the name of Antonius, it is well known in what veneration it was held at the time of which I am now writing the history. Caracalla was then but eight years old.

We owe to Spartian our knowledge of the place where Caracalla was proclaimed Cæsar. Severus was then encamped near the city of Viminacium in Mœsia upon the Danube. It is highly probable *, as I have just observed, that it was likewise at the same place that Albinus was declared an enemy by Severus's army. From this moment the two rivals no longer made any secret of their designs, but marched openly against each other, Severus from Mœsia, and Albinus from Britain.

The armies
of Severus
and Albi-
nus meet
near Ly-
ons.

Herod.

The plan of this last seems to have been, if he could, to penetrate into Italy, and get himself acknowledged at Rome, where he had great friends. Severus, knowing of what consequence it was to him to prevent the execution of any such design, detached some of his troops to guard the passes of the Alps on the side next Gaul, and with the main body of his army made all the haste his situation required, and his natural activity rendered him capable of. He set all his men an example to bear the greatest fatigues with invincible courage: no
difficulty

* If Severus had declared himself an enemy to Albinus before he left the East, he could not, let him have made ever so great haste, have hindered his rival from entering into Italy. I am therefore persuaded, that he deferred this declaration until he saw it was in his power to act effectually.

difficulty of the roads stopped him : with his head bare, he defied the rigour of snows and frosts : he took no more rest than what the necessity of nature compelled him to : and by this forcible kind of exhortation, he transfused into the breasts of others the ardour which he himself was filled with. By this means he anticipated the march of his enemy, who was already master of Lyons, and came up with him near that city, at the gates of Italy.

In the mean time the preparations for a new civil war alarmed the inhabitants of Rome ; and among so great a multitude of people, sentiments were different, according to their different interests. Of the senators, of whom Dion Cassius was one, some remained quiet, waiting the event, and ready to become the prey of the conqueror : others, attached by particular ties either to Severus or Albinus, shared the fears and hopes of the two competitors. The common people, who are the first that feel the miseries of war, and who cannot hope for any benefit from it, expressed plainly and very strongly their grief and complaints. At the games of the circus, a little before the Saturnalia, (that is to say, towards the end of December,) the infinite multitude of spectators that were present beheld six successive races of chariots, without taking the least interest or concern in them ; so much were they busied with more important thoughts. Before the seventh began, all, as if they had agreed upon it beforehand, lifted up their hands towards Heaven, and, after beseeching the gods to watch over and protect their city, cried out with one voice : “ O queen of cities ! O eternal city ! What is thy fate to be ? “ Until when are we to suffer the same evils ? Until when are our civil wars to last ? ” After several more such like exclamations, they, however, were at last silent, and attended to the games.

Dion Cassius, who was much given to superstition, admires this agreement of a whole multitude

Alarm, and diversity of sentiments at Rome upon the renewal of the civil war. *Dia.*

A. R. 917.

Pretended prophecies.

in uttering the same words, and finds in it somewhat divine: as if a conformity of sentiments might not naturally produce a similarity of expressions. He likewise talks of other pretended prodigies: a great light in the sky; which was nothing more than an Aurora Borealis: a silver coloured dew, which fell in the square of Augustus, and kept its colour three days. But such frivolous remarks are not worth our notice.

First, and
most impor-
tant op-
erations of
the war.
Spart. Sev.
10. & Capit.
Alb. 2. &
Dio.

The operations of the war were not long. Some skirmishes happened between parties or detachment of the two great armies, in which Albinus's men generally had the advantage. Dion Cassius mentions in particular an action in which Lupus, one of Severus's generals, was defeated with considerable slaughter. After blood had once been shed, Severus demanded and obtained of the senate, that Albinus should be declared a public enemy. He had done the same thing before with regard to Niger.

We find here in Dion Cassius an odd adventure, but which would perhaps have lost a great deal of what seems surprising in it, if that writer had examined it with a more careful and penetrating eye. I shall relate it as our author gives it. One Numerianus, who kept a grammar-school at Rome, took it into his head to hasten away into Gaul, to engage in a war with which he had no sort of business. Assuming there the title of a senator, he got together some soldiers, with which he defeated a body of Albinus's horse, and performed some other small exploits. Severus, being informed of it, and believed him really a senator, sent him a commission, and a reinforcement of troops, which Numerianus made a good use of for the benefit of him to whom he had devoted his services. The wonderful part of the adventure is, that this military grammarian acted without any view of interest: for, having taken from the enemy seventy millions of sesterces*, he sent

* Near
£ 380,000

sent the whole sum to Severus : and after the war was ended, he neither desired any recompence, nor pretended to realize the rank of senator which he had usurped ; but retired into the country, where he spent the rest of his days, living upon a small pension, which was all he would accept of from the emperor. These are the outward circumstances of a fact of which the writer was not able to tell us the real motives.

The war was ended by a decisive battle in the plain between Lyons and Trevoux. The two armies were equal in number, each of them consisting of an hundred and fifty thousand men ; and at the heads of them were their emperors. Severus, who had not been present at any of the battles against Niger, commanded his army in person in this against Albinus. The valour of the troops was great on both sides. The British legions, which fought for Albinus, were not inferior to those of Illyricum. But Severus was thought a better general than his competitor.

The victory was obstinately disputed, and remained a long time doubtful. Albinus's left wing made no great resistance, but was soon broke, and pursued to their camp by Severus's men. The other side of the field of battle wore a different face. The troops of Albinus's right wing had dug in the ground before them a great number of ditches, and covered them over slightly with earth, so artfully that no one could perceive what they had done. To draw the enemy into this snare, they pretended to be afraid to advance, and therefore darted their javelins from afar, and retreated as soon as they had made their discharge. The stratagem succeeded. Severus's soldiers, burning with ardour to come to a close engagement, and despising their seemingly trembling adversaries, advanced upon them without any precaution. But they were stopped at once by an obstacle as formidable as it was unexpected.

Coming

A decisive battle is fought near Lyons. Albinus, defeated, kills himself.

Coming to the place where the ditches were, the earth sunk under their feet, and the whole first line fell in. As the lines were very close, the second had not time to recover, but fell in upon the first. Those who followed, terrified at this, fell hastily back, and beat down their companions behind them. By this means the whole of Severus's right wing was put into great confusion, and their enemies made a dreadful slaughter of them.

In this extreme danger, Severus flew to the assistance of his troops, with his guard. But at first, far from remedying the evil, he saw even his prætorians broke and cut in pieces, and had a horse killed under him. This bad success served but to animate him the more. Rallying some of the fugitives, and putting himself at their head, he fell sword in hand upon the enemy, determined to conquer or die. His little troop hewed down all before it, without distinction of friends that were flying, or enemies that opposed. By this means numbers of Severus's men were forced to return to the charge; and the conquerors, who had already broken their ranks through eagerness to pursue their advantage, were scarce able to sustain this unexpected shock.

The battle began a-new; but the victory was still doubtful, until Lætus, who commanded Severus's horse, decided the fate of the day. He had declined engaging at the beginning of the fight, out of a perfidious design, as is said, of letting the two rivals destroy each other, in order to set up afterwards for himself. But when he saw that fortune began to declare for Severus, being sensible of the danger to which his criminal inactivity exposed him, he fell upon the rear of Albinus's troops, whilst Severus attacked them vigorously in front. Unable any longer to keep their ground, they fled, and took shelter within the city of Lyons, with their unfortunate general Albinus. By this victory, which was perfectly complete, Severus became sole master of the

the whole empire, having destroyed, in less than four years, three emperors, Didius, Niger, and Albinus.

The battle of Lyons was very bloody. Our authors do not say what was the loss on both sides: but it must have been great even on that of the conqueror: and Dion Cassius observes with the grief of a good citizen, that the blood which was shed either on one or the other side, was equally lost to Rome.

Spartian tells us the month and day on which this Spart. Sev. great event happened, which was the nineteenth of ^{11.} February. He does not determine the year: but by comparing the facts which preceded, with those that followed it, M. de Tillemont fixes it to the Tillem. Sc.: not. 16. A. R. 948. year of Christ 197; the fourth of Severus's reign.

The city of Lyons was plundered and ravaged by the conquerors, who set it on fire in several places, and burnt great part of it.

Albinus had retired to a house near the Rhône. There, seeing that all was lost, and knowing that no mercy would be shewn him, he either stabbed himself, or made one of his slaves perform that fatal office for him. He was not quite dead, when a troop of the enemy arrived, cut off his head, and carried it to Severus.

Such was the end of Albinus, concerning whose Remarks on the character of Albinus. Capit. Alb. 10—13. character I have but little to add to what I have already said of him. No dependance can be made upon the outrageous reproaches with which Severus loads him in his memoirs: nor do I think we ought to give much greater credit to the testimony of so injudicious a writer as Capitolinus, who frequently contradicts himself, and shews throughout his whole work how little he was skilled in the knowledge of mankind. If we believe him, Albinus was unjust to his domestics, insupportable to his wife, surly and morose to all, eating always alone out of aversion to society, rigid even to cruelty in matters relating to military discipline, and condemning not only the common soldiers, but their centurions, to be whipped to death,

or

Capit. Alb.
14.
Eutrop. &
Aur. Vict.

or crucified, as if they had been slaves. If such was his behaviour, he certainly could not be very amiable: and yet it is certain that he was exceedingly beloved by the senate, very many of whose members wished to see him emperor: and if their motive for this was the hatred they bore Severus, it follows at least that they had a very different opinion of Albinus, from that which Capitolinus endeavours to give us of him. I pay no regard to the suspicion with which some pitiful writers charge him, of having been concerned in the death of Pertinax. All the circumstances of that affair refute this absurd and odious imputation.

As to his drinking to excess, a fault with which Severus reproached Albinus, Capitolinus varies so much in what he says upon that head, that one cannot tell what to think of it. But we certainly shall not give credit to stories about his gormandising, which that writer himself confesses he can scarce believe, and which are really incredible. We cannot think that Albinus used often to eat at a breakfast five hundred figs, an hundred peaches, ten melons, twenty pounds of grapes, an hundred beccaficos, and four hundred oysters. I mention this purposely to give my readers an idea of the judgment of the authors I am obliged to have recourse to.

Let us then form an idea of Albinus from facts; and, laying aside his private character, consider only how far he was possessed of the talents necessary for great undertakings. We shall, in this case, see him in the light of a brave warrior, who had the art of making himself beloved; but who had not cunning enough to guard against the artifices of his enemy; and this was the cause of his ruin.

Cruelty of
Severus af-
ter his vic-
tory.
Diab. & He-
rod. &
Spurl. Sc.
A. L. § 117.

Severus made a most horrid use of his victory. Having no longer any thing to fear, he gave an entire loose to the natural violence of his temper, and, renouncing even the slightest appearances of moderation which he had affected until now, shewed

ed

ed himself what he really was, cruel and vindic- & Nig. & Capit. Alb.
 tive beyond all measure. Nothing can be mean-
 er than the indignities which he offered to the
 dead body of his rival. After sending his head
 to Rome, he rode several times over the breath-
 less corpse, making his horse tread it under foot:
 and to feast his eyes still more with the shocking
 sight, he let it lie in its gore before his tent until
 it was half putrified, and then ordered it to be
 thrown into the Rhone. Albinus's wife and chil-
 dren were treated with the same rigour, put to
 death, and their bodies thrown into the river.
 The destruction of this family was followed by
 that of Niger's, for which Severus had professed
 a great regard whilst Niger lived, which he had
 kept in exile since his defeat, and which he extir-
 pated when his victory over Albinus had secured
 to him the possession of the empire. He caused
 search to be made for the bodies of the senators
 who had been killed fighting for Albinus, and af-
 ter exposing them to every kind of insult, forbid
 their being buried. All the prisoners of note, ei-
 ther by their birth or employments, were put to
 death. These cruelties certainly contributed to
 hinder many of Albinus's partizans, who had some
 bodies of troops under their command, from sub-
 mitting to so inhuman a conqueror. They chose
 rather to fall sword in hand, than by the axe of
 the licitor: and Severus had accordingly several
 battles to fight, before he could entirely destroy
 a party which clemency after his victory would
 have disarmed at once.

He tormented both Gaul and Spain with rigorous
 inquiries after the friends of Albinus, and, under
 that pretence, put to death a very great number of
 the chief people of those countries. Even the wo-
 men were not spared; for he condemned many of
 them to share the unhappy fate of their husbands
 and relations. An iniquitous desire of plunder

was one great cause of these bloody executions : for sentence of death was always followed by confiscation of estates and effects ; and the produce was immense.

*Spart. Scr.
17. & Aur.
Virt.*

No plea of equity, no affecting remonstrance, could move Severus. A person accused alledging the same arguments that Cassius Clemens had used with success after the death of Clemens, saying ; “ Necessity, and not choice, engaged me in Albinus’s party. What would you do, if you was “ in my place ? I should suffer,” answered Severus, “ what you are going to suffer.”

*His rage
against the
the senate.
Spart. Scr.
XI. & Ca-
pit. Alb.
XII.*

But nothing rendered him more odious than his rage and cruelty against the senators. It is true they had seemed to incline towards Albinus, and had sufficiently declared their sentiments, by granting to his brother Clodius Celsinus, a little before the battle of Lyons, honours which they did not dare to decree directly to himself. Severus’s anger would then not have been absolutely unjust, if he had kept it within certain bounds, and had not carried it to the highest pitch of violence.

Herod.

When he sent the head of Albinus to Rome, he accompanied it with a letter to the senate and people, by which he notified to them his victory, and which he ended with saying, that he had ordered the head of his enemy to be set upon a gibbet in the most public part of the city, as a proof and example of his resentment against those who had offended him. He wrote a thundering letter to the senate, taxing them with the basest ingratitude towards him. “ I have ended, said “ he, several wars, to the advantage of the re- “ public : I have filled the city with plenty of “ provisions : I have delivered you from the mi- “ series of tyranny, by my victory over Niger. “ And how have you expressed your gratitude “ for so many services ? By preferring to me an “ impostor, a man whose mouth was always full “ of

Capit.

“ of lies, and whose whole merit consisted in a
 “ groundless pretence to a chimerical nobility.”

To vex the senators, and fill them with consternation, he restored the memory of Commodus, of whom he had never spoken before but with contempt and horror. He made his soldiers rank that detestable prince among the gods: and adding to a step so disobliging and alarming to the senate, a puerile vanity, he called himself the brother of Commodus and the son of Marcus Aurelius. This last whim was indeed of older date than the battle of Lyons, as appears by a medal of the third year of Severus's reign, where he styles himself the son of Marcus Aurelius. Another, coined some years after, makes him the son of L. Verus. Strange fancies! but they were the fruit of prosperity.

Severus spent some months in Gaul, busied with doing himself justice, as he termed it, with quieting the province, and fixing his authority in it. It was then also that he divided Britain into two governments, whereas it had made but one until that time. When he had settled what seemed to him most important, he set out for Rome, leading with him his army to appear the more terrible. According to M. de Tillemont, he was there before the second of June of the year 197 of Christ, which was that in which he conquered Albinus.

The inhabitants of the capital endeavoured to appease his anger by the honours they paid him. The people went out to meet him, crowned with branches of laurel. The senate came also to receive him, with all possible demonstrations of submission and respect; concealing their fears under those outward expressions of joy. Severus, in the midst of the most flattering acclamations, entered the city, went up to the capitol, sacrificed to Jupiter, and, returning to his palace, seemed satisfied with the people, to whom he promised a largess that they might rejoice for his victory.

tory. All his wrath and vengeance was reserved for the senate.

His men-
acing speech
to the se-
nate.
Dio.

He assembled it the next day, and opened the meeting with a speech, in which, quoting examples of former times, he commended highly the rigours exercised by Sylla, by Marius, and by Octavius, as the best and surest safeguard: and, on the other hand, he blamed the mildness of Cæsar and of Pompey, to which, he said, their ruin ought to be imputed. From thence he proceeded to the justification of Commodus, which he accompanied with most bitter reproaches against the senators. "It well becomes you," said he to them "to insult Commodus, when most of you lead more shameful lives than that prince ever did. If he was seen at the shews killing wild beasts with his own hand, can I not point out among you one, an old consular, who very lately, engaged in public a common prostitute disguised like a lion? Commodus fought in the arena like a gladiator! Do not many of you do the same? Else why, to what end, have you bought his helmet and all his armour?" He ended this violent invective with ordering them to decree divine honours to Commodus, as the soldiery had already done.

Twenty-
nine, or
forty-one
senators
put to
death.
*Herod. &
Czj. Alb.
XII.
Dio. & Her-
od. &
Spart. Sav.
13.*

This was but the prelude; and the effects which followed were answerable to it. Severus had caused strict search to be made after all Albinus's papers, and having got possession of them, had discovered all his friends and correspondents at Rome. Furnished with these proofs, out of sixty-four senators, who were accused of having favoured Albinus, he declared thirty-five innocent: but he condemned the other twenty-nine to suffer death, and had them executed without any form of process, though they were all men of great distinction, some having been consuls, and others prætors. Dion Cassius names two of them, Sulpicianus father-in-law to Pertinax, and Erucius Clarus. This last was a man of great merit:

*D. n. ap.
P. c.*

merit: and Severus, partly out of a malicious hope of tarnishing a character which provoked his envy, and partly to authorise his violences by the sanction of a name universally respected, endeavoured, by promising him his life, to prevail upon him to become the accuser of, and witness against, those who were embarked in the same cause with him. But he bravely chose rather to die, than act so vile a part. Another senator, named Julianus, undertook the odious task, and was in fact not put to death: but he was made to suffer all the tortures of the rack, without any regard to his dignity.

Spartian enumerates forty-one persons who now fell victims to Severus's revenge. Among these are six of the name of Pescennius, relations, without doubt, of Niger, since they bore the same family name. This observation, joined to a word* in Herodian, gives room to think that Severus completed on this occasion his until then imperfect revenge against the partizans of Niger, whose wife and children he likewise put to death at the same time, as I before observed.

With regard to this horrid carnage, Severus received a good lesson from his youngest son Geta, who was then but little more than eight years old. Hearing his father declare his intention of putting to death all the chief partizans of those who had disputed the empire with him, he seemed greatly concerned. Severus, observing it, said to him, "They are enemies, of whom I am going to deliver you." Geta then asked how many there might be of them. Being told, he grew still more pensive, and asked, whether those unhappy men had any parents or relations. He was answered that most of them had several. "Alas, then, cried he, more people will be sorry for our victory, than

* The text of Herodian is manifestly defective in the place here referred to. As amended by Henry Stephens, it offers the meaning I have endeavoured to express.

“ than will partake of our joy !” Severus is said to have been shaken by this equally judicious and humane reflection. But the two prætorian prefects, Plautianus, of whom we shall soon have occasion to make more particular mention, and Juvenal, hoping to enrich themselves by the spoils of the proscribed, exhorted him to execute his design. Caracalla was present at this conversation, and, far from being of Geta’s mind, proposed, that even the children of their enemies should be put to death with their fathers. Upon which Geta, with a look of indignation, said to him, “ You, who spare the blood of none, are capable of killing your own brother.” And so in fact he did, as we shall hereafter see.

Narcissus
the mur-
derer of
Commodus
thrown to
the lions.
Spart. Sev.
14. & Dio.
1. LXXIII.
p. 836.

While so many illustrious persons, far more unfortunate than guilty, were expiring under the hands of cruel executioners, Severus pronounced one just sentence of death. The wrestler Narcissus, who had strangled Commodus, was yet alive. Severus’s hatred of the senate, rather than zeal for the memory of a detested prince, brought him at last to condign punishment. At the end of five years, Narcissus was, by his order, exposed to the lions, with this label fastened to him, “ The murderer of Commodus.”

Severus en-
deavours to
please the
people and
the sub-
jects of the
empire, but
particular-
ly the sol-
diery.
Herod. &
Spart. Sev.
14. & 12.

While Severus was venting all his fury upon the senate, he took care to please the people with all sorts of games and shews, and with plentiful distributions of provisions and money. He eased the provincial subjects of the empire of a very heavy burden, by charging the exchequer with the expence of all messengers or couriers sent by the prince or the state ; whereas, until then, they had used to be furnished gratis with horses and carriages, by the inhabitants of the countries through which they passed : but it was chiefly to the soldiery that, the expression will not be too strong if I say, Severus studied to pay his court : for he was exceedingly artful, minded nothing but his own interest, and cared

careed very little for the concerns of the public. With this way of thinking, it is not to be wondered at, if, to gain the affections of the soldiery, he did not fear to enervate their discipline by giving them frequent largesses, increasing their pay, and allowing them to marry, and to wear rings of gold. Herodian looks upon this emperor as the first corrupter of the military discipline: in which he goes perhaps too far. Commodus had made a great progress in that work: but Severus completed it, and by his unmanly complaisance towards the soldiery, raised their insolence to such a height, that the evil became incurable.

The chief drift of his policy was to secure his own fortune, and to perpetuate the empire in his family. The great youth of his sons, the eldest of whom was only in his tenth year, made him uneasy. He hastened their advancement by raising them to honours before they had attained the age required by the laws. We have already seen that Caracalla was declared Cæsar by the troops towards the end of the year of Christ 196. The next year, which is that I am speaking of, Severus caused that title to be confirmed to him by a ^{14.} decree of the senate. He also began at this time to confer marks of distinction upon the youngest of his sons, Geta: but * we cannot say exactly wherein his prerogatives consisted.

As to his relations, he only gave some of them a few honorary distinctions, void of profit, and of no consequence to the empire. He had a brother named <sup>His indit-
tion: see his
relation.
I. c. 10. b.
& 10.</sup>

* Spartian says, that Severus gave Geta the manly robe: but that was not possible then, Geta being only eight years and some months old. According to Herodian, Severus made his sons his associates in the empire at the time we are speaking of: which, at most, is true only of Caracalla, to whom the title of Cæsar was confirmed by the senate. Our authors certainly intended to point at some prerogative of honour granted to Geta; but they have not explained themselves so clearly as one could wish.

named Septimius Geta, who, forming to himself vast expectations when he saw Severus raised to the throne, came to him the moment he was acknowledged at Rome, and before he set out upon his expedition against Niger. He flattered himself with thoughts of being either associated to the empire, or of having at least a considerable power with the title of Cæsar. Severus sent him back to his post; but what that was we are not told: and it was partly to cure him of his chimerical projects, and to cut off all his hopes, that he created Caracalla Cæsar when he was yet so very young. His brother was obliged to content himself with the consulship, and even that he was forced to stay for several years.

15. His sister, who had always lived at Leptis, where she was born, came also to pay him a visit with a son that she had. Her provincial dialect and behaviour, for she could scarcely speak Latin, and had never seen a court, soon made the emperor her brother ashamed of her. He made her some presents, conferred the dignity of senator upon her son, and ordered them both to go back to their own country.

14. To shew, however, that he was not devoid of natural tenderness and affection, he erected statues to his father, his mother, his grandfather, and his first wife. But this was an illustration which reflected upon himself. He did not consult the senate about setting up these statues, tho' it had always been customary so to do. This despotic way of proceeding could not but displease that assembly.

Severus goes into the East, to make war upon the Parthians. His motives for this war. D. A. L. I. V. A. T. §. H. R. L. L. III. §. 8. et. Sc. l. 16.

Severus made but a very short stay at Rome, if it be true, as M. de Tillemont thinks, that before the end of this very year, so full of events, he was in the East, ready to make war upon the Parthians. This dispatch, astonishing as it is, is not absolutely incredible in so active a prince. It has been said, that his only design in this new enterprize was love of glory, and a desire not to signalize his valour

our only in civil wars, but to illustrate his name by conquests over other nations. Without pretending to exclude this motive, which is certainly well suited to the character of Severus, he ought not to be accused of having taken up arms on this occasion without a lawful cause; since the Parthians, as we learn from Dion Cassius, had, while Severus was employed against Albinus, made an irruption into Mesopotamia, and attacked Nisibis, which filled them with perpetual jealousy and alarms. Besides, Barsemius king of Atræ had assisted Niger, as I said before; and Severus had not had time to seek satisfaction for that injury. These were the motives that called him back into the East.

He seems, immediately after the battle of Lyons, to have sent Lætus on before him, with orders to defend Nisibis against the Parthians. He himself followed with his army as soon as he possibly could; and at his approach, the enemy, struck with terror, retired from before the place. Severus, having delivered Nisibis, returned into Syria, and, in his passage, received the submission of Abgarus king of the Osrhoenians, who gave him his sons for hostages, and furnished him with a number of archers.

His design was to push on the war against the Parthians vigorously the next year; and to that end he took all the time necessary to prepare for so important an expedition. He did not begin his march until towards the end of the summer, staying on purpose for the latter season, as the most proper for acting in a country which was quite dried up and burnt. He had caused a great number of boats to be built upon the Euphrates, and put on board them part of his troops, who sailed down the river, while the rest of his army marched along its banks. He carried with him the brother of the king of the Parthians, whose presence he thought might facilitate his conquests, which proved

Upon his arrival, he forced the Parthians to raise the siege of Nisibis.

The next campaign, he takes Babylon, Seleucia, and Ctesiphon. A. R. 94^r.

proved exceedingly rapid. Arriving at Babylon, he found that great city abandoned. From thence he reached Seleucia, making his fleet, probably, pass through the canal called *Naar-malcha*, which communicated from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Seleucia was likewise given up to him by the flight of its inhabitants. Ctesiphon cost him a siege, and the loss of many men. The Parthians, animated by the presence of their king Vologeses*, who had shut himself up with them, made a brave resistance: and the Romans, wanting provisions, reduced to live upon roots, and worn out with sickness occasioned by their bad food, began to be discouraged. Severus persisted: and his resolution was crowned with success. The city was taken by storm, and delivered up to the soldiers to be plundered. The slaughter was prodigious, the booty immense, and the number of prisoners amounted to an hundred thousand. The king of the Parthians escaped, and the conquerors were not able to pursue him.

*Amm.
Misc. l.
XXIV.*

Allem.

Severus took for this conquest, which however he could not keep, the title of *Imperator* for the eleventh time, and that of *Parthicus*, with the farther addition of the epithet *Maximus*. He wrote to the senate and Roman people, giving them a pompous account of his exploits, which he caused to be represented in painting, and exposed to public view.

*Caracalla
declared
Augustus,
and Cæsar.*

This empty pageantry was not the only fruit he reaped from his victory. He made it the means of fixing the supreme power in his family. The surest way to do this, was to make his sons, whom he had carried with him purposely in this view, his partners in all the honours of the sovereignty. The example had been already set by Marcus Aurelius. Severus followed, and, as it generally happens in the imitation of abuses, exceeded it. He did not wait for Caracalla the age which Marcus Aurelius

* Herodian calls him Artabanus.

Aurelius had waited for Commodus. At the time * of the taking of Ctesiphon, that young prince was but in his eleventh year: and in the transports of joy with which the conquest and plunder of the capital of the Parthians filled the Roman soldiers, Severus easily induced them to proclaim his eldest son *Augustus*. Geta, destined to the same rank ere it should be long, received then the title of *Cæsar*, and the name of *Antoninus*. The senate confirmed what had been done by the soldiers, whom Severus rewarded with large donations.

Want of provisions, and the inconveniencies of a strange climate, forced the Romans, victorious as they were, to abandon Ctesiphon, and think of retreating. They could not return by the way they came, because the country through which they had passed was eaten up. They therefore went up the Tigris, by land and by water at the same time.

This route led them into Armenia, which they prepared to enter in an hostile manner. I cannot say for what reason. For the king of Armenia, whose name was Vologeses, which was also that of the king of the Parthians, had not given Severus any cause of complaint, having refrained from sending succours to Niger, though this last had applied to him for his assistance. Vologeses seems to have been a wise prince, and a faithful imitator of his father Smotruces, of whom Dion Cassius gives this character; that to the greatest courage and skill in war, he joined the strictest observance of justice; and that for temperance and moderation, he might be compared to the most virtuous among

* For this date I follow the authority of Spartian, and historical probability. Another date, prior to this by several months, is taken fr an medals and inscriptions, as the time of Caracalla's being raised to the rank of *Augustus*. It matters not which of the two is most exact; the fact and its principal circumstances remaining still the same.

among the Greeks or Romans. Vologeses, the son of Sanotruces, behaved, on the occasion I am speaking of, with equal vigour and prudence. He marched out to meet the Romans, and put himself in a posture of defence: but at the same time, sensible of the inequality of his forces, and preferring peace to war, he proposed a negotiation, which Severus agreed to. The Armenian gave a sum of money and hostages, and the emperor granted him peace, and even increased his dominions by the addition of a district of Armenia, of which the Romans were masters.

He be-
sieges Atra
twice, but
in vain.
Hi. & Mc-
sad.

Severus had now completed all his designs in the East, except the revenge he meditated against the king of Atra. We may reasonably suppose that he made a treaty with the Parthians, before he left their country, since we find no farther mention of any war with them during the whole course of his reign. He remained satisfied with the submission of the king of Armenia. The city of Atra, either not expecting any favour, or proud of her situation which had formerly baffled all the efforts of Trajan, prepared for resistance. Severus, on his march back from Mesopotamia into Syria, besieged it, but with very bad success. His machines of war were burnt; a great number of his men were killed, and many more wounded; and he was forced to raise the siege, though without giving up his design of being revenged.

Accordingly he made new preparations, amassed immense quantities of provisions and warlike machines, and, in a short time, returned before Atra. The inhabitants defended themselves with the same bravery as before. They were Arabians, as I have observed elsewhere, and had a numerous body of horse of their own nation, which scoured the country, intercepted the convoys of the Romans, fell like lightning upon their detachments that were sent out to forage, and in an instant disappeared. Those that

that were shut up in the city made brisk sallies, in which they killed numbers of the besiegers.— They even burnt a second time all their machines, except those which had been made by Periscus, the engineer of Byzantium, whose life Severus had spared, on account of his great skill, and the services he hoped to derive from it. The besieged themselves had machines which carried to a great distance, and threw a number of darts at once, with such force as to kill a great way off those they hit; insomuch that Severus had several of his guards struck dead at his feet. When the Romans had gained ground, and approached near to the walls, the besieged altering their method of defence, became more formidable than before. They poured down upon their assailants great quantities of flaming bitumen, which burnt and killed them with excessive torment. Herodian says they likewise threw upon them vessels of earth, filled with venomous winged insects, which upon the vessel's breaking, fixed upon the Romans, and stung them so as to disable them from acting. To these difficulties, add all those which necessarily attend a climate insufferably hot, and the dangerous sicknesses occasioned thereby.

At length, however, the activity and perseverance of the besiegers enabled them to make a breach, and a great piece of the wall, mined probably underneath, fell down. The city must then have been taken, if the avarice of the conqueror had not saved it. Severus knew that it contained vast riches, and particularly the treasures of the temple of the sun, which would become the prey of the soldiers, if the place was taken by storm; whereas the whole would belong to the emperor, if the besieged should desire to capitulate, as the extremity to which they were reduced made him hope they would. For this reason, he ordered a retreat to be sounded, to the great dissatisfaction of all his troops, who were on the point of completing their conquest.

His

His avarice was disappointed. The besieged, far from thinking of surrendering, built up another wall in the night: and when Severus wanted his men to renew the attack, the Europeans who were his best troops, refused to march. He was therefore obliged to make use of Syrians, who, more docile, but less resolute, were repulsed with loss and shame. Nor was it possible to prevail upon the mutineers to stir. One of the principal officers of the army desired only five hundred and fifty European soldiers, with which he engaged to take Atræ. "Where," said the emperor to him, "can I find that number?" Thus, says our historian, God saved this city, by making Severus recal the troops which could have taken it; and by afterwards putting it out of his power to conquer it, when he wanted so to do, by the disobedience of his soldiers. After twenty days of fruitless efforts and attacks, he was obliged to raise the siege, and for want of being able to make his troops obey him: a circumstance which does him no sort of honour.

*Tullem. Sev.
art. 17.*

He comforted himself by one or more expeditions into Arabia, which proved successful. If we believe Herodian, he penetrated even into Arabia Felix. Eutropius and Victor speak of a part of Arabia reduced by him into a province. In truth, it does not appear that he added much to the conquests Trajan had before made in that country.

Severus's exploits in the east may then be reduced to his traversing a vast extent of country with immense labour and expence, his failing in a great enterprize, and his not making one solid or lasting conquest. The advantage that accrued to the Romans was, their strengthening themselves in the possession of their former acquisitions in those countries, and their establishing in them a tranquillity which was not interrupted for many years.

*Severus's
cruelty to
warriors.*

Severus was indeed intitled to a share of this glory. But he disgraced it by his cruelties both towards the
unfor-

unfortunate remains of Niger's party, and even to-wards his own friends and officers. Spartian as-cribes these endless proceedings against enemies now incapable of doing hurt, to the avarice of Plautianus. According to Herodian, and probably according to truth, the emperor was not less greedy than his prætorian præfect, and reserved for himself the greatest part of the forfeitures. The sweets of this bloody booty, joined to his eternal mistrusts, rendered him cruel, as I said before, even to those who had always been attached to his fortune. To be thought worthy of the empire was as dangerous as to aspire to it. Some were accused of conspiracies; others of consulting astrologers about the emperor's life; and only to say that his children were young, was construed into a doubt whether they would succeed him, and was punished with death. Dion Cassius mentions particularly two officers of great distinction, who were inhumanly sacrificed to the suspicious temper of this prince.

One of them was a tribune of the prætorian cohorts. His name, Julius Crispus. Wearied out by a tedious and painful war in a climate whose heat was insupportable, he chanced one day to apply to the situation he was then in, these lines of Virgil* :

We, but the slaves who mount you to the throne :
 A base ignoble crowd, without a name,
 Unwept, unworthy of a fun'ral flame :
 By duty bound to forfeit each his life,
 That Turnus may possess a royal wife.

This complaint was looked upon as seditious. It cost the tribune his life, and his place was given to a common soldier who informed against him.

Lætus

* Scilicet, ut Turno contingat regia conjux.
 Nos, animæ viles, inhumata infletique turba,
 Stermanur campis. VIRG. ÆN. XI. 571

Lætus had too much merit not to excite the jealousy of a suspicious prince. He was a warrior and a statesman, beloved by the soldiers, who had more than once declared, that they would not march, unless he was at their head. This may reasonably enough give room to doubt his fidelity and the uprightness of his intentions, already suspected, as I before said, at the battle of Lyons. But nothing was proved against him, and it was an extremely odious thing to put to death an old friend, whose services had both raised Severus to the empire, and maintained him in it, and who had distinguished himself equally in the civil and the foreign wars. The emperor took on this occasion a resolution suited to his close and artful temper. He caused Lætus to be killed in an insurrection of the soldiers, and imputed his death to them, as if he had not had any concern in it.

He was longer absent from Rome than he needed to have been for the affairs which first called him from thence. He did not return thither until the year of Christ 203. Consequently he was gone six years. The first two or three of these years were employed in the wars I have spoken of. In the remaining interval, I find fewer memorable events.

War of no
great im-
portance,
against the
Jews.
Spart. Sev.
16, 17, 14.

He made some war, but of no great importance, against the Jews, either because they had attempted to revolt, or that he wanted to pick a quarrel with them for their late attachment to Niger, though he had since declared that he forgave them that fault. Caracalla seems to have had the title of commander in this expedition: for we find it was to him that the senate decreed a triumph over the Jews. Severus made several regulations in Palestine, and forbid, under severe penalties, those who were not born Jews to embrace their religion.

Caracalla
consul.

He gave his eldest son the manly robe at Antioch, before he had completed his fourteenth year; and made

made him his colleague in the consulship, in the year of Christ 202.

This same year he published an edict against the Christians, which gave rise to the fifth general persecution of the Christians. The fifth general persecution of the Christians. Tillam. In the beginning of his reign he had been pretty favourable to them, from a motive of personal gratitude towards a Christian named Proculus Torpacio, who had cured him of a dangerous sickness, and to whom, in return for that service, he allotted an apartment in his palace. He was so far from hating those who professed the religion of Jesus Christ, that he gave his eldest son Caracalla a Christian nurse. A mistaken policy made him alter his conduct. The Christians, under favour of the peace they enjoyed whilst Commodus reigned, had multiplied exceedingly. Their distinguished virtue, and the miracles which God wrought by them, drew over to them an infinite number of proselytes. "We fill," said Tertullian to the Pagans at the very time we are now speaking of, "your cities, your towns, your senate, and your armies. We leave you only your temples and your theatres." The prodigious increase of Christianity plainly threatened with approaching ruin the religion of the state; and this was certainly what induced Severus, first to let the magistrates make war upon the Christians for some years, by virtue of the ancient laws, and afterwards to authorize by an edict their persecution of them, which lasted until the end of his reign, and crowned with glory a great number of martyrs, the most illustrious of whom were St Irenæus of Lyons, Leonidas the father of Origen and the virgin Potamiana at Alexandria, St Speratus and the martyrs Scillitanus in Africa. The Christian religion had an excellent defender in the person of Tertullian, whose apology is so well known, and so justly admired. To it we may also add, the elegant and pious work composed about the same time, and with the same views, by Minucius Felix.

Severus vi-
sits Egypt.
Dio. §.
Spart. 17.

Severus, having entirely pacified the east, pass-
ed into Egypt, where, upon his arrival, he paid
honours to the memory and ashes of Pompey. He
seems not to have had any other motive in this
journey, than a desire to see, and know by his own
observations, that famous country. He was na-
turally very inquisitive, and desirous to examine
and know as thoroughly as was possible every thing
that concerned the sciences, divine or human.
Accordingly, he was not satisfied with seeing
Memphis the ancient capital of the kings of Egypt,
the statue of Memnon, the Pyramids, and the La-
byrinths; but he entered into the sanctuary of the
most famous temples, and made the Egyptians
shew him the sacred books that were kept in them
with a religious reverence: then, instigated by
that envious and tyrannical spirit which never left
him, he carried away those books, that none but
himself might afterwards know what was contain-
ed in them. The same motive made him shut up
the tomb of Alexander the Great, that no one
might ever enter it after him.

The journey to Egypt delighted him much.
The singularity of the climate and of the animals
it produces, the wonders of nature and of art, the
worship of the god Serapis, and many other ex-
traordinary things, gratified his curiosity, and he
remembered them with pleasure as long as he liv-
ed. To this may perhaps be ascribed his readi-
ness to soften the yoke of the Egyptians. They
were governed despotically, in consequence of
Augustus's institution, by a prefect who held the
place of their ancient kings. Severus granted the
Alexandrians a council, the members of which had
the title and privileges of senators, and assisted in
the administration of public affairs.

He returns
to Rom. c.
A. R. 951.
Villob.
Spart. Sec.
20

He returned to Rome in the year of Christ 203,
as I observed before, pursuing his rout by land
through Syria, Cilicia, Asia Minor, Thrace, Mœ-
sia, and Pannonia. We cannot say whether he tri-
umphed

umphed upon his arrival at the capital. Spartian says a triumph was decreed him by the senate, but that he would not accept of it, being too much afflicted with the gout, to be able to undergo the fatigue of that ceremony. The same writer adds, that Severus gave his son leave to triumph over the Jews : which is hardly probable, if he himself did not triumph over the Parthians. We may suppose that Severus made his entry into Rome with very great pomp and magnificence, but with somewhat less solemnity than if he had entered it in triumph. In lieu of the triumph, the senate decreed him a triumphal arch, which subsists to this day, and of which the inscription informs us, that it was erected in the eleventh year of the tribunitian power of Severus, that is to say, some time between the second of June of the year of Christ 203, and the same day of the year 204.

This same year he gave games and shews of every kind, accompanied with immense largesses. Three motives concurred to heighten the magnificence of these rejoicings. Severus celebrated his victories over the orientals, his return to Rome, and the tenth year of his reign ; and therefore thought he could not bestow too much pomp and splendour on those three united objects. He distributed to each citizen, and to every prætorian soldier, as many pieces of gold as he had reigned years, and the whole sum amounted to fifty millions of drachmas * : an immoderate expence, upon which he prided himself greatly, as having surpassed in that respect all who had preceded him. What he said was true : but was it a thing to boast of? Are these enormous largesses, by which each individual is so little benefited, and which exhaust the public finances, consistent with the maxims of a wise government? They suited indeed the inter-
Games and shews. Dio. l. LXXVI. & Herod.

* Considerably above a million of our money.

terested policy of Severus, because they attached a number of creatures to him and his family.

In the shews that were given to the people, sixty bears which had been taught to wrestle, engaged one another upon the giving of a signal to which they had been used. In the middle of the amphitheatre was built a large vessel, like a ship of war, which contained four hundred wild beasts. This vessel, opening at once, let out bears, lions, panthers, ostriches, wild asses, and buffalos; to which were added three hundred domestic animals: and all these creatures, to the number of seven hundred, were killed for the diversion of the multitude, an hundred each day of the seven that the festival lasted. Dion Cassius mentions also an elephant, and an Indian monster which the ancients called *Corocotta*, said to be got upon a bitch by a wolf, or upon a lioness by a tiger.

E. in. l.
LXXV.

A remarkable, but very indecent singularity in these games, was, that women appeared upon the stage, and fought as gladiators. This licentiousness, not quite unprecedented indeed, but neither often practised, nor ever approved of, produced numbers of bitter sarcasms against several ladies of the first quality, though, in fact, they had no share in it. The magistrates were sensible how wrong it was, and accordingly published an ordinance, by which women were forbid all such battles, so unbecoming the weakness and modesty of their sex.

Caracalla
married to
the daughter
of Paulus
Ulpius
Septimus
Severus
the
14.

All this year was spent in rejoicings. Severus gave the manly robe to his second son Geta Caesar, and married his eldest, Caracalla, to the daughter of Plautianus, his praetorian prefect, an insolent favourite, whose abuse of his too great power brought him to an untimely end. His history may not be improperly placed here.

History of
the
14.

The beginning of this man, who had afterwards the whole power of the empire in his hand, was very obscure. He was an African, born of mean parentage,

rentage, and poor. In his youth, he was turbulent and riotous, and, for a sedition and several acts of violence he had been guilty of, was banished by Pertinax *, then proconsul of Africa. In this distressed situation, he found a resource in the friendship of Severus, to whom he attached himself. He was his countryman, and, some say, his relation. Others add, that it was by an infamous crime that he gained his good graces: and indeed it must be owned, that Severus's being so blindly partial to him as he was to the very last, gives great room for that suspicion. As Severus's power increased, he increased Plautianus's fortune, and when he was made emperor, he appointed him prætorian prefect. He seems even to have held that office alone, at least during the last years that he enjoyed it.

In that high post, the power of which was extremely great, he displayed all his vices, beginning with avarice. Every thing excited his cupidity, all ways of gaining were alike to him, whether by extorting presents, by rapines, or by confiscations. We have seen that history imputes to him a share in the murders so frequently ordered by Severus, and the minister's view in the bloody counsels he gave was to enrich himself with the spoils of those he caused to be condemned. There was not in the whole empire a people or city which he did not plunder, unless they paid him a tribute; and richer and more magnificent presents were sent to him, than to the emperor. Even the things consecrated to religion did not escape his rapacious hand.

His pride and insolence were as great as his avarice. He exacted every kind of honour and respect; not excepting even those that were particularly reserved to the sovereign: nor is it easy to conceive

* In the fragment of Dion Cassius (ap. Val. p. 737) from whence I take this circumstance, the person condemned by Pertinax is called *Fulvius*, Plautianus's name being *Fulvius Plautianus*.

Dio. l.
LXXV. &
LXXVI.
Herol. III.
Spir. S. u.
ll.

conceive how Severus, so mistrustful, so suspicious, so jealous of his rights, and so terrible in his anger, could bear every thing this favourite thought fit to do. More statues, and larger, were erected to him, than to the emperor and his sons; and that, not only in the cities of the provinces, but even in the capital; and as often by a decree of the senate, as through the flattery and at the expence of private persons. The senators and soldiers swore by the fortune of Plantianus, and public vows were made every where for his safety.

Intoxicated by his prosperity he thought all things lawful to him, and exercised a tyranny scarcely to be credited. One could not, for example, imagine, were it not for the testimony of Dion Cassius a contemporary writer, that a minister should dare to make an hundred eunuchs of all ages, to wait upon his daughter: I say of all ages, children, youths, young men, married men, and fathers of families. It is true, this shocking secret was confined to his own house whilst he lived: the public was not informed of it until after his death.

Plantianus, to his other vices added the most excessive debauchery of every kind. He loaded his stomach with such quantities of wine and meat, that, not being able to perform the office of digestion, he had accustomed himself, like another Vitellius, to ease it by vomiting. Though given to the most shameful excesses, and even to those that are most repugnant to nature, he was not the less jealous, but kept his wife a close prisoner, never suffering her to see or be seen by any person whatever, not excepting even the emperor and the empress.

Thus detestable was the man in whom Severus had placed all his confidence, or rather whom he had suffered to become his master: for he treated him, not with marks of kindness, but with a deference that amounted even to submission; inso-much that, to see them, one would have thought
Severus

Severus the minister, and Plautianus the emperor. When they travelled together, the prætorian prefect had the best lodgings: his table was better served than that of his master, and if Severus wanted any nicer dish than usual, he sent to Plautianus for it. In a fit of sickness which this minister had at Tyanæ, the emperor going to visit him, the soldiers that guarded Plautianus's door stopped his attendants, and he went in alone. Wanting one day to judge a particular cause, he ordered the proper officers of the court to bring it on: "I cannot," answered the other, "unless I have Plautianus's order." The empress Julia, loose enough indeed in her morals, but endowed with great sense and spirit, bore impatiently the pride of this audacious minister. Plautianus, instead of keeping measures with her, declared open war against her. He did all he could to make the emperor dislike her: he caused informations to be lodged against her: several ladies of great distinction, who were her friends, were put to the rack; and she had no way left to enjoy a little quiet, but by applying herself to the study of philosophy, passing her time in the company of men of learning, without meddling with any sort of business.

There was however a short time during which Severus was less fond of his minister, or rather, during which Plautianus fell into actual disgrace. The emperor, opening his eyes for a few moments, was offended at the multitude of statues erected to the prætorian prefect, and ordered some of them to be taken down and melted. Plautianus was even declared a public enemy, if we believe Spartian. At this signal, an universal hatred, until then curbed in by fear, broke out against him. The Roman magistrates in the provinces, the cities, and people, every where pulled down his statues. They soon had cause to repent it. Plautianus returned into favour, regained his ascendant over the emperor,

emperor, and made all who had shewn themselves his enemies feel his vengeance. Dion Cassius mentions in particular Racius Constans, proprætor of Sardinia, a man of merit, who was prosecuted for having thrown down the statues of Plautianus in his province. The accuser had the impudence to say in the course of his pleading, that they would sooner see the heavens fall, than Severus do the least hurt to Plautianus: and the emperor, who was present, confirmed and repeated this fine speech. Yet a year did not pass before this so positive declaration was most effectually set aside. But at the time of making it Severus thought what he said; and after his reconciliation to his minister, he heaped upon him greater favours than ever.

Dio. l.
XLVI.
p. 321.

He appointed him consul, and, which was without example, gave him leave to reckon the consular ornaments which had been decreed him formerly for a first consulship: so that though now consul in reality only for the first time, Plautianus stiled himself consul for the second time. With this supreme office Severus permitted him to keep the sword of prætorian præfect, which ought not properly to be worn by any but a Roman knight. He seemed almost to desire that he should be his successor, and in one of his letters he said; "I love Plautianus so much, that I wish I may die before him." As a proof of these sentiments, he married his eldest son Caracalla, who had now been Augustus some years, to the daughter of this favourite. But this high honour, which brought the empire into the family of Plautianus, proved the cause of its ruin.

The riches which Plautilla received on this occasion from her father, in jewels, ornaments, and equipages, would have been sufficient, says our historian, for the dower of fifty empresses. The glittering shew was exposed to the view of the whole city, and carried a-cross the forum to the palace. The nuptials were celebrated with the utmost magnificence

nificence. The emperor gave an entertainment to the whole senate ; and not only his table was served in the most splendid manner, but undressed victuals, and living animals were given to each of the guests to carry home to their own houses.

These pompous festivals and great rejoicings were soon changed into mourning for Plautianus and his daughter. Caracalla hated the praetorian prefect, as much as his father loved him. He could not bear the tyrannical power of that minister ; his haughty airs, and the pomp of his equipages, finer than those of the emperor ; the badges of incompatible dignities, of senator and of praetorian prefect, united in him ; and lastly, the arrogance with which Plautianus marched in Rome, preceded by numbers of slaves who stopped all passengers and carriages that might obstruct his way, and ordered every one not to look the minister in the face, but to keep their eyes fixed upon the ground whilst he passed by. We may easily conceive how much these insolent airs must incense a young prince, hot and impetuous, like Caracalla. From detesting the father, he soon proceeded to hate the daughter, whom he had married against his inclination. Far from treating her as his wife, he neither admitted her to his table nor to his bed ; but always expressed the utmost contempt and aversion for her, and publicly declared, that if he should ever reign, the first use he would make of his power should be to order the death of the father and the daughter.

Plautianus was sensible of the danger : but how far that fear might carry him, and whether, in consequence thereof, he formed any design against the life of the emperor and of his sons, does not seem to me possible to determine. Herodian, who accuses him of it, fills his account with circumstances altogether improbable, and adopts for truth an imposture invented by Caracalla. Dion Cassius does not explain himself clearly, but gives us sufficiently
to

to understand that Plautianus conceived hopes and desires contrary to his duty, without saying expressly what they were. All we know by him is, that Plautianus had always in the palace spies, who gave him an account of every word and action of the emperor, and that whatever he said or did himself remained a profound secret: a conduct undoubtedly suspicious in a minister, though it be not an absolute proof of actual guilt. Let us then remain uncertain as to this point, and content ourselves with what Dion says.

Plautianus, at the height of fortune, always trembled and looked pale; which our historian ascribes, partly to his excessive debaucheries which ruined his health, and partly to the fears and desires which agitated his mind. His uneasiness was so visible, that the mob, taking particular notice of it, cried out to him one day in the circus, "What do you tremble at? Why do you look pale? You are richer than all three put together:" meaning Severus and his two sons. But though Plautianus could not conceal the anxiety that tormented him, he was not the less arrogant and haughty. To the menaces of Caracalla he opposed pride, treating that young prince with great rigour, setting spies to watch and bring him an account of all he did, and wearying him out with perpetual reprimands. At the same time he took no care to put a stop to the just causes of complaint which the scandalous conduct of Plautilla gave him. Blinded by his confidence in Severus's friendship, he thought he might dare to do any thing with impunity: and it is true that Caracalla would never have been able to pull him down, had not the charm which bewitched his father to that minister been broken at last.

No one dared to open his mouth against Plautianus. The approach of death first gave that courage to the emperor's brother Septimius Geta, who, in his last moments, when he no longer feared the prætorian

prætorian prefect, whom he hated, entirely unmasked him in an interview with Severus. Dion Cassius does not give us the particulars of their conversation: but Severus was so struck with it, that from that very moment he had no longer the same regard for Plautianus, and greatly diminished his power. Nothing could be more favourable to the designs of Caracalla, who immediately seized the opportunity to satisfy his revenge.

In concert with Evodius, a freed-man, who had been his preceptor, he engaged three centurions, one of whom was called Saturninus, to go and declare to Severus, that Plautianus had charged them and seven more of their comrades to kill the emperor and his eldest son that moment, and that he had given them the order in writing. This information was given just as the princes were coming from a play that had been acted in the palace, and were sitting down to supper: all circumstances which shewed the absurdity of the accusation. For, as Dion Cassius justly observes, if Plautianus had intended to commit such a deed, he would not have chosen either Rome or the palace for the scene of action; nor for the time, that in which the emperor was surrounded by his whole court; nor for the actors, ten centurions at once. But above all, who ever heard of giving a written order in such a case as this? Yet Severus did not reject the information: and what made him the more ready to give credit to it, was a superstitious regard to a dream he had the night before, in which he thought he saw Albinus alive, and going to stab him.

Plautianus was immediately sent for, and, not suspecting any thing, came with such haste that his mules stumbled and fell down in the court of the palace: a circumstance which Dion Cassius takes notice of as an omen of his impending fate. Plautianus was surprised to see his intendants stopped at the entrance of the palace, and himself only
suffered

suffered to go in. He then began to mistrust that all was not right : but it was too late to go back, and he appeared before the emperor and his son. Severus, with great mildness, said to him : “ How have you been able to forget my kindnesses towards you, so far as to want to take away our lives ? ” Plautianus, surprised at these words, began to justify himself, and Severus listened to him. But Caracalla, flying into a fury very unbecoming his rank, fell upon the prætorian prefect, snatched away his sword, struck him with his fist, and was going to kill him with his own hand, if his father had not prevented it. The young prince thereupon ordered a soldier who was near him to kill Plautianus : which was accordingly done in the presence of Severus, who certainly acted a very odd part on this occasion. It may perhaps not be easy to say which was most surprising, the audacious boldness of the son, or the strange inactivity of the father.

Such was the tragical end of Plautianus, who, as he resembled Sejanus in his enormous power, probably imitated him likewise in his rash and ambitious views, and like him dug the pit in which he perished. His body was thrown out of the palace windows into the street : but Severus ordered it to be taken up and decently interred.

He still retained a degree of fondness for this unhappy minister even after his death. In the senate, he did not inveigh against his memory ; but bewailed the unhappy lot of mankind, who are giddied by too much prosperity ; and blamed himself for having raised his favourite too high. However, that the senators might know what had occasioned this great event, he ordered in the informers, who repeated what they had told him concerning Plautianus's criminal designs. The senate did not fail to suppose that their account was exactly true. Rewards were decreed to Saturninus and Evodius, and a motion was made to insert in the decree a panegyric

gyric of this last. But Severus opposed it, saying, that it did not become the dignity of the most august assembly in the world, to condescend to take so much notice of a freed-man. Some former emperors were not so attentive to what was or was not becoming in this respect: witness the abject flattery which the senate lavished upon Pallas.

The ruin of Plautianus was necessarily followed by that of his family. History does not mention his wife: but his son Plautus and his daughter Plautilla were banished to the island of Lipari, where they languished in misery and perpetual alarms, until Caracalla, become emperor, ordered them to be killed.

Plautianus's friends also shared his disgrace. Several of them were in danger, and some perished. Dion Cassius names two of them. Cæcilius Agricola, a determined flatterer, and one of the most vicious and worst of men, being condemned, shut himself up in his house, made himself drunk with the richest wine he had, then furiously broke the vessel he had drank out of, which cost him two hundred thousand sesterces*, and ordered his veins to be opened. Caranus had better luck. He was quit for a banishment of seven years, at the end of which returning into favour, he was the first Egyptian that was made a senator; and by a second not less remarkable indulgence, he obtained the consulship without having gone through any of the inferior offices.

It seems probable enough that Plautianus was killed towards the beginning of the year of Christ ^{Tillem.} 205, perhaps on the twenty-second of January, at ^{Nim. int.} which time Caracalla was pretty far advanced in ^{20.} his seventeenth year, and had been Augustus between six and seven years. This young prince, by ordering the death of a man of such consequence under the very eyes of his father, daringly assumed an authority which Severus was never able to check, and which must have made him repent

repent his having been in such a hurry to raise his son to dignity and power.

Implacable
hatred be-
tween the
two bro-
thers.
Dio. l.
LX.XVII.
Herod. l.
III.

Another thing which gave him great uneasiness was the perpetual discord that divided his family, and the violent hatred which his two sons bore each other. Their age was not very different, the eldest being but a year and some months older than his brother. They had the same taste, or rather the same madness, for pleasure: and though their father had taken care to give them a good education, yet, when they came to that time of life when the passions begin to act, the luxuries of Rome, the seducing sweets of fortune, and the interested counsels of flatterers, stifled in them all the principles of virtue which their preceptors had endeavoured to instill into them. Shews, chariot races, dances, had, in their eyes, charms to which they give themselves up without any regard to what was due to their rank. However, Plautianus, whilst he lived, kept them within some bounds by the authority he had assumed over them. Delivered from all constraint by his death, there was not any one excess of vice but the two young princes plunged headlong into it. Neither the honour of women, nor the law of nature was respected by them. Their usual companions were men of the most infamous characters, gladiators, and chariot-drivers. To supply their mad expences, they had recourse to extortion and rapines: and the feeble efforts which Severus made to put a stop to this corruption, were entirely fruitless.

The greatest misfortune of all was the implacable hatred between the two brothers. We are not told when it began: but it seems to have been of almost equal date with their lives. Even in the childish plays of their infancy, their jealous rivalship broke out upon every occasion. Whether they set quails or cocks to fighting, or made young wrestlers engage, the desire of conquest fired them with
anger.

anger. In the circus, they patronized contrary factions; and in a race which they had together, driving their own chariots drawn by little horses, they contended with such warmth, that Caracalla, thinking of nothing but how he might outstrip his brother, and forgetting his own safety, fell from his seat, and broke his leg. This irreconcilable antipathy increased with their years, and extended to all their actions. What pleased the one, displeased the other. Whoever had one of them for his friend, was sure to find a bitter enemy in the other. Tale-bearing sycophants and flatterers envenomed the wound on both sides, and entering into the passion of him they served, studied how they might exasperate the other.

Blameable as both the young princes were, a difference was however observed in favour of Geta. Spurt. Cirt. 1, & 2. & Geta, 4, & 5. He was milder and more tractable. Caracalla, on the contrary, more haughty, and even savage, gave room to fear his running into greater extremes. It has been said, that in their early infancy they shewed quite different inclinations; good nature distinguishing the eldest, and the other seeming rougher and less tender-hearted. But this I can hardly believe upon the bare authority of Spartian. The love of contrasts may easily have misled the authors of this remark.

Severus was sensible of the danger of this division Herod. between his children; but as weak a father as he was a stern and terrible prince, he contented himself with only reproving them for it. He quoted to them many examples, both from history and fable, of the fatal effects of discord among brothers; and said to them: "My coffers, you see, are full: and therefore you will have wherewith to attach the soldiery to you. I have increased the strength of the prætorian guards to four times what I found it, and you have at the gates of the city an army that secures your safety. You have nothing to fear from without. But if

“ a war should happen within, all my precautions
 “ will be useless, and you will draw down upon
 “ yourselves inevitable ruin.” All these speeches
 made no impression upon the young princes. Se-
 verus went even so far as to punish the flatterers
 who corrupted their minds by their wicked coun-
 sels. But the remedy came too late. He should,
 by a steady conduct, from the very first have ac-
 customed his children to respect in him the autho-
 rity of a father: whereas the premature honours
 by which he had equalled them to himself in point
 of rank, gave them an audaciousness it was no
 longer in his power to check. I say he had made
 them both his equals. For Geta was declared *Au-*
gustus, as well as his brother, and invested with the
 tribunitian power, in the year of Christ 208.

Geta de-
 clared *Au-*
gustus.
Tillem. Sev.
art. 33.
Dim. & He-
rod.

Under these circumstances Severus was glad to
 hear that some disturbances had broken out in Bri-
 tain, which required his presence. He resolved
 to go thither, and to carry with him his sons, in
 order to remove them from the pleasures of Rome,
 and to accustom them to military exercises, in
 hopes that occupation might help to get the bet-
 ter of the fatal animosity which was nourished by
 idleness. But before I give an account of this
 expedition of Severus, in which he ended his life,
 it will be right to mention such facts as have not
 yet been noticed, and which happened between
 the year 203, when he returned to Rome, and the
 year 208, when he set out for Britain.

Secular
 games.
Cass. d. vic.
Nat. c. 16.
 Two præ-
 torian præ-
 fets.
Herod.

Severus celebrated the secular games in the
 year 204 of Christ, 955 of Rome, fifty-seven years
 after those of Titus Antoninus.

He appointed two successors to Plautianus, and,
 according to the custom which had generally ob-
 tained, divided the office of prefect of the præto-
 rium between two colleagues, having experienced
 the danger of trusting so great a power to one man.

New cri-
 ties of Se-
 verus.

The illustrious blood which he continued to shed
 after the death of Plautianus, shews the injustice of
 imputing

imputing to the counsels of this minister the cruelties Severus had committed before. The truth is, that he was cruel by nature. Mere jokes, a silence of disapprobation, or a flourish of rhetoric intended only to shew the genius of the orator, often seemed to him crimes that deserved death. He made the senate in particular groan beneath a cruel tyranny : and he sacrificed to unnecessary precautions for his safety, all that were so unfortunate as to give him the slightest umbrage.

Quintillus Plautianus, a senator respectable for his nobility, and venerable for his age, lived retired in the country, without ambition or meddling with public affairs : but even this could not screen him from the unjust suspicions of Severus. He was accused, without doubt of having aspired to the empire; and condemned to die. He seems to have received his sentence with great composure of mind : for, ordering the liuens and other things which he had prepared long before for his burial to be brought him, and finding them grown rotten through age, “ Ah ! said he, we have tarried a great while indeed.” However, he was very sensible of the injustice he suffered : and his fate, pretty much like that of Servianus under Adrian, suggested to him a similar wish. He prayed to the gods, that Severus might wish for death, and not be able to find it. His request, says our historian, was granted.

The catastrophe of Apronianus and of Bæbius Marcellinus was still more extraordinary, and would seem almost incredible, if the fact was not attested by Dion Cassius, who was himself an eye-witness of what he relates. Apronianus, then proconsul of Asia, was charged with high-treason, because his nurse had formerly dreamed that the child she suckled would be emperor : to which was added, that, in consequence of this dream, he had consulted fortune-tellers and offered magical

sacrifices. He was condemned, though absent, and without being heard. But that was not all.

When the informations were laid before the senate, it was found by them, that a witness who had been interrogated concerning this criminal dream, being asked who had related it, and who had heard it told, answered, that a bald-headed senator was present. Nothing can be more expressive of the excess to which tyranny was then carried, than the consternation into which the reading of this deposition threw the whole senate. As the name of the senator was not mentioned, we all trembled, says Dion Cæsius, as well those among us who were bald, as those who had not much hair, and even those who had. I confess, adds he, that I could not help putting my hand up to my head, to feel whether I had still got my hair, and I observed that several others did the same. A circumstance which was read afterwards, reduced the danger to a smaller number of persons. It was said, that the bald senator wore at that time the robe *prætexta*. The eyes of all were then fixed upon Læbius Marcellinus, who was very bald, and who had borne the office of curule edile at the time mentioned by the evidence. Marcellinus rose up, and said: "If the witness saw me, doubtless he will know me again." The witness was then brought in, and remained a long while looking about him and viewing all the senators, without fixing upon any one. At last one of the company wickedly pointed out to him Marcellinus, and the witness thereupon said he remembered him to be the man. Immediately, without any farther examination, or formality, Marcellinus was seized, and dragged to the place of execution. He met by the way four children which he had, and, embracing them, pitied their hard fate, that they were born to see such unhappy times. He was afterwards executed, his head being cut off, even before Severus was informed of his condemnation.

The senator who was the cause of the death of ^{Punish-} Marcellinus, did not remain unpunished. His ^{ment of} name was Pollenius Sebennus. He had a mali- ^{Po'lenius} cious temper, and a wicked tongue; was zealous ^{Sebennus.} to serve his friends, but still more eager to revenge himself on those he hated. Not even the emperor escaped his satire. When Severus was declared the son of Marcus Aurelius, Sebennus said to him, "Caesar, I congratulate you upon your "having found your father:" thereby reproaching him with the obscurity of his birth. Yet that was not what ruined him: but having committed many acts of violence and injustice in the government of Noricum, with which he had been charged, he was accused before the senate by the people he had oppressed. As mean and grovelling then as he had been insolent and audacious before, he prostrated himself upon the ground, and, with tears, begged for mercy. Even this would not have saved him, had not an uncle of his, a man of great weight, interceded for him. His life was spared; but he was loaded with infamy.

Dion Cassius, whom I follow here step by step, ^{Bulla Fe-} has thought proper to give us a long detail of the ^{lix, captain} adventures of one Bulla Felix, a famous robber, ^{of a band} who, at the head of six hundred banditti, over- ^{of six hun-} ran all Italy for two years, under the very eyes of ^{ded rob-} the emperors, and in spite of all the troops they ^{bers.} had about them. He had correspondents who informed him exactly of all that went out of Rome, or arrived at Brundisium: he knew who they were, how many of them travelled together, and what they carried with them. He then lay in wait for them at proper places upon the road, and, if they were rich people, eased them of part of their money and baggage, and let them continue their journey: if they were artizans whose labour he wanted, he kept them for a time, set them to

2

work,

work, paid them well for what they had done, and then sent them away.

He was exceedingly dexterous and cunning. Two of his comrades having been taken, and condemned to be exposed to wild beasts, he went to the jailor in whose custody they were, and pretending to be the chief magistrate of a neighbouring city, said he was going to give a public shew, and wanted two criminals to fight against the wild beasts. His stratagem succeeded, and the two robbers were delivered to him.

Being informed that a centurion was sent with a party of soldiers to take him, he went to the centurion, disguised, and with a borrowed name, and, after exclaiming greatly against Bulla, said he would undertake to apprehend him, if the officer would go with him. The centurion, believing him, suffered himself to be led into a hollow way, where he was surrounded in a moment by a multitude of armed men. Bulla then ascended a kind of tribunal, and, as if he had been lawfully invested with the authority of a magistrate, caused the centurion to be brought before him, ordered his head to be shaved, and then dismissed him, saying: "Tell those who sent you upon this errand, that if they would lessen my troop, they must use their slaves better than they do." In effect, most of his gang were slaves, who had fled to him to avoid the ill treatment of their masters.

At length, however, he met the fate which such wretches seldom escape. Severus, vexed to think that a highway robber should bid defiance to him before whom whole nations trembled, sent a tribune of the prætorian cohorts with a body of horse, threatening him with his indignation if he did not bring Bulla to him alive. Debauchery delivered to him the person he wanted. The captain of robbers kept a mistress, a married woman, whom the tribune prevailed upon, by a promise of pardon,

to procure him the means of seizing his prey. Bulla was taken sleeping in a cave, and carried to Rome. Papinianus, then prætorian præfect, asked him, "Why he had taken to the infamous life of a robber?" And why, replied the audacious criminal, "Do you follow that of prætorian præfect." He was exposed to the wild beasts, and his gang, of which he was the soul, was dispersed by his death.

In what we have hitherto said of Severus, the Laudable qualities of Severus. had greatly outweighs the good. Activity for war seems to have been almost his only commendable part. Deceit, covetousness, and cruelty, fill up the rest of the picture. It is however true, that, though he had no amiable, he had several estimable qualities.

He was a perfect judge of men, and chose with Dio. & Herod. & Spart. Sev. 18, 19, 22. Vict. Epit. uncommon care those he intended to employ. Papinianus, whom he made prætorian præfect, is a proof of this. Money never was the means of obtaining honours from Severus. He governed his household with firmness and resolution, and did not suffer his freed-men to usurp the least undue authority. He administered justice regularly, His care to administer justice. and with equity and judgment: for he was tolerably well versed in literature, philosophy, and the law. He gave the counsellors sufficient time to set forth all their arguments in favour of their clients; and the senators, who sat as judges with him, were at full liberty to vote according to the dictates of their conscience.

When the leisure of peace permitted it, his day was laid out as follows. He rose very early in the morning, and, after spending some time in his closet, admitted his ministers, to whom he gave audience, and settled with them the affairs of the state, whilst he walked up and down his room. He then judged the law-suits of private persons, until noon, unless it happened to be some great festival. At noon, he rode out, if not hindered by the gout, Daily distribution of his time. and

and after that exercise he bathed, and then dined, pretty plentifully, either alone, or with his children. After dinner, he took a short nap; then dispatched what business could not be finished in the morning; and afterwards devoted the rest of the day to conversation with learned men. Towards the evening, he bathed again, and then supped with those that were about him: for he did not like great entertainments, or much company; and it was only upon certain days, fixed by indispensable custom, that he invited the chief persons of the senate to his table.

His love^d
of simpli-
city.

Severus, thus plain and simple in his way of life, but at the same time fully occupied, as we see, was a stranger to all pomp and ostentation. His robe was scarcely distinguished by a narrow border of purple, and his mantle was frequently rather military than imperial. But he prided himself upon being magnificent in what related to the public. He built, or repaired, a great number of edifices, the most famous of which are the Septizonium*, and the baths called by his name, which he built from their foundations; and the Pantheon, which he repaired from a very ruinous state, as an inscription upon it testifies to this day. His magnificence was however regulated by a wise economy, and his savings proved very considerable at the time of his death.

His mag-
nificence
in what
concerned
the public.
* S. c. Mont-
faucon's
Antiq. Vol.
V.

He was a prince of great foresight. When he died, Rome was provided with corn for seven years to come, after the rate of seventy-five thousand bushels a day: and the public magazines of oil were abundantly furnished for five years, not only for Rome, but for all Italy. The ancients used great quantities of oil, particularly on account of their gymnastic exercises. M. de Tillemont, on the authority of the book ascribed to Galen, upon *Theriaca*, mentions another kind of stores, worthy the attention of a great prince. Severus had provided great plenty of *Theriaca*, and of other expensive remedies, to be distributed to such as wanted them.

I likewise

I likewise place among his laudable actions, the care he took to secure the tranquillity of the country of Tripoli in Africa, in which he was born. His kindness to his native country. He removed from it, by force of arms, the savage and intractable people who disturbed its peace: and, if the text of Spartian be not corrupted, he gave the Tripolitans reason, by repeated liberalities, to congratulate themselves upon their having for emperor one of their countrymen.

His attention extended also to the laws, and to the morals of his subjects. A writer of those times extols the equity of the ordinances by which he perfected the Roman jurisprudence; and several of his laws are still extant in the Code. He increased the punishment of adulterers: and the zeal of the prince having awaked that of the people, accusations for that crime became so numerous, that Dion Cassius says he himself reckoned up three thousand of them upon the list of causes. We may judge by this, how general the vice was. It was past the power of the emperor to stop it: and most of these affairs having been neglected by those they concerned, Severus himself grew cool, and gave up the undertaking. His desire to reform the morals of his subjects. Aurel. v. i. t.

He was indeed little fit to exercise that censure, since he set others an example of indifference in a point of such importance to morality, by suffering quietly the shameful lewdness of his own wife Julia, who drew upon herself a severe reproach from a British lady, whom she pretended to rally for the indelicacy of the women of her country. "You Romans," said the lady to her, "have no reason to reproach us upon that score. We receive the company of men estimable for their courage, that we may have children like them; and we are not ashamed of it: but you, furtively, suffer yourselves to be corrupted by the meanest and most despicable of men."

Severus's

His care
to maintain
military
discipline,
not always
equal.

Spart. Vig.
3.

Herod.

Dis.

Severus's conduct with respect to the discipline of the army was not always of a-piece, and consequently not consistent. On one hand, he wished to have the ancient severity preserved among the troops, and that they should abstain from pleasures, licentiousness, and whatever might tend to corrupt and enervate them. We have a letter of his, in which he finds great fault with Rogonius Celsus, who commanded in Gaul, for suffering his soldiers to enervate themselves with wine and debauchery. But on the other hand, he flattered the soldiery, loaded them with distinctions, gifts, and privileges, and thereby nourished in them all the vices he wanted to destroy. He had in this respect, and delivered to his sons upon his death-bed, a maxim, which M. de Tillemont justly thinks more worthy of a tyrant, than of a good prince. "Enrich the soldiery," said he to them, "and value not the other orders of the state." Caracalla remembered this lesson but too well.

Severus
sets out for
Britain.
Dis. & Herod.

Remarks
upon the
Caledo-
nians and
Mæatic.

I now resume the thread of my history, and come to Severus's expedition into Britain. Two motives carried him thither: love of glory, which never ceased to animate him, and a desire to bring his children to a better way of thinking. The honour which he acquired was not great, nor did his sons grow at all better: the eldest especially, was guilty of greater excesses than ever.

The only people Severus had to encounter in this expedition, were the Mæatæ and the Caledonians, who inhabited the most barbarous part of Britain, beyond the walls of Adrian and of Antoninus. The Mæatæ, of whom no mention is made in the wars of Agricola, were the most southern of the two. The Caledonians occupied the north. The country which these two nations possessed, answers pretty exactly to the present Scotland, and is intersected by mountains and lakes, barren high-lands, and plains overflowed with water.

Nothing

Nothing could be more savage than the manners of these ancient people. They had neither towns, nor castles, nor had they any knowledge of agriculture. Tents served them for houses, and their cattle, hunting, and some few fruits that the country produced naturally, were their subsistence. Fish, which they had great plenty of, they either neglected, or abstained from out of superstition. What Dion Cassius says of their preparing a certain food, of which the bigness of a bean served them for meat and drink for a long time, may certainly be looked upon as very fabulous.

Their dress equalled, or even surpassed, the simplicity of their food. Notwithstanding the rigour of the climate, they went almost naked. An iron collar about their necks, and a hoop or belt of the same metal round their waists, were their chief ornaments. Iron was, in their eyes, as fine a thing, as gold seems now to the civilised nations of the world. They likewise imprinted upon their bodies the figures of various animals; and it was partly not to hide those embellishments, that they wore no cloaths. Another reason too was, that, by being naked, they were the more nimble, and ready at all times to plunge into, or swim over, their rivers and lakes. Dion tells us, that they sometimes spent several days together in them, with only their head above water: which is scarcely credible. But it is easy to conceive, that the hard life which they led in an excessively severe climate, strengthened their bodies and their minds against cold, hunger, and all the inconveniencies of life; and that if necessity compelled them to remain hid in their forests, they easily contented themselves with the roots and herbs they found there for their food.

I have spoken elsewhere of the manner of fighting of the Britons, which was the same throughout all the island; of their chariots of war, and the use they

*Rom. Hi. l.
V. l. XII.
B. XII.*

they made of them; of the courage and agility which rendered them equally fit either for fighting a pitch battle, or for skirmishing. Dion Cassius observes, that the horses of the Caledonians and Mæatæ, were small, but very swift. They used neither cuirasses nor helmets, which they looked upon as incumbrances rather than advantages. A small buckler, a lance with an iron head with which they struck their targets when they were going to fight, and a sword, was their only arms.

As to their government, we may easily judge that nothing but a democratic liberty could suit so savage a people.

They invade the territories of the Romans.
Dion. l.
LXXV.

When Severus marched against them, it was not the first time he had been provoked by their attacks. Whilst he was making war against the Parthians*, the Caledonians and the Mæatæ had taken advantage of the absence of the emperor and of the chief forces of the empire, and reduced Lupus, the Roman governor of Britain, to buy peace of them with large sums of money.

Severus drives them back beyond the gulphs of Gilota and Bodotria.
Dion. l.
LXXVI.
& *Herod.*

Such a peace could not but tempt them to renew the war. A few years after, faithful to their prevailing passion, the love of plunder, they began to make fresh incursions upon the territories of the Romans; and Severus, being informed of it by his lieutenant, though worn out with years and infirmities, marched against them with all the ardour of a young man, to erect in the North, trophies which might answer those he had acquired in the East. It is probable that he arrived in Britain in the year of Christ 208, but that he did not enter into action till the year after.— He employed the winter in making preparations, in raising troops and money, and in providing all sorts of stores, and particularly pontoons, of which he foresaw he would stand in great need in a country full of fens and marshes. The

* The Greek text says Περσικῶν πολέμων. It is easy, by altering only one letter, to change Περσικῶν into Παρθικῶν.

The barbarians, terrified at the arrival of the emperor in their island, sent to beg pardon of him for what was past, and desired peace. But Severus, elated with ideas of new conquests, refused to receive their submissions; and leaving his second son Geta in the Roman province, to command there in his absence, and take care of whatever he might want in his expedition, he advanced into the enemy's country at the head of his legions, taking with him his eldest son Caracalla. He himself was carried in a litter, being too ill of the gout to be able to sit on horseback.

He met with great difficulties, and was obliged in order to march his troops, to cut down forests, level mountains, throw bridges over rivers, and make roads over fens and marshes. By these means, with infinite fatigue, he penetrated into the north of the island, without meeting any considerable body of the enemies. They had divided into small parties, which fell sometimes upon the skirts of the Romans, and sometimes drew them into snares and ambuscades, by offering them a seemingly easy booty, of cattle or other things. No general action happened, but a great many skirmishes, in which the Romans were often worsted.

All that Severus got by this laborious expedition, was the extending of his dominion to the neck of land that separates the gulphs of Glota and Bodotria: a poor compensation for the loss of fifty thousand Romans, who perished, either in the skirmishes, or by sickness, chiefly owing to the bad quality of the waters they were obliged to drink. The barbarians ceded to him by a treaty the space contained between Antoninus's wall and the above-mentioned gulphs, beyond which they retired. To confine them there, Severus's wall. Severus built a wall, some remains of which are still Spart. Sev. to be seen, between the firths of Clyde and Forth: 18. beyond which the Roman empire never did ex- C. Illar. tend (i. v. r. Ant. 11. 14.

tend in Britain. The conquest of this scrap of land procured Severus the title of *Britannicus Maximus*, and each of his sons that of *Britannicus*.

Caracalla's
wicked de-
signs
against his
brother.
*Dio. &
Herod.*

This was not enough to comfort the conqueror for the cruel vexations his son Caracalla gave him. Being obliged by his infirmities, which increased daily, to leave the care of the armies partly to the young prince, even before the war was ended, he learned that Caracalla, instead of minding the duties of a general, studied only how to ingratiate himself with the officers and soldiers, in order to induce them to acknowledge him for sole emperor, in prejudice to his brother, whom he looked upon as an odious rival. He even ventured indirectly to attack his father: and the soldiers animated by his secret instigations, complained that their victory was retarded by an old and gouty chief.

Spart. Sec.
18. &
Aurel. Vict.

Severus, upon this, did an action of vigour and resolution. Causing himself to be carried to his tribunal in the middle of the army, and seating himself upon it, he ordered his son, and all those who had entered into his plot, to be summoned to appear and condemned them all to die, except Caracalla. The criminals fell prostrate before Severus, and with tears implored his mercy. He was inflexible for some time, and, resolving at length to pardon them, he laid his hand upon his head, and said with a majestic air, "Are you now satisfied that it is the head that rules, and not the feet?" This warning, instead of checking Caracalla, served only to drive him to the utmost excess of fury.

He endeavours to raise a sedition in the army.
Dio.

The first thing he tried was to raise a sedition in the army. After settling his plan with some soldiers whom he had bribed, he ran hastily out of his tent, crying out with all his might, that he was insulted and abused by Castor. This was the best and honestest of all the emperor's freed-men, and the person in whom his master reposed the greatest confidence. The soldiers who were in the secret, gathered about

about Caracalla, and the affair began to make a noise in the camp, when Severus appeared, and, by punishing the most guilty, restored order and tranquillity.

This scheme having miscarried, Caracalla was so blinded with rage, that he conceived the detestable design of murdering his father with his own hand. As Severus, who was now well enough to sit on his horse, was marching, accompanied by his son, likewise on horseback, at the head of his army, that of the enemy appearing at some distance; the wicked Caracalla, letting his father go on a little before him, drew his sword in order to stab him. Those that were near them, seeing it, cried out, which disconcerted the parricide. Severus turned round, and, though he saw the naked sword, was sufficiently master of himself not to say a single word. He continued his march, finished what he had to do, and returned to his tent, where, throwing himself upon his bed, he sent for his son, and, in the presence of Papinianus, captain of his guards, and of the freed-man Castor, with great coolness reproached him with the enormity of his crime, representing to him particularly the rashness of his attempting such a deed at noon-day, and in the presence of two armies. "If you want to kill me, added he, take this sword, (holding out one that lay by him) execute your design here. You are young and vigorous, and I an infirm old man, stretched out upon a bed ready to receive the blow. You may easily strike it. Or, if shame withholds your hand, order Papinianus, who is here present, to rid you of me. He will obey you, since you are his emperor." Severus said no more. But he deceived himself greatly if he thought these words could make any impression upon the hardened heart of his unnatural son. He had often blamed Marcus Aurelius for his excessive indulgence in letting live a son unworthy of him: and he himself

self now imitated that indulgence in regard to Caracalla, who was infinitely more criminal than Commodus. Some have however said, that he intended to punish his son with death, and that he was dissuaded from it by his prætorian prefects. But the account we have given, which is that of Dion Cassius, seems most probable.

New revolt
of the Britons.

A new revolt of the Britons, who had so lately submitted, incensed Severus to a very great degree. He assembled his soldiers, and, addressing them in the words of Agamemnon in Homer *, exhorted them not to give any quarter to the rebels; “nor suffer one of them to escape their swords; “not even the infant in its mother’s womb.”

Sickness
and death
of Severus.
Dion. & Herod.

Sickness and death hindered him from prosecuting his revenge. Cruelly tormented by the gout for a long time past, the continual grief and vexation which his son gave him, increased his distemper greatly. Some even add that the monster Caracalla thinking his father, dying as he was, lived too long, bribed the physicians to hasten his death.

Spart. S. v.
23.

In this last sickness, Severus sent for both his sons; and, after exhorting them to concord and unity, caused to be read to them, with that view, the excellent speech of Micipsa to his children and Jugurtha, in Sallust. At the same time he applied some words of it to a short recapitulation he made to himself, of his own exploits and successes. “† I found, said he, the republic in disorder and confusion. I leave it quiet at home and abroad. “The East and the North are pacified by my cares.

“ I

* — Τῶν μὴ τις ὑπεκφυγοῖ αἶπυν οὐδέραν,
Νῆάς δ' ὑπερέβουε, κινδ' ὀλίγα γαστέρι κητήσῃ
ἀέρον ἰσθίε φέροι, μηδ' ὅς φέροι.

Iliad. VI. v. 57.

† Turbatam Rempubliam ubique accepit, pacatam—relinquo, scruex & pedibus ager, firmum Imperium Antoninis meis relinquens si boni erunt, imbecillum, si mali.

“ I leave my sons an empire, powerful and lasting, if they are good men; but weak and precarious, if they are bad.”

To these ideas of triumph succeeded others ^{Spurt. 18. & Aurcl. Vict. Di.} more suitable to his present situation. Struck with the emptiness of his fleeting grandeur, he cried out *, “ I have been every thing: but it avails me nothing now.” Then ordering the urn to be brought to him, in which his ashes were to be inclosed, he took it in his hands, and looking at it, said “ Thou, † shalt contain one, whom “ the whole world was too little to hold.”

His activity, which was the foundation of his ^{Spurt. 23. & Din.} character, never forsook him even in his last moments. He was almost expiring, when he gave for word to the officer who came to receive it of him, “ Let us mind our business:” and then addressing himself to those who stood round his bed, “ Let us consider, said he, what we have to do.”

His intention was that his two sons should succeed him with equal power: and in consequence of this design, he desired, a little before his death, that a duplicate might be made of the golden statue of Fortune which generally stood in the emperor's chamber, that each of his sons might have one. The time being too short for it to be made in, he ordered, that, when he should be no more, the imperial Fortune should be carried every day first to the apartment of one, and then to that of the other of his sons. But Caracalla, paying no regard to this order, got possession of the statue, and never suffered it to be carried to his brother.

Severus's pains increased to such a degree, that, ^{Phil. E.} if we believe the epitome of Victor, he called for poison to put an end to them. If so, the dying wish of Quintillus was fulfilled; for no one would give him that fatal assistance. He therefore purposely

* Omnia fui, & nihil expedit.

† Χρηστὸς αἰδοῦναι ἢ οὐκ αἰδοῦναι ἑαυτὸν.

posely loaded his stomach with coarse meats, which causing an indigestion, carried him off. He died at York, in the year of Rome 960, and of Christ 209, after having lived sixty-five years; nine months, and twenty-five days, and reigned seventeen years, eight months, and three days. His funeral rites were performed upon the spot: and after his body was burnt, his ashes were put into an urn of porphyry *, which his sons carried with them to Rome.

*Spart. 17.
Dio.*

What judgment ought to be formed of the character and merit of Severus.
*Spart. 9,
& 18.*

Spartian tells us that Severus was greatly esteemed and regretted after his death, and that the senate applied to him what had been formerly said of Augustus; that he ought never to have been born, or never to have died. This was certainly going too far: and Spartian himself assigns the cause of this too favourable judgment. Severus gained greatly by the comparison that was afterwards made of him with his successors, who, for the space of sixty years, were all, except Alexander the son of Mamæa, rather robbers than princes.

It must be owned that he was really estimable in many respects. His activity was most astonishing. He preserved tranquillity within the empire, by the firmness and vigilance of his government, foreseeing and providing for all things with an indefatigable attention. He maintained the glory of the Roman arms against foreign nations, and made them be respected to the very extremities of the world.

Most writers call him a great warrior: but I do not see any thing by which he deserved that title. I observed before, that, in the war against Niger, in which his own cause was at stake, he was not present at any one of the three battles which decided that dispute. In the battle of Lyons, where he commanded his troops in person, the victory was a long

* According to Herodian, the urn was of alabaster; according to Spartian, of gold.

long time doubtful, and seems to have been at last determined in his favour by one of his lieutenants.—His exploits against the Parthians and the Britons afford nothing very remarkable. The difficulties which he surmounted were not great, and he miscarried in the siege of Atra. If the general success in these wars answered his wishes, his forces were so superior to those of his enemies, that the Romans may be said to have conquered, rather than Severus.

His policy in the government of affairs at home often deserved the name of treachery and deceit. He did many things which were of service to the public, but always with a view to his own private interest. I see in him a great deal of cunning and finesse: but nothing elevated, nothing noble, nothing frank and open, nothing generous. He seems to have thought of nothing but himself, and the establishment of his family. For this it was that he increased and strengthened the enormous power of the soldiery, so inconsistent with the welfare of the empire.

It is needless to speak of his cruelty and rapines, which were monstrous, and admit of no excuse.—The spirit of revenge was so strong in him, that, *Aurcl. Vict.* out of hatred to Didius Julianus, he abolished the decrees which had been drawn up by his great-grandfather Salvius Julianus, a famous civilian, and author of the perpetual edict under Adrian. But the wisdom and equity of Salvius's decisions maintained their authority against all the power of Severus.

Another thing which does him no honour, is, *Dis.* his not valuing what was said of him. He that has no regard for his own reputation, is in a fair way to set little value upon virtue.

The most that can be said in favour of Severus, is, that if he deserves in some respects to be ranked among the great princes, he by no means merits a place among the good ones.

Vict. Epict. His private character is likewise far from doing him any honour. We are told indeed, that he was a good and faithful friend : and as proof of this, writers quote Lateranus, Cilo, Anulinus, Bassus, whom he loved constantly, and whom he loaded with riches. But he was guilty of an unpardonable excess that way in regard to Plautianus, by placing in him such a confidence as rendered him blind to all his faults. Too indulgent her vices, and who even gave room to suspect her of conspiring against his life. Weak and pusillanimous as a husband, he kept a wife who dishonoured him by her conduct. As a father, he suffered his children to lord it over him. He seems therefore still less estimable as a man as a prince. In short, in whatever light we consider him, we find in him more to censure than to praise.

*Spart. 18.
& Aurcl.
Vict.*

His taste for learning. He wrote memoirs of his own life. *Dio. Vict. Epict. Aurcl. Vict.* He had some learning : or rather he was a lover of learning and of philosophy. For he had not time to acquire any degree of excellence therein, nor to perfect himself in the Greek and Latin eloquence. An ancient writer says he generally used his mother tongue, which was the Punic. He wrote, however, in Latin memoirs of his own life both public and private, of which Aurelius Victor praises the style as well as the fidelity. Dion Cassius does not think so favourably of that work. On the contrary, he accuses Severus pretty plainly of having paid little regard to truth in his account of himself : a reproach highly probable, even if it was not supported by the authority of a contemporary writer. Severus endeavoured particularly, in those memoirs, to clear himself from the imputation of cruelty. We may judge by his actions, what foundations his apology could have.

*Dio l.
LXXV.
p. 633.*

*Spart. Sec.
15.*

The empress Julia was also a lover of the sciences and of learned men.

The empress Julia, his wife, was also a lover of the sciences and of learned men. I have already said what was her motive for applying to study. She had regular assemblies at her palace, not of fine ladies

ladies, but of philosophers and learned men. We have however seen, that she sometimes found herself another sort of amusement. It was at her request that Philostratus wrote the life of Apollonius Tyanæus. If we judge by that work of the taste which prevailed in the learned conversations of the empress, we shall be apt to think that it turned more upon elegance of style, and pretended curious researches, than upon any thing solid, and really worth inquiring into.

Among the learned who flourished in the reign of Severus, Philostratus held a distinguished rank which does not give us any great idea of the others. In effect, most of them were sophists, among whom Antipater, a native of Hierapolis in Phrygia, may be looked upon as the most illustrious. He succeeded better at speaking off-hand, than at composing finished discourses: and Severus employed him according to his talent, by making him his Greek secretary. Antipater acquitted himself perfectly well of this office. Soon qualifying himself for his new post, he made the emperor speak, in his letters, with all the dignity that becomes a sovereign: his expressions were clear, his thoughts noble and refined, his diction easy and natural, and unencumbered with false ornaments or affected transitions. He had a share in the education of the two princes, Severus's sons, and received as a reward for it, the consulship and the government of Bithynia. In this last post he was too severe, shed too much blood, and, for that reason, was recalled. After the death of Geta, killed by Caracalla under pretence of his having formed a design against his life, he had the courage to tell the savage murderer, in one of his letters to him: "It is a great grief to me, that two princes whom I instructed in the use of arms for their mutual defence, should have turned them against each other." He supposed Caracalla's pretence to be true. But even with that mitigation

Dio. l. LXXV. p. 858. Philostr. Ap. l. 3.

Learned men who flourished in the reign of Severus. Philostratus. The sophist Antipater. Philostr. Soph. II. 24.

tigation of the fact, the reproach is still strong enough to do honour to him who dared to direct it to so barbarous an emperor.

Diogenes
Laertius.
*Menag. Ob-
serv. in
Laert.*

Diogenes Laertius, a writer less estimable for his talents, than necessary to such as want to know the philosophy of the ancients, is likewise said, and with some probability, to have lived in the time of Severus. We have of him, in ten books, the lives of eighty-two philosophers, with an exposition of their doctrines, and most remarkable sayings. It is agreed, that he was but little acquainted with the subject he wrote upon; and that his accounts of the opinions of the philosophers are too short, often confused; and far from having that precision which such a work particularly requires. With these faults, which are great ones, Diogenes Laertius is nevertheless much esteemed by the learned, who find in his work many things which they would seek for in vain elsewhere. His style is dry and destitute of ornaments: but perhaps it may, for that very reason, not be the less fit for matters which require not to be embellished, but only to be explained clearly. He addresses himself, in his work, to a lady, whom he describes no otherwise than by stiling her a lover of Plato. She is thought to have been Arria, whose taste for philosophy and the sciences, is praised in the treatise ascribed to Galen, upon Theriaca. The surname of *Laertius* which the author I am speaking of bears, was probably given him on account of his being born at *Laertes*, a city of Cilicia.

Solinus.

I have already said that Solinus, who has left us a collection of memorable things under the title of *Polihystor*, is, by many, thought to be the same with C. Julius Solo, a senator who lived under Commodus and Severus, and who was put to death by this last. His work is only a mere compilation, into which he has not put any thing of his own. He has borrowed, in particular, from Pliny the naturalist.

There

There was, in the reign of Severus, a little before the fall of Plautianus, an eruption of Vesuvius, which alarmed all Campania, but did not great hurt.

An eruption of mount Vesuvius.
Dio. l. LXXV.

Dion Cassius speaks of a sea monster of an enormous size, which was driven into the harbour of Augusta near the city now called Porto. It was taken, and a representation was made of it in which all the dimensions of the animal were exactly observed. Its capacity was such, that it could contain fifty bears.

p. 860.
A sea monster.
Dio. l. LXXV. p. 858.

The same writer mentions also the appearance of a comet, which did not fail to be looked upon as the presage of some great calamity.

A comet.

 BOOK XXIII.

P R I N C I P A L E V E N T S

OF THE REIGN

OF

C A R A C A L L A,

A.R. 962. GENTINUS.
 A.C. 211. BASSUS.

CARACALLA and Geta joint emperors.
 Cruelties exercised by Caracalla.
 Peace concluded with the Caledonians.
 Feigned reconciliation between the two brothers.

They leave Britain, and return to Rome.—
 Their discord breaks out whilst they are upon the road.

The apotheosis of Severus.

A.R. 963. C. JULIUS ASPER.
 A.C. 212. — JULIUS ASPER.

Geta killed by his brother, in the arms of their mother, about the 27th of February.

Caracalla, acknowledged sole emperor by the prætorians, makes his apology before the senate, and recalls the exiles.

The apotheosis of Geta.

All his friends and partizans murdered. Rome drenched in blood. The death of Papinian.

The

The rights of Roman citizens granted to all the subjects of the empire.

M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS AUGUSTUS IV. A.R. 964.
D. COLEIUS BALBINUS II. A.C. 213.

Balbinus, the second consul of this year, is the same who was afterwards made emperor by the senate, with Pupianus Maximus, against Maximin.

The elder Gordian was likewise consul during part of this year.

Caracalla goes into Gaul, and commits great cruelties and rapines there.

..... MESSALA. A.R. 965.
..... SABINUS. A.C. 214.

The dress of the Gauls, called *Caracalla*, introduced by the emperor into Rome and the army; from whence came his name of *Caracalla*.

War against the Cenni, a German people, and against the Alemanni. The Alemanni now first mentioned in history. Caracalla purchases peace of them, and, as if he had been conqueror, takes the surname of *Alamanicus*.

..... LÆTUS II. A.R. 966.
..... CEREALIS. A.C. 215.

He goes into Dacia.

War against the Gæti, by whom is here meant the Goths. First mention of the Goths in the Roman history.

Caracalla goes into Thrace, and from thence into Asia. He implores in vain the help of Æsculapius, at Pergamus, to ease his pains of body and of mind. He visits Ilium, and pays his great honours to the memory of Achilles.

C. ATIUS

A.R.967.
A.C.216.

C. ATIUS SABINUS II.
... CORNELIUS ANULLINUS.

He goes to Antioch.

Death of Vologeses king of the Parthians. Disagreement between his two sons, which emboldens Caracalla to threaten the Parthians with war, if Tiridates and Antiochus, who had fled for refuge to the court of Parthia, are not sent back to him. They are sent back, and he seems satisfied.

His perfidy towards Abgarus king of Edessa, and towards the king of Armenia. He seizes Abgarus's dominions. The Armenians take up arms, and defeat Theocritus, a dancer, to whom Caracalla had given the command of the Roman army.

Caracalla goes to Alexandria, and massacres its inhabitants.

He returns to Antioch, and picks a quarrel with Artabanus king of the Parthians. He surprises him unawares, takes Arbela, over-runs Media, and approaches near the royal city, without meeting the enemy any where. For these exploits he takes the name of *Parthicus*,

A.R.968.
A.C.217.

C. BRUTTIUS PRÆSENS.
T. MESSIUS EXTRICATUS.

Whilst he is preparing to march a-new against the Parthians, who, on their side, were prepared to receive him, his prætorian præfect, Macrinus, conspires against him.

Caracalla is killed, the 8th of April.

SECT.

S E C T. I.

C A R A C A L L A.

Origin of the name of Caracalla. Geta was called Antoninus, as well as his brother. Caracalla, not being able to cause himself to be declared sole emperor, feigns a reconciliation with his brother. Cruelties exercised by Caracalla. He makes peace with the Barbarians, and returns to Rome with his brother. The hatred between the two brothers breaks out again. Their entry into Rome. The apotheosis of Severus. The two brothers seek to destroy each other. A partition of the empire proposed, but without effect. Caracalla causes his brother to be killed in the arms of their mother. He prevails upon the prætorians, by flatteries and gifts, to declare Geta a public enemy. He endeavours to justify himself to the senate, and recalls all the exiles. The apotheosis of Geta. Slaughter of Geta's friends. The death of Papinian. Fabius Cilo treated outrageously. Julius Asper banished. Other great persons put to death. A daughter of Marcus Aurelius. Pompeianus grandson of Marcus Aurelius. Severus cousin-german to Caracalla. The son of the emperor Pertinax. Thrasca Priscus. Serenus Sammonicus. Caracalla's hatred of the memory of his brother. His disturbance of soul, and remorse. Games and shows, in which he commits several acts of cruelty. He may be looked upon as a second Caligula. Other instances of his cruelty. Enormous extortions and rapines. His prodigality to the soldiery; to flatterers; and for games and shows. He himself fought with wild beasts, and ran in the circus. His contempt of learning, and his ignorance. He seldom administered justice.

Dis-
gustful

gustful manner in which he treated his assessors, His inquisitiveness. Soldiers employed as spies, in every corner, to bring an account of all that passed. His ministers chosen from among the vilest of men. His debaucheries joined to an affectation of zeal for purity of manners. Pretended zeal for religion, accompanied with a love of Magic and judicial Astrology. Perpetual contradiction between his words and his actions. The current coin excessively debased. He attacks the senate and the people with violent invectives. He would not be advised by any one. He grants the privilege of Roman citizens to all the inhabitants of the empire. His extravagant fondness of Alexander. He affects mixing with the soldiers in their military labours and exercises. He goes into Gaul, and commits great violences there. He passes the Rhine, and makes war upon the Cenni and Alemanni. Ferocious courage of the German women. Caracalla, despised by the Barbarians, purchases peace of them. He takes a liking to the Germans, and imitates their dress. He marches to the lower Danube, gains some slight advantages over the Goths, and makes a treaty with the Dacians. He passes into Thrace. He crosses the Hellespont, visits Ilium, and honours the tomb of Achilles. At Pergum, he implores the assistance of Æsculapius, to be eased of his torments of body and of mind. He spends the winter at Nicomedia, preparing for war against the Parthians. He goes to Antioch. The king of the Parthians submits to his demands, and obtains peace. Caracalla's perfidy towards Abgarus king of Edessa. Corhoene subdued. Like perfidy towards the king of Armenia. The Armenians take up arms. Caracalla vaunts his military toils and exploits. He goes to Alexandria, where he orders a most dreadful massacre. The Alexandrians admitted into the senate. Caracalla demands in marriage the daughter of the king of the Parthians; and being refused, renews the war. His trifling exploits. He takes the surname

of Parthicus. *Macrinus, incensed against Caracalla, and alarmed at his behaviour, conspires against him. Caracalla is killed. The uncertainty of human grandeur exemplified by the misfortunes of Severus's family. False, or at least uncertain, imputations laid to the charge of Caracalla. He was hated by all but the soldiery. Works with which he embellished Rome. He is said to have been the father of Heliogabalus. The Greek Poet Ovipian lived in Caracalla's time.*

THOUGH the two brothers, Caracalla and Geta, began to reign together, I mention only the eldest in the title of this book, because the youngest enjoyed the supreme power but a very short time, and soon lost it with his life.

The name of *Caracalla*, by which the emperor whose reign I am going to write is generally known, is a kind of nick-name, which he himself never took. He was first called *Bassianus*, from the name of his grandfather by the mother's side, *Bassianus*, priest of the sun in Phœnicia, father of the empress *Julia*, and of *Julia Mœsa*, of whom frequent mention will soon be made. *Severus*, being made emperor, and determining to share his high authority with his son, made him quit that name, which denoted a private condition, and even an obscure origin; and substituted in the room of it the noble and respected names of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, which were universally received, and are the only ones of which this prince afterwards made use. But as he disgraced their splendour by his conduct, and took a liking to a kind of Gaulish robe called *Caracalla*, which he not only wore himself in preference to any other, but distributed it among his soldiers, and to the inhabitants of Rome, that they might wear it like him, he was for this reason, in all private companies, called *Caracalla*; by which name he is now known better than by any other.

Geta was called *Antoninus*, as well as his brother. *Spart. Sev.* 19, 20.

His brother, P. Septimius Geta, did not change his names; but he added to them that of *Antoninus*; a name which was then an object of public veneration, and which Severus would have wished to appropriate to all the emperors, like that of Augustus. His admiration and respect for this name was quite enthusiastic, and he looked upon it as a very signal glory for him to leave two Antoninus's for his successors. Vain and frivolous glory! for one of them perished by the hand of his brother, and the other by his own fury.

Caracalla, not being able to cause himself to be declared sole emperor, feigns a reconciliation with his brother. *Herod. l. III.*
Dio. l. LXXVII.
A. R. 962.
A. C. 211.

Caracalla, ambitious of reigning alone, had often attempted to get rid of Geta, even in Severus's life-time. The sovereign power, devolved to him by the death of his father, facilitated the execution of his wicked design, which he soon discovered, by tampering with the soldiery, in order to prevail on them to declare him sole emperor. To this end, he spared neither gifts nor promises, nor any method that he thought could possibly win them over. But the troops, attached to the memory of Severus, respecting his will, and looking upon themselves as the guardians of the two princes, to whom they owed an equal share of tenderness, though, of the two, they were most inclined to Geta, who was very like his father, and shewed a mild and humane disposition, were deaf to all Caracalla's solicitations. All the titles of honour remained therefore common to the two brothers, excepting that of high pontiff, which the eldest reserved to himself, as M. Aurelius had done when he made L. Verus his associate in the empire. There was even a seeming reconciliation between them: for, not being able to resist the exhortations and intreaties of the empress Julia, and of all the old friends and counsellors of Severus, who pressed them strongly to put an end to their fatal animosities, and to live together in that union which the ties of blood and their reciprocal interests required; they embraced each other, and mutually

J&Kcm.

mutually promised a brotherly affection, whilst, at the same time, they preserved in their hearts all the rancour of the most implacable enemies.

They begun then to reign together; or rather to bear the same titles of sovereignty: for, in reality, Caracalla, more violent and furious than his brother, enjoyed alone the supreme power, and shewed at once the horrid use he intended to make of it. He filled the whole palace with blood; killed the physicians who had refused to assist him in destroying his father; the freed-man Evodius, who had taken care of his education, and exhorted him to live in harmony with his brother; and the freed-man Castor, who had merited his father's utmost confidence, and who, for that reason, could not but be odious to the son. He ordered his wife Plautilla, and his brother-in-law Plautus, to be murdered in their exile. Papinianus, too great a lover of virtue to please such an emperor, was stripped of his office of prætorian præfect: and this disgrace was only the prelude to a still more melancholy doom. To these acts of cruelty and injustice towards his own people, Caracalla joined cowardice and effeminacy in regard to his enemies. He made peace with the Caledonians, by giving up to them the advanced forts which Severus had built in their country to keep them in awe. He was in a violent hurry to return to Rome; and therefore left Britain as soon as possible, accompanied by his mother and his brother.

Notwithstanding the pretended reconciliation of the two princes, their discord broke out again all the way upon the road. They neither lodged together, nor eat at the same table; but lived in continual distrust of each other, and took all possible precautions for fear of being poisoned with their victuals or drink: and when they arrived at Rome, they divided between them the imperial palace, which was larger than any town in the provinces; and fortified themselves in their respective habitations,

Cruelties
exercised
by Caracalla.

He makes
peace with
the barbarians, and
returns to
Rome with
his brother.

The hatred
between
the two
brothers
breaks out
again.
H. vol. II.

tions, with guards and barricadoes, which prevented all communication between them.

Their entry into Rome.

However, they made their entry into Rome together. All the people, crowned with laurel, went out to meet them, and the senate, in a body, harangued them without the gates. They then entered the city in great pomp, marching foremost, with all the ornaments of the imperial dignity. The consuls followed, carrying the urn in which the ashes of Severus were inclosed; and all that came to salute the new emperors, did homage likewise to the sepulchral urn of their father. It was deposited in the tomb of the Antonini, from whence the two brothers proceeded to the capitol, to offer the sacrifices that were usual upon the solemn entry of an emperor.

The apotheosis of Severus.

Severus was inscribed among the gods, and his two sons were present at the ceremony of his apotheosis, which was celebrated with great magnificence. Herodian gives us a description of it. But as I have already related at length the whole ceremony of the deification of Pertinax, as recorded by Dion Cassius; to avoid repetitions, I shall here borrow from Herodian only two circumstances, which are not mentioned by the other historian.

The first is, that during seven days that the effigies of the prince, in wax, was exposed to view upon a bed of state, his physicians met every day at his bed-side, to consult, as if he had been ill, and afterwards made their report, that his health decayed, and his end drew near: a comic scene; the equivalent to which is practised in our state funerals.

The second observation I have to make, relates to the structure of the funeral pile, which was a square building, of several stories. These stories grew less and less as they rose in height, to the uppermost, which was only a kind of closet. In the chamber on the second story were placed the bed and the effigies of the deceased prince; and in

"in the closet which formed the topmost story was the eagle that was to be let fly, to carry the emperor's soul to heaven.

The sons of Severus, after jointly paying the last honours to the memory of their father, gave an entire loose to their mutual hatred, and studied only how to destroy each other. In this respect our authors remark no other difference between them, than that the proceedings of the eldest were the most violent. But each of them caballed against his brother, in order to reign alone; and each, by his private intrigues, gifts, and promises, sought to increase the number of his partizans. In this Geta succeeded best, because he seemed the most open, accessible, and affable. He expressed a regard, and even a friendship for those that approached him. His inclinations too were decent. He had a taste for learning, and for those who cultivated it; and in his bodily exercises, he took delight in none that were any way ignoble, or unbecoming his rank. On the contrary, Caracalla was harsh and brutal, extremely passionate, full of menaces, and better pleased with being feared than loved. He affected the airs of a soldier, and an ardour for war and arms, in which policy and vanity had no small share.

It was easy to foresee the fatal consequences of so furious and inveterate a hatred between two brothers who possessed jointly the supreme command, who had every moment opportunities to thwart each other, and who were determined not to let one of them slip. If places were to be filled up, each insisted on putting in his own friends. If they sat in judgment together, their opinions always differed, to the great prejudice of the parties, and of justice. They themselves were tired of their eternal wrangles, and thought the best way to end them would be to divide the empire. In this scheme alone they acted with tolerable harmony, because, it was to separate them for ever.

The two brothers seek to destroy each other. Dio. l. LXXVII. Herod. l. IV.

A partition of the empire proposed, but without effect.

Geta ceded to his brother, Rome and all the East, and retained for his portion Asia and the countries of the East, intending to establish his residence at Antioch, or Alexandria. The Propontis was a natural barrier, which would have fixed the boundaries of their respective dominions; and a garrison would have been kept at Byzantium and at Chalcedon, to prevent all passage from the territories of one to those of the other, and all communication between them. As to Africa, the western part of that region, that is to say, Mauritania, Numidia, Africa properly so called, was to belong to Caracalla: Geta was to have for his share, the eastern side of that country.

This plan, which suited the two brothers, was not relished by the chief persons of the republic. Jealous of the Roman grandeur, they were afraid of weakening it by dividing it; and the division of the whole into an eastern empire and a western empire, which was afterwards introduced, and finally established, was then a novelty which shocked every one. The empress Julia disliked it: and in a council that was held upon the occasion, and at which she was present, she said to her sons: "You find means to divide lands and seas; but how will you divide me betwixt you? You must take away my life, and cut my body in two, that each may have his half." This affecting speech was accompanied with sighs and tears, whilst she embraced her two sons, and held them united within her arms. The whole assembly was moved with compassion, and broke up without concluding any thing; by which means the project was dropt.

Caracalla causes his brother to be killed in the arms of their mother.

The quarrels, clandestine snares, and attempts to poison one another, which had been suspended a little while by the hopes of an arrangement, began again the moment after. Caracalla attempted to kill his brother under favour of the licentiousness allowed during the saturnalia: but finding him too

well

well guarded, he resolved, at all events, and even in violation of the most sacred laws, to seize the first moment in which he should find him defenceless, to execute his parricide.

He did not expect that Geta would ever trust to him, or depend upon his promises or oaths. The tenderness of their common mother for this beloved son, was the means Caracalla availed himself of to surprize and kill him. Under pretence of desiring to be reconciled to his brother, he desired Julia to procure him an interview with Geta in her apartment. The unfortunate Geta repaired thither without any mistrust, thinking the presence of his mother a sufficient safeguard against all danger. But he was mistaken: for he had scarce entered the room, when he was attacked by several centurions whom his brother had found means to conceal in it. He ran to his mother, who received him in her arms: but the murderers, animated by Caracalla, far from respecting so sacred an asylum, or the efforts Julia made to screen him from their blows, stabbed him, whilst he cried out, "Save me, mother, save me from these assassins." It seems as if his brother, not satisfied with ordering his death, was himself one of the executioners; for, some years after, he consecrated in the temple of Serapis at Alexandria, the sword he had made use of to murder Geta. The empress, who held him closely embraced to her bosom, was covered with the blood of her son. She looked upon a wound which she received in her hand, on this horrid occasion, as a trifle not worth complaining of; but what heightened her grief beyond all expression, was her being forbid to shew any signs of concern for this most shocking event. Menaced herself with death by a barbarous son, she was forced to conceal her tears, and even to wear the face of gladness in the midst of the greatest anguish.

Dio. p. 880.

*Spart. Ca
rac. 3. &
Ch. 6.*

Geta was twenty-two years and nine months old when he was killed. He was born on the twenty-seventh of May, of the year of Christ 189. Consequently his death happened about the twenty-seventh of February 212.

A. R. 963.

He prevails upon the prætorians, by flatteries and gifts, to declare Geta a public enemy. *Dio. & Herod. & Spart. Cæsar. 2.*

The parricide was no sooner committed, than Cæsaracalla began to fear the anger of the soldiery; to elude which, and deceive them, at least for the first moment, he had recourse to stratagem. Rushing out of his mother's room, and running about the palace like a man extremely frightened, he cried out, that he had narrowly escaped a great danger, and had with difficulty saved his life. At the same time, he ordered the guards to attend him to the camp of the prætorians, as the only place where he could be safe. None yet knew what had happened. His guard followed him, and his precipitate march through the city alarmed all its inhabitants.

On his arrival at the camp, he was carried to the kind of sanctuary where the military ensigns and the images of the gods and of the Cæsars were honoured with a religious worship. There, prostrating himself upon the ground, he returned thanks to the propitious deities who had saved him, and offered up sacrifices of thanksgiving. This was towards the evening; and the soldiers, some of whom were then bathing, and others had already retired to their tents, immediately flocked together, curious to know what unexpected event gave their emperor such infinite concern.

When they were assembled, he took care not to confess his crime, but told them a story of his own inventing, turned however in such manner as to give them room to guess the truth. He said he had just escaped, with great difficulty, from the snares of an enemy: that a battle had been fought in which both their emperors had like to have perished, and which he alone had survived by the special interposition of fortune. He added, that it was a
subject

subject of joy to the troops, to have no longer any other emperor but him. "Congratulate yourselves," said he to them, on my being now master of all, "and able to satisfy my desire of making you rich." He knew that the best apology he could make to the soldiers would be an ample largess. Accordingly he promised them * ten thousand sesterces a-piece, and doubled their daily allowance of corn for ever. To this enormous prodigality he joined the most flattering, and at the same time the most abject speeches. "I look upon myself," said he, as one of you. If I wish to live, it is for your sakes, that I may do you much good; for all my treasures are yours." Then, affecting an extraordinary fondness for war, "My first and strongest desire, said he, is to live with you; or else to die in the midst of you. What other wish can a man of courage form, but to fall in battle, crowned with glory?" By these various artifices he obtained of the soldiers all he wanted. In the mean time the truth of what had happened was known at the camp. An action of such a nature could not be long a secret, and the people belonging to the palace had divulged it. The prætorians knew it: but, dazzled by Caracalla's vast promise, they declared him sole emperor, and Geta a public enemy.

All was not yet done. Another camp, near Alba, formed probably since the number of the prætorians had been increased by Severus, was still to be gained over. Caracalla repaired to it, and met with great difficulty. The soldiers of this camp, who had learnt the murder of Geta, without any previous preparations or story to take off the horror of the deed, were extremely incensed, and protested loudly, that they had sworn fidelity to the two sons of Severus, and could not render themselves in a manner accomplices of the violent death of one of them. But money is all-powerful over men who are not attached to virtue out of principle. Caracalla

made them the same promises as he had done to their comrades, and with the same success. Nor were they promises only: for the soldiers, having got an order from Caracalla, went to the public treasury and the imperial exchequer, and paid themselves. Thus were the immense treasures which Severus had heaped up, often by tyrannical means, during a reign of eighteen years, dissipated in one day.

He endeavours to justify himself to senate, and recalls all the exiles.

Caracalla staid all night in one of the two camps, probably the old one; and the next day, being sure of the soldiery, he ventured to present himself before the senate, after taking, however, all the precautions that the fear inseparable from his crime could suggest. He had a coat of mail under his robe, made his guards go with him into the senate-house, and placed them in rows along the seats of the senators.

Herodian puts into his mouth on this occasion, a speech in which one may easily perceive the rhetoric of a writer more capable of embellishing a declamation, than of handling so difficult a subject. He begins with common-place phrases and expressions; avails himself of examples which condemn him; and boldly charges Marcus Aurelius with having contributed to the death of L. Verus. What seems to me most reasonable in this harangue, is an observation on the advantage that will accrue to the state from having but one head, and not being any longer obliged to acknowledge two masters. For our parts, we shall only say with Spartian, that Caracalla complained of his brother's having laid snares to take away his life, and that he endeavoured to make the murder of Geta pass for self-defence on his side, because he was under an absolute necessity of killing or being killed.

But so little was he himself satisfied with his own justification, that, as he had gained the soldiers by his largesses, so he now endeavoured, in a manner, to purchase his pardon of the senate by an ostentation

Book XXIII.] CARACALLA.

tation of clemency. After he had come down from his throne, and was near the door, he turned about, and said, raising his voice; "That this day may be a day of gladness to the whole universe, I order, that all exiles, for whatsoever crimes they have been condemned, shall be at liberty to return to this city." Little did he know how to act the part of a merciful prince. By this too general indulgence, he made no distinction between the innocent and the guilty, but filled Rome with multitudes of villains who had richly deserved the punishment inflicted on them. But he soon returned to his natural character, and re-peopled the islands with illustrious personages unjustly proscribed.

Our authors do not tell us what passed in the senate in consequence of the emperor's speech. But I think I cannot find a more proper place than this for what Spartian says of the apotheosis of Geta. Caracalla was given to understand, that by permitting the memory of his brother to be honoured, he would in some measure satisfy the public, who would be pleased with that mark of his moderation. He agreed to it, with this since famous expression, "Let * him be a god, as long as he is not alive." The senate accordingly issued a decree by which Geta was enrolled among the gods. His obsequies were celebrated with great magnificence, and his ashes were deposited in the tomb of the Antonini.

But this seeming mitigation of Caracalla's anger, with respect to the deceased, was of no avail whatever to the living. All those who had been any way attached to Geta, men, women, freed-men, slaves, soldiers, stage-players, musicians, wrestlers, all were put to death, without excepting even their infant children. The part of the palace which that unfortunate prince had inhabited, was filled with blood and slaughter. Dion Cassius tells us, that no less than twenty thousand persons were

thus

* Sit Divus, dum non sit virus

thus inhumanly massacred. Their dead bodies were carried in carts through the city, and afterwards burnt without any sort of ceremony, or even exposed to the beasts and birds of prey.

Caracalla was not satisfied with these murders of persons of an inferior rank ; but sacrificed to his hatred a great number of illustrious victims, among whom Papinianus was the most distinguished.

The death
of Papini-
anus.
Spart. Sev.
21. & Carac.
3, 4,
& 8. & Gel.
6.

This great man, the honour of the Roman jurisprudence, had been intimately connected with Severus and his family. He is said to have been allied to that emperor by the empress Julia, and consequently was related to his children. They had studied together under the same master, Cerebidius Scævola, a famous civilian ; and Papinianus succeeded Severus in the post of Procurator-fiscal. When Severus was become emperor, he made Papinianus his prætorian præfect ; and after having profited by the counsels of this wise friend, during the future part of his life, so as greatly to soften the natural ruggedness of his temper, he particularly recommended to him, at his death, the princes his sons. Papinianus, whose probity was equal to his profound knowledge of the law, thought himself bound in honour to answer, by his conduct, the confidence which Severus had reposed in him. He exhorted the two young emperors to union and concord ; and having thereby rendered himself disagreeable to Caracalla, he was deprived of the post of prætorian præfect, as I observed before. This disgrace was probably masked under the pretext of doing greater honour to his merit ; and M. de Tillemont, with great reason, supposes, that Caracalla made him a senator, when he divested him of his military command, for he did not remove him from his person ; and we are told, that on the same day on which he explained himself before the senate, in relation to the murder of his brother, in his way back from that assembly to the imperial palace, he leaned upon
Papinianus

Papinianus and Cilo, both of whom he had then actually resolved to put to death.

The cause for which Papinianus suffered does him infinite honour. Pressed by the emperor to furnish him with plausible excuses for the murder of his brother, and to help him to draw up an apologetical oration, he scorned to have for Caracalla the same complaisance as Seneca meanly had for Nero. "It is easier," replied he boldly, "to commit a parricide, than to justify it; and to accuse an innocent person, is a second parricide." Caracalla took no notice of this answer, at the time it was made: but, shortly after, the prætorians, privately stirred up by him, demanded the death of Papinianus, whose head was thereupon cut off with a hatchet. The emperor is said to have found fault with his being executed with a hatchet, and not with a sword: poor and frivolous mark of distinction; founded, without doubt, on its being reputed less ignominious, and more military, to die by the sword. Two epitaphs of *Græc. in. de* Papinianus, said to be found at Rome, make him *Ort. & Progr. jur.* only thirty-six years old when he was put to death. *99.* But that date does not agree with the facts which I have borrowed from the ancient authors. If he was Severus's school-fellow, and his successor in the post of procurator-fiscal, there could not well be any great difference between their ages.

He carried the glory of the bar to its utmost *Id. ibid. 98.* height; infinitely surpassing all that ever went before him, and leaving but little hopes of equalling him to any that might come after; so great was his knowledge of the civil law. An edict of the emperor Valentinian III. orders, that in case the *Tillem. Sev.* judges in any cause are divided in their opinions, *30.* that of Papinianus shall be preferred. His assessors were the illustrious Ulpian and Paul, two *Sourt. Nig.* great masters, who esteemed it an honour to be *Sput. Cæ. rac. 1.* called

called the disciples of Papinianus. His son, who was then quæstor, was killed with him.

Fabius
Cilo treat-
ed outrage-
ously.
Dio. &
Spart. Ca-
ruc. 4.

Fabius Cilo did not lose his life; but he suffered every kind of indignity, and it was unwillingly that Caracalla spared him. Cilo was one of Severus's best friends. He had twice been consul; and having superintended the education of the princes, Caracalla affected to honour him as a second father. For these reasons, though he hated in him a censor who had always blamed the antipathy between the two brothers, he did not, however, dare openly to order his death. But a party of soldiers, headed by a tribune, acting as if from a motive of voluntary zeal for the emperor, seized Cilo whilst he was bathing, plundered his house, and shamefully dragged him through the streets, tearing off his bathing-shirt, which was all that covered his body, and striking him in the face. Their design was to carry him in this manner to the palace, there to receive the emperor's final orders concerning him. The sight of so respectable a man treated with such indignity, excited a sedition. The soldiers of the city cohorts, whom he had commanded by virtue of his post of præfect of Rome, grew so tumultuous, that Caracalla himself, terrified by their motions, ran into the street, and covering Cilo with his own robe, cried out, "Cease striking my father, my master, the man who took care of my infancy: whoever attacks him, attacks me." Thus constrained to spare the life of Cilo, he vented his fury upon the tribune and soldiers, who were put to death, under pretence of punishing them for their horrid treatment of Cilo, but, in truth, because they had not killed him when he was in their power.

Dio. 76. F. 1.
Julius As-
per banish-
ed.

Julius or Julianus Asper, whose sons were the two consuls of the year in which Getæ perished, was also cruelly insulted and banished; happy in being able to preserve his life.

Dion

Dion Cassius's own work contained the names of a great number of illustrious persons, whose heads were struck off by order of the enraged Caracalla: but his abbreviator, who was not acquainted with them, has deprived us of that detail, and enveloped the whole in one general expression, by which we are given to understand that floods of the most respectable blood were shed, without distinction of innocence or guilt, without form of justice, without any rule but the caprice of a mad and furious prince. Herodian and Spartian are somewhat more particular: and though the tragical deaths which they mention, do not perhaps all relate to the time immediately subsequent to the death of Geta; yet as it would be difficult, and of very little importance to distinguish their dates, I shall not separate what my authors have joined together.

Caracalla put to death a sister of Commodus, a daughter of Marcus Aurelius, then very aged, and who had been respected by all former emperors. The crime of this lady was her having wept for the death of Geta, with the empress Julia.

A branch still remained of the family of Marcus Aurelius: this was Pompeianus, grandson of that wise emperor, by Lucilla. He was a man of merit, had twice been consul, and had been employed in several important commands. Caracalla, who both feared and hated him, but had not even the shadow of a fault to alledge against him, privately caused him to be assassinated, and then gave out that he had been killed by robbers on the highway.

He likewise took away the life of his cousin-german, who was called Severus, after the name of his father; and in this murder he added perfidy to cruelty. After giving him a mark of friendship, by sending him a dish from his own table, he the next day ordered some of his soldiers to go to his house and stab him. The unhappy Severus having received intelligence of the sentence of death pronounced

nounced against him, endeavoured to make his escape, and, jumping out of the window, in his fright broke his leg. He crawled however to his wife's apartment; but the assassins discovered him there, and insulting over him for the misfortune he had met with, barbarously murdered him.

The son of
the emper-
or Pertin-
ax.

Spart. Ca-
ric. 10. &
Cet 6.

The emperor Pertinax had left a son of the same name, who attained to the consulship. His quality of son of the emperor rendered him suspected, and obliged him, in point of policy, to be upon his guard. He neglected that necessary precaution, and let slip a word which cost him his life. Some years after the death of Geta, as a prætor called Faustinus recited with great emphasis in the senate, the glorious surnames which Caracalla assumed, calling him *the great Sarmaticus, the great Parthicus*; "Add," said Pertinax to him, "*the great Geticus.*" The expression was witty; and at the same time that it seemed applicable to some advantage gained over the Geti, with whom Caracalla had really been at war, it alluded slyly to the murder of Geta. Pertinax, already odious, paid for this poignant joke with the loss of his head.

Thrasea
Priscus.
L. v. ap.
Fal.

We find also in Dion Cassius, but without any detail of circumstances, the death of Thrasea Priscus, involved by Caracalla in the slaughter of Geta's friends. He was a man, says our historian, inferior to none, either for his birth, or his prudent conduct. The names he bore seem to indicate his being descended from the famous Thrasea, and his son-in-law, Helvidius Priscus.

76 d.

Several governors and intendants of provinces perished for the same cause, and through the same suspicions.

Serenus
Sammonicus.
S. 1. G. t.
S. 8. G. t.
76. 4.

A man of letters shared the fate of so many illustrious persons who held the highest rank in the state. Serenus Sammonicus, author of several works, of which we have remaining only a small treatise in verse, upon the remedies proper for various

rious

rious distempers, had unfortunately pleased Geta, who took delight in reading his performances.— That was enough to incur the hatred of Caracalla, who sent some of his emissaries to kill him in his house, whilst he was at table. Sammonicus Capit. G. vii. juv. had formed a library of sixty-two thousand volumes: a magnificent collection for those times, and one of the most numerous that was ever made by any private person before the art of printing was invented. 16.

The memory of Geta was so odious to his brother, that he vented his rage even upon the stones that had supported the statues of that unfortunate prince. He melted down the money that bore the impression of his effigy; abolished the festivals that were celebrated on his birth-day, and affected to single out that day for the blackest of his crimes. No one was allowed to pronounce or write his name. The poets did not dare to use it in their comedies, in which it had till then been common, as appears from Terence. The wills in which any legacies had been left him were annulled, and the effects of the testators confiscated. Caracalla's hatred of the memory of his brother. Din. ap. Val. & lib. LXXXVII. p. 876.

Yet, by a turn of mind which seems quite inexplicable, unless it be that guilt is always inconsistent, and full of contradictions, Caracalla put to death several of those who had been concerned in the murder of his brother. Latus, who had encouraged him to commit that execrable deed, was the very first that was punished of these malefactors; Caracalla ordering him to drink poison.— The tyrant himself often wept for the death of Geta. Remorse for his parricide tormented him all his life. He endeavoured to appease his restless conscience by magic sacrifices, and tried to call up the ghosts of Severus and Commodus. His disturbance of soul and remorse. N. port. Carac. 3. Dio. p. 873.

To divert his gloomy thoughts to other objects, soon after the commission of his crime, he gave games and shews: but this remedy was of little effect, his uneasiness of mind lasting as long as he lived. Games and shews, in which he continued to divert himself. Dio. p. 873.

lived. Even during the performance of those very games he gave fresh proofs of the savage nature of his soul. He feasted his eyes greedily with the sight of the blood of the gladiators, and forced one of them, whose name was Bato, to fight three times in one day against three different adversaries, the last of which conquered and killed him. To the same time, perhaps, belongs the death of a famous charioteer, who, after having won seven hundred and eighty-two races in the circus, and as many crowns which were the reward of the victor, a thing no one had ever done before, was killed by order of Caracalla, because he vented his fury against the whole people. A prince favoured. For a similar cause, he vented his fury against the whole people. A great number of the spectators of a race in the circus, having one day ridiculed and hissed a driver who was a favourite with Caracalla, the emperor thought himself insulted, and thereupon sent for a party of troops, whom he ordered to seize and kill the delinquents. As it was not possible to distinguish them from those that had been quiet, the soldiers always fond of plunder and violence, attacked all the spectators indiscriminately, killed several of them, and made those they spared pay them handsomely for their lives.

It may be
looked
upon as a
second Ca-
ligula.

This prince was a second Caligula, by his furies, by his violent caprices, by his contempt of all laws and of all decency, by his hatred of the senate, by his rapine and prodigality, and, lastly, by his frenzy: for his reason was quite gone, and the disorder of his mind was so visible, that none doubted the fact, though some were puzzled to find out the cause, and idly imputed it to enchantments practised against him by the barbarians, in whose country he had been, to make war, as we shall soon relate.

It is a misfortune, to have such a monster to describe; but the historian does not make his own subject; and besides, these kind of examples, in which
vic,

vice united with power renders wretched him who commands as well as those that obey, are very fit to undeceive us with regard to that admiration with which we naturally look upon grandeur, and to that false notion of happiness which we generally tack to it.

I have not yet related all the instances of Caracalla's cruelty. He praised incessantly Tiberius and Sylla; all whose vices he really had, but without any mixture of any of those qualities for which they were valued in some respects. In particular, he imitated the malice of Tiberius, in turning into crimes against the state, the least want of reverence for his statues, or whatever else represented him. A young Roman knight was actually imprisoned, and would have been put to death if Caracalla had lived a little longer, only for going into a place of debauchery with a ring upon his finger on which the head of the emperor was engraved.

His inhumanity went so far as to forbid the burial of several illustrious persons whom he had put to death. On the other hand, he revered the tomb of Sylla, and ordered it to be rebuilt.

No service done him ever appeased his rage. The very persons who had taken care of him during a great fit of sickness which he had, were rewarded with death.

He never loved any one, and his greatest demonstrations of friendship were generally sure signs of implacable hatred. Those whose blood he refrained from shedding publicly, he found means to get destroyed privately, under pretence of placing them in more honourable stations. He sent them to govern provinces, the climates of which he knew would not only disagree with their constitutions, but prove fatal to them, either through their great heat, or excessive cold.

The dreadful qualities of poison were well known to him. He is accused of having kept by him vast quantities

Other instances of his cruelty. Spart. Carac. 2. § 4.

5.

Dion. 67. Vals.

Spart. 6. 7. 6.

Dion.

Dion. 67. LXXVIII.

quantities of various kinds, and, if we may give credit to the testimony of his murderer Macrinus, there was found in his possession, at the time of his death, as much as amounted to the value of

* *Upwards*
of *L. Icc* 000.

thirty * millions of sesterces. He received greedily, and even encouraged all sorts of accusations; an evil always detested, but always practised. As this was a sure way to please him, all sorts of persons; Roman knights, senators, ladies of quality, took up that odious trade. A wicked prince renders wickedness common amongst his subjects.

Enormous
extortions
and rapines.
Dion. l.
LXXVII.

Caracalla's rapines and extortions equalled his cruelties; his only study during his whole reign being how to harrass and oppress his people. For his pretended victories, of which we shall soon shew the just value, he exacted vast sums, to buy, said he, crowns for his conquests, according to a custom, or rather an abuse which the good emperors had always taken care to moderate. He obliged the provinces to furnish, *gratis*, all the provisions necessary for the subsistence of his armies; and formed of those stores such immense magazines, that he likewise got a great deal of money by selling what was superfluous. He often disguised his extortions under the name of presents, which he exacted, not only from the cities of the empire, but from such of his subjects as were thought to be rich. He invented new taxes and imposts, and increased the old ones. Thus, instead of the twentieth penny which had been levied upon the price of all manumitted slaves, and upon all testamentary inheritances, he established the tenth penny; revoking and annulling all exemptions from this tax, which his predecessors had often granted in cases that seemed to require a mitigation of it. The senators, in particular, were those he studied most to ruin. When he left Rome, says the historian Dion Cassius, in order to proceed upon his travels and military expeditions, we were forced to

to build him, at our own expence, on all the roads through which he possibly might pass, magnificent houses, furnished with all things necessary for his reception; though most of them remained useless, and he did not so much as see several of the rest. In the cities where he declared his intention of taking up his winter-quarters, we were obliged to build him amphitheatres for the fights of wild beasts, circuses for the chariot-races: and these edifices, which had cost us vast sums, were immediately pulled down; so that no doubt could remain but that his design was to exhaust our fortunes by the exorbitant expences he compelled us to be at.

By these vexations of every kind he utterly ruined the cities and the provinces, the great and the small; nor indeed did he at all conceal his design of making himself master of every thing. "I am resolved, said he, that no man in the universe shall have any money, but myself: I will have it all, to give it to my soldiers." His mother, one day, expostulated with him concerning this tyranny, representing to him that there was no longer any method left, just or unjust, odious or tolerable, by which money could be raised. "Do not be afraid of that, mother, answered he, laying his hand upon his sword; as long as I have this instrument, money will not be wanting."

The chief use he made of these sums, drained out of the blood of the people, was to distribute them among the soldiers, to gain their affection. It is said, that the additional pay which he granted them, amounted to two hundred and eighty millions* of sesterces a year. He thought by this to secure to himself a safeguard against the hatred of the public; and, full of this idea, he once wrote to the senate in these terms: "I know that you dislike many things in me; and therefore it is that I
" keep

His prodigality to the soldiery; Dio. l. LX. XVII. & l. LX. XVIII. p. 004.

* A million and a half of our money.

“ keep soldiers and armies, that I may safely de-
 “ spise your vain censures.”

to flatter-
 ers ;

Flatterers had also a great share in his prodigal donations. A million of sesterces was nothing with him to reward a fulsome compliment that pleased him.

and for
 games and
 shews.

Horse-races, and fights of wild beasts, were another expence in which he knew no bounds. Besides the animals which he made the senators furnish at their own charge, he himself bought great numbers of all sorts, elephants, tygers, rhinoceroses. Extreme in all things, and making every other consideration give way to his perverse turn of mind, he exposed and prostituted his person in these shameful combats ; and it is observed of him, that he killed an hundred boars in one day with his own hand. So far was he from being ashamed of driving chariots in the circus, that, on the contrary, he gloried in it, as imitating in that respect the sun. Ever attentive to his plan of ruining the rich, he fixed the expence of the games upon some freed-man, or some wealthy senator, who, in return, had the honour of presiding at them. The emperor, dressed like a charioteer, in the livery of the blue faction, saluted the president with his whip, and asked him for a few pieces of gold, like the meanest of those hirelings.

He him-
 self fought
 with wild
 beasts, and
 ran in the
 circus.

His con-
 tempt of
 learning,
 and his ig-
 norance.

Such were the inclinations of Caracalla, who, by a necessary consequence of that low, indecent taste, despised all that was worthy of esteem. Learning, and men of letters, were the object of his aversion and disdain *. His father had endeavoured to accomplish

* Philostratus (*Soph. II. 30.*) relates, that Philiscus, a professor at Athens, having claimed in that quality a right to certain exemptions, Caracalla condemned him, and pronounced his sentence in these contemptuous terms : “ It is not just that the number of those who ought to bear the public burden, should be diminished for the sake of a few paltry declamations.” I have not taken notice of this anecdote in my text, for two reasons ; first, because it is not ill suited to the person of Philiscus

comprish him by all the exercises that form the body and the mind. The young prince learnt extremely well to ride, fence, wrestle, and swim : but in polite literature, or philosophy, he made no progress ; and even the little that had been forced into him by mere dint of labour, he afterwards forgot so entirely, that he seemed never to have heard even the name of any one of the sciences. This was not owing to any want of natural parts ; for his conception was quick, and his expression easy. His high birth, his having been surrounded from his infancy by all the noblest and most polite in Rome, and a certain confidence in himself which never cramped any one of his reflections ; all this furnished him with words, generally well enough chosen. Labour and study had no share in it.

A prince of this disposition could not be fond of the function of administering justice, which the good and wise emperors, and even the not extremely bad ones, such as his father Severus, had applied themselves to with great care and assiduity. Caracalla seldom judged any causes ; and when he did, it was in such a manner as proved excessively disgusting and mortifying to his assessors. Dion Cassius, who had frequently experienced this disagreeable treatment, speaks as follows upon this subject. “ He sent us notice, “ says that historian, that he would hear causes, “ or hold a council early in the morning. We “ failed not to be punctual to his orders ; but he “ made us wait until afternoon, and sometimes “ till the evening. We waited without doors, not “ being permitted to go even into the anti-chambers. At length we were called in, to do scarce “ any

He seldom administered justice. Disgustful manner in which he treated his assessors.

lisus whose talent was rather to talk too much, than to speak well ; and secondly, because the privilege now refused to Philiscus, was soon after granted by Caracalla to one Philostratus of Lemnos, who probably deserved it better. However, it is not the less certain, according to the testimony of Dion Cassius, that this emperor held men of learning in contempt.

“ any business at all ; and at last he got a habit
 “ of frequently sending us away, without our ha-
 “ ving so much as saluted him. Whilst we were
 “ thus losing our time in waiting to no purpose,
 “ the prince who had ordered us to attend, was
 “ amusing himself with trifles : he was driving
 “ a chariot, fighting with wild beasts, or with a
 “ gladiator, drinking or already drunk. Dishes
 “ of meat and great vessels of wine passed before
 “ our eyes for the use of his guards. He took a
 “ pleasure in insulting us, by wearying and fati-
 “ guing us.”

His in-
 quiri-
 tiveness,
 Soldiers
 employed
 spies, in
 every cor-
 ner, to
 bring him
 an account
 of all that
 passed,

Caracalla was not more averse to the proper
 cares of government, than he was curious to
 know every little private transaction, with which
 he had no sort of business. Accounts were
 brought him of every thing that passed, even of
 the most minute and trivial affairs. Soldiers were
 posted all over the city, to see, hear, and bring
 him an account of what every one said or did ;
 exercising, by that means, a most irksome tyran-
 ny over the citizens ; and that they might not be
 controled in their odious office, the emperor re-
 served to himself the sole power of punishing
 them.

His mini-
 ters chosen
 from
 among the
 vilest of
 men,

It was in such that men he reposed his confidence.
 Hating all good men, he would employ none but
 bad. Dion Cassius mentions an eunuch called
 Sempronius Rufus, by birth a Spaniard, and by
 profession a poisoner and empiric, who had been
 banished for his crimes by Severus, but was put
 at the head of affairs by Caracalla.

Theocritus, the son of a slave, covered with
 shame and infamy from his earliest years, had been
 dancing-master to the princes, Severus's sons.—
 He does not seem to have succeeded much, even
 in that profession : for upon his attempting to
 dance on the Roman stage, he was hissed, and
 obliged to go to Lyons to divert the province.—
 Yet this very man, from a slave and a dancer, be-
 came

came, by Caracalla's own choice, general of an army and prætorian præfect. He abused his fortune with all the insolence of a mean upstart.— He was a robber, and cruel. Among other illustrious persons whom he put to death, Dion Cassius mentions Flavius Titianus, who, whilst præfect of Egypt, had the misfortune to displease Theocritus. This last, in a violent passion, jumped down from his tribunal with his drawn sword in his hand. “There,” said Titianus coolly, “is a dancer's leap.” Theocritus enraged at this sarcasm, ordered Titianus to be murdered that instant.

Epagathus, one of the freed-men of the Cæsars, had not less power, nor did he use it less tyrannically, than Theocritus.

Pandion, once a groom to the jockeys of the circus, had risen to the honour of driving the emperor's chariot in a war against the barbarians of Germany. In consequence of this employment, Caracalla was not ashamed to call him his friend, and the companion of his military labours, in a letter to the senate. He acknowledged that he owed his life to him, as having been extricated from a great danger by his address. He ranked him above the soldiers, to whom he always gave the preference before the senators.

I have already said that this prince, so detestable in all respects, plunged into every excess of debauchery. But what is something extraordinary, especially, in him, is, that whilst he himself was setting the worst of examples by his own conduct, encouraging and fomenting public licentiousness on many occasions, he at the same time, affected an extraordinary zeal for purity of manners. He punished adultery with death. He condemned four vestals, one of whom, named Claudia Leta, he had endeavoured to debauch. She was buried alive with two of her companions, Aurelia Severa and Pomponia Rufina. The fourth, whose name

His debaucheries joined to an affection of zeal for purity of manners

was Lanutia Crescentina, prevented the execution of the dreadful sentence pronounced against her, by throwing herself headlong down upon the pavement, from the top of the house.

Pretended
zeal for
religion,
accompa-
nied with
love of ma-
gic and ju-
dicial As-
trology.
*Spart. Ca-
rac. 5,
Dio.*

It was not only a zeal for chastity, but also for religion, that Caracalla pretended to in the cruelties he exercised upon these probably innocent vestals. He wanted to pass for the most religious of men; and this justice must be done him, notwithstanding all his crimes, that he forbid any one to call him by the names of the divinities he worshipped. But this pretended piety towards his gods, was mixed with a love of magic, and an esteem for magicians; to which was owing his great regard for Apollonius Tyanæus. He likewise applied himself to judicial astrology. Getting the horoscopes of the chief citizens of the state, he pretended to judge, by that most deceitful means, which of them loved, and which hated him: so that what he imagined he read in the stars, determined on one hand his favours and affection, and on the other his dislike and the punishments consequent thereto. At the same time he strictly forbid his subjects to practise any kind of superstition; and some were even put to death in his reign for wearing round their necks a charm against the ague.

Perpetual
contradiction
between his
words and
his actions.
*Spart. Ca-
rac. 9,
Dio.*

His actions and his words never once agreed. He called himself a frugal man, who was satisfied with the plainest and most common things: but in reality he loved wine and good eating. The provinces and private persons were obliged to furnish for his table all the rarities that the earth and sea produced: but even then he knew not how to make a right use of them; for he feasted on what was sent him, not with the senators and great men of the republic, but with freed-men.

He praised without ceasing the generosity of the ancient Fabricius, who informed Pyrrhus of the treachery of his physician: and at the sametime he prided

prided himself upon his having bred an enmity and a war between the Vandals and the Marcomanni, who before were friends ; and of having made himself master, certainly by treachery, of the person of Gaiobomarus king of the Quadi, whom he ordered to be tried according to the forms of law, and whom he condemned to die with several of his officers.

He had killed his brother : and yet, during his war with the Parthians, who had then for their kings two brothers who seldom agreed, he told the senate, in one of his letters, that the empire of the Parthians was threatened with great evils, on account of the disagreement of the two brothers who governed it.

At the head of his armies he affected to live like a soldier, to share the fatigues and exercises of the troops, to be content with the most homely diet, to refrain from bathing, and to make long marches on foot. But in all this there was a great deal of vain boasting. He secured his body carefully against both heat and cold, and wore a fine light vest, which looked like a cuirass, but had none of the inconveniencies of armour.

All was false in him : even his coin was deceitful and base. He gave us, says Dion Cassius, The current on excessively debas'd. gilded lead for silver, and copper for gold ; keeping his real gold and silver for the barbarians of whom he purchased peace.

In one thing, however, he did not dissemble : He attacks the senate and the people with violent invectives. Spart. Carac. 4. that was, in his hatred of the senate and Roman people, which he never once disguised : madder in that respect than even Caligula, who, knowing that he deserved the detestation of the senators, endeavoured at least to gain the affection of the multitude. Caracalla attacked both orders, that is to say, the whole nation, with harsh and arrogant invectives, which he published either in the form of edicts, or by way of harangues. All his trust was in the soldiery, by whose hands he perished.

From

From this sketch of the character of Caracalla it appears, that he was a compound of vices which he shewed because he took them for virtues, and of appearances of virtues which he affected, but through which vice was easily discerned.

He would not be advised by any one. *Dio. ap. Val.*

No remedy could be found for all these evils, nor could the wrong way of thinking of this prince ever be set right, because he took counsel of none but himself; thinking no other so wise, nor any one else so powerful. He even envied those in whom he saw the least superiority of understanding, and, far from consulting them, studied only how to bring about their ruin.

He grants the rights of Roman citizens to all the inhabitants of the empire.

Yet it was this emperor who rendered the rights and privileges of the Roman citizens common to all the inhabitants of the empire. The policy of Rome varied greatly in this respect, at different times. Romulus, its founder, was very liberal of the rights of citizens, and gave them to almost all the petty nations that he conquered. His reason for so doing is very evident. He strengthened an infant-state, by changing into citizens of his own town all those who at first had been its enemies.

When the republic was become flourishing, and the quality of Roman citizen began, in consequence thereof, to give a pre-eminence, distinctions, and privileges, not only honourable but useful, the Romans grew extremely jealous of this title, and granted it no longer except on very extraordinary occasions. The people of Italy never could obtain a voluntary grant of it, but were forced to extort it by a bloody war, which brought Rome to the very brink of ruin.

The first emperors, Augustus and Tiberius, were equally sparing of this honour, and judging it necessary in order to maintain the dignity of the Roman name, to avoid multiplying the number of those that bore it.

The

The weakness of Claudius began first to relax the bonds of this rigid policy. Under that easy prince, money did every thing. Messalina and the freedmen sold the title and rights of citizen of Rome, and all other advantages, to whoever pleased to become a purchaser. The transalpine Gauls obtained also of the indulgent Claudius an entrance into the senate, and admission to the highest posts in the empire. The door thus opened was never after shut : concessions multiplied beyond number, especially after Rome was governed by princes, who not only did not belong to its ancient nobility, but were not even of Italian blood. Emperors * of Spanish, Gaulish, or African birth or origin, could not, with any grace, refuse to extend a privilege which they themselves partook of, only through the facility with which it had been extended by others. Then, not only individuals, but cities and whole provinces obtained the privileges of Roman citizens for all their inhabitants. The senate was filled with provincials. Rome frequently had consuls who were born at Athens, in Bithynia, Syria, Africa, or any other part of the empire. But still the distinction between citizen and subject continued, until Caracalla abolished it by a solemn edict, as appears by the united testimony of Dion Cassius and Ulpian.

One may easily guess the specious pretences which the emperor made use of on this occasion. It was a fine thing to unite all the people of the empire under one name, and to make Rome the common country of all the inhabitants of the universe. His real motive, quite worthy of him, was the augmentation of his revenues. The citizens
of

* Trajan and Adrian were of Spanish extraction. The ancestors of Titus Antoninus were natives of Nimes in Gaul. Severus was born at Leptis in Africa. It is true, these emperors sprang from Roman colonies, and were intitled to the right of citizens by their birth. But it is highly probable that they would have been puzzled to prove their descent from the true Romans their ancestors.

of Rome were subject to several taxes, which foreigners did not pay: so that under colour of granting a favour and a privilege, Caracalla laid new burdens upon all his subjects.

It is a great problem, and past my abilities to solve, whether this step was in itself advantageous or hurtful to the welfare of the state. Rome, by adopting for citizens all those that obeyed her, by entirely confounding the distinction of conquerors and conquered, furnished them all with common and equal motives of affection for her. She appropriated to herself all the virtue and all the merit that sprang up within the bosom of her vast empire. But on the other hand, how much must her ancient maxims be altered by the mixture of the foreign maxims, and national prejudices, necessarily introduced by this countless number of new citizens? Even their attachment to their common country, counterbalanced and divided in them by the love of their native soil, could not but be greatly weakened. Accordingly we find that Rome became indifferent even to her emperors. Dioclesian scarce ever saw that capital of the world during a reign of upwards of twenty years, but fixed his residence chiefly at Nicomedia; and Constantine built a new imperial city, in which he established his court.

By Caracalla's edict of which we have been speaking, all persons of free condition acquired the rights and privileges of citizens of Rome, and there were no longer in the empire any people but Romans. One would be apt to think that in consequence of this all distinctions of free cities, municipal towns, colonies, Latin right, Italian right, ought to have disappeared: but yet we still find traces of all these things in latter times. The reason is, that, by the law of nature, the prior possessor never gives way at once to a new comer: but, if he be not absolutely overpowered by force, still struggles

gles for a while to keep at least a part of his possession. As it is not my province to enter into a discussion of these matters, I shall drop them here, after referring the reader who may be curious to know more about them, to M. Spanheim's Dissertation on this edict of Caligula's, in Vol. XI. of Grevius's Collection of Roman Antiquities.

I have now remaining of Caracalla's life only the account of his military exploits, in which we shall find at every step fresh proofs of the insanity of his mind.

The first strong symptom that he shewed of this unhappy turn, was an extravagant fondness for Alexander the Great. From his infancy he talked of nothing but the exploits of that famous conqueror; and during his whole life he pretended to take him for his model, copying him in what was most easy to imitate, his armour and his dress. If he met with any sort of furniture, or any kind of arms that was said to have belonged to Alexander, he was sure to make it his own, as a farther step towards resembling him. Among the statues which he erected to that prince, in all the cities of the empire, and particularly at Rome in the capitol and in all the temples, numbers had one side of the face made to represent Alexander, and the other side was a profile of Caracalla. He called him the *Augustus of the East*; and in one of his letters, he told the senate, that the soul of Alexander had passed into the body of Augustus, in order to make up by the long life of this emperor, for the shortness of the time during which it had animated its first mansion. I do not know why he did not assume to himself the honour he ascribed to Augustus, who certainly did not pique himself on being an Alexander.

Caracalla's affection for Alexander was such, that he resolved to have a Macedonian phalanx; and accordingly he formed a corps of sixteen thousand men, all natives of Macedonia, armed
and

His extra
vagrant
fondness of
Alexander.
*Dio. Herod:
Spart. Ce-
sar. 2.*

and disciplined after the manner of the ancient Macedonians and commanded by officers who bore similar names to those that had served under Alexander. Wherever he went, he carried with him a great number of elephants, to represent the conquerors of India, Alexander and Bacchus.

Whatever concerned Alexander, seemed of the highest importance to Caracalla. He carried his zeal for his memory so far as to hate the Peripateticians, because some people had suspected their master Aristotle of being an accomplice in the death of that prince, by giving him poison. The accusation itself was a downright calumny; and as to the fact of Alexander's being poisoned, it is, to this hour, at least very doubtful. But Caracalla thought otherwise; and, in consequence of this notion, he not only wanted to burn all Aristotle's works, but, at the end of so many ages, rendered his disciples answerable for the pretended crime of their master, by retrenching the pensions and other advantages which they enjoyed in the Alexandrian Musæum.

On the other hand, he loved the Macedonians, and favoured them singularly. Observing, one day, a tribune mount his horse dexterously and nimbly, he asked him what countryman he was. "A Macedonian," answered the officer. "What is your name? Antigonus. And your father's?" "His name was Philip. That is sufficient," said the emperor, "I do not want to know any thing more." Accordingly, upon this recommendation alone, he immediately promoted the Macedonian officer in the army, and soon after ordered him to sit in the senate, among the ancient prætors.

Another time, a man who had been guilty of many crimes, but whose name was Alexander, was brought before him to be tried. In the course of the pleading, the accuser, speaking of the criminal, loaded him with injurious epithets, and often repeated, the wicked Alexander, Alexander an ene-

my to the gods: upon which Caracalla, as much offended as he himself had been insulted, interrupting the pleader, said to him, "If Alexander does not protect you, you are a ruined man."

With this passionate fondness for Alexander, ^{He affects} Caracalla could not fail of wanting to be a soldier. ^{mixing} But it is not given to all to tread in the paths of ^{with the} that hero. Caracalla was a soldier, but not a ge- ^{soldiers in} neral. He took delight in military exercises; ^{their mili-} dressed and armed himself like the meanest of his ^{tary la-} soldiers, mixed with them in their works, and ^{bours and} lived upon the same food that they did. Herodian says, he often ground with his own hands the corn that was necessary to make him bread, then kneaded the dough, baked it, and eat the fruit of his labour. Sometimes he carried upon his shoulders the standards of the legions, which, among the Romans, were very heavy. In all this, as I have observed after Dion Cassius, there was much more ostentation than reality; for Caracalla knew perfectly well how to dazzle the eyes of the vulgar by appearances, whilst in fact he avoided real fatigue. But even supposing him to have acted sincerely in these matters, there is surely a wide difference between these low offices, and the superior views, attentions, and knowledge requisite to conduct a war; things of which Caracalla had not the least idea. He thought himself an Alexander, because he worked in the trenches; and imagined he could transport the virtues of the ancient Lacedemonians into himself and his army, by levying a cohort or two of troops in the country of the Spartans. The success was answerable to the justness of the measures: for we shall meet with few events that did not turn to his shame in all the wars he undertook, though his vanity made him endeavour to palm them upon the world for victories.

He began his expeditions with visiting, or, more ^{He goes} properly, ravaging Gaul. M. de Tillemont places ^{into Gaul} this ^{and com-} ^{mits} ^{g. t.}

C orders
there.

D. C. 5.

A. R. 964.

this journey in the third year of his reign. His uneasiness and fickleness of mind, and still more his remorse for his crimes, and especially for the murder of his brother, did not suffer him to remain quiet at Rome. He went into Narbonnese Gaul, and upon his arrival there ordered the proconsul of that province to be put to death. He committed all sorts of violences, as well against the magistrates and officers, as against the people of Gaul: and notwithstanding some vain affectations of clemency, which were easily seen through, he appeared there what he really was, cruel, and a tyrant, and made every creature hate him.

It seems probable that he returned to Rome either towards the end of this year, or in the beginning of the next, and that he then brought with him the *Caracalla*, a gaulish dress, of which I have spoken elsewhere.

He passes
the Rhine,
and makes
war upon
the Cenni
and Ale-
manni.

Dion.

A. R. 965.

He soon set out again, to make war in Germany beyond the Rhine. He there engaged the Cenni *, a people but little known, and the Alemanni, of whom this is the first mention we find made in history.

Dion.

Caracalla first began to make them conspicuous, by attacking them. He entered their territories as a friend and ally, and built in several parts of them forts and castles, to which he gave names borrowed from his own. These people, who were then barbarians, did not foresee the consequences of this novelty. Several of them took no notice of it, and others looked upon it only as an amusement that the Roman emperor had found out. Their tranquil indifference made Caracalla despise them. Thinking he might signalize himself against them, without danger, by an act of perfidy, he assembled all their young men, under pretence of taking them into his pay, and

* Some of the learned think we ought to read here in Dion Cassius the *Cilli*, a name better known than that of the *Cenni*.

pay, and ordered them to be massacred by his troops with which he had taken care to surround them. Such was the glorious victory for which he took the surname of *Alamannicus*. He himself was not ashamed to divulge his own infamy, declaring publicly that he had conquered by cunning a people whom it was not possible to subdue by force.

The Cenni were not so easily mastered. In a battle which he had with them, they fought with such fury, that when wounded by the arrows of the Osrhoënians, of which there were several in Caracalla's army, they drew the shaft out of the wound with their teeth, that they might have their hands at liberty to continue the fight. They seem to have had the best of the day: but gold rendered them tractable. The emperor offered them large sums, and they in return sold him the title of Victor, and permitted him to repass the Rhine, and retire in safety to the province which the Romans called Germany.

We have not any connected or circumstantial account of these events, but only a few extracts or fragments: so that it is necessary to endeavour to supply the want of ancient records, by conjectures. We must, for example, suppose that Caracalla had, however, the advantage in some skirmishes, since he carried away prisoners several of the wives of the Cenni * and Alemanni. It is well known, that among the German nations the wives followed their husbands when they went to war. These female prisoners shewed a courage as ferocious as that of the men of their nation. The emperor having left it to their option whether they would be killed or sold, they preferred death. But notwithstanding this they were sold as slaves: upon which almost all of them killed themselves, and

* The text of Dion Cassius says here the *Catti*; but I follow the reading before adopted

and some of them killed their children at the same time.

Caracalla
despised by
the barba-
rians, pur-
chases
peace of
them.

The only fruit that Caracalla reaped from his German expedition, was the contempt of the barbarians, who plainly saw, through all his pompous boastings, the cowardice and perfidy of his soul. This contempt for the Roman empire extended as far as the northern regions, and to the mouth of the Elbe. The people of those countries, greedy after money, and seeing that the example of the Cenni offered them an easy way of getting it, sent to Caracalla, menacing him with war. He answered their deputies haughtily, but paid them down large sums: and the barbarians, on their side, readily over-looked his arrogant words, in consideration of the real gold with which he enriched them.

He takes a
liking to
the Ger-
mans, and
imitates
their dress.

Though he was thus despised and laughed at by the Germans, yet he took a liking to them. Not satisfied with having attached them to him by a treaty of alliance, he singled out of their nation the handsomest and bravest men he could find, to be his body guards; renewing a custom established in the days of Augustus, but which seems to have been afterwards dropped. He went even so far as to adopt their dress; and openly professing a contempt of all decency, often quitted the coat of mail which the emperors wore in war, and appeared in public dressed in a German garb. He likewise wore a light coloured wig, made to imitate the hair of the Germans.

He marches
to the low-
er Danube,
and obtains
some
slight ad-
vantages
over the
Goths, and
makes a
treaty with
the Dan-
nubi.
A. R. 966.
Tacit. Ca-
p. 11.

From the borders of the Rhine Caracalla marched to the Lower Danube, near which he met a nation, until then hardly known, the Goths. This is the first mention that is made in the Roman history of these barbarians, who had afterwards the greatest share of any people in the ruin of the Roman empire in the West. The Romans then knew so little of the Goths, that they called them Gæti, from the name of the ancient inhabitants of

the

the country in which these new comers were now settled. They are said to have come originally from Gothia, which still preserves their name, in Sweden; to have settled, in their first migration, in Germany, not far from the Vistula, on the coast of the Baltic sea, where they were known by the name of Gothons, or Guttons; and afterwards to have advanced from thence more and more to the south, until they at last came into, and took possession of, part of Dacia north of the Danube, where Caracalla found them. He first tried the Roman arms against them, in some skirmishes and slight engagements, in which the advantage is said to have been on his side; but not such as to stop the formidable increase of power which those barbarians acquired soon after.

In the same country Caracalla made an alliance with the Dacians who had not yet submitted to the Romans, and received of them hostages for the performance of the conditions to which they obliged themselves.

From the banks of the Danube he passed into Thrace, where he neither staid long, nor did any thing remarkable. I shall only observe, that the proximity of Macedonia roused and increased his madness to be thought another Alexander.

He afterwards crossed the Hellespont, not without danger, being overtaken by a storm. Arriving at Ilium, he visited the remains of that famous city; and, without troubling his head about the pretended affinity between the Romans and the Trojans, full of martial ideas, he paid singular honours to the memory of Achilles, the greatest enemy of Troy. He erected to him a statue of bronze, offered libations and crowns of flowers upon his tomb, made his whole army perform jousts and tournaments to his honour, and gave his troops a considerable gratification for so doing, as if he had rewarded them for some great exploit.

The

The better to resemble Achilles, he would have a Patroclus, whose funeral he might celebrate upon the spot. The death of Festus, his favourite freed-man, furnished him with the wished-for opportunity; or, which seems most probable in such a monster as Caracalla, he procured himself that opportunity at the expence of the life of Festus, whom he poisoned. No cost was spared to render his obsequies extremely pompous. A funeral pile was erected, upon which the dead body was laid, and sprinkled with the blood of all sorts of animals; whilst Caracalla, with prayers and libations, invoked the winds, for what purpose I know not, since he had no voyage to make. That nothing might be wanting to the ceremonial, he resolved to offer up a lock of his own hair: but as he was almost bald, the spectators could scarce refrain from laughing when they saw him rub his hand over his head, to lay hold of three or four hairs, which he cut off, and threw into the flames.

At Pergamus, he
implies the as-
sistance of
Æsculapius, to la-
cure of his tor-
ment of
body and
of mind.
Dion. & He-
rod.

From Ilium he went to Pergamus, there to seek, in the temple of Æsculapius, health of body and of mind; for both were greatly disordered. His body laboured under various infirmities, some manifest and known to all, others concealed. His mind was disturbed by frightful visions. He often imagined that his father and brother pursued him with naked swords in their hands. His crimes were his punishment, and, as we see, had a greater share in the insanity of his mind, than all the witchcraft of the Germans, who boasted of having employed against him all their most powerful sortileges. To mitigate these evils he had recourse to Æsculapius, who, we are told, revealed in dreams the remedies that would cure the sick person that applied to him. Caracalla had dreams enough; but his health continued just as it was before. He then recurred to the oracle of Apollo, and to the god Serapis in Egypt; but all was in vain. Dion Cassius is not surprized

at

at it, because he thinks the gods * were less pleased with his offerings and sacrifices, than incensed against his criminal and impious designs and actions, which rendered him unworthy to be heard.

Caracalla spent the winter at Nicomedia, where he made great preparations for attacking the Parthians and Armenians. Among other things he ordered two huge machines to be built for that war, so large that they were obliged to be taken to pieces before they could be put on board the ships that were to convey them to Syria.

He spends the winter at Nicomedia, preparing for war against the Parthians. *Dio. lib. LXXVII.*

He was still at Nicomedia on the fourth of April, the anniversary of his birth-day, which, as Dion Cassius observes, he celebrated in a manner ill becoming a ceremony of joy. He gave a fight of gladiators, to the usual horrors of which he added this farther circumstance of cruelty. One of the combatants, being conquered, begged his life of him. "Apply to your adversary, answered Caracalla; you are at his disposal; I cannot save you." The conqueror, who would perhaps have spared his prostrate antagonist, had it not been for this reply, fearing to displease the emperor by seeming more humane than him, killed his supplicating foe.

After this, Caracalla set out for the war against the Parthians, to which end he repaired to Antioch. His real motive for this war was no other than a vain ambition to acquire the title of *Parthicus*, and to have an opportunity of boasting that he had subdued the East. As it was proper to have some sort of pretence for what he was going to do, for the Parthians had no idea of attacking him, he complained that their king sheltered in his territories Tiridates and Antiochus, two fugitives of importance, who ought to be delivered up

He goes to Antioch. The king of the Parthians submits to his demands, and obtains peace. *A. R. 967. Herod. Dio.*

* Μῆτε τοῖς ἀλεθρημασι, μῆτε τοῖς θυσιαῖσι, ἀλλὰ τοῖς βυλίνοισι, καὶ αἰς πράξισιν αὐτῶ περιεχοῖ. *Dio. ap. Val. p. 753.*

up to him. We know little of Tiridates, and nothing at all of his story, any farther than that he seems to have been the son of Vologeses king of Armenia, and that he was the person whom Marcius re-established on the throne of his father. Antiochus was an adventurer, a native of Cilicia, who, at his first entrance, into life, set himself up for a cynic philosopher, in which capacity he was of some service to the emperors whom he accompanied in their wars. In climates where the soldiers were frozen with cold, and greatly discouraged thereby, the cynic, inured to hardships, rolled himself in the snow, and by his example roused the drooping courage of the troops. Severus, and even Caracalla, rewarded him amply for his services. Being grown rich by this means, he quitted the knapsack and staff of Diogenes, and his new fortune swelling his heart with pride, he probably formed some ambitious project, for the execution of which he joined with Tiridates. The success not answering their desires, they fled for safety to the empire of the Parthians.

These were the two fugitives that Caracalla demanded back, with great haughtiness, threatening war if they were not delivered up to him. He could not have chosen a more proper time. The Parthians had lately lost their king Vologeses, and his two sons were then disputing for the crown. This was consequently a favourable juncture to attack an empire weakened by intestine broils. Accordingly Artabanus, who, either then, or very soon after, conquered his brother, was intimidated by the menaces of the Roman emperor, delivered up Tiridates and Antiochus, and thereby obtained peace.

Caracalla's
perfidy to-
wards Ab-
garus king
of Edessa.
Osroëne
subdued.

Abgarus king of Edessa was in alliance with the Romans, since, as I observed before, we find some of the Osroëniens, his subjects, fighting in Caracalla's army against the Germans. But nothing was sacred with this perfidious emperor. He invited Abgarus to come to him at Antioch, and when

when he had him in his power, he loaded him with chains. Osrhoëne, thus deprived of its king, was forced to submit, and there is reason to think it then became a Roman province. Some difficulties, however, still remain with regard to this matter, concerning which the curious reader may consult M. de Tillemont.

Caracalla treated the king of Armenia in the same manner as he had used the sovereign of Edessa. We have seen that a Vologeses, son of Sano-truces, reigned in Armenia in the time of Severus. It may possibly be the same, who, having some difference with his sons, was sent for by Caracalla, under pretence of a reconciliation, which, as emperor of the Romans, he undertook to mediate between them. The king of Armenia, mistrusting nothing, went to him with his sons, and they were all arrested prisoners. But Armenia was a more powerful state than Osrhoëne, and not so easily subjected to the yoke. The Armenians took up arms, to revenge their king and defend their liberty; and the wretch Theocritus, of whom I spoke before, being sent against them at the head of an army, was defeated and repulsed with great loss: so that the only fruit which Caracalla reaped from his perfidy, was the shame he justly deserved, and the universal distrust of all mankind. But a soul like his was not capable of feelings such humiliations.

On the contrary, he prided himself on his success, and boasted of the fatigues he had undergone in so many wars; though at the same time he had never once stirred out of Antioch, but had remained there wallowing in all the pleasures of that voluptuous city. He even took occasion, from these pretended toils, to inveigh bitterly against the senate, to whom he wrote, as Caligula had done before, letters full of reproaches, taxing the senators with leading idle lives, scarcely doing, even negligently, the duties of their easy functions,

Tillem. Carac. art. 11.
Like perfidly towards the king of Armenia.
The Armenians take up arms.

Caracalla vaunts his military toils and exploits.

whilst their emperor bid defiance to toils and dangers, and laboured for their sakes in distant regions.

He goes to Alexandria, where he orders a most dreadful massacre.

Dio. Herod. Spart. Carac. c. 6.

Caracalla was not satisfied with shewing his perfidy to foreign kings and princes, but he likewise exercised his odious talent upon his own subjects. Even the profound veneration which he professed for the memory of Alexander the Great could not screen the city of Alexandria, founded by that conqueror, from the dreadful effects of his mean and cruel vengeance. It must indeed be owned that the Alexandrians, a fickle and sarcastic people, had provoked his anger by several bitter jokes. They loved, says Herodotus, to be merry * at the expence of their princes; and often ventured to lampoon them, wittily as they thought, but, in reality, in such a manner as left a wound in the heart of the offended: for it is well known that no raillery cuts so deep as that which is founded on truth. Thus, alluding to the hatred of Eteocles and Polynice, of which they had just seen a similar instance in Caracalla and Geta, they gave Julia, the mother of these last, the name of Jocasta. They ridiculed the vanity of Caracalla, who, small of stature, deformed, and destitute of every kind of military merit, compared himself on one hand to Achilles, the most comely as well as the most valiant of the Greeks; and on the other to Alexander, the greatest of heroes. Caracalla made them repent the liberties they had taken; and, determined to wash away their offence with their blood, he began with deceiving them.

He gave out that he intended to visit the finest monument then existing of the glory of Alexander, and to pay his personal homage to the god Serapis. The Alexandrians, forgetting the reasons they had given

* Αποφεικτικῶς εἰς τὰς ὑπερέχουσας πολλὰ χρημεῖα μὲν αὐτοῖς δεκάτην λαμπρὰ δὲ τοῖς σκωφθῆσι· τον γὰρ τοῦτον κριζει μαλακῶσα ὡσα ἐλεγγεῖ τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων τῆν ἀληθείαν.

given him to hate them, were proud of the honour the emperor intended their city, and prepared themselves to receive him with joy and magnificence. When he arrived, innumerable crowds went out to meet him. Concerts of music, illuminations, perfumes, garlands of flowers, and crowns of gold, were lavished with profusion.

Caracalla took care not to undeceive them. He went first to the temple of Serapis, where he sacrificed whole hecatombs, and burnt a prodigious quantity of incense upon the altar. From thence he repaired to the tomb of Alexander, and pulling off his imperial robe, which was of purple, his belt enriched with precious stones, and the rings that were upon his fingers, he offered up all these ornaments to the hero, and laid them upon his coffin.

All this specious shew served only to conceal his black design of extirpating the inhabitants of Alexandria. Though Dion Cassius and Herodian differ somewhat in their accounts of the manner in which he set about this horrid deed; yet it is not impossible to reconcile them, by making them help out each other. According to Herodian, Caracalla pretended a desire to raise an Alexandrian phalanx, as he had already formed a Macedonian; and under that pretence, he assembled all the young men of the city in a plain just without the walls, where he made his troops surround and massacre them. Dion Cassius, who does not mention this slaughter, says, that Caracalla first murdered the most eminent of the citizens, who had waited on him with all that was most sacred in their religion, and whom he had received favourably, and even entertained at his own table. That his soldiers afterwards spread themselves all over the city, to which infinite numbers of strangers had resorted on this occasion, and killed, without distinction, every person they found in the houses, into which all the people had been ordered to retire, whilst

whilst the troops took possession of the streets and squares. The slaughter was so great, and so much blood was shed, that Caracalla, inaccessible as he was to all sense of shame or pity, did not dare to tell the senate the number of the slain. He only said, in his letter, that it was of little importance to them to know the names or the number of those that had lost their lives, since all of them deserved the same fate. The dead bodies were thrown in heaps into deep ditches, that they might not be counted, nor the greatness of this carnage be thoroughly known. Even some of those who had come with the emperor perished in this dreadful massacre, which lasted several days and nights, during which the rage and fury of the soldiers, the dark of night, and the resistance of some of the boldest of the Alexandrians, occasioned inexpressible confusion. The author of this bloody butchery beheld it, as an agreeable sight, from the top of the temple of Serapis, from whence he sent orders from time to time to animate the cruelty of the assassins. He concluded this horrid tragedy in a manner worthy of himself, by consecrating in the temple of the god the dagger with which he had killed his brother.

We may easily judge that the plundering of Alexandria accompanied the massacre of its inhabitants. Nothing was spared neither sacred or profane, in the temples or the houses; and Caracalla, not yet satisfied even with these unparalleled barbarities, vented his implacable fury upon the wretched remains of this, a few days before, so rich and populous city, by driving from it all strangers, except merchants. He abolished the societies of learned men, who were paid and maintained in the museum; and he separated the different quarters of the city from each other by walls and towers, to prevent all communication between them.

However,

However, this desolation was but a temporary evil: for Caracalla being killed shortly after, Alexandria recovered its splendour by its own resources, and soon became again the second city of the empire.

It is odd that this cruel enemy of the Alexandrians should be the first of the emperors who admitted them into the Roman senate. Before Severus they had not even a senate-house in all their city; and his son granted them entrance into the senate of the capital. I have spoken elsewhere of Cærenus, who was the first Egyptian that was not only a senator, but consul of Rome.

The Alexandrians admitted into the senate. Dio lib. LII. p. 455.

Caracalla's sole motive for going to Alexandria was to reek his horrid and perfidious vengeance upon that unfortunate city. He had not lost sight of his intended conquests in the East; nor of making war against the Parthians, with whom he had just concluded a peace. To bring about a fresh rupture, he resolved to demand the daughter of Artabanus in marriage; concluding within himself, either that his proposal would be accepted, in which case he should lay a foundation for a future claim upon the empire of the Arsacidae; or that if it was rejected, he should be authorized to revenge the affront by force of arms. Though this projected marriage was equally contrary to the established customs of the Romans and to those of the Parthians, yet Herodian says that Artabanus, after resisting for some time, at length agreed to it. But I make no difficulty of preferring, with M. de Tillemont, the testimony of Dion Cassius, who assures us, that the king of the Parthians, seeing through the ambitious and unjust designs of Caracalla, persevered in refusing an alliance of which he feared the consequences would be most fatal. He was, however, greatly wanting in the precautions he should have taken, and suffered himself to be surprized by Caracalla, who, returning to Antioch, after having prepared every thing

Caracalla demands in marriage the daughter of the king of the Parthians; and being refused, renews the war.

Dio. lib. LXXVIIII. II. u. & Spart. Cor. 6.

thing necessary for his design, was at once ready to invade the territories of the Parthians.

His trifling exploits.

Artabanus had not any troops assembled, and the Roman emperor met with no resistance. He ravaged the country, plundered the cities, of which number was Arbela, and, after over-running all Media, drew near the royal capital, where, like a dastardly enemy, he vented his fury even upon the dead, opening the tombs of the Arsacidae, and throwing their ashes to the winds.

Whilst he was thus master of the lower parts of the country, the Parthians, retiring to their mountains beyond the Tigris, assembled their force, with design to take their revenge the next year: for they did not fear either the emperor or the Roman soldiers; because they looked upon the former as a vain boaster who had no real courage; and they knew that the latter were enervated by voluptuousness, and corrupted by a licentiousness which rendered them more formidable to their friends than to their enemies.

He takes the surname of Parthicus.

Caracalla returned to Mesopotamia, proud of his feats, and boasting that he had conquered the Parthians, whom he had not so much as seen. He wrote in this stile to the senate and Roman people, pretending that he had subdued all the East, and obliged every country beyond the Euphrates to acknowledge their laws. He had so little sense or judgment, that, in this very letter, he mixed with the pompous recital of his vast exploits, a circumstance the most pitiful that could possibly be imagined, saying, that a lion had come down from a mountain and fought for him. The senators knew extremely well what to think of the conquests of their emperor; for the affairs of princes cannot be concealed: but fear not permitting any one to open his mouth, except to flatter, the honours of triumph, and the title of Parthicus, were decreed him.

In

In the mean time Caracalla, being informed of the preparations making by Artabanes, disposed matters on his side to push on the war. But he was prevented by a violent death, the just reward of his crimes and tyranny. The author of his death was Macrinus, one of his praetorian prefects, whose hatred he had provoked by several bitter words, and who, alarmed by an imminent danger impending over his own head, chose rather to kill the emperor, than be killed by him.

Macrinus incensed by Caracalla and alarmed at his behaviour, conspires against him.

M. Opelius Macrinus, whom we shall call only by the last of these names, was born at Caesarea in Mauritania, now Algier, of parents whose station was so mean, that after his rise, he was compared to an ass which fortune had introduced into the palace. That he was of Moorish extraction appeared from one of his ears being bored, according to the custom of that nation. The means by which he rose above that obscurity to which his birth seemed to condemn him, was the study of the law. He became a tolerably good civilian; but, which was preferable to all science, he was incorruptibly just and honest. Some verses are ascribed to him which do him no honour as a poet. After passing through several of the lower employments, he became a pleader, and chancing to be concerned in a cause in which a friend of Plantianus's was one of the parties, in the time of Severus, he behaved so well that the minister took notice of him, and made him his steward. The fall of Plantianus seemed to defeat the infant-hopes of Macrinus, and was very near proving fatal to him. However, his life was saved by means of Fabius Cilo, but he was banished to Africa. During his stay there, he maintained himself by exercising at the same time the three professions of rhetorician, advocate, and civilian. At length he obtained his pardon, and Severus made him master of the imperial posts on the Flaminian way. He received the

Dio. Herod. & Capit. Maer. c. 4.

Capit. 11

the

the golden ring and the title of Roman knight from Caracalla ; was appointed intendant of part of the imperial demesnes ; then was made procurator-fiscal ; and at last rose to the post of prætorian præfect, the highest and most powerful in the empire. The obscurity of his birth was doubtless a circumstance which recommended him to Caracalla, who, jealous and suspicious of every thing, was afraid to trust a person nobly born, with any degree of power. Dion Cassius testifies, that in the discharge of the important office of prætorian præfect, in which both the civil and the military power were united, Macrinus behaved with honour, and shewed a zeal for justice, at least in such affairs as were left wholly to his decision.

His office obliged him to accompany the emperor in his wars : and as he had handled the pen more than the sword, he was the constant butt of Caracalla's jokes, who treated him as if he had been cowardly and effeminate, and preferred greatly before him, his colleague Adventus, a man of no sort of education, illiterate, clownish, and, in his behaviour, still the common soldier, though he had risen to the high post of prætorian præfect. Macrinus, on the contrary, loved to keep a good table, and dressed genteelly ; by which he could not fail to displease an emperor who affected to imitate the vulgar, in his cloaths and diet. Caracalla therefore hated and despised Macrinus, often threatened him with death, and endeavoured to lessen his power by removing from him all his creatures, under pretence of preferring them to better employments. In short, Macrinus plainly saw that he must inevitably perish, or make himself emperor ; when a new incident, threatening him with immediate destruction, determined him not to defer matters any longer.

Caracalla, always uneasy, always afraid of conspiracies, did not shut himself up in order to examine into and prevent them by such means as human prudence might suggest ; but had recourse to
all

all sorts of divinations, auguries, inspection of the entrails of victims, witchcraft and enchantments; keeping about him to that end numbers of people who professed those lying arts, astrologers, diviners, magicians; though at the same time he did not readily believe them, in which indeed he was less to blame than in any other thing. He suspected that their answers, when he consulted them himself, might be dictated by flattery: and for that reason he charged Flavius Maternianus, whom he had left at Rome at the head of affairs, and in whom he had the greatest confidence, to consult privately these foretellers of futurity, and to send him the result of their answers. Maternianus executed his commission; and, whether he disliked Macrinus and would have been glad to ruin him, or whether this prætorian præfect had not kept his own thoughts so secret but that some part of them had transpired, the fact is, that Maternianus wrote the emperor word that Macrinus aspired to the empire, and that it was necessary he should get rid of him as soon as possible.

This intelligence, intended for Caracalla, fell into the hands of Macrinus. Dion Cassius and Herodian give different accounts of the manner in which this mistake happened. According to Dion, Caracalla had ordered that all dispatches directed to him, whilst he was with the army, should be carried to the empress Julia, who remained at Antioch. She opened them, selected those that were of consequence, and sent none else to her son. This necessarily occasioned some delay: and in the mean time Macrinus received a letter from a friend of his at Rome, informing him of what Maternianus had written concerning him. Herodian imputes to Caracalla himself the accident by which Macrinus discovered this affair. He says that the emperor, always intent upon his pleasures, was preparing to drive a chariot, and had already put on the dress and livery of a charioteer, when a courier

courier presented him the packet in which Maternianus's letter was inclosed. Caracalla would not delay his diversion, but, as he had frequently done before, gave the packet to Macrinus, bidding him examine it and tell him the contents. Thus the fatal letter fell into the hands of the very person against whom it was written; and Macrinus was the less doubtful how he should act now, as, but a few days before, an Egyptian diviner had told Caracalla in express terms, that his life would be of short duration, and that Macrinus would succeed him. The prætorian præfect prevailed upon Caracalla to order the Egyptian to be thrown to the lions as an impostor: but still he did not doubt but that the prophecy had made an impression on the prince, and was very certain that death would be the infallible consequence the moment it should be confirmed by Maternianus's letter. He therefore had no remedy but by preventing Caracalla, and that he immediately resolved on.

Among the officers of the guard was a * centurion called Martialis, who had always been attached to Macrinus, and was at that time greatly dissatisfied with the emperor, who had put a brother of his to death upon an accusation destitute of proof. Macrinus applied to this officer, reminded him of the services he had done him, promised him still greater, animated him to revenge the death of his brother, and persuaded him to kill Caracalla the moment an opportunity should offer. Martialis engaged some of his companions in the plot, and the thing was executed in the following manner.

Caracalla
is killed.]
Spart. Carac.
lib. 6, & 7.
Dion. Hieron.

On the eighth of April, the emperor being at Edessa, where he had spent the winter, resolved to go to Carrhæ, to offer up a sacrifice in the temple of

* According to Dion Cassius, Martialis was not an officer, and the reason of his being dissatisfied with Caracalla, was, that this prince had refused him the rank of centurion. The differences of little consequence.

of the Moon *. As the distance was pretty great, he did not think proper to fatigue his army by taking all his troops with him, but went with only his horse-guards. Upon the road he had a call of nature, which obliged him to alight. Martialis, seizing this opportunity, when Caracalla was almost quite alone, gave him so well-aimed a stab with his dagger, that he dropt down dead upon the spot. The assassin fled; but being known by the bloody poignard, which he imprudently kept in his hand, he was pursued and overtaken by some Scythians and Germans of the emperor's guard; and some Roman officers, who probably were in the plot, running up, as if to his assistance, killed him directly, doubtless in order to remove the proof of their being his accomplices.

Thus perished Caracalla in the early flower of his age, having lived but twenty-nine years, of which he had reigned six years, two months and two days.

History is full of examples of the instability of all human things, and of the idle emptiness of grandeur: but I do not know any one more striking than that of Severus and his family.—What could be more brilliant than the fortune of that prince, who, born in a middling or rather low station of life, attained the supreme power, triumphed over two formidable rivals, spread the terror of his name and arms from one extremity of the world to the other, and, after a reign of twenty years, left his throne to two sons of age to succeed him?

Could

* The moon was honoured in this temple, and in some others, as a god, and not as a goddess. It was called the god *Lunus*. The people of this country said, that those who worshipped the moon as a female divinity, were governed by their wives; and that, on the contrary, those who worshipped it as a male god, ruled their wives, and had nothing to fear from them. A silly notion, though somewhat descriptive of the different condition of wives in different countries; slaves in the East, but free and often mistresses in the West.

Could the most boundless ambition wish for more? Yet, not to speak of the perpetual uneasiness, incessant fatigues, and dangers inseparable from power acquired by the sword, how much was all this prosperity embittered to Severus by the furious enmity of his two sons, which all his cares and efforts could neither lessen nor remove? After his death, the best, or rather the least bad of the two young princes, was killed by his brother in the arms of the mother of them both.—The other covered with crimes, a monster detested by heaven and by earth, after a very short reign, perished by a domestic snare. Such was the end of this high fortune of Severus, so resplendent, and, in appearance, so solidly established.

The fate of the empress Julia was of a piece with that of her husband and her sons. Associate of their grandeur, she shared their misery. We have already seen her, in the reign of Severus, persecuted, suspected, and forced to devote all her time to the study of literature and philosophy, to secure her peace, her quiet, and her life. The first fruit that she reaped from the elevation of her sons to the throne, was the cruel murder of him she loved most, with whose love she was bathed, and whose death she did not dare
Dio. Herul. to weep for. Under her parricide son, she enjoyed some marks of distinction; always a comfort to an ambitious woman. Charged with an important part of the ministry, she had the satisfaction of seeing the great men pay their court to her. Caracalla placed her name with his own at the head of his letters to the senate and people.—But yet she had the grief to find her counsels slighted, her advice disregarded, whenever she offered them to her son to prevent his rushing on to ruin: and his death plunged her into the bitterness of woes. She hated him whilst he lived, but regretted him when dead, because the loss of him deprived her of her chief support, and exposed

sed her to the danger of being again reduced to a private station. She gave herself up to the most violent transports of grief, beat her breast, and inveighed against Maerinus. But as soon as she found that the new emperor let her continue to enjoy the prerogatives and rank of empress, that he neither retrenched her household, nor took away her guards, and that he even wrote to her in respectful terms, she was comforted, her spirits returned, and her ambition revived. Thinking herself not inferior to Semiramis or Nitocris, who had formerly reigned with glory in a country not far distant from that in which she was born, she conceived hopes of being able to do the same, and, with that view, began to tamper with the troops. Maerinus being informed of it, ordered her to leave Antioch, and even, as some say, to kill herself. Certain it is, that her death, which happened soon after, was not natural; and that Julia, the wife and mother of emperors, either in obedience to the command of Maerinus, or no longer able to bear the racking pains of a cancer she had long had in her breast, and which she had perhaps inflamed by striking it in the height of her grief, starved herself to death; thereby completing the disasters of Severus's family, and of all that belonged to it.

Detestable as Caracalla was in every respect, he seems to have been charged with even more crimes than he really committed. Among these I reckon the pretended incest with his mother, of which Spartian accuses him. It is true, that this writer thought Julia was only mother-in-law to Caracalla, who, according to him, was the son of Severus by a former wife. But in this he is contradicted by the testimony of all historians: and the accusation is in itself so atrocious, that it requires a better authority than that of Spartian to render it at all probable.

I do not know whether the same judgment ought not to be formed, of what Dion Cassius tells us of

False, or at least uncertain. imputations but to the charge of Caracalla. See l. Carac. 10.

Di. l. l. lxxviii. p. 291 certain

certain private interviews which Caracalla had frequently with the ambassadors of the Scythians, Germans, and other barbarians. I can easily believe that Caracalla might chuse from among those nations guards, in whom he had greater confidence than in the Roman soldiers. But can it be conceived that in his conversations with the deputies of those barbarians, he should exhort them to fall upon Italy in case any accident happened to him, or encourage their natural ferocity by giving them hopes, and telling them that the conquest of Rome would be very easy? He could not have these conferences without the help of interpreters. But he took care, we are told, to have them killed the moment after. It must be then from the barbarians themselves, that Dion pretends to have learnt afterwards this odious anecdote, which has all the air of a groundless report, adopted and propagated by the public hatred with which this prince was justly loaded.

Macrinus spread another report, which I mentioned before, and which seems equally improbable. He gave out that Caracalla had in his custody, at the time of his death, as much poison as cost him seven millions five hundred thousand draehms*. This is too much to be believed upon the credit of an enemy; nor can any thing be suspected less than an enormous exaggeration.

* *Upwards*
of
£ 700,000.

We are the more at liberty to doubt these stories, as I find one of the same kind advanced by Dion Cassius and Spartian, contrary to the evidence of what is known to be fact. Dion says, that Caracalla lost the love of the Roman soldiers, by treating them less favourably than he did the Scythians and Germans, who served in his armies: and Spartian asserts, that he was hated by all his troops, except the praetorians. Yet the sequel will shew how much his memory was dear to all the soldiery. He had but too well merited their affection.

He was hat-
ed by all
but the sol-
diers,
Dio.

He was hated and detested by all other men: and after his death, instead of continuing to be called
by

by the venerable name of *Antoninus*, which he had profaned, he was designated by his old name of *Bassianus*, or the nick-name of *Caracalla*; or by that of *Tarantas*, a little, deformed, ugly gladiator, remarkably fond of blood in the cruel exercise of his horrid trade.

This prince, odious and despicable as he was, even beyond expression, embellished Rome, Works with which he embellished ever, with some superb edifices. We are told of baths of his constructing, called, after his name, Rome. Spart. Ca. rac. 9. the Antonian baths, which surpassed all others for the beauty of their architecture: and near these baths he built a new street, one of the finest in Rome. He likewise built a portico, which he called the portico of Severus, adorned with representations of all his father's military exploits, and of the triumphs with which they had been crowned.

He left a son worthy of him, if it be true, as He is said to have been the father of Heliogabalus. has been said, that he was the father of *Heliogabalus*, who succeeded *Macrinus* in the empire, of which he became the horror and reproach.

Learning, which had declined for upwards of an age, did not recover fresh vigour under a prince whose sole delight was in the exercises of the body. The Greek poet Oppian lived in Caracalla's time. Tillam. However, it was not quite extinguished.

Besides *Serenus Sammonicus*, whom I mentioned before, this same reign produced *Oppian*, a Greek poet, born at *Anazarba* in *Cilicia*, of whom we have two poems, one upon *Hunting*, and the other upon *Fishing*. We are told, that he presented both these works to *Caracalla*, who rewarded him with as many pieces of gold as they contained lines. If this be true, we may, by comparing the fortune of *Oppian* with that of *Homer*, be more and more convinced that rewards are far from being always distributed according to merit. *Oppian* deserves great praise for his filial piety, if we may believe the author

of his life, who says, that upon the emperor's bidding him ask any favour he pleased, he only desired the pardon of his father, who had been banished long before by Severus. I wish this fact was supported by less disputable authority.

Caracalla is said to have loved music; and as a proof of it, he is said to have erected a monument to the memory of Mesomedes, a lyric poet, of whom I have spoken elsewhere.

PRINCIPAL

PRINCIPAL EVENTS
 OF THE REIGN
 OF
MACRINUS.

C. BRUTTIUS PRÆSENS.
 T. MESSIUS EXTRICATUS.

A. P. 968.
 A. C. 217.

Macrinus is elected emperor, on the eleventh of April, by the soldiery, who were ignorant of his having been concerned in the death of Caracalla.

He behaves in all things differently from that prince, whose memory he does not, however, dare to attack openly, for fear of irritating the soldiery.

He writes to the senate, who readily acknowledge him, and decree him all the titles of the imperial power.

He creates his son Diadumenus, then nine years of age, *Cæsar*, and makes him take the name of Antoninus.

The troops demand the deifying of Caracalla. Macrinus agrees to it, and the senate decrees it.

Informers punished. Scheme for abolishing all the particular edicts of the emperors, and for reducing the Roman laws to their primitive state.

Macrinus defeated twice by Artabanus king of the Parthians, purchases peace of him.

He restores the crown of Armenia to Tiridates, who seems to have been the son of Vologeses, the last king of that country.

He returns to Antioch where he spends the winter, and gives himself up to idleness and effeminacy. He endeavours to hide the meanness of his birth by an haughty behaviour. He pro-

motes to places and employments people not capable of managing them, and turns out several worthy men, whom he suspected on account of their abilities, and of their having been attached to Caracalla.

A. R. 969.
A. C. 218.

M. OPELIUS MACRINUS AUGUSTUS II.
..... ADVENTUS.

Macrinus had held the consulship during part of the last year, but only by subrogation. However, he reckoned it his first, though he had before been invested with the ornaments of consul, under Caracalla.

Adventus, a rough unpolished soldier, totally ignorant of all civil affairs, had been his colleague in the post of prætorian præfect.

The troops, dissatisfied with Macrinus, murmur against him.

Julia Mæsa, sister to the empress Julia, takes advantage of this disposition of the soldiery, and raises to the emperor her grandson Heliogabalus, a youth of fourteen years of age; making him pass for the son of Caracalla.

He is proclaimed emperor by a legion encamped near Emesa. His party soon grows numerous.

Macrinus gives his son the title of Augustus.

A battle is fought near Antioch, on the seventh of June. Macrinus flies like a coward, and abandons the victory to his rival.

Attempting to return to Rome, he is seized at Chalcedon, and carried back into Cappadocia, where, learning the death of his son, who had been taken and killed, he throws himself out of his carriage, is considerably wounded by his fall, and is murdered. His head is carried to Heliogabalus.

SECT. II.

MACRINUS.

Macrinus causes himself to be elected emperor by the troops. The beginning of his reign promises well. He acquaints the senate with his election, and desires their confirmation of it. The senate, who detested Caracalla, readily acknowledge Macrinus. The prætorian præfect Adventus loaded with honours, and removed from the army. His incapacity for business. Diadumenus, son of Macrinus, created Cæsar and named Antoninus. Caracalla ranked among the gods. Actions of Macrinus, by which he indisposed the senate against him. His respect for the laws. His conduct with regard to informers, mixed with justice and cautious circumspection. His timidity in war. Worsted twice by Artabanes, he purchases peace. He ends the troubles of Armenia by giving up every thing in dispute. He returns to Antioch, where he gives himself up to luxury and pleasure. His army inclined to revolt. Origin of Heliogabalus. A legion encamped near Emesa receives him in its camp, and proclaims him emperor. A body of troops sent against him by Macrinus, goes over to him. Macrinus gives his son the rank and title of Augustus. Largesses on this occasion. He writes letters of complaint to the senate and city præfect. Heliogabalus declared a public enemy by the senate. Battle, in which Macrinus is conquered. He flies to Antioch, and from thence crossing Asia Minor, is taken at Chalcedon. The death of Diadumenus and of Macrinus. Judgment concerning Macrinus. His wife Nonia Celsa had the title of Augusta.

Macrinus causes himself to be elected emperor by the troops. *Dio. lib. lxxviii. p. 205.*

Dio. ibid.

p. 803.

894. Herod. l. II.

Capit. Macrin. 2, &

5.

IF Macrinus, after procuring the death of Caracalla, had endeavoured to give the empire to some one of the most deserving and most eminent among the senators, he would, in the opinion of Dion Cassius, have acquired infinite glory. A conspiracy which was become necessary in order to secure his own life, would not then have been imputed to him as a crime; and all men would have thought themselves obliged to him for delivering them from a cruel tyrant. But ambition was one of the motives that induced him to attempt the life of his emperor; and he thereby lost all the merit of an action, which, according to the then prevailing way of thinking, would have done him great honour; and soon drew a bloody catastrophe upon himself and his son.

He carefully concealed at first both his concern in the murder of Caracalla, and his thoughts of succeeding him. The tragical death of that prince, beloved by the soldiers, excited throughout the whole army, grief, pity, and regret.—Macrinus, affecting more zeal than any other, wept over the dead body of his master, caused the last honours to be paid him, and inclosing his ashes in an urn, sent them to the empress Julia, who was then at Antioch, as I observed before. Whilst he seemed wholly taken up with these cares, he laboured privately to win the affection of the troops, who were the more easily gained over to his views, as they did not in the least suspect his having been an accomplice in the death of Caracalla, but thought the centurion Martialis had killed him merely to revenge his own personal injuries. It was not only with the troops immediately about him that Macrinus tampered: his emissaries did the same with those that were quartered in different parts of Mesopotamia; and these intrigues lasted three days, during which the Roman empire was without a head. In the mean time Artabanus, king of the Parthians,

Parthians, approached with a powerful army, and the situation of affairs required the utmost dispatch. On the fourth day after the death of Caracalla, which was the eleventh of April, the soldiers of the prætorian cohorts and those of the legions assembled in order to proceed to the election of an emperor.

Adventus, who was Macrinus's colleague in the office of prætorian præfect, could have balanced the suffrages of the electors: at least he boasted that he could, and ventured to say to the soldiers; "The empire is my due, because I am an older officer than my colleague. But I am too far advanced in years, and therefore give my pretensions up to him." Macrinus was accordingly elected, and after a feigned resistance, with which he endeavoured to colour over the irregularity of his proceedings, he consented to accept of the empire, and immediately rewarded the zeal of the troops with a donation.

The day of his election was the anniversary of that of the birth of Severus, whose name Macrinus took, to cover the obscurity of his own origin, adding to it that of Pertinax, which was revered by all lovers of virtue. Cap. Ma. crim. 11.

That the soldiers might not be the only persons pleased with his elevation, and to give at once a favourable idea of his government, he revoked all the condemnations pronounced during the reign of his predecessor for pretended crimes of treason, and forbid prosecuting any accusations of that kind then depending. He likewise abolished the ordinance by which Caracalla had raised the tax upon manumitted slaves and collateral inheritances to the tenth part of their value, instead of the twentieth that it was at before, and put those matters upon their ancient footing. He stopped those odious vexations by which the people in general, and rich individuals in particular, had been harrassed and tormented; annulled the pensions granted to undeserving The begin-
ning of his
reign pro-
mises well.
Dio. p. 893,
& 896.

deserving men, out of the public treasury; and seemed determined to be guided by maxims diametrically opposite to those of his predecessor.

Dio. p. 887. The public was likewise pleased with his modesty, in forbidding any statue to be erected to him of more than five pounds weight in silver, or three pounds in gold.

He acquaints the senate with his election, and desires their confirmation of it. Dio. Herod. & Capit. Maer. 6, 7. These actions recommended him strongly to the senate, whom he acquainted with his promotion by a judicious well wrote letter, in which he very modestly desired their confirmation of what the army had done for him; promising that his government should be rather aristocratical than monarchical, that nothing should be done without their advice, and that the citizens should enjoy their rights, their fortunes, and their liberties.

With regard to Caracalla, he protested that he had no share in his death, but avoided entering into the particulars of his conduct. Withheld on one hand by fear of the soldiery, and on the other by his own sentiments and interests, he neither said all the ill he thought of him, nor attempted to give him the least praise. Speaking of the Parthian war, he was less reserved; because he knew the troops did not like it. He therefore boldly blamed that enterprize, and imputed it to the injustice and breach of faith of his predecessor. He likewise complained that the pensions which Caracalla paid the barbarians amounted to exorbitant sums, equal to the expence of maintaining all the Roman armies. As to the rest, he neither determined whether he ought to be declared a public enemy, or whether he should be ranked among the gods. He would have been glad to see the senate stigmatize his memory, but was afraid to propose it.

The senate who detested Caracalla, readily acknowledged Maerinus. The senate granted Maerinus all that could satisfy his personal ambition. Notwithstanding the obscurity of his birth, he was inrolled among the Patricians; all the titles of the imperial power were

were decreed him; and his son Diadumenus was declared Prince of the youth, and decorated with the name of *Cæsar*. The senate would even have ordained, that the day of his accession to the empire should be celebrated with feasts and shews: but he refused this compliment, saying, that that day was already sufficiently distinguished by the games which were given for the birth of Severus. The senate also decreed him the surnames of *Pious* and *Happy*, which an almost established custom had then rendered peculiar to the emperors. Macrinus accepted the last of these names, but would not take that of *Pious*, perhaps out of respect for Titus Antoninus, who first bore it.

He owed this ready completion of his wishes to the detestation with which every one hated Caracalla. The senate made no scruple of declaring their sentiments in this respect, but explained them with the greatest strength and clearness. *Capit. Maer. 11.* "We would chuse," said they, "any man whatever, rather than the parricide we have just been delivered from; any, rather than a prince of such abominable morals; any, rather than the murderer of the senate and people." The festivals instituted in honour of him were abolished; *Dio.* his statues of gold and silver were ordered to be melted down; the praises of Martialis, the murderer of Caracalla, were sounded with reiterated acclamations, and a great stress was laid upon the conformity of his name with that of the god Mars, the father and founder of the Roman nation. The conscript fathers did not, however, dare to carry matters so far as to declare Caracalla a public enemy. The fear of being massacred and cut to pieces by the troops in the city, stopped them: and soon after, as we shall see, the same fear made them decree divine honours to the man they thus detested.

One of Macrinus's first cares, after his being proclaimed and acknowledged emperor, was to re-^{The pre-torian præ-fect Ad-}move

Adventus
loaded with
honours,
and re-
moved
from the
army.
His inca-
pacity for
business.
*Capit.
Maer. 5.
Liv.*

move his colleague Adventus, in whom he had suspected he should find a competitor. But he proceeded cautiously in this affair, loading him with honours in order to get rid of him. He sent him to Rome with the ashes of the deceased emperor, appointed him præfect of that city, and nominated him consul with himself for the following year. This promotion of Adventus was extremely displeasing to the public, not only on account of his being a man of no family, and a mere soldier of fortune, but also because he seemed absolutely incapable of the business he was charged with, being almost blind, through age; so ignorant that he knew not how to read; and not only destitute of all experience in civil affairs, but totally unacquainted even with their first principles. He could not so much as pronounce a speech of four lines: for which reason the day that the ceremony of his election to the consulate was performed, he absented himself, under pretence of illness, because he knew he must otherwise be obliged to make a compliment of thanks. His incapacity soon obliged Maerinus to take the office of city præfect from him; and that post was given to Marius Maximus, perhaps the same who penned the lives of several of the emperors, often quoted by the writers of the Byzantine history.

Diadume-
nus, son of
Maerinus,
created Cæ-
sar, and
named An-
toninus.

I said before, that the title of *Cæsar* was decreed by the senate to Maerinus's son Diadumenus, who was then but in the ninth year of his age. His father had not waited for that decree to associate him to the honours of empire. Judging that a necessary precaution in order to establish his own infant fortune, he hurried Diadumenus away from Antioch to the army; and the troops who escorted him proclaimed him *Cæsar* upon the road, doubtless in consequence of private orders they had received.

Liv. i. 1. 4^a

But above all, Maerinus thought he did a most masterly thing, in giving his son the name of *Antoninus*.

toninus. The last emperor had borne it; and it was held in such veneration, that the soldiers, despairing of success when they had no longer an Antoninus at their head, imagined that the Roman empire would perish with that sacred name. Macrinus feared lest they should seek a remedy for this evil among the kindred of Titus Antoninus, of whose family a collateral branch still subsisted, and held several important posts in the army. An imaginary danger required a preservation of the same nature: and accordingly Macrinus, assembling his troops, told them he intended, with their consent, to revive the name of Antoninus in the person of Diadumenus. The proposal was received with universal gladness: praises and vows were heaped upon Macrinus and his son; and the name of Antoninus Diadumenus was echoed with transports of joy. But amidst these acclamations, the soldiers demanded that Antoninus Caracalla should be ranked among the gods. All they asked was granted. Macrinus began with promising them a largess of eight * pieces of gold to every man, of which three were for his promotion to the empire, and the other five for the name of *Antoninus*, as if that name had been something greater than even the sovereign power. The new Antoninus spoke likewise. He returned his thanks, and entered into the same engagements with the soldiery, as his father had done. He was a child of an amiable figure and pleasing countenance, and was tall for his age: advantages which seldom fail to please the multitude. The apotheosis of Caracalla crowned the joy of the military people. Macrinus treated as a god, a prince whom he had been the means of killing; and the senate, by his order, decreed him divine honours. Thus this monster, detested by heaven and earth, had his temple, his priests, and festivals established for the worship of him at Rome.

Caracalla ranked among the gods. *Capit. Marc. 3. Dio. p. 592. Spart. Car. 10. 11.*

Macrinus

* Two hundred denarii, or eight hundred sesterces. About 10s. of our money.

Actions of
Macrinus,
by which
he indis-
posed the
senate a-
gainst him.
Lampriid.
Diad. 2.
Dio.

Macrinus was willing that the senate and Roman people should also share the joy of seeing the name of Antoninus revived in his son. He wrote accordingly to the senate; and promised a largess to the people on this occasion. The multitude, no doubt, entered into his sentiments: but the senators were not pleased at finding that the soldiery had invaded their prerogative, by anticipating what properly belonged to them in the promotion of Diadumenus; and could not bear to see their rights thus annihilated, or at least reduced to a mere formality, a consent no longer of the least importance.

But this was not the only thing by which the new emperor disobliged this first assembly of the state. The honours he had forced them to pay to Caracalla; the death of one Aurelian, who had signalized his hatred against the memory of that prince, and whom Macrinus had sacrificed to the resentment of his soldiers, increased their dislike of his proceedings. They also found that he acted injudiciously in his distribution of employments. Not to speak of Adventus, whom I mentioned before, he gave the posts of prætorian præfect to two men equally undeserving, of no experience in war, and who had misbehaved very grossly under the last reign: these were, Ulpius Julianus and Julianus Nestor. It is true, they had been of service to him, by helping him to the knowledge of several things important to his safety. But places ought not to be the rewards of favour, nor even the acknowledgements of gratitude. They are due to merit; and a prince, in disposing of them, should consider the welfare of the state, and not his own personal connexions. For this reason Macrinus was greatly blamed for displacing Sabinus and Castinus, two commanders of real merit and abilities, the one in Dacia and the other in Pannonia, but whom he suspected on account of their known courage, and of their attachment to Caracalla, and for appointing in their stead
 Marcus

Marcus Agrippa, who, born in obscurity, had waded through several dirty offices, and Decius Tricilianus, who indeed had merit, but whose extremely low extraction was ill suited to the highest post in the empire, Some other actions of this kind made all judicious people look upon Macrinus as a prince who either had no knowledge of men, or who was guided by views of self-interest, without regard to the public good.

A very ill-judged thing in Macrinus, and which hurt him greatly, was, that he pretended to conceal the obscurity of his birth, by an affectation of pompous manners and an haughty behaviour. His conduct ought to have been quite the reverse, as Dion Cassius judiciously observes. The way to make others forget the meanness of his origin, would have been to seem to remember it himself. A mild and modest deportment, an easy access to his person, and a kind expression of regard for those that wanted his assistance, would infallibly have gained him the hearts of all. But so far was he from taking those prudent steps, that he affected, both in his person and in every thing about him, a magnificence which degenerated into effeminacy, a disgusting carriage, and a jealousy of his grandeur, which shewed that nature never designed him for it. No crime was more severely punished than that of comparing his first setting out in life with the high fortune he had now attained.

These defects in Macrinus were however compensated by some valuable qualities. Dion Cassius expresses a great esteem for the respect this emperor shewed for the laws, in not reckoning as a second consulship that which he took upon his accession to the throne, though he had been honoured with the ornaments of consul under Caracalla. The contrary abuse had been introduced by Severus, and Macrinus began to reform it by his own example.

His conduct with regard to informers, mixed with justice and cautious circumspection.

His behaviour with regard to informers was mixed with justice and prudent circumspection. The senate had desired communication of the secret memorials deposited in the imperial palace, in order to inflict due punishment upon those who had clandestinely been the cause of the death or disgrace of a very great number of innocent persons. All sorts of people, as I observed before, men and women, great and small, knights and senators, had practised this odious trade. Macrinus therefore readily conceived that the prosecuting of so many delinquents, many of whom were allied to the best families in Rome, would occasion great disturbances. The reader may remember, what storms an affair of this nature raised in the senate, in the beginning of Vespasian's reign, and with what difficulty it was at length appeased by the authority of Mucian, who stopped the proceedings against the informers. Macrinus acted somewhat differently, but with the same effect. He answered the senate, that the memorials which had been given into Caracalla by informers, had either been torn by order of that prince, or returned to the authors of them. This answer, whether true or false, stopped the mouths of the senators. But that they might not be too much dissatisfied, Macrinus gave them up three victims, notorious offenders, who had carried the rage of informing to the utmost height of impudence, Manilius, Julius, and Sulpicius Arrenianus, all three members of the senate; by whose order they were confined to distant islands: for Macrinus had expressly forbid condemning them to death, "In order," said he, "that no one may be able to reproach us with having done ourselves that which we blame in others."

The senate, of its own accord, added a fourth example of justice upon L. Priscillianus, for whom Caracalla had entertained a great friendship on two accounts, his vigour and surprising dexterity in fighting

fighting wild beasts, and his bloody accusations against numbers of illustrious persons. Dion Cassius attests, that this Priscillianus fought against a lion and a lioness at the same time; against a bear and a leopard; and that he came off victorious, though not without receiving lasting marks from the teeth of those furious animals. Still more formidable to men than he was to beasts, he had been the instrument of death to many knights and senators. Rewarded by Caracalla, he was detested by the senate, who condemned him to perpetual banishment.

As to informers of less note, from whose punishment no bad consequences were to be feared, Macrinus treated them rigorously. He punished them with death, and even crucified some slaves who had accused their masters. By the nature of the Roman laws, informers were a necessary evil. But the condition of those who were afraid to continue that dangerous function under the reign of Macrinus, was very hard. If they did not prove their allegations, they suffered death, or at least banishment. If their proofs were sufficient, they received the pecuniary reward allotted by the laws, but remained infamous. Herod. l. v. Capit. Macr. l. 11.

We may easily judge, that such treatment could not but reduce the tribe of informers to a very small number. Accordingly Herodian observes, that peace and tranquillity reigned in the inner parts of the empire under Macrinus, and that the citizens, who in Caracalla's time thought they saw a naked sword perpetually suspended over their heads, now breathed again, and enjoyed a semblance of liberty.

From this account of Macrinus's government it naturally follows, that the multitude were not dissatisfied with it, and that the more discerning part saw many things which hurt them. He lost himself in the opinion of the soldiery by his cowardice in war.

Terrified by the approach of Artabanus, he made some advances towards him which favoured strongly His timidity in war.

Worsted
twice by
Artabanes,
he pur-
chases
peace.
Dio.

strongly of timidity. He sent him back the prisoners which the Romans had taken the year before, and proposed a peace, laying all the blame of the rupture upon Caracalla, who was then no more. Artabanes, naturally haughty, and more so than ever when he found himself thus courted; despising too, Macrinus, as an upstart of fortune, who did not deserve the rank he had been raised to; was not satisfied with what was offered him, but added very heavy additional conditions. He insisted that the Romans should rebuild the forts they had ruined in his country, and the cities they had sacked. He demanded the restitution of Mesopotamia, together with an equivalent for the losses his kingdom had suffered, and a compensation for the sepulchres of his ancestors destroyed and profaned. As desirous as Macrinus was of peace, he could not submit to such hard terms, and therefore was obliged to fight.

The armies met near Nisibis, and a dispute which of them should be master of a rivulet that ran between their camps, brought on an engagement in which the Romans were worsted. A second battle was fought with the like success. Macrinus, twice beaten, and badly obeyed by his troops, among whom a spirit of revolt began to ferment, had again recourse to negociation, and succeeded therein; Artabanes having then strong reasons to listen to overtures of accommodation. The Parthians, unaccustomed to keep the field for any length of time, were grown weary of the war, and wanted to return to their own country. They were also in great want of provisions, of which it was their custom never to carry with them any considerable store. Money purchased what Macrinus wanted; two hundred millions of sesterces*, given to the king of the Parthians, or distributed among his courtiers, obtained peace.

* *Upwards
of a million
of our mu-
n.*

He wrote to the senate upon this occasion, somewhat disguising the facts, and turning them to his
own

own advantage. The senate saw through his misrepresentations ; but yet had the meanness to order feasts and rejoicings as for a victory, and to decree the emperor the surname of Parthicus.—Macrinus did not indeed accept that title, and was modest enough not to call himself the conqueror of a nation by which he had been conquered.

In my account of the war of this prince with the Parthians, I have followed none but Dion Cassius. Herodian was not only less in the way of true information, but he mixes with his narrative such romantic circumstances, as quite discredit it.

Macrinus ended the troubles of Armenia by the same means that he had made use of with the Parthians. He gave the crown of that kingdom to Tiridates, probably the son of its last sovereign ; restored him his mother, who had been kept prisoner eleven months by Caracalla ; repaired the damage the Roman troops had done in Armenia ; put Tiridates in possession of all the places his father had held in Cappadocia ; and if he did not pay the pension which the kings of Armenia received annually from his predecessor, it was because the fear of being attacked by the Dacians obliged him to husband his finances. He had given this last nation also room to threaten him, by his too great facility in returning them the hostages which Caracalla had required of them as pledges of their tranquillity and good behaviour.

He sacrificed every thing, as we see, to his repose ; and after having established peace with the Parthians and Armenians, he returned to Antioch, where he behaved as if he had only to enjoy his fortune. He pretended to be an imitator of Marcus Aurelius : but it was only in some outward things, easily copied, such as an air of gravity, a slowness to answer any question, and a tone of voice so low that he could scarcely be heard when he spoke. He was very far from expressing the great

He ends the troubles of Armenia by giving up every thing in dispute.

He returns to Antioch, where he gives himself up to luxury and pleasure. Her. II. V.

characteristics of that wise emperor, his activity, his perseverance in labour, his zeal for the public good, his noble simplicity, his austere temperance. On the contrary, he neglected business; gave himself up to pleasure, shews, and music; plunged into luxury, and affected gorgeous apparel, wearing a fillet by way of diadem, enriched with gold and precious stones. This shew of magnificence, more suitable to the manners of the Asiatics than to the severity of the Romans, gave the greater offence, as Macrinus had but just succeeded an emperor, who had prided himself upon living less like a prince than like a common soldier.

His army
inclined to
revolt.
Dioc. lib.
l. xxviii.
Herod. l. v.

Far other cares would have engrossed his thoughts, if he had known the situation he was in. An army dissatisfied with the bad success of the war, undisciplined and intractable, no longer accustomed to military exercises and fatigues, corrupted by effeminacy, exacting immense gratifications and largesses, and determined to do nothing to deserve them, was a thing that might well have alarmed Macrinus. The boldest and most vigorous emperor would have found it difficult to contain such troops within the bounds of their duty: much less could Macrinus do it, whom they despised.

He tried, however, to reform them; and it must be owned that he set about that work prudently enough. He confirmed to all the soldiery then actually in the service of the state, the enjoyment of the rights and privileges which Caracalla had granted them; but he declared that with regard to those who should enlist after that time, things should be put upon the ancient footing on which Severus had left them. If to this regulation he had added the precaution of separating his army, by sending all his legions into their respective quarters, and had himself immediately returned to Rome, where the people called for him with loud cries, he would perhaps have prevented his
fatal

fatal catastrophe. But, without any necessity, since the war was quite over, he left his troops assembled in and about Syria, and in so doing, raised their insolence to a greater height than ever, by shewing them the strength of their united force. Fear too was another motive that helped to spur them on. Persuaded that the ratification of the privileges they derived from Caracalla was granted out of mere policy, these old soldiers made no doubt but that the moment they should be weakened by being dispersed, they should be reduced to the same condition as the new levies. In short, a few examples of justice, which Macrinus made of some of them, who had committed great disorders and violences in Mesopotamia, or who had been guilty of sedition, at once determined them to vow his ruin. Capitolinus ^{Capit.} accuses him of having carried his severity in cases ^{Macr. 12.} of this nature, to a degree of cruelty. But that writer is so embittered against Macrinus, that little credit can be given to the ill he says of him. He seems to have framed his account of this emperor, from the calumnious reports which Helio- ^{Lampriid.} ^{Helic. c. 8.} gabalus spread in order to blacken the memory of his predecessor.

An army animated by a spirit like that we have been speaking of, could not fail to seize eagerly the first opportunity that offered for a revolt. So, in fact, it happened. To get rid of Macrinus, who had his good as well as his bad qualities, the soldiers raised to the throne, the most shameful and most flagitious wretch that ever defiled the Purple and the name of the Cæsars. I will give him his portrait here.

The empress Julia had a sister named Julia ^{Origin of} ^{Helio. ca-} Mæsa, who was no way inferior to her for ambi- ^{balus.} tion and intrigue. Mæsa lived with her sister in ^{Dioc. lib.} the imperial palace, as long as Severus and Cara- ^{lxviii.} ^{Herod. l. v.} calla reigned. After the death of this last, and that ^{Capit.} of Julia, which happened soon after, Mæsa was ^{Macr. 9, &} ^{10, &} obliged by Macrinus to retire to Emesa in Phœni- ^{Lampriid.} ^{Helic. 1,} ^{cia, 2.}

vid. & *Va-*
ler. not. ad
Dion. Ex-
cerpta, III.

cia, her native city, where her father Bassianus had been priest of the temple of the sun.

She had been married to Julius Avitus, a man of consular rank, by whom she had two daughters, Julia Soæmis, and Julia Mamæa. Mamæa is well known, no one being ignorant that she was the mother of that amiable emperor who took the names of Alexander Severus. Soæmis married Varius Marcellus, whom a premature death cut off before he could attain the consulship: and by that husband, or by an adulterous commerce with Caracalla, she had a son, who bore a great many different names. He was called Bassianus, from the name of his great-grandfather; Avitus from that of his grandfather; Varius, from the name of his father; and when emperor, he assumed the names of Marcus-Aurelius-Antoninus: lastly, the dignity of Priest of the Sun, which was worshipped at Emesa, under the name of Heliogabalus*, and the frantic zeal he expressed for that worship, acquired him the name of Heliogabalus, by which he is best known in history.

Lio. Herod.
Capit. Lam-
prid.

Mæsa, upon her retiring to Emesa, carried with her her two daughters, both widows, and her two grandsons, one of whom, that is to say Heliogabalus, was thirteen years old, and the other nine.—She endeavoured at first to comfort herself under her change of fortune, by getting for her grandsons the priesthood of the temple of Emesa, which their great-grandfather had held. It was a great and fine place in that country, and intitled the possessor of it to the superintendance of a magnificent temple, richly adorned with gold and precious stones, to which all the princes and people of the East sent their offerings. The representation

* Critics say this word ought to be written *Elagabal*: and in fact this way of spelling it agrees better with the Hebrew or Phœnician etymology *El haggabar*, the puissant god, from whence it is, probably enough, said to be derived. I have followed the common method of writing it

tion of the god was like that of Venus at Paphos, a black stone of conic form, said to have been dropt down from heaven, and revered by superstition, as an image of the sun, which was not made by human hand. The religious ceremonies were pompous: the habits of the priests superb: and when the young prince, in whom perfect beauty was joined to the charms of youth, appeared clothed with the ornaments of his office, he attracted and charmed the eyes of all: he might be compared, says Herodian, to the finest representations of Bacchus. People ran from all parts to see him celebrate the feasts and sacrifices, to gaze on him whilst he danced to the sound of the flute and all sorts of instruments of music, and thought they could never sufficiently admire so beautiful a youth.

But none considered him more attentively than the soldiers, of whom a legion was then encamped near Emesa, from whence they resorted in crowds to the temple, where they saw Heliogabalus, and took a liking to him. The love they still retained for Caracalla, and their hatred of Macrinus, soon attached them strongly to a young prince who was related to the one, and an enemy to the other.

A legion encamped near Emesa receive him into their camp and proclaim him emperor.

Mæsa, as ambitious as woman could well be, and determined to hazard every thing rather than remain in the obscurity of a private station, no sooner saw this favourable disposition of the troops, than she resolved to make the most of it. She began with spreading a report, that young Heliogabalus was not only related to, but that he was even the son of Caracalla; adding, without valuing the dishonour of her daughters, that the emperor had loved them, and had received in return every favour he could wish.

To this motive, which made a strong impression upon the troops, she joined another still more powerful argument. Having amassed great wealth in the time of her power and credit, she now lavished

it among the soldiers, as an earnest only of much more abundant largesses she said she intended to give them; intimating, that she was ready to exhaust all her treasures, if they would place her grandson upon the throne.

She was well served in the execution of her designs by Eutychianus and Gannys, the one a freedman of the Cæsars, and the other the instructor and governor of Heliogabalus in his infancy. These two men, though of very different characters, were both fertile and powerful in intrigues. They wrought up the ardour of the troops encamped near Emesa, and practised upon them so effectually, that they prevailed with them to admit the young prince into their camp in the night, and to proclaim him emperor. At the hour agreed on, Heliogabalus, dressed in a robe like that which Caracalla had worn in his youth, in order to make the resemblance the more striking, went, accompanied by some of these soldiers and by all his family, to one of the gates of the camp, which was immediately opened to him, and, upon his entering it, a thousand acclamations instantly saluted him with the name of *Antoninus* and the title of emperor. Dion Cassius places this event in the night between the fifteenth and sixteenth of May. After this step, the troops, not doubting but that they should be attacked by Macrinus, furnished their camp with all sorts of provisions, and prepared to sustain a siege, if it should be necessary.

A body of troops sent against him by Macrinus.

At first Macrinus looked upon this affair as a trifle, not worth his taking the field in person: for which reason he contented himself with sending Ulpianus Julianus, one of the prætorian præfects, with some troops, to chastise the rebels. The præfect had in his little army a body of Moorish auxiliaries, extremely attached to their countryman Macrinus, and quite devoted to his cause. Had he taken advantage of their ardour, he might easily have forced the
camp

camp of the mutineers as soon as he arrived at it, and at once have ended the dispute. Some of the gates of the camp were already broke open, when, either withheld by fear, or hoping that the enemy would submit voluntarily, he ordered his troops to retreat, and missed an opportunity which never returned again.

The besieged fortified their gates with new works, in the night; and the next morning, when Julianus gave them a second assault, they sustained it with a courage increased by the success of their resistance the day before. At the same time they carried young Heliogabalus, whom they called Antoninus, up to the top of the walls, and shewing him to their comrades, invited them to acknowledge the son and heir of an emperor by whom they had been so much beloved. "What are you doing?" cried they to them: "Why do you employ your arms against the son of your benefactor?" They compared the face of their new prince with pictures of Caracalla when a youth, and seeing things as they chose to see them, pointed out every resemblance that their prejudiced imagination could suggest. The besiegers, shaken in their fidelity by such persuasions as these, were quite determined by the sight of the money which those within the camp shewed them, telling them, that they had received it from Massa, and that it was in their power to merit equal liberalities. Heliogabalus addressed them likewise from the top of the wall, repeating what he had been bid to say, and confirming the promises that were made in his name. Julianus's soldiers, who, the Moors excepted, were but little attached to the side they fought for, readily yielded to the sweet temptation. Their tribunes and centurions tried in vain to check them. Far from listening to any remonstrances, the soldiers fell furiously upon their officers, and massacred them, emboldened thereto by an emissary from Eutychianus, who

who promised the murderers the spoils and rank of the person they should kill. Julianus fled immediately, to escape their rage: and the seditious, then free from all restraint, marched as friends into the camp of those they were sent to besiege. The number of the rebels was quickly increased, and that very considerably by fugitives from all parts, some influenced by the love of novelty, and others by the hope of gain.

Macrinus gives his son the rank and title of *Augustus*. Largesses on this occasion.

Whilst Julianus went against the rebels of Emesa, Macrinus himself did not remain idle: but he took upon him cares of a more tranquil nature, political measures, better suited to his inclination than the dangerous and toilsome operations of war. Sensible of the necessity of strengthening himself upon the throne, and judging that one means of doing it would be to find an opportunity of giving a new largess to the troops, whose affection it now behoved him to gain at all events, and with all possible expedition, he resolved to raise his son to the rank of Augustus. To that end he repaired to Apamæa, where the prætorians had a camp; and after having, with their consent, declared young Diadumenus, who had not yet completed his tenth year, *Augustus*, he promised the soldiers twenty thousand * sesterces a-piece, of which he immediately paid each of them four thousand †, accompanying this donation with still farther gifts and favours. He likewise gratified the people on this occasion, with a distribution of ‡ six hundred § sesterces to every citizen of Rome, in lieu of a public treat to the whole multitude; and, vainly thinking to conceal his real motive for these liberalities, which the circumstances of things rendered evident and palpable, in the letter by which he announced this largess, he said not a word of the rebellion of Emesa, but spake of the promotion of his son to the supreme rank of Augustus, as the sole and only object.

* £ 110.

† £ 22.

‡ £ 3: 6: 0.

This

This was his situation when he learnt the bad success of the affair of Emesa, and the defection of his troops who had gone over to his rival. This news was brought him in a singular and insulting manner. Julianus was soon discovered in the place he had retired to, by a soldier, who killed him, cut off his head, wrapt it up in a bundle of linen, corded it carefully, sealed it with Julianus's own seal, and then set out with it for Macrinus, to whom he sent in word, upon his arrival, that he brought him the head of Heliogabalus. While the bundle was undoing, the soldier ran away, and Macrinus, knowing Julianus's head, saw his disgrace, of which he soon after learnt the particulars. Amazed and terrified, he retired to Antioch; and immediately the troops who had just proclaimed his son Augustus, declared against him, and in favour of Heliogabalus.

The two parties were then nearly upon an equality. Notwithstanding so many defections, Macrinus had still remaining a considerable number of troops whose fidelity was not yet tainted: and Heliogabalus, by the numbers that had resorted to him, was grown strong enough not to be afraid to quit his camp, and take the field. Expresses were sent by both sides, with letters, to all the provinces and all the armies. The contrary interests of the contending rivals occasioned in them some troubles and commotions, which, however, proved of no great consequence, the dispute being soon ended.

Dion Cassius has transmitted to us an abstract of the letters which Macrinus wrote on this occasion to the senate, and to Marius Maximus, præfect of the city: and it must be owned, that they give no very favourable idea either of the courage or of the prudence of this emperor. In that to the senate, Macrinus spoke of Heliogabalus with great contempt, treating him as a giddy-headed boy. So far might, perhaps, not be wrong. But he,

He writes letters of complaint to the senate and city præfect.

he very inconsiderately, in my opinion, complained of the soldiery with whom he had so many reasons to endeavour to keep well, reproaching them with their covetousness, which nothing could satisfy, and imputing to that their inclination to forsake him. He likewise betrayed a pusillanimity and distrust, by comforting himself in his misfortune with the thought of his having out-lived, said he, a tyrant and a parricide, who was the scourge of the universe. Lastly, so great was his want of judgment, he insisted strongly on the minority of Heliogabalus, though he himself had but just given the title of Augustus to his son, who was four years younger. His letter to Marius Maximus contained nothing but complaints against the soldiery. Among other things, he said, it was impossible to pay them the sums they demanded as their due, the bare augmentations granted by Caracalla amounting to two hundred and eighty millions* of sesterces a year. This allegation might be true: but it was misplaced at this time, when the fate of him that pleaded it depended absolutely upon the military people.

Heliogabalus declared a public enemy by the senate.

The senate, though little satisfied with Macrinus, and far from being prejudiced in his favour, had a still worse opinion of the government of a child, directed by women, and by two such ministers as Eutygianus and Gannys. They therefore remained faithful to the emperor they had acknowledged, and declared Heliogabalus, his cousin, Soamis and Mamæa their mothers, and Mæsa their grandmother, public enemies, offering, as Macrinus himself had done, a general amnesty to those who had sided with them, if they repented and returned. But a dispute like this was not to be ended by decrees of the senate: arms were the only means of deciding it.

Macrinus,

* About a million and a half of our money.

Macrinus, having assembled all his forces, ^{Battle, in which Ma-} marched in order to attack Heliogabalus, who, ^{crinus is} more diligent than his rival expected, met him ^{conquered} within eighteen miles of Antioch. The two armies engaged on the seventh of June. Gannys, who commanded that of Heliogabalus, though he had no experience in war, having always lived in indolence and pleasure, found, however, in his own naturally happy genius, resources which in some measure qualified him for the office of commander. He possessed himself of an advantageous post, ranged his troops in good order, and encouraged them strongly to behave well, by representing to them the necessity of conquering, if they would avoid the vengeance of a justly incensed enemy. On the other hand, Macrinus's prætorians, all chosen men, and by so much the more fresh and alert as they had been eased of all that was cumbersome in their armour, fought with such valour that they broke the lines of their enemies, and began to put them in disorder. In this imminent danger, bold ambition made Masa and Soæmis heroines. They descended from their cars, and placing themselves before the flying soldiers, endeavoured, with prayers and tears, to stop them. Heliogabalus too gave on this occasion, the only one in all his life, some signs of vigour. Mounted upon a war-horse, with a naked sword in his hand, he animated his men to return to the battle, by his own example. These exhortations had their effect. Shame revived the courage of the conquered. They stopped, rallied, stood firm, and prepared to regain the ground they had lost.

To this critical moment, in which Heliogabalus's affairs began to take a favourable turn, probably belongs what Herodian relates of a great number of Macrinus's troops, who, on a sudden, abandoned him, and went over to his enemy. Terrified by this desertion, and despairing sooner than he need have done, he left the field of battle,

like

like a coward, whilst his prætorians continued fighting valiantly for him. These brave troops, not knowing what was become of their emperor, maintained the battle long after he was gone. Their own honour was a sufficient motive. At length, however, Heliogabalus, being informed of Macrinus's flight, dispatched proper people to represent to the prætorians, that they were fighting for no object: that a coward, who had abandoned them, did not deserve their sacrificing themselves for him; that they had nothing to fear if they would surrender; and that he not only pardoned them, but would continue them in their respective stations in his service. Upon this they submitted, without having been conquered, and acknowledged Heliogabalus for emperor.

He flies to Antioch, and from thence crossing Asia Minor, is taken at Chalcedon.

Macrinus, after the battle, made the best of his way to Antioch, where, to facilitate his admittance into that city, he gave out that he had gained the victory. His first care, after his arrival there, was to provide for the safety of his son, whom he to that end put into the hands of people he could trust, with orders to them to carry him to Artabanes king of the Parthians. For his own part, he purposed going to Rome, hoping to find the senate and people favourably disposed in his behalf, and that he should be able to renew the war with the help of his forces in the West. His hopes were not destitute of some foundation: for, as I observed before, the Romans feared the tyranny of the Syrians, the pride and greediness of Mæsa, and the youth of Heliogabalus.

Macrinus set out from Antioch disguised and slightly attended, and arrived safe at Eges in Cilicia, where he took post-horses, as a messenger belonging to the emperor. He traversed in this manner Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithyûia, and arrived at Chalcedon; where, by his sending for money to an intendant of the imperial domaine, he was discovered and

and arrested. Those whom Heliogabalus had sent to pursue him, arrived soon after, seized his person, and carried him into Cappadocia. There, learning that his son had been taken and killed, The death of Diadumenus and of Macrinus. Macrinus unable to survive this last disaster, threw himself, in despair, out of his carriage, and broke his shoulder in the fall. As his wound was, probably, such as left no hope of his being able to complete the journey, he was killed in the city of Archelais in Cappadocia, and his head was sent Euseb. Chron. to Heliogabalus.

Thus perished Macrinus, at the age of fifty-four, after a reign of only fourteen months, wanting three days. His son, whose death preceded and hastened his, was but ten years old. Their sudden elevation served only to bring them both to an untimely and tragical end. It is equally surprising and shameful for Macrinus, that, in the maturity of his age, instructed by long experience in the greatest affairs of state, and master of very great forces, he should be conquered by a child, whose very name he scarcely knew.

He was regretted, at least when compared with his infamous successor: for Dion Cassius says he did not, in himself, deserve to be loved, and that the effeminacy of his manners, and some acts of unjust rigour, promised a government which would certainly have made every one hate him. Judgment concerning Macrinus.

It is however certain that he had some good qualities. Capitolinus, who is far from favouring him, ascribes to him a noble plan for reforming the practice of the Roman courts of judicature. He assures us that Macrinus intended to abolish all the rescripts of the emperors, and to make the laws alone the sole authority in the decision of all causes. It seemed to him a great abuse, that the whimsical caprices of such princes as Caracalla and Commodus should have the force of laws; and he observed, that Trajan never would answer by rescripts Capit. M.c. 11.

scripts any petitions that were presented to him, lest what he might think proper to do in particular cases, or for particular persons, should be construed into a precedent, and be extended beyond his intention. The shortness of Macrinus's reign did not permit him to execute his design.

We may judge that he might easily have got the better of the tumultuous commotion by which he was ruined, if his courage had been equal to his understanding.

His wife, Nonia Celsa, had the title of *Augusta*. *Cu-pit. Macr. 14. & Lam-prid. Diad. 5. & 7.*

Nonia Celsa, his wife, does not bear the best of characters, either for her morals, or her conduct. Little doubt can be made but that she received the title of *Augusta*. Lampridius quotes a letter in which Macrinus congratulates both himself and her, in terms so exaggerated as to be even ridiculous, upon their son's having acquired the name of Antoninus. But little confidence can be placed in the pieces given as originals by the writers of the Byzantine history. Many of them are manifest forgeries, and for that reason I often avoid taking any notice of them.

PRINCIPAL

PRINCIPAL EVENTS
OF THE REIGN OF
HELIOGABALUS.

M. OPELIUS MACRINUS AUGUSTUS II.
..... ADVENTUS.

A. R. 969.
A. C. 216.

HELIOGABALUS, after conquering Macrinus, goes to Antioch, and saves that city from being plundered.

He addresses a letter to the senate and an edict to the people, taking, in virtue of the sole suffrages of the troops, all the titles of the imperial power.

He promises not to harbour any resentment on account of the deliberations of the senate against him, and against the memory of Caracalla: and he keeps his word.

He puts to death the chief friends and partizans of Macrinus, and several illustrious persons.

He goes to Nicomedia, where he begins to shew his passion for debauchery, and for the height of luxury.

He kills with his own hand Gannys, to whom he was under the greatest obligations.

Several menacing symptoms of rebellion, which, however, subside, without producing any effect.

M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS AUGUSTUS II.
..... SACERDOS.

A. R. 974.
A. C. 219.

Heliogabalus reckoned the consulship he took this year, as his second; because he had ridiculously claimed that of Macrinus.

His foolish zeal for the worship of the god Heliogabalus, whose priest he was, and whose name he bears in history.

He

He repairs to Rome. His grandmother and his mother sit with him in the senate-house.

A senate of women.

He builds a temple to his god, into which he removes all the most sacred objects of the veneration of the Romans. He himself presides at the religious ceremonies, and celebrates the festivals of this foreign god with infinite pomp and expence.

All the events of his reign may be reduced to his monstrous debaucheries and furious lust.

All posts and places given to the worst of men.

A. R. 971.
A. C. 220.

M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS AUGUSTUS III.
EUTYCHIANUS COMAZON.

Heliogabalus's colleague in this consulship was a freed-man, whose first profession was that of a stage-buffoon or droll; from whence he was called *Comazon*, from the Greek word which has that signification. He was also prætorian præfect, and thrice præfect, or governor of Rome.

A. R. 972.
A. C. 221.

GRATUS SABINIANUS.
..... SELEUCUS.

The colony of Emmaus, otherwise Nicopolis, restored and re-established through the means of Julius Africanus, a learned Christian chronologist, who ended his chronicle with this year.

Pretended phantom of Alexander, who, with four hundred men, over-runs Mœsia and Thrace, and disappears in Asia.

Heliogabalus, at the request of Mæsa, adopts his cousin Alexianus, son of Mâmæa, makes him Cæsar, appoints him consul for the following year, with himself, and changes his name into that of *Alexander*.

He

He takes an aversion to him, wants to divest him of the rights and titles he had given him, and plots his ruin. Sedition of the prætorians, who force Heliogabalus to be reconciled to his adopted son.

M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS AUGUSTUS IV.

A. R. 973.

M. AURELIUS ALEXANDER CÆSAR.

A. C. 227.

Heliogabalus, renewing his evil designs against Alexander, is killed, with his mother, in the camp of the prætorians, on the eleventh of March.

His memory is detested, and his name effaced from the Roman Annals.

S E C T. III.

HELIOGABALUS.

Inconveniencies of a military government, proved by the election of Heliogabalus. He saves Antioch from being plundered. He writes to the senate, and addresses an edict to the people. He assumes all the titles of the imperial power, without any decree of the senate. His rage against Macrinus. He ridiculously appropriates to himself the consulate of Macrinus. He puts a great number of illustrious persons to death. Divers conspiracies set on foot by low people. Heliogabalus kills Gannys with his own hand, at Nicomedia. He puts all his confidence in Lulychianus. Heliogabalus's second consulship. He despises the dress of the Romans, and substitutes in the room of it the luxury of Phœnicia. He goes to Rome. Mæsa sits in the senate, and performs the function of senator. A senate of women. Mad zeal of Heliogabalus for the worship of his god. Indecency and extravagance of his marriages. His monstrous debaucheries. Other indecencies in his behaviour. His mad luxury. All posts and places given to men of infamous characters. Heliogabalus thinks of making war against the Marcomanni. Pretended presage of his fall. Indignation of all the orders of the state, and particularly of the soldiery, against him. Amiable character of his cousin Alexianus, the son of Mamæa. Mæsa prevails upon Heliogabalus to adopt his cousin. He changes his name of Alexianus into that of Alexander. He wants to pervert his adopted son, but is hindered from so doing by Mamæa. He takes an aversion to him, and endeavours to get rid of him by secret snares. He attacks him openly. A sedition of the prætorians obliges him to feign a reconciliation with him. He soon resumes his former

mer designs. He makes all the senators leave Rome. The prætorians rise, and kill him and his mother. The colony of Emmaus re-established.

HISTORY affords no example more capable of shewing the dreadful dangers and inconveniencies of a military government, and of leaving the election of a sovereign to the caprice of the soldiery, than the elevation of Heliogabalus to the throne of the Cæsars. A child of fourteen, by birth a Syrian, and having in him nothing Roman, whose strongest recommendation was his being reputed the bastard of one of the worst emperors that ever lived; such was the person whom the unbounded licentiousness of the military people placed at the head of the Roman empire, and to whom the fate of the finest and noblest portion of the universe was committed.

What followed shewed the imprudence of this rash, unworthy, choice. Heliogabalus was such a monster of impudicity, that he holds, to this day, the first rank of infamy among the worst and most abominable of princes, by a luxury carried to the greatest excess of extravagance, by a contempt of all laws, and, which may seem surprizing in such a character, even by cruelty. Young as he was, he had already given specimens of some of these vices, and the sovereign power enabled him to display them without restraint.

He began, however, with an action in which there was somewhat laudable. The day after the victory over Macrinus, he went to Antioch, and his soldiers wanted to plunder that great and opulent city. This he prevented, by promising to give each of them two thousand sesterces. It is true, it cost him nothing; the sum to which this largess amounted being levied upon the inhabitants of Antioch: but still they thought themselves happy in coming off at that price.

Inconveniencies of a military government, proved by the election of Heliogabalus.

He saves Antioch from being plundered. Dio. lib. LXXIX.

About £ 11.

He writes
to the senate,
and addresses
an edict to
the people.

From Antioch, he wrote to the senate, and addressed an edict to the Roman people. Both these pieces were full of invectives against Macrinus, whom he particularly reproached with the meanness of his birth, and his audaciousness in causing himself to be made emperor, when he had not even a right to sit in the senate. This last reproach came with a very bad grace from the mouth of an emperor who was himself scarcely fourteen years of age. With as little judgment he insisted strongly on the non-age of Diadumenus, raised to the empire by his father before he had completed his tenth year. He had an uncommon rancour against that young prince, whom he looked upon with the eyes of a rival, and of whom he afterwards reported all sorts of calumnies, which he even obliged the writers of those times to insert in their works.

*Tempid.
Heliog. 8.*

Dio.

As to himself, both in his letter and in his edict, he lavished the most magnificent promises. He pretended that Augustus and Marcus Aurelius should be the models of his conduct, and engaged himself particularly not to take any vengeance on account of the deliberations held against him, or against the memory of Caracalla, in consequence of Macrinus's orders. In this last article he kept his word. Wholly taken up with other objects and other crimes, things that were past escaped his memory.

He assumes all
the titles
of the imperial power,
without
any decree
of the senate.

He shewed at once how little regard he would pay to the senate or the ancient maxims of the state, by assuming all the titles of the imperial power upon the bare authority of the suffrages of the troops. In the two pieces of which I just now mentioned the substance, he styled himself *The Emperor Caesar, son of Antoninus, grandson of Severus, the Pious, the Happy, Augustus, Proconsul, vested with the Tribunitian power.* No one of his predecessors ever behaved in this manner. All of them had chosen to owe to a decree of the senate and an ordinance

the titles of power and honour which characterized the supreme rank. This innovation was of dangerous tendency, and shewed in the prince and his council either a great ignorance or a great contempt of the laws.

The indignation of the senators was stifled by Dis. ap. Val. fear; the more so as orders were given to Pollio, then consul, to use violence, even with arms, if any one of them attempted to resist. They there- Tillem. Hist. fore decreed Heliogabalus all the titles he had assumed: and it is probable, that they also then decorated Mæsa and Soæmis with the name of *Augusta*, which we find upon their medals. They Dis. regretted Macrinus, and detested Caracalla: but their vile servitude reduced them to so low a state, that, contrary to all their thoughts and sentiments, they loaded Macrinus with abuse, declared him a public enemy, honoured Caracalla with the greatest praises, and, as if their ignominy and misery was not yet great enough, they said they wished his son might resemble him.

Though spite and malice are the too frequent His rage against Macrinus. concomitants of enmity, and people, in general, are not surprized to find them, yet the rage of Heliogabalus against Macrinus was carried to such an excessive height as shocked every one. To render his predecessor odious to the soldiers, and at the same time to make them love him by comparison, he published the private plan which that emperor had drawn up for reforming the armies, and his letter to Marius Maximus, præfect of the city, wherein he had complained greatly of the troops.

His appropriating to himself the last consulate of He illegally appropriates to himself the consulate of Macrinus. Macrinus was likewise thought very ridiculous and absurd. That prince had nominated himself consul in ordinary in the beginning of the year, and after holding this office about four months, and resigned it, before there was any talk of Heliogabalus, and at a time when he thought himself well honoured with

with the title of Priest of the Sun. The new emperor was therefore deservedly laughed at, for substituting his name in the room of that of Macrinus in the annals and public acts of the state; thereby arrogating to himself a consulate he never could so much as dream of. But these are slight blemishes, not worth noticing in an Heliogabalus.

He puts a great number of illustrious persons to death.

He gave proofs of his cruelty even before he left Syria. The principal friends and creatures of Macrinus felt his vengeance, such as Julianus Nestor, prætorian præfect; Fabius Agrippinus, governor of Syria; several Roman knights; Reanus, commander in Arabia; Claudius Attalus, proconsul of Cyprus; and Decius Tricilianus, who, after having been governor of Pannonia, as I observed before, commanded the prætorians of the camp near Alba at the time of the revolution. Private orders were also sent to Rome to put to death several persons of considerable rank, whose late connections with Macrinus rendered them obnoxious to the new government. Others, who could not be accused of having had the least concern in any of the former troubles, were sacrificed to groundless suspicions and distrusts, merely because they held places, were endowed with talents, or had weight and influence which might possibly render them dangerous. Dion Cassius names several of these, whom we are not otherwise acquainted with, though they were distinguished in the republic: and that historian observes, that Heliogabalus, whilst he was striking off so many illustrious heads, never once vouchsafed to take the least notice of it to the senate.

He and his council made a jest of the most serious affairs, and seemed to sport with the lives of the first men of the empire. Silvius Messala and Pomponius Bassus were, by order of the ministry, charged with being disaffected to the government, and in consequence of that vague accusation, without any proof against them, they were condemned to die.

After

After sentence was passed, Heliogabalus wrote to the senate, telling them, that the two senators, who were the objects of it, had set themselves up for censors of his conduct, and inquisitors of what was transacted in the palace: adding, "I do not send you the proofs of the conspiracy they had formed against me, because they would now be useless, as the offenders will be dead before this can reach you."

It was not, however, without some foundation, Divers conspiracies set on foot by low people. that he suspected there were intrigues then forming to invade his throne. The example of his elevation, and the confusion into which every thing was thrown, by the licentiousness of the soldiery and the badness of the government, made almost every man think he might aspire to the empire. Dion Cassius mentions five attempts of this nature, all made by men of no sort of consequence: nor were these the only ones, though they were the most important of any that came to his knowledge. Two of the chiefs of these conspiracies were senators: but one of them had served a long time in the army as a centurion, and the other was the son of a physician. The son of a centurion, and a wool-comber, or at least one who worked in wool, had the same audaciousness; and one of the common people tried to debauch the fleet at Cyzicus, whilst the emperor was at Nicomedia. All these attempts were fruitless, and served only to cost the authors of them their lives. But they do not the less prove the dreadful disorder into which an alteration of the old fundamental maxims of government, and the depravity of those who are at the head of it, may plunge even the most powerful state. Even this, however, is but a slight sketch of the troubles and combustion in which we shall see the Roman empire some years hence.

I have just mentioned Heliogabalus's being at Nicomedia. He went thither in his way to Rome, Heliogabalus kills Clannys with his own and passed the winter in that city. Upon his arri-
val

hand, at
Nicome-
dia.
*Dio. ap.
Val.*

val there, he was guilty of a murder more shocking than any I have yet spoken of. He was under the greatest of obligations to Gannys, the tutor of his infancy, and the chief cause of his promotion to the throne. It was Gannys who laid the plan, who won over the soldiers, who introduced young Heliogabalus into their camp, and who contributed more than any other to his victory over Macrinus. Gannys was esteemed by Mæsa, and too well beloved by Soæmis, which last he was very near marrying with the consent of the prince her son, who was not averse to giving him the name of Cæsar. To great vices he joined very estimable qualities. He loved pleasure, and was glad to receive money: but he never oppressed any one, and was even beneficent. We have seen that he was brave and intelligent in war. Assiduous as a minister, and careful as a governor, he exhorted his pupil to attend to the business of the state, and to regulate his conduct by the rules of justice and moderation. This incensed Heliogabalus, who was so meanly cruel as to give him the first stab with his own hand, because no one of the soldiers dared to begin the execution. This horrid ingratitude quite unmasked the baseness of the new prince's heart, and rendered him the object of public detestation.

He puts all
his confi-
dence in
Eutychia-
nus.
*Dio. lib.
LXXIX.*

Not less blameable in his friendships than in his enmities, Heliogabalus gave all his favour and confidence to Eutychianus, a flatterer and imitator of his vices, a man destitute of all sense of shame, and who had been originally a stage-buffoon by profession, on which account he was as often called by the name of *Comazon*, which signifies in Greek a droll or buffoon, as by his own name. Heliogabalus loaded this wretch with dignities and honours. He made him prætorian præfect, his colleague in the consulship, and, which had never been known before, three times præfect, or governor, of Rome. He listened to none but him and such as were like him:

*Herod. lib.
v.*

him: even Mæsa herself, to whom he owed so much, and whose morals were far from being austere, lost part of her credit with him, by offering some remonstrances.

Heliogabalus took upon him, at Nicomedia, a consulship, which he called his second, because he had attributed to himself that of Macrinus. Dion Cassius observes, that this prince, holding in contempt all decency and decorum, appeared contrary to established custom, on the day of the annual vows of the Romans, which was the third of January, cloathed with the triumphal robe. He despised all the dresses and all the stuffs of the Greeks and Romans. Wool was too mean for him: nothing less than silk could please him, and that dyed in purple, and embroidered with gold. It is well known how scarce and precious silk was in those days. Even the most bare-faced luxury did not then dare to use it, but by mixing it with other materials; except a few women who had sometimes, though very seldom, worn dresses made entirely of silk. Heliogabalus was the first man among the Romans that ever adopted this effeminacy: nor was the shape of his cloaths less repugnant to the manners of the Romans. He dressed himself like a priest of the sun, and not like an emperor; wearing a robe after the fashion of the Phœnicians, a necklace, bracelets, and a kind of tiara, or crown, of gold set with jewels. In this garb he celebrated publicly the feasts of his favourite god, and performed the dances which were part of the ceremony.

Mæsa, who had sense and judgment, readily conceiving how much this violation of the customs of the Romans might prejudice her grandson, represented to him, that, as he was going to Rome, it would be wrong in him to shock the eyes of the inhabitants of that city, by a dress which would be looked upon as foreign and barbarous, unbecoming
the

Heliogabalus's second consulship.

He despises the dress of the Romans, and substitutes in the room of it the luxury of Phœnicia.

A. R. 970. Dio. & Herod.

Lowrid.

Hellog. 26.

Herod.

the gravity of a man and the dignity of an emperor, and excusable in none but effeminate women. The consequence he drew from this advice of his grandmother was odd enough. He concluded, that it would be right to accustom the Romans to the sight of his dress, before he made his personal appearance among them. To this end he caused his picture to be drawn at full length, with his sacerdotal ornaments, and on one side of him the figure of the god whose priest he was. This he sent to Rome, with orders to hang it up in the most conspicuous part of the senate-house, over the statue of Victory, that the senators might offer him incense and libations of wine as they came in. Herodian does not say what was the effect of this whimsical precaution. But it is easy to guess that it could not but hasten the indignation of the Romans, by exposing to their sight what they before knew only by report. What exasperated them still more was, that he then began also to shew his mad zeal for the worship of his god, whose name he ordered all the priests to pronounce and invoke in their sacrifices, before that of any other deity.

He goes to Rome.

As Mæsa was very desirous to return to Rome, where she had formerly shone, and would now appear with a prodigious increase of grandeur, it is probable that Heliogabalus went thither as soon as possible. Upon his entering his capital, he gave the people the usual largesses, and treated them with magnificent games.

Mæsa sits in the senate, and performs the function of senator.

Mæsa's ambition prevented her saying to herself* what she had so well remonstrated to her grandson. She was not afraid of irritating and hurting the minds

* I ascribe chiefly to the grandmother of Heliogabalus what Lampridius says of his mother, because these marks of ambition seem to agree better with the character of Mæsa than with that of Soëmis: and besides, Lampridius himself says expressly in two different places, (12, & 15.) that Heliogabalus took his grandmother with him to the senate.

minds of the Romans by a novelty still more shocking than the garb of Heliogabalus. She entered, and made her daughter enter, with the emperor into the senate-house, where she gave her opinion as a member of the assembly, and was named at the head of a *senatus-consultum*, as having helped to draw it up. This example stands quite unmatched in all the Roman history. Neither Livia, nor even Agrippina, ever attempted such a thing; nor did any princess in after-times, ever alledge what was now granted to *Mæsa* and *Sœmis*, by way of claiming the same prerogatives.

Sœmis, who to use *Lampridius's* expression, lived like a courtesan, did not trouble herself much about affairs of state. Trifles engrossed all her attention, and her son served her to her wish, by establishing on the *Quirinal* mount a senate of women, of which he made her president. The Roman ladies had been used to assemble there before, upon certain ceremonious occasions: but now, metamorphosed into a senate, they determined all matters relative to the dresses of women, the sorts of carriages they were to be allowed to ride in according to their several ranks, the ceremonial of salutations among them, and other equally important affairs.

The emperor's occupations were not at all more serious. He had nothing more at heart, from the moment of his reaching Rome, than to establish there the worship of his favourite god, upon the ruin of all other religious cult. Not satisfied with preferring him before the other gods, not excepting even *Jupiter Capitolinus*; nor with degrading them all to the humble stations of stewards, secretaries, servants, &c. to his deity; he would have no other god worshipped in Rome but this new comer, and to that end he removed all the most sacred objects of the veneration of the Romans, to the temple which he built for him on mount *Palatine*. The stone of *Pessinontum*, call-

Lamprid.
Hellog. 4.

A senate
of women.
Lamprid.
2, & 4.

Mad zeal
of *Helioga-*
balus for
the wor-
ship of his
god.
Dis. Heind.
Lamprid.
3, 6, 7.

ed the grandmother of the gods, the Palladium, the perpetual fire of Vesta, and the shield of Numa, were carried thither. To these he designed to add the religious ceremonies of the Jews and Samaritans, and, with a madness not to be conceived, the rites of Christianity, irreconcilable to profane worship. He could not succeed in this last point: but the Pagans were more tractable; and he had the satisfaction of assembling round his god all that was greatest and most conspicuous in the empire, the senate and the order of knights forming a semicircle about him, and the prætorian guards accompanying him whilst he performed the functions of his priesthood. The minds of all were indeed embittered against him; but their resentment gave way to policy.

I shall not here attempt to describe the luxury and profusion of the temple, the pomp of the sacrifices, the hecatombs of bulls, the heaps of perfumes, the most exquisite wines lavished by whole tuns, and running in streams with the blood of the victims, the entrails of which were borne in basins of gold by the most illustrious personages of the state, who were forced to reckon these vile offices an honour conferred upon them. Helio-gabalus himself, forgetting all decency, appeared in his Phœnician sacerdotal robe, painted round his eyes, and his cheeks coloured with vermillion, disgracing, says Herodian, by that artificial daubing, the fine and graceful face he had received from nature. In this condition he danced and sung, marching with backward steps before the statue of his god when it was carried in procession. Public rejoicings, illuminations, largesses of victuals, live animals, vessels of gold and silver, and rich stuffs, crowned the festival.

These farces were not entirely a sport or affectation of the prince. Real persuasion, or, to speak more justly, superstition, had a great share in them. Many observances to which he submitted, and the law he prescribed to himself never to eat pork, can-

not be imputed to any other motive. I know not whether we ought to credit what is said of his thinking of being castrated, in order to imitate the priests of Cybele: but there is no reason for not believing the testimony of historians who assert, that he always wore about him a prodigious number of all kinds of amulets; that he practised magical ceremonies; and that joining, as is common, cruelty to impiety, he sacrificed children, with a view of discovering futurity in their entrails. Dio. & Lamprid.

A thing less odious, but ridiculous and extravagant to the highest degree, was his resolution to marry his god. He first thought of wedding him to Pallas: but that military goddess was not a fit match for an all-pacific and even voluptuous god. He therefore laid aside that project, and fixed upon the celestial Venus of Carthage, a goddess originally of Phœnicia, where she was worshipped under the name of Astarte. Besides, she passed for the same divinity as the moon; and nothing could be more suitable than to marry the moon to the sun. The statue of the celestial Venus was accordingly brought from Carthage to Rome, and Heliogabalus took for her dower all the riches that were in her temple. He celebrated the marriage of the god and goddess with all possible magnificence, and ordered all the nations and all the cities of the empire to make them presents on their wedding. Dio. & Herod.

He practised the like extortions on account of his own marriages, in which he shewed the same folly, madness, and want of shame, as in all the rest of his behaviour. In less than four years, which he reigned, he married four wives. The first was Cornelia Paula, a lady of great beauty and high birth. She had been married * to Pomponius Bassus, whose condemnation and tragical end Innocency and extravagance of his marriages.

* M. de Tillemont distinguishes Paula from the widow of Bassus: but upon a strict examination of the words of Dion Cassius, that historian seems to me to make them one and the same person.

end I mentioned before. One of the crimes of that unfortunate senator was his having a handsome wife. He was no sooner put to death, than Heliogabalus married Paula, without even giving her time to finish her mourning for her husband. He gave her the title of *Augusta*, and spent a prodigious sum at this wedding. Not only the senators, but their wives and the Roman knights received all of them valuable presents. The emperor likewise distributed six hundred * sesterces a piece to the citizens, and a thousand † to each of the soldiers. He also gave combats of gladiators, and fights of wild beasts, in which fifty-one tygers were killed at a time. After all these rejoicings, Heliogabalus repudiated Paula with ignominy, reducing her to a private station, and divesting her of all the honours he had given her.

* £3: 5: 0.

About
£ 5: 8: 0.

He afterwards conceived, or pretended to have conceived, an unbounded passion for a vestal called Aquilia Severa. What prompted him most to this, was, undoubtedly, the illegality and impiety of the deed. He went in person to the temple of Vesta, forced away his prey by downright violence, and then wrote to the senate, "That a high-priest like him, and a priestess, should beget children that would delight the gods." Thus, says Dion Cassius, did he pride himself upon an action for which he ought to have been whipped through the streets of Rome, and afterwards strangled in a prison.

He did not keep this dishonoured vestal long; but soon took a third wife, then a fourth, and afterwards returned to Severa.

His monstrous de-
baucheries.

Great as these enormities are, they still fall infinitely short of the monstrous crimes Heliogabalus was guilty of in other shapes; crimes so abominable, and of such a nature, as to procure him this advantage, that no modest writer can think of entering into any detail of them. With what words could he relate the actions of a prince who personated the character

character of a courtesan, who married as if he had been a woman, and who, dressed like a female, and following the occupations of that sex, took a pleasure in being called *Madam* and *Empress*?

His husband was one Hierocles, originally a Carian slave, and a chariot-driver in the circus. This wretch acquired a power greater than that of the emperor himself. Whoever wanted a favour, was forced to buy it of him * : he promised some, menaced others, and drew money from all by deceiving them. "I have spoken to the emperor about you," said he to the greedy courtiers, "your request will be granted;" or, on the contrary, "you have much to fear." Frequently, there was not the least foundation for a syllable of what he said; but yet he always insisted on being well paid. He sold smoke †, to use the common expression of the Romans of those days, and made an ample revenue of his influence over the prince: an artifice which succeeds, says the historian, not only with bad princes, but also with those who, though they mean well, neglect their affairs. His mother, who was still a slave when he first began to be in favour, was carried to Rome in great pomp, escorted by a body of troops, and ranked among the ladies whose husbands had been consuls. Heliogabalus was so thoroughly submissive to Hierocles, that he suffered him to beat and buffet him even so as to leave marks of violence. He boasted of this ill treatment, as a sign of his friend's great regard for him, and intended to reward him for it by creating him

* I ascribe to Hierocles what Lampridius says of Zoticus, who will soon be taken notice of in my text. The credit of this last was of so short a duration, according to Dion Cassius, that he had not time to make a bad use of it.

† Qui . . . omnia Heliogabali dicta & facta venderet fumis . . . ut sunt homines hujusmodi, qui si admissi fuerint ad nimiam familiaritatem principum, famam non solum malorum, sed etiam bonorum principum vendunt.

him Cæsar. But his attachment to this infamous wretch proved one of the principal causes of his ruin.

Hierocles was however afraid of being supplanted by a rival. Aurelius Zoticus, a native of Smyrna, and the son of a cook, pleased Heliogabalus. But his credit was of short duration. Hierocles made him lose it by a means which modesty forbids our mentioning. Zoticus was ordered to leave Rome and Italy, and his disgrace proved an advantage to him, for he thereby saved his life, whilst Hierocles perished in the revolution by which Alexander Severus was placed upon the throne.

Other indecencies in his behaviour.
Lamprid.
10, § 11.

Dia.

After what has been said, it would be needless to observe that a prince so impudent in his actions, was likewise so in his speeches and discourse. Nor shall I dwell upon certain indecencies which, tho' they would leave an eternal stain upon any other prince, scarcely deserve being noticed in such a one as Heliogabalus. He drove chariots in the games of the circus, at which presided his prætorian præfects, the first of the senators, his mother, his grandmother, and other ladies: and in the exercise of this vile function, he saluted the judges who were to distribute the prizes, and the soldiers, with his whip, as if he had been a common driver; demanding his salary, and stretching out his hand for a few pieces of gold. He danced, not only upon the stage, but even whilst he gave audience, or harangued the people; when his thought ought certainly to have been much more seriously employed.

His mad luxury.
Lamprid.
18—32.

These, however, were faults which some of his predecessors had been equally guilty of. But his madness in point of luxury was carried far beyond any thing that even Vitellius or Nero ever thought of. Lampridius mentions several instances of his excesses of this kind, which he owns seem incredible even to him. Let us not extend our belief beyond the possibility of nature. That only excepted, every

every thing may be credited of a monster in whom extravagance and corruption contended which should rule.

He began early, being yet but a private man, that is to say, not fourteen years of age, when he declared his intention of imitating Apicius. The couches on which he and his guests lay when at table, were covered with cloth of gold; he never stirred out with less than sixty carriages to attend him; and when his grandmother Mæsa reproved him for this extravagance, representing to him that his revenues, great as they were, could not possibly suffice, and that he would bring himself to a very melancholy condition; his answer was, "That he intended to be his own heir."

When emperor, he gave a loose to all his fancies. The only occupation of his life was to seek new pleasures. He proposed premiums for such as should invent ragouts not known before. If they succeeded, a silken robe, then esteemed an exceeding rich and costly present, was their reward. If their sauce did not please, they were condemned not to eat any other thing, until they had repaired their fault by a better and more happy invention.

I cannot be expected to give an exact detail of all the follies of Heliogabalus's luxury: for which reason I shall select what seems to me most striking.

His beds and couches were of massy silver; and on his table were served up dishes of mullets livers, brains of thrushes and of foreign birds, and heads of parrots, pheasants, and peacocks. Can this be wondered at, when he fed his dogs with the livers of geese, and the lions of his menagerie with parrots and pheasants? His supper never cost him less than an hundred * thousand sester-
ces, and frequently thrice that sum. No. 1
£ 550.

Fond of every thing that was odd and out of the common way, he took a pleasure in making one and the same meal at the houses of five different
Vol. VIII. S friends,

friends, situated in five different and distant parts of the city. Each of these houses had an entertainment for him, and he went from one to the other, so that a repast often lasted the whole day.

If he was near the sea, he would not taste fish; but if he was at a great distance from it, his table was covered with sea-fish. Sometimes, in inland villages, he treated the peasants with mullets roes. The dearer a thing was, and the more difficult to be had, the more it pleased his palate; and he even loved to have all his eatables over-rated to him, saying, That his purveyors whetted his appetite by making an extraordinary charge.

It might indeed have been justly said of him, that he knew how to squander away his riches, but not how to give*. He often ordered the same sorts of meats as were set upon his table, and equal quantities of them, to be thrown out of the windows. Instead of dry sweet-meats, and other trifles of that kind, which were frequently given to friends to take home with them, Heliogabalus presented his guests with eunuchs, saddle-horses richly caparisoned, coaches or cars with four horses, a thousand pieces of gold, or an hundred weight of silver. When he gave largesses to the people, it was not by distributing money among them, but by leaving to their mercy, to scramble for as they could, whole droves of fatted oxen, camels, stags †, &c. This often produced battles, which seldom ended without the loss of several lives, whilst the prince looked on, and thought it a diversion; for he delighted in mischief, and shewed a spirit of tyranny in all his follies.

He frequently invited the chief men of the city to dine or sup with him, and made them drink beyond

*Lampriid. 8.
& Herod.*

* It is said of Otho, in Tacitus, *Hist. l. 30. Perdere iste sciel, donare nesciel.*

† The text says, *servos, slaves.* But Salmasius thinks it ought to be *cervos, stags,* that all the parts of the enumeration may agree, by speaking of nothing but beasts.

yond all measure. On the other hand, he loved to torment parasites with hunger, ordering their table to be covered with representations of meats made of ivory, wax, glass, or painted wood. Sometimes he stilled them with heaps of violets and other flowers, thrown over them in such prodigious quantities, that the poor wretches remained buried under them, without being able to extricate themselves.

I fear I have tired the reader with this disagreeable detail, which I could not totally suppress, because it shews to how great a degree the abuse of the supreme power and of imperial opulence may be carried; but which it is needless to dwell on any longer, as the farther instances which I might add, would not enforce the instruction already conveyed.

I cannot, however, avoid taking some notice of Heliogabalus's luxury in his dress and person. He wore garments of cloth of gold enriched with precious stones, so heavy, that he could not help saying * he sunk beneath the weight of magnificence. He adorned his shoes with stones engraved by the greatest artists, as if the beauties of their curious workmanship, which required being held pretty close to the eye in order to their being seen, would have been noticed and admired upon his feet.

He generally wore, within the palace, a diadem set with precious stones, because he thought it added to the beauty of his face, and gave him a feminine air: but he never dared to appear in public with that mark of royalty, detested by all the Romans.

He never wore linen that had been washed, saying it was fit only for beggars: nor did he ever put on the same shoes twice, nor, it is said, the same ring. The pavement of the porticoes through which he was to pass in order to go to his horse or coach,

coach, was strewed with gold or silver dust. Even his carriages were set with jewels; gold and ivory seeming to him too common ornaments.

Let us finish this tedious detail of Heliogabalus's extravagancies with observing, that he himself, far from blushing at any thing he did, seemed on the contrary to relish the very ignominy of his actions. Fabius Gurges and the son of the first Scipio Africanus, were famous in history for the disorders of their youth: and it has been said, that their fathers, in order to correct them by a sense of shame, made them appear in public in an uncommon dress. The prince we are speaking of affected this singularity; thinking his person embellished by that very distinction, which had formerly been intended as a chastisement to young debauchees.

I must observe, that some of the luxurious inventions which this detestable emperor first introduced, were continued after he was dead. Lampridius remarks it, in three different places, and from thence gives us room to conclude, that luxury is attended with such powerful charms, as still to enchant its votaries in spite of every example most capable of making it be disliked.

All posts and places given to men of infamous characters.

It is easy to judge in what manner, and to what sort of people, Heliogabalus gave all the posts and offices of the state. I have already observed, that he was not ashamed to make the buffoon Eutychianus, praetorian praefect, governor of Rome, and his colleague in the consulship. But, in general, he debased and vilified all dignities by the meanness of the birth and the infamous vices of those he preferred to them. He made his freed-men governors of provinces, emperor's lieutenants, proconsuls. He took his officers of the imperial palace from off the stage, and out of the circus. Chariot-drivers and dancers became the first men in the state. If other recommendations were wanting, money did the business. The prince, either by himself, or by the slaves

slaves and ministers of his pleasures, sold every employment, civil and military. Money procur'd a seat in the senate, without regard to age, birth, or merit, or even to the once necessary condition of having a landed estate in Italy.

Lost as Heliogabalus was to all sense of honour and of virtue, he nevertheless thought of acquiring military fame, by making war upon the Marcomanni. But this was only a sudden momentary start of a weak and fickle mind; a design which vanished almost as soon as it was formed.

Heliogabalus thinks of making war against the Marcomanni. *Lampriid.* 9.

This is the substance of what we find most remarkable in the authors who have spoken of the government and personal conduct of Heliogabalus. I have now remaining to relate only his fall, which, according to Dion Cassius, was foretold by several presages, and particularly by a pretended prodigy, the recital of which does no great honour to the judgment of that historian.

Pretended presage of his fall.

A spectre, says that credulous writer, calling *Dio.* himself Alexander the Great, and imitating his air, his armour, and his dress, appeared suddenly, I know not in what manner nor with what circumstances, on the borders of the Danube. From thence it traversed Mœsia and Thrace, accompanied by four hundred men, who, dressed like the ministers of Bacchus, with skins over their shoulders, and spears in their hands, travelled with it, without doing the least hurt to any one. The apparition was honoured and well treated wherever it went: inns were prepared for it upon the roads, with tables well served; and no one, either officer, soldier, intendant, or governor, dared to stop or attempt to resist it. The spectre declared it would go to Asia; upon which it was conducted with great pomp, on the day it had fixed, as far as Byzantium. It crossed from thence to Chalcedon, where, after having offered a sacrifice in the night, and buried a wooden horse in the ground, it vanished.

To remove all doubt of the truth of this story, Dion Cassius takes particular care to tell us, that he himself was then upon the spot: and he seems satisfied that this phantom denoted Alexander Severus, who soon after succeeded his cousin Heliogabalus. For my part, I see nothing in it but the tricks of an adventurer, who, taking the hint from Caracalla's recent madness for Alexander of Macedon, devised this stratagem in order to live some time at the expence of the public, and, the better to conceal the fraud, affected to have the same desire of imitating Bacchus. These kind of schemes never can be carried on for any length of time: and accordingly, when our adventurer found that the charm was on the point of breaking, he prudently withdrew without taking leave of any one. But to proceed to matters of more serious importance.

Indignation of all the orders of the state, and particularly of the soldiery, against him.
Dion. & Lamprid. 5, & 10.

Heliogabalus's abominable conduct had drawn upon him the indignation of all mankind. Not only the senators, and the honest part of the inhabitants of Rome, but even the soldiery were incensed against him. From the time of his beginning to make himself known by his first disorders at Nicomedia, they had begun to repent their choice; and their hatred of him had increased ever since, in proportion to the accumulated enormity of his behaviour. On the other hand, they had a strong inclination for his cousin, from whose amiable and virtuous youth they conceived the greatest hopes of real happiness.

Amiable character of his cousin Alexianus, the son of Mæsa.
Tillem. Hellog. & Alex. Sev.

Alexianus, (for that was the name of the young prince,) was born about the year of Christ 208, or 209, at Arcæa in Phœnicia, of Gensius Marcianus and Mæsa. All we know of his father, is that he was a Syrian, and attained the consulship. His mother Mæsa, the second daughter of Mæsa, is greatly and justly celebrated in history. Born of a family remarkable for its corruption, she preserved herself from the contagion of bad example. Her mother would, indeed, willingly have cast a great

great stain upon her reputation, by making Caracalla pass for the father of her son. To aggrandize herself was all that the ambitious Mæsa thought of; no matter by what means. But her calumny, justly suspected because it was plainly calculated to promote her own interest, is refuted by the clearness of Mæsa's conduct from the time of her being first known in history; and the uncommon strictness with which she educated her son, must justify her in the minds of all dispassionate people.

It has even been said that she was a Christian: *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 21.* and it must be owned that the terms in which Eusebius speaks of her, seem to authorize this opinion. He calls her a princess of * great piety towards the divinity: which, in the mouth of a Christian and a bishop, may be supposed to imply the profession of Christianity. He adds, that, struck with the great reputation of *Origen*, she sent for him during her stay at Antioch, and received instructions from him concerning the glory of the Lord, and the evangelical doctrine. But he does not say that she actually embraced the Christian religion; nor should we at any time lay too great a stress upon the words of Eusebius, who, though a bishop, was very worldly-minded. What cannot be doubted, is that she retained an inclination for the Christians, and that she inspired her son with the same sentiments. ** Ο ἁγίων γάρ.*

She brought him up with great care, and gave him excellent masters to instruct him early in the polite arts, and in all the military exercises. *Extorrid. Hist. Sec. 3.* The young Alexianus, who had naturally good parts and a sweet disposition, readily listened to his instructors, and laid it down as a rule, which he observed all his life, to devote some part of every day to the study of literature and the exercise of arms. He succeeded better in the Greek eloquence, than in the Latin. The Greek was his natural tongue. Born in Syria, of Syrian parents, it is not to be wondered at if he was less fond of the

4, & 11.

Mæsa pre-
wails upon
Helioga-
balus to
adopt his
cousin.
*Herod. lib.
v.*

the Latin, which was to him a foreign language. Mæsa was still more careful to instruct him in virtue, than in learning; and she had the satisfaction of finding him ready to receive every good impression. Besides this, he had a pleasing countenance, a sprightly sensible look, a genteel person, and was strong for his age; so that he wanted no one accomplishment capable of engaging the affections of those that knew him.

It was with reason therefore that Mæsa, disappointed in her expectations of Heliogabalus, now fixed her hopes upon Alexianus. She saw that the indignation of the soldiery, joined to that of all the other orders of the state, would not leave the eldest of her grandsons long upon the throne. She feared the blow which would recoil upon herself, and probably reduce her to a private station. To guard against it, she resolved to make Heliogabalus adopt Alexianus. The ridiculousness of an adoption, by which a youth of thirteen was to acquire a father of only seventeen years of age, was a circumstance which soon gave way to more important considerations. But the difficulty, was how to make Heliogabalus consent to a step which could not but displease him, and of which he might easily foresee the consequences. However, she brought him to it gently and dexterously. "You ought, said she, to attend to the functions of your priesthood, the mysteries, the festivals, and other matters belonging to the worship of your god. Take an assistant upon whom you may rest the weight of your worldly concerns, and who, charged with the administration of affairs, will leave you all the splendour and all the enjoyment of the imperial power, at the same time that he will relieve you from all its troubles and embarrassments. That assistant is at hand: nor would it be reasonable to think of a stranger, whilst your cousin is alive."

Heliogabalus had no great cunning. He relished his grandmother's proposal, and immediately formed

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to himself a plan of happiness suited to his darling inclinations. Full of this idea, he went to the senate accompanied by Mæsa and Soæmis, and declared that he adopted Alexianus, and named him Cæsar. He congratulated himself upon his being able to have at once such a son; and protested that he desired no other, being glad to preserve his house from intestine feuds and discords by thus adopting its only heir. He added, that his god had inspired him to take this step, and that it was the will of the same god that his adopted son should be called Alexander. By the act of adoption, he communicated to him the names of Marcus-Aurelius; and it is highly probable that Caracalla's veneration for the memory of the conqueror of Asia and the Indies, was the motive which induced Heliogabalus to change the name of Alexianus into that of Alexander.— It appears by medals, that it was likewise at this time that the name of Severus was given him, doubtless in order to revive the remembrance of the prince to whom this family owed its grandeur. The new Cæsar was appointed consul with the emperor for the following year.

The satisfaction which Heliogabalus felt at first from this adoption, did not last long. By virtue of his new parental authority over Alexander, he pretended to direct his education; of the plan of which we may easily judge, when we consider that it was formed by Heliogabalus, who had often declared, that he did not wish to have sons, for fear they should give him the mortification of turning out well. In that situation he had now put himself by the adoption of his cousin, all whose inclinations were good and virtuous. He therefore tried to pervert him; and, the better to form him after his own model, wanted to associate him to the functions of his priesthood, and to make him execute indecent and lascivious dances. In this he met with great opposition from Mamæa, whose excellent

Dio.
A. R. 972.

Herod
Tillot.
not. 2. ca
Alex. Sev.

Herod.

He wants
to pervert
his adopted
son, but is
hindered
from so do-
ing by Ma-
mæa.

Lapprid.

31.

Herod.

lent instructions had given her son a disgust to every thing that was mean and unworthy of his rank, and who, continuing what she had happily begun, cherished in him the progress of wisdom by the lessons of the best and most virtuous masters. She likewise took care to strengthen his body, as I said before, by exercises becoming a prince, making him learn the use of arms, wrestling, and riding.

He takes
an aversion
to him, and
endeavour
to get rid
of him by
secret
snares.
Lamprid.
Helio. 16.

Heliogabalus, incensed at this conduct of Mamæa, drove all Alexander's masters from the palace, alledging that they alienated his son's affection from him, but, in reality, because they confirmed him in his virtuous principles. Some of them were banished, and others put to death. Among these last Lampridius mentions Silvinus, a rhetorician. The famous civilian Ulpian, suffered a disgrace, which was however soon ended by the death of his persecutor; with whose successor, Alexander, we shall soon see him enjoy the highest favour.

Lamprid.
13, 17.
Herod. Dio.

Heliogabalus did not stop here. He took an absolute aversion to his adopted son, and endeavoured to poison him: but the vigilance of Mamæa defeated his designs. None were suffered to go near the young prince, but such as she herself made choice of: she did not suffer him to be served by the officers of the palace, nor to eat or drink any thing but what she prepared with her own hands, and sent him by people in whom she could confide. At the same time she took particular care to secure the affections of the soldiery already well-disposed in favour of her son, by giving them private largesses; whilst Heliogabalus, persevering in his detestable behaviour, added daily to their hatred and contempt, and now incurred their indignation more than ever by his treatment of Alexander.

Mesa seconded Mamæa powerfully, and protected the work of her own hands. Sensible, intelligent, and long accustomed to all the tricks and artifices of the court, she easily disconcerted all
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the bad designs of Heliogabalus, whose only study was how to destroy Alexander and his mother, but who, vain, indiscreet, and talkative, divulged his own schemes before he gave them time to ripen.

After several fruitless attempts to procure the death of the young prince, either by assassination, or by drowning him in the bath, Heliogabalus enraged at the miscarriage of his secret machinations, at length resolved to proceed to open violence. Accordingly, after retiring, for his own security, to a garden which he had, near the skirts of the city, he sent two orders one to the senate, and the other to the prætorians, to divest Alexander of the title of Cæsar; and at the same time he posted murderers to kill him, in case they should find an opportunity for so doing, during the confusion he expected the execution of his orders would occasion.

The senate received the emperor's command with silence and astonishment. But the soldiery, less patient, no sooner saw Heliogabalus's emissaries begin to throw dirt upon the inscription under Alexander's statues, than, transported with rage, they flew instantly, some of them to the palace, to defend the life of the young Cæsar; and others, determined to revenge him, to the gardens to which the wicked emperor had retired.

The first of these found Alexander with his mother and grandmother, well guarded by a faithful troop, and carried them to the camp. The latter, who had directed their steps against Heliogabalus, surprized him unawares. He waited securely for the execution of his orders, and, thinking of nothing but his pleasures, was preparing for a chariot-race in which he intended to dispute the prize. Terrified by the noise and tumult which he heard, he hid himself, and sent Antiochianus, one of the prætorian præfects, to the soldiers, to appease them. They were but few in number, their tribune Aristomachus having kept back

He attacks him openly.

A sedition of the prætorians obliges him to feign a reconciliation with him.

back the greatest part of the cohort, by not letting its standard be removed out of the camp. Less haughty, by reason of their want of strength, than they would otherwise have been, they listened to the remonstrances of Antiochianus, who represented to them the solemn oath they had taken to the emperor, and exhorted them not to be guilty of the heinous crime of shedding his sacred blood. They yielded, on condition that Heliogabalus should repair to the camp.

He went thither, pale and trembling : and the soldiers, arbiters of their princes, dictated laws to Heliogabalus, insisting that he should remove from about his person all the vile companions of his debaucheries, all comedians, chariot-drivers, and men of bad characters, and particularly all those who made a traffic of his favour and indulgence. Heliogabalus agreed to all, except giving up Hierocles. He prayed, intreated, wept, uncovered his bosom and cried out, " Strike, strike me rather than him. Grant me the life of that only friend, or kill your emperor." The soldiers, who had already yielded once, now gave way again, and ceased to demand the death of Hierocles. But they recommended to their præfects, not to suffer the emperor to continue the licentious life he had led till then ; and charged them to watch over the safety of Alexander, and to prevent him seeing any of Heliogabalus's friends, lest their bad example should prove hurtful to his innocence. The prætorians were right in all their demands. But what can we think of a government in which the soldiery prescribe the laws, and the princes and their chief officers submit to them!

He soon resumes his former designs.

The emperor's reconciliation with his adopted son lasted no longer than the fear which had extorted it. The moment the danger was over, Heliogabalus returned to his former designs, and began again to lay snares for Alexander's life. He would not even now be at the trouble of concealing

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his hatred ; and when the first of January came, on A. D. 973 which day he was to take possession of the consulship with the young Cæsar, and go with him in state to the senate-house, and from thence to the capitol, he for a long while refused to comply with that indispensable ceremony. At length, however, his mother and grandmother, by convincing him that the soldiers were ready to mutiny, if he persisted any longer in shewing so open an aversion to his cousin, prevailed on him, about noon, to put on the robe *prætexta*, and go to the senate. But nothing could induce him to go to the capitol : and the præfect of the city was obliged to offer up the sacrifices, in which the ministry of the consuls had always been required on that solemn day.

All his thoughts were bent upon stratagems to get rid of Alexander : but fearing lest the senate should displace him by chusing another emperor, he on a sudden ordered all the senators to leave Rome. He had long accustomed himself to hold that august assembly, the glory of the empire, in contempt, and often called the senators a pack of slaves * disguised in the habits of great men. They were forced to obey instantly, without being allowed time to prepare even what was necessary for their journey ; insomuch that those of them who had not their carriages at hand, were forced to hire others. Sabinus, who had been consul, was the only one that did not seem in a hurry to depart. The emperor, being informed of it, ordered a centurion to go and kill him. Luckily, he spoke with a very low voice ; and the centurion, who was somewhat deaf, thought he was bid only to conduct Sabinus out of the city : a mistake which saved the life of that senator.

In getting rid of the senate, Heliogabalus removed only the least of his dangers ; and it is surprizing he should not have seen that the soldiers The prætorians, and kill him and were

were those he ought most to fear. He resolved to sound them, by giving out that Alexander was threatened with speedy death : but his trial succeeded very badly. The prætorians, upon this news, grew quite outrageous, refused to send him his usual guard, and insisted absolutely on seeing Alexander, and on having him brought into their camp.

Heliogabalus yielded, and taking the young prince in his pompous car, shining with gold and jewels, carried him to the camp, there to seek his own death. The prætorians immediately declared their sentiments very plainly, by receiving him with great coldness, and his adopted son, or rather his rival, with every demonstration of joy and gladness. Hatred and jealousy kindled up in the breast of Heliogabalus, who, forgetting at that juncture, when he ought most to have remembered it, the timidity with which he had always behaved towards the troops, very imprudently ordered the most forward of the soldiers, and those who distinguished themselves by their zeal for Alexander, to be arrested. This order was the signal for the battle. Some of the troops still obeyed Heliogabalus, and attempted to seize his victims. The others, more numerous, immediately undertook to defend their comrades. Mama and Soæmis, who had repaired to the camp, placed themselves each at the head of her son's party, and animated the combatants. The victory was not a moment doubtful, the cowardly Heliogabalus running away the instant the fray began, to hide himself in the filthiest place he could have found. The ministers and accomplices of his crimes, abandoned by him, were the first that felt the fury of the victorious soldiers, who made them suffer deaths as cruel as their lives had been infamous. He himself was afterwards sought for, and, being found, was killed with his mother, who held him closely embraced in her arms.

Thus

Thus even the precautions he had taken in order to die with luxury, were rendered useless. ^{*Lamprid.*} For, conscious that his end would not be natural, ^{33.} he had provided cords of silk to strangle himself with, swords with golden blades to stab himself, and vases of great price to drink poison out of, in case he should chuse to end his being by that means. He is likewise said to have built a very high turret, the foot of which was paved with precious stones, that by throwing himself down upon them, he might dash his brains out in the midst of magnificence. Such was the extravagance of this wretch, whose throat was cut in a bog-house.

His head was cut off, as was also that of Soæmis, a princess not less criminal than unfortunate, and who, to sum up her character in one word, was worthy to be the mother of such a son. Their naked bodies were dragged through the city with every kind of ignominy. We are not told what became of that of Soæmis. As to the carcase of Heliogabalus, the outrageous populace tried to cram it into one of the sinks of Rome; but the entrance being too narrow, it was thrown into the river: a sepulchre full as honourable as he deserved.

Heliogabalus was but eighteen years old when he perished. He had reigned three years, nine months, and four days, reckoning from the day on which he gained the battle against Macrinus. Consequently he was killed on the eleventh of March.

This prince has never been spoken of but with horror and contempt. The senate ordered his name to be erased out of the Roman Annuals. Neither Dion Cassius nor Lampridius ever give him the name of Antoninus, which he dishonoured by his vices. Dion calls him Pseudo-Antoninus, Assyrian, Sardanapalus: and after his death, by an insulting allusion to the last fate of his dead
body

body thrown into the *Tiber*, he was surnamed *Tiberinus*.

With him perished Hierocles, the prætorian præfect, the city præfect Fulvius; and scarce any one of those who had partaken of his crimes, escaped death. Aurelius Eubulus, a native of Emesa, superintendant of the finances, author of several grievous vexations, and who, to satisfy the greediness of one man had rendered himself the enemy of all, was torn in pieces by the people and the soldiers.

We are not told of any public buildings erected by Heliogabalus, except the temple of his god, and the porticoes round Caracalla's baths. This last work, which he left imperfect, was finished by his successor.

The colony
of Emmaus
re-established.
Euseb.
Chron.
Tit. i.
Hist. Eccl.
lib. x. c.
III. not. 3
v. p. Jul.
African.

The colony of Emmaus, founded by Vespasian after the taking of Jerusalem, as I have related in the sixteenth book of this history, was greatly decayed. Julius Africanus, a native of that place, as is believed, a Christian by religion, and author of a learned Chronology, of which Eusebius has preserved several considerable fragments, was deputed to Rome towards the end of the reign of Heliogabalus, to petition the re-establishment of this colony, which he obtained from his successor, Alexander Severus. It may be doubted whether it was not then that Emmaus changed its name into that of Nicopolis.

 BOOK XXIV.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS

OF THE REIGN

OF

ALEXANDER SEVERUS.

M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS AUGUSTUS IV.

A. R. 973.

M. AURELIUS ALEXANDER CÆSAR.

A. C. 212.

ALEXANDER proclaimed emperor by the prætorians, receives from the senate all the titles of the imperial power. He was then thirteen years and an half old.

Decree of the senate, forbidding women to be present at the deliberations of that assembly.

Cares of Mamaea, mother of Alexander to prevent his being corrupted by the allurements of the supreme power.

Council of sixteen illustrious senators for the administration of affairs. Ulpian had the greatest authority in this council.

Alexander sends Heliogabalus's god back to Syria. He clears the palace, and afterwards all the orders of the state, of the unworthy wretches Heliogabalus had filled them with.

His government was always mixed with mildness and resolution, opposing vice and promoting virtue.

His grandmother Maesa dies, and is ranked among the deities.

A. R. 974. L. MARIUS MAXIMUS II.
A. C. 223. L. ROSCIUS ÆLIANUS.

The first of these two consuls is probably the author of a history of the emperors, often quoted by the writers of the Byzantine history.

Alexander marries a lady of illustrious birth, whose father was afterwards put to death on a suspicion of his aspiring to the throne; his daughter being repudiated, and banished to Africa. Alexander contracts another marriage, and perhaps a third. It does not appear that he ever had any children.

A. R. 975. JULIANUS II.
A. C. 224. CRISPINUS.

A. R. 976. FUSCUS II.
A. C. 225. DEXTER.

A. R. 977. M. AURELIUS ALEXANDER AUGUSTUS II.
A. C. 226. MARCELLUS.

Revolution in the East. The empire passes from the Parthians to the Persians, by the revolt of Artaxerxes against Artabanus.

A. R. 978. M. MUMMIUS ALBINUS.
A. C. 227. MAXIMUS.

The second of these two consuls seems to have been Pupienus Maximus, who was afterwards emperor.

A. R. 979. TI. MANILIUS MODESTUS.
A. C. 228. SER. CALPURNIUS PROBUS.

Ulpian.

Ulpian, now prætorian præfect, is killed by the soldiers, notwithstanding the efforts of Alexander and Mamaea to protect him from their fury. The civilian, Paulus, succeeded him in his office.

Alexander had dignified the office of prætorian præfect, by ordering that those who were promoted to it should be chosen from among the body of the senators, whereas they had until then been regularly taken out of the Order of Knights.

Ambitious projects of several aspirers to the throne, all of which miscarry. Ovinus Camillus, who was one of that number; instead of being punished for it by Alexander, is desired by him to share with him the weight of the government, is associated to all the honours of the empire, and, weary of his grandeur, obtains leave to retire to his own estate.

Wars, of no great consequence though successful, in Illyricum, Armenia, and Mauritania Tingitana.

The dates of these conspiracies and wars are not absolutely certain.

M. AURELIUS ALEXANDER AUGUSTUS III.
CASSIUS COCCEIANUS DIO II.

A. R. 980.
A. C. 2.9.

The second of these consuls is the historian Dion Cassius, who, finding himself the object of the hatred of the prætorians, fearing for his life, and tormented with the gout, retires to his native country, Bithynia, there to end his days in peace and quiet.

Gordian, afterwards emperor, was consul this same year for the second time: and it is probable that he was the immediate successor of Dion Cassius, since he was the colleague of Alexander.

L. VIRIUS AGRICOLA.
SEX. CAPIUS CLEMENTINUS.

A. R. 981
A. C. 230.

A. R. 982.	..... POMPEIANUS.
A. C. 231.	..... PELIGNIANUS.
A. R. 983.	..... LUPUS.
A. C. 232.	..... MAXIMUS.

Alexander marches into the East against Artaxerxes king of the Persians, who attacked the Roman empire, and talked of nothing less than re-conquering all the countries which the great Cyrus had possessed.

Alexander's firmness in maintaining military discipline. A legion broke for mutiny. After thirty days of prayers and supplications, the emperor consents to re-instate it.

He blended with his severity, all the care and attention of a good father, towards the troops.

A. R. 984.	..... MAXIMUS.
A. C. 233.	..... PATERNUS.

The Persians conquered.

A. R. 985.	..... MAXIMUS.
A. C. 234.	..... URBANUS.

Alexander is called back into the West by the motions of the Germans upon the Rhine.

He returns to Rome, and triumphs for his victory over the Persians.

He passes into Gaul.

A. R. 986.	..... SEVERUS.
A. C. 235.	..... QUINTIANUS.

Maximianus, whose father and mother were the former a Goth and the latter an Alan, having advanced

vanced himself in the army by his bravery, and obtained the command of the new levies raised by Alexander, aspires to the empire.

Alexander is killed near Mentz, on the nineteenth of March, by some of his own soldiers whom Maximinus had bribed. He was then twenty-six years and an half old; of which he had reigned thirteen years. Mamæa is killed with her son.

This prince favoured the Christians, and honoured Jesus Christ among his divinities. Mamæa is said to have been a Christian: but that fact is not sufficiently proved.

Modestinus, the last of the Roman civilians quoted in the Digest, flourished under this reign.

Alexander was ranked among the gods after his death. Feasts are instituted in honour of him and of his mother.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS.

SECT. I.

ALXANDER is proclaimed emperor by the soldiers. He receives from the senate all the titles of the Imperial power. Decree of the senate, forbidding any woman ever to be present at the deliberations of that assembly. Alexander refuses the name of Antoninus, which the senate desired him to take. The whole authority of the government is in the hands of Mæsa and Mamæa. Council of state composed of sixteen of the most illustrious of the senators. The worship of the god Elagabal, abolished at Rome. Bad men removed from the offices of the state, and good ones put in their places. Ulpian made prætorian præfect. Death of Mæsa. Mamæa's care to train the young emperor up to virtue. Picture of Alexander's government and conduct.

He

He never shed innocent blood. His regard and deference for the senate. He annexes the dignity of senator to the office of prætorian præfect. Marks of his esteem for good governors of provinces : for the pontiffs : for the people. Mildness, moderation, and goodness of his general behaviour. His clemency towards a senator who had conspired against him. His firmness. He clears the palace of all the ministers of Heliogabalus's debaucheries. His zealous endeavours to check all licentiousness of manners. He makes a strict review of all the orders of the state. His hatred against all robbers and oppressors of the public, and against those that were then called Sellers of Smoke. The punishment of Turinus. No excess in his severity. He was liberal and beneficent. He knew how to ease the people, and to keep his finances in good order. Wise economy of this prince. Superior views of Alexander in the choice of those he employed. Marks of his regard for them. His care not to put them in danger of ruining themselves. He lessens the expences of the consulship. Laws made with great judgment. Some regulations relative to the police of the city. Alexander's veneration for the memory of great men. His distribution of the day. He loved learning and learned men. Reflection on the causes to which the wisdom of Alexander's government ought to be ascribed. He has been blamed for his excessive deference for his mother ; for being too inquisitive and distrustful ; and for being too much inclined to vanity. The first years of his reign little disturbed by foreign enemies. Continual seditions of the prætorians. Ulpian falls a victim to them. The prætorians demand the death of Dion Cassius, who retires into Bithynia. Reflection on these marks of weakness in Alexander's government, compared with his vigour upon other occasions. Disturbances and commotions. Several pretenders to the empire.

AS soon as Heliogabalus was killed, the soldiers proclaimed emperor his cousin and adopted son, Alexander, who had before received the title of Cæsar: a prince, says Lampridius, given to mankind, to retrieve them from the miserable condition to which they had been reduced by preceding emperors, and especially by the last.

Alexander is proclaimed emperor by the soldiers. *Herod. l. IV. Lamprid. Alex. 1, § 2.*

The very first step that Alexander took, shewed upon what principles he intended to frame his government, and how different his maxims would be from those of his predecessor. Heliogabalus had assumed all the titles of the imperial dignity, upon the bare proclamation of the soldiers: Alexander was willing to receive them from the senate. That illustrious assembly immediately decreed him all of them, the name of Augustus, that of Father of his Country, the proconsular power, the power of tribunc, and the high priesthood. The conscript fathers hoped that this opportunity would afford them the means of resuming their ancient rights, and wished they might be able so far at least to put a stop to the licentiousness of the soldiery, already authorised by several examples, as to hinder that abuse from becoming a law, or rather an established custom, in consequence of which the military people would claim a right to chuse their emperors, independent of the first order of the republic. But the evil was too deeply rooted, as I have observed more than once, and sprang from the original constitution of the power of the Cæsars.

He receives from the senate all the titles of the imperial power.

The senators likewise seized this favourable moment to do another act of vigour. The presence of Mæsa and Soæmis at their deliberations, had filled them with grief and indignation: for which reason they passed a decree forbidding any woman ever to come to their meetings, and loading with imprecations whosoever should revive the abuse they now abolished. Mamaæ, who probably received

Decree of the senate, forbidding any woman ever to be present at the deliberations of that assembly. *Lamprid. Heliog. 18*

received

ceived then the title of *Augusta*, but who never had enjoyed the privilege interdicted by this decree, readily submitted to this just regulation: nor did even the ambitious *Mæsa*, so far as we can find, murmur at the diminution of her honours.

Alexander
refuses the
name of
Antoninus
which the
senate de-
sired him
to take.
Lamprid.
Al. 6—12.

The senate assembled immediately after Alexander's installation, and desired him to add to his own names that of Antonius. But the young prince modestly begged they would not put him to the difficult trial of maintaining the glory of so great a name*. The fathers repeated their request several times, and he as often declined accepting the honour they offered him. Much less would he receive the surname of Great, which they strongly pressed him to take, as belonging of right, said they, to the name of Alexander. By rejecting all this borrowed splendour, he acquired the much more solid glory of being modest.

Heliogabalus was the last of the Roman emperors that bore the name of Antoninus. He had imprinted upon it a stain, which might well disgust Alexander.

But a stronger, though a secret reason, for the young emperor's refusing this last distinction, was, doubtless, his regard for his mother's honour. *Mæsa*, as I said before, had endeavoured to wound *Mamæa's* reputation, by giving out that both her grandsons were the children of *Caracalla*. Alexander would have seemed to confirm that injurious report, if he had suffered himself to be called Antoninus; and therefore he declined accepting of that name. That this was his motive, is, I think, pretty evident from some parts of the speeches that are
9, & 11. ascribed to him on this occasion. He praises *Caracalla*, but coldly. He calls himself a relation of the family of that prince: he was his nephew. But
he

* Ne, queso, P. C. ne me ad hanc certaminis necessitatem vocetis, ut ego cogar tanto nomini satisfacere.

he says expressly that the name of Antoninus*, was a name foreign to him: which was declaring in plain terms, that he did not look upon himself as the son † of Caracalla.

These cautions were undoubtedly suggested to him by his mother, for whom he always preserved the utmost respect, and who, jointly with Mæsa, directed the reins of government, which his own youth, he being but thirteen years and an half of age, did not permit him to hold himself.

These two princesses made a wise and prudent use of the authority that was put into their hands. They immediately formed a council of sixteen of the most illustrious among the senators, men respectable for their age, and remarkable for the gravity and integrity of their lives. No order was made out, no affair settled, but by the advice of these sixteen counsellors of the emperor. This establishment was greatly approved of by the people and the soldiery, and particularly by the senate, who saw with joy a wise aristocracy substituted in the room of an outrageous tyranny.

The religion of the state, shamefully violated by Heliogabalus, was the first object of the attention of this council. The new god which he had brought to Rome, and madly instituted the worship of, was sent back to Syria: and all the objects of religious veneration which had been collected together in his temple, were returned to the places from whence they had been taken.

At

* *Alienæ familie nomen.*

† M. de Tillemont (art. 13.) supposes, that Alexander suffered himself to be called the son of the great Alexander, that is to say, of Caracalla. Even though this title should be found upon some ancient monuments, it would be no proof that the emperor approved of it: for it may be imputed solely to the authors of those monuments, who may, very mistakingly, have thought to pay their court to him by that compliment.

All the authority of the government is in the hands of Mæsa and Mama. *Herod. l. VI.*

Council of state, composed of sixteen of the most illustrious of the senators.

The worship of the god Elagabal, abolished at Rome.

Bad men removed from the offices of the state, and good ones put in their places.

At the same time all those who had been promoted to employments under the late government without deserving them, or for things which ought to have excluded them from all favour, were dismissed, and men capable of rendering real services to their prince and the republic were put in their places. Every one was stationed according to his talent. The civil employments were given to men of known eloquence and skill in the laws; and the military commands to experienced warriors, who had given proofs of their bravery, knowledge of their profession, and love of good discipline.

Ulpian made prætorian præfect.
Dio. lib. LXXX.

We may judge with what prudence and wisdom these choices were made, by the example of the celebrated civilian Ulpian, who, disgraced by Heliogabalus, and banished from the person of Alexander, was recalled by his august disciple, now become emperor, and received from him the office of prætorian præfect. His credit, founded on his merit, increased daily. He was the tutor of his prince, and had a principal share in the management of affairs. We shall speak more fully of him in the sequel of this history.

Empirid. Al. 51.

Death of Mæsa.
Herod.

Mæsa died soon after Alexander's accession to the throne, and the honours of deification were decreed her.

Mamæa's care to train the young emperor up to virtue.

Mamæa, charged from that time with the sole care of educating her son, thought it her first duty to watch carefully over the morals of the young prince, that his innocence might not be corrupted. The example of Heliogabalus shewed her to what length the vivacity and giddiness of youth, backed by the unbounded power of empire, might be carried. Struck with the apprehension of this danger, she suffered none to approach her son, whose characters were in the least suspected. Flatterers, whose pernicious counsels might have encouraged the infant passions in his young heart, and have emboldened him to shake off the yoke of reason and of virtue, were severely banished from

from him: and to guard him against the allurements of pleasure, she busied him with serious occupations becoming his high station, making him attend his councils and the courts of justice regularly: by this means leaving no part of his day idle, and barring the way by which corruption generally creeps in. She had room to be satisfied with the success of her cares: for Alexander's happy disposition, aided and perfected by so excellent an education, rendered him one of the most amiable and most accomplished princes of whom history has preserved the memory. This the reader will be convinced of by the picture I am going to draw of his conduct and government: after which I shall take notice of the two wars which filled up the last years of his life and reign.

Picture of Alexander's government and conduct.

The only remark that Herodian makes upon Alexander's government, is, that he never shed the blood of an innocent person, nor ever suffered any one to be put to death until after a regular trial and legal condemnation. This indeed was no more than strict justice required, and rather exempts him from blame, than intitles him to praise. But this great regard for the lives of men became a quality highly valuable to the Romans, who had experienced a tyrannical cruelty from almost all their princes since Marcus Aurelius.

He never shed innocent blood.

Lampridius makes amends for the dryness of Herodian, and enables us not only to give a circumstantial history of Alexander's reign, but also to paint his character, and to shew the maxims upon which his government and his personal conduct were founded.

I begin with his regard and deference for the senate, whose rights and privileges he preserved and even enlarged, instead of seeking to curtail them, as several of his predecessors had done, out of an ill-judged diffidence and distrust. All matters relative to the provinces, which, by Augustus's institution, were in the department of the senate,

His regard and deference for the senate.

senate, were constantly settled by him in concert with the senators, whose advice he also took even in things which had always depended solely upon the emperor, in the choice of his prætorian præfects, and in that of the governor of Rome. He never created a senator, but with the approbation and consent of those to whose body he was going to give a new member: and in the choice of the subject intended to be preferred, he proceeded with such scrupulous care and caution, as plainly shewed the high esteem in which he held the dignity of senator. He heard and weighed the recommendations and testimonials in favour of the person proposed: and if he found that either the witnesses, or those who voted for the candidate, had deceived him, he punished them without mercy, as cheats and impostors. He likewise thought it proper that the senators should be distinguished by their outward appearance, and accordingly he gave them leave to use carriages gilt with silver. Looking upon the Order of Knights as the nursery of the senate, he carefully preserved its splendour, and never suffered any freed-man to be admitted into that body.

He annexes the dignity of senator to the office of prætorian præfect.

It was out of regard to the senate, that he raised the prætorian præfects to the dignity of senators. These officers, who had hitherto generally been, and who indeed, strictly, ought always to have been taken out of the Order of Knights, now joined to their military command a great power in the civil administration. They judged with the prince, or in his name, all important causes, and consequently those in which the reputation and the person of the senators were at stake. Alexander thought it indecent that senators should be judged by men who were no more than knights; and to obviate this inconvenience, he judged it would be right that the prætorian præfects should themselves be senators. But by thus consulting what seemed to him to be, and what in reality was, a matter of decency and decorum,

corum, he overlooked the rules of sound policy, as M. de Tillemont justly observes. The office of *Prætorian præfect* already gave but too much power to those that held it: and by now uniting to it the splendour of dignity, Alexander encouraged the ambition of these ministers, and rendered them more formidable than ever. Their future actions will evince the justness of this reflection.

He took a pleasure in distinguishing and conferring favours upon those governors of provinces who behaved with integrity. In his journeys, he often took them with him in his coach: and he frequently made them considerable presents, saying, that as robbers ought to be punished, by stripping them of their unjust prey, and reducing them to poverty: so probity ought to be rewarded by those riches which it had not sought after.

He carried his deference for the pontiffs and augurs so far, as more than once to suffer them to re-examine causes which he himself had judged in his quality of high-priest.

The people too received from him marks of regard, which they had long been strangers to under the late emperors. Alexander often assembled and harangued them, as the tribunes and consuls had used to do in the times of the republican government.

All this behaviour speaks mildness, moderation, and goodness of heart, which composed the real character of this prince, who was easy of access and affable to all, without ever treating any one with the least roughness.

His doors were open to whoever wanted to see him. No guards surrounded them, but only ushers, who were ordered to let in all that came. His baths were those of the people, from whom he was distinguished only by his purple vest.

Far from suffering any one to fall prostrate before him, an homage which Heliogabalus had insisted

T. Mem. 41.
13.

Marks of
his esteem
for good
governors
of provin-
ces:

Lamprid.
411. 27.

For the
pontiffs.

For the
people.
25.

Mildness,
moderation
and good-
ness of his
general be-
haviour.
4, 18, 20.
42.

sisted on from all his subjects, he would not be saluted otherwise than by his name; and if any word or gesture was added, expressing the least degree of adulation, the person that used it might think himself well off, if it was returned only with a look of disapprobation and contempt. None were allowed even to call him lord, though Trajan and several other good princes had received that title. In all letters that were written to him, he insisted that the stile should be that of one private person to another, and that the superscription should not be blazoned out with a long list of pompous titles, but should be directed simply to him, with only the addition of his quality of emperor; that being a necessary distinction. Those who came to salute him, especially the senators, were always desired to sit down. He visited his friends when they were ill, even though they were but people in a middling station. He dined or supped at their houses, and always had some of them at his own table, to which they came when they pleased without any express invitation. He loved to be spoken to freely. If any one offered him his advice, he listened to it with attention, was thankful for it, and followed it, if he thought it good; and if he did not approve of it, he gave his reasons why he was of a different opinion. He was

35. of the same mind as Pescennius Niger with regard to panegyrics addressed to a living prince: he thought them ridiculous, and never suffered any man to pay him a compliment of that kind, which could not fail of being infected with flattery.

20. His mother, though a princess of judgment and understanding, through a love of pomp, too natural to her sex, did not approve of the plainness and popularity of his behaviour *. "Take care," said

* Quam ei objiceret nimiam civilitatem Mamæa mater
Molliorem tibi potestatem & contemptibiliorem Imperii fecisti; ille respondit, sed securiorem atque diuturniorem

said she to him one day; “you weaken your authority, and render it contemptible.” “I render it,” * answered he, “more secure and more durable.” He well deserved that so noble an expression should be verified by the event.

Mildness and gentleness were so strongly imprinted in the heart of Alexander, that history gives him the glorious character † of not suffering a day to pass without his doing some act of goodness and humanity. He repeated incessantly, and with infinite delight, this fine maxim of the Christians: “Do unto others as thou wouldst that they should do unto thee.” He ordered it to be engraved in his palace in capital letters; to be placed, as an inscription, upon several public buildings; and when any criminal was executed for having violated the rights of society, the public crier proclaimed aloud this same sentence, as a proof of the justice of the punishment inflicted on the offender, and as a lesson to those that were present. He made it the rule of his own conduct, and even went beyond it, shewing clemency and generosity to those that had offended him. Lampridius gives us an instance of this kind, which M. de Tillemont suspects of being embellished in most of its circumstances; and with reason, if derision had not some share in it.

Information was given to Alexander, that Ovinus Camilus, a senator, of an illustrious family, had formed a conspiracy in order to raise himself to the sovereign power, and the crime was proved. The emperor sent for Ovinus, and instead of reproaching him, “I am much obliged to you,” said he to him, “for your kindness in offering to take upon you a burden which weighs me down.”

He

* Theompompus king of Sparta, had before made a pretty similar answer to his wife, in relation to the establishment of the Ephori, to which he had consented.—ROLLIN. Anc. Hi t. Vol. II.

† Des nunquam transit quin aliquid mansuetum, civile, pium fuerit.

He then carried him directly to the senate, declared him his associate in the empire, invested him with the imperial ornaments, and lodged him in the palace. This was not all. He put him in actual exercise of his function, and took him with him upon an expedition then carrying on against certain barbarians who had revolted. Ovinus was much more delicate than Alexander, and could not, like him, bear the fatigue of marching on foot with the army. The emperor ordered him every indulgence he could wish for, first a horse, and afterwards a coach, whilst he himself continued to walk. If this story be true, it is plain that Alexander diverted himself at the expence of Ovinus, who, sorely afraid of coming to an engagement with the enemy, begged so hard for leave to retire, that he at last obtained it, and went and hid himself in one of his country-houses. This was the only revenge that Alexander took. He let his rival spend his days in peace, as long as he lived. But Ovinus paid afterwards the forfeit of his criminal ambition; one * of the succeeding emperors putting him to death, lest he should resume his former project.

His firm-
ness. II.
clear at the
palace of
all the mi-
nisters of
Heliogab-
lus's de-
baucheries.
Lamprius
15, 23, 24.

Alexander's mildness was not the effect of weakness; but it was his natural temper: for he had that strong hatred to vice, with which an ardent love of virtues fires a young heart. He began with clearing the palace of all the ministers of debauchery which Heliogabalus had collected together. Those infamous wretches, of either sex, were all driven out with ignominy: several of them were banished to desert islands, and the most corrupt were drowned in the sea. Alexander likewise turned out of the palace the dwarfs, buffoons, singers, and pantomimes, which Heliogabalus had picked up: and singling

* Lamprius does not name the emperor by whose order Ovinus was put to death: but it is very plain that he could not mean Alexander.

singling out of them those that were supposed to be the least vicious, he, out of a condescension which even the best of princes judge sometimes necessary, gave them to the people for their amusement. The rest were dispersed in different cities, with a provision for their support, to prevent their becoming a nuisance to the public by turning beggars.

The eunuchs, whom Heliogabalus had employed in the most important offices, were reduced by Alexander to the servile functions they are fit for. Nor was it about his person that any of them were employed. He detested and despised those monsters, and would not keep one of them in his own service. He gave some of them to the empress his wife, and the rest to the great men of Rome, under the express condition that if those wretches persisted in their disorders, and did not amend their lives, they should not be intitled to the benefit of the new law made by Adrian in favour of slaves, but that their masters should have an absolute power over their lives, without recurring to the authority of any other judge.

Alexander's zeal was not confined to the limits of his palace. He forbid throughout Rome all baths common to both sexes: an abuse already proscribed by Adrian, and afterwards by Marcus Aurelius, but revived under Heliogabalus. Crimes contrary to nature were grown extremely common among the Romans, who had public schools in the city where those hellish practices were taught. Alexander thought of forbidding them by a severe law; and he would have done it, had he not feared lest that horrid infamy, irritated by compulsion and restraint, might spread with greater rage, and find admittance into private houses. He therefore suffered one evil, for fear of causing a greater; and contented himself with restricting it within the narrowest bounds he could. He shewed his horror for all sorts of debauchery, by not suffering the tax upon prostitutes to be paid into

His zealous endeavours to check all licentiousness of manners.

24, 34

the treasury; appropriating it to the use of the theatre, the amphitheatre, and the circus. He shewed too his abhorrence of vice, by the example which he himself set of a chaste and regular life; by wishing that all about him should breathe a spirit of virtue; by admitting to his audiences none but men of fair characters, esteemed by the public; and by forbidding all women of bad repute ever to take the liberty of coming to pay their court to the empresses, his mother and his wife.

He makes
strict re-
view of all
the orders
of the
state.
15.

The whole state wanted a thorough reformation. Alexander set about this great work with vigour. I have already mentioned his degrading and breaking all the iniquitous judges and bad officers promoted by Heliogabalus. He likewise made a strict review of all the orders of the republic, of the senate, the Roman knights, the tribes, and the armies; all which he purged by expelling and cutting off their bad and corrupted members. No guilty person was spared. Even those that were connected to him either by friendship or by blood, were punished, or at least removed from being near his person, if they were bad men and stained by any opprobrious blot. "The republic," said he, "is dearer to me than my family."

His hatred
against all
robbers
and oppres-
sors of the
people.
15, 17, 18,
25.

No sort of criminals were more odious to him, than judges who suffered themselves to be corrupted by money, and magistrates who oppressed the people. His abhorrence of them was so great, that it was not in his power to check his wrath whenever he beheld them. Writers who had been near him on such occasions, related, according to the testimony of Lampridius, that if a robber of that kind appeared before him, he vomited gall, and his fingers, by a sort of natural impulse, were directed at the face of the criminal, as if to tear out his eyes. A senator called Septimius Arabinus, whose robberies and concussions had subjected him to a criminal prosecution under Heliogabalus,

balus, coming to Alexander's audience to salute him, the prince cried out with the same vehemence that Cicero formerly inveighed * against Catiline: "Heavenly gods! great Jupiter! Is Arabinus still alive? He is! and comes into the senate, hoping to impose even upon me: so weak and void of judgment does he think me." Alexander took a singular method to remove all such hateful objects from his sight. As in the mysteries of Ceres Eleusina a herald warned those that were not pure and innocent, not to approach the altars; so this emperor caused public proclamation to be made, that all such as knew themselves guilty of robbery and rapine, should take care not to appear before him, lest their lives should atone for their crimes.

These were not mere menaces. He declared perpetual war against all sorts of criminals, and ordered with regard to those who had been convicted of receiving money in the administration of justice, that they should be reputed infamous; that it should not be lawful for them to appear in any public places; and that if any of them should dare to shew themselves there, those that were in authority in the province should seize them, and confine them to an island. He wanted greatly to give the lie to a Greek proverb, too often verified by the event †: "Great robbers escape punishment, by giving only a small part of what they have stolen." He endeavoured to prevent this abuse, by great examples of severity. A public officer having produced a false abstract of writings relative to a cause depending before the emperor's council, Alexander ordered the sinews of his fingers to be cut asunder, to disable him from ever writing again, and confined him to an island. A man of distinction, but greedy and rapacious, obtained

2

through

* Alexander's words are borrowed from the first Catilinarian, n. 2. *Hic tamen vivit. Vivit! imo etiam in senatum venit.*

† *Ὁ πολλὰ κλέψας, ἕλιγα ὄντις ἐκφίξειται.*

through the interest of some foreign kings then at the emperor's court, a post of consequence in the army. His employment gave him power, and he exerted it to satisfy his inclination, and rob. Alexander, who watched him, was soon apprised of his proceedings, brought him to justice, and had him tried before the very kings who had been his protectors. The crime was proved, and nothing remained but to pass sentence upon the criminal. "How are robbers punished in your country?" said the emperor to the kings who had heard the trial. "They are crucified," answered they. Alexander was glad of this opportunity of exercising a necessary rigour, dictated by the very patrons of the offender, without doing violence to his own clemency: and accordingly their sentence was put in execution.

41. This wise prince always kept himself at full liberty to punish the misdemeanors of his magistrates or other officers rigorously, by never suffering any places of power and jurisdiction to be sold. "He that buys by wholesale, said he, must sell by retail. Therefore I could not justly use severity against men, who by selling what they had bought, should only get their money back again." Such was his behaviour towards venal or rapacious magistrates.

Against those that were then called *Sellers of Soulds*. 23, 35, 36.

A species of public robbers still more criminal, are those who by selling their influence with the prince, become the tyrants of others, from whom they extort money: enemies to the state, of which they fill up the places with creatures incapable of serving it: enemies to the reputation of their prince, whom they dishonour by an improper choice of those that are employed, and whom they give the world room to look upon as a duped by them just as they think proper. Often too they exact payment for services never done; shamefully abusing the credulity of those whom ambition blinds.

This

This was what, in the days I am now speaking of, was called *Selling of Smoke*. Alexander was sensible of the enormity of this abuse, and rightly thought it deserved the severest punishment.

One of his slaves, who had carried on this traffic, and received an hundred pieces of gold from an officer in the army, was crucified by his order upon the road by which the slaves of the palace were often obliged to pass in order to go to the emperor's villas.

The punishment of Vetronius Turinus was much more striking. Turinus had insinuated himself into Alexander's favour, and gained his confidence, which he abused by *selling smoke*. He pretended to be all powerful with the emperor, whom he governed, said he, like a child. He promised his protection, and made his dupes pay him handsomely for it, though he did not even endeavour to serve them. In law-suits, he frequently took money from both sides; and no place was given away at court, or in the empire, without his requiring a tribute for it. Alexander was informed of these infamous proceedings; and did not think it beneath him to lay a snare for the greediness of this faithless minister, in order to have an evident and irrefragable proof against him. Accordingly, somebody, in concert with the emperor, solicited publicly a favour, and applied secretly to Turinus for his assistance. He promised to speak to the prince about it, but did not. The favour being granted, Turinus pretended it was through his means that it was obtained, and exacted a reward, which was paid him before witnesses. The emperor then ordered him to be prosecuted. Turinus could not make any defence, nor deny a fact which was proved by the testimony of the very people who had been employed in the negotiation. As Alexander was determined to make an example of him, he laid before the judges ample evidence of a great many other equally odious tricks,

tricks, of which the criminal had been guilty, and which had not been made known, because no one dared to attack him. After these proofs, Alexander thought his severity could not be blamed; and to proportion the punishment to the crime, he ordered Turinus to be carried to the market-place, and there to be fastened to a post erected over a pile of green damp wood, which would not burn when fire was applied to it, but only emit a thick smoke. Turinus died thus suffocated, whilst the public crier repeated several times with a loud voice, "He that sold smoke, is punished by smoke."

An example like this was well calculated to stop
 31, & 35. the progress of the evil, to prevent which another time, Alexander added this farther precaution. That none of those who approached his person might have the least room to pretend they ever had private conversations with him, or carry in his name promises he had not made, he laid it down as a rule never to give private audience to any one, except Ulpian: an exception truly glorious for that great civilian, and which he well deserved by his untainted probity.

No excess
 in his severity.

21.

We must not, however, imagine that Alexander's severity was such as bordered in the least on cruelty. The sentences that were pronounced, were sure to be executed: but he desired, and took care, that they should not often be necessary.

He was liberal and
 beneficent.

26.

22.

He was naturally beneficent; and his liberality was felt both by the public and by private persons. In the course of his reign he made three general distributions of provisions to the people, and three largesses in money to the soldiery. Severus had established a fund for giving regularly to the citizens a certain quantity of oil. This indulgence was not totally retrenched, but greatly diminished under Heliogabalus, whose ministers, men void of honour and of probity, thought only how they might plunder and grow rich, no matter by what means. Alexander re-established

established it fully, on the footing of Severus's first institution. He exempted the city of Rome from the pretended voluntary contribution that was paid to victorious emperors, by the name of crown-money. Consulting too, the convenience of the public, he ordered baths to be built in several quarters of the city where there were not any. He took uncommon care to prevent all scarcity and dearness of provisions, replenishing at his own expence the granaries of Rome, which had been exhausted by the bad government of Heliogabalus. He increased the number of those public granaries, and erected new ones for the use of private people who had no convenient place in which they could lay up their corn. He confirmed Adrian's law, by which the property of all treasures was granted to those that found them. If any great calamity happened, such as an inundation or earthquake, by which any of the cities or other places of the empire were damaged, he relieved their misfortune, not only by remitting their taxes, but also by giving them money, to enable them to repair the losses they had sustained. His attentive goodness foresaw the wants of others, and he relieved them even before he was applied to.

He took a particular pleasure in giving to the poor, especially to those who having a rank to support, were destitute of the means of so doing, and had not brought on their distresses by any fault of their own. He gave them lands, slaves, cattle, and all necessary implements of husbandry: for he thought this way of bestowing his liberalities more beneficial and more genteel than the giving of gold or silver. If he granted a pecuniary assistance, it was by way of loan. He had established a bank, where all that wanted money found it at a moderate interest. Upon some occasions he lent without any interest: but on condition that the money so lent should be employed in the purchase of land, out of the produce of which he was to be re-imbursed.

His

His reason for doing this was, not sordidly to save or gain, but to prevent idleness, and promote industry. He knew how to be liberal and magnificent, when the circumstances of things required it:

39. He frequently built fine houses, purposely to give them away when they were finished. He prevented
 36. the wishes of those whom modesty or timidity would not suffer to speak. "Why do you never
 "ask me for any thing?" said he to them. Do you
 "chuse rather to moan in secret, than lay your-
 "self under an obligation to me?" But he was desirous that his liberalities should be well placed; that they should be of real service to those who received them, and that they should do honour to the prince who gave them. Looking upon him-
 32. self* as the dispenser, and not as the proprietor, of the revenues of the state, he did not think it lawful for him to apply the sweat and labour of the provinces, either to his own pleasures, or to those of any other.

He knew
 how to ease
 the people,
 and to
 keep his
 finances in
 good order.

Magnificence thus regulated never exhausts the public finances. Accordingly Alexander, at the same time that he gave away a great deal, found means to ease the people by so considerable a diminution of their taxes, that those who had been assessed at ten pieces of gold under Heliogabalus, paid but the third part of one piece to his successor: which makes a difference of thirty to one. He was consequently far from wanting to extend the rights, or claims, of the exchequer, which had been a perpetual source of grievances under former emperors. On the contrary, he restricted them by laws full of humanity. He knew of what importance it is to a prince to have his coffers well filled; and he accordingly bestowed great attention upon that object: but at the same time he would not do any thing contrary to the strict-
 est

16.

44.

Herod.

* Nefas esse dicens, ut dispensator publicus in delectationes quas & suorum converteret, id quod provinciales delissent.

est laws of mildness and equity: insomuch that finding in his mother, for whom he always had the greatest respect, and who was otherwise a most valuable princess*, a love of money which made her do things not altogether justifiable, to get it, he more than once reproved her severely for her unjust proceedings. Happy! had he been able to put a stop to them. The collectors and other managers of the finances had no sort of ascendant over him. He called the intendants of his revenues in the provinces, a necessary evil. 46. He punished them most severely if they were guilty of mal-administration; rewarded them but moderately if they behaved well; and never left them above a year in place.

A prudent economy, as necessary to princes, ^{Wise eco-} as it is to private men, regulated the expences of ^{fronomy of} this emperor, whose plainness and simplicity were ^{this prince.} such, as might make many among us who are but in a middling station blush at their extravagant luxury. His table was frugal, and always served 37. with the same decent moderation. The price of his bread, wine, and meats of all kinds was fixed. The game that was furnished him, he divided with his friends, especially with such of them as he knew could not conveniently purchase it. He sent none to the rich. Even in the public entertainments which custom obliged him to give to the great men of the state, he never deviated from the rules of a modest frugality. The difference consisted only in the quantity, and not in the quality of his dishes. At the same time he disliked all numerous companies, whose mirth is so apt to end in noise and riot. He was much better pleased to see round his table a chosen society of learned and virtuous men, whose conversation, 34. † said he, afforded both food and delight.

He

* Mulier sancta, sed avara. *Lauprid. Al.* 14.

† Ut haberet fabulas literatas, quibus se recreari licebat & pasci

44. He never made use of any vessels of gold, nor did the weight of all his silver plate exceed two hundred pounds. If he wanted more upon extraordinary occasions, he borrowed it.

15. His household, his equipages, his wardrobe, and, in short, every thing that belonged to him, was regulated upon the same plan as his table. He would have no more officers or domestics of any kind about him than were really necessary, that the state might not be obliged to pay idle men. In the meaner offices of the palace, such as footmen, cooks, bakers, &c. he employed none but slaves; carefully avoiding to subject any that were of free condition, to functions which were reputed servile among the Romans. His slaves always wore the

23, & 31. dress proper to their station, without any ornaments or finery. Those that waited at his table, even on days of the greatest ceremony, were never allowed to have any gold upon their cloaths.

33. Even the troops that attended him on extraordinary occasions were not decked out with either gold or silk, but were clad, as soldiers ought to be, neatly, and not richly. "The majesty * of the empire," said he, "consists in virtue, and not in ostentation of riches."

40. He himself never wore garments made entirely of silk, and seldom any sort of stuff in which that then very costly material was employed. It would be needless to observe that he constantly preserved the decency of his rank, by wearing none but the Roman dress, and rejecting all foreign fashions; that he never wore the military habit in Rome, nor in any part of Italy; and that he contented himself with the *toga*, which indicated modesty and peace. But it is very singular that he had not a robe *prætexta* of his own, adorned with branches of palm embroidered on it; and that when he was consul, he made use of one of those that

* *Imperium in virtute, non in decore.*

that were kept in the capitol, just as private men did when they were made consuls or prætors.

Heliogabalus had worn precious stones even upon his shoes. So extravagant a piece of luxury was far from suiting the taste and principles of Alexander, who, on the contrary, sold the jewels^{4, 41, 51.} of the crown, saying, they were indecent for men, and that even princesses ought not to go beyond what custom rendered in a manner indispensable. He carried his strictness in this respect so far, that a foreign ambassador having made the empress his wife a present of two pearls remarkably fine and large, he tried first to sell them; but not finding a purchaser, he consecrated them to Venus, and converted them into a pair of ear-rings for her statue.

Thus * the manners of the emperor and of the princesses of the court were a living censure, the effect of which was happy for the people. The great men of Rome retrenched their luxury in imitation of Alexander, and the ladies did the same in imitation of the empress.

Some will, perhaps, find fault with what I have been praising, and think that this prince carried his economy too far. What I call simplicity and modesty, may to them seem to border upon avarice. But it is proper to observe, that he was under an absolute necessity of being at an enormous expence on account of his troops, not only for their pay, but also to gain their affection by extraordinary largesses. The Roman soldiers, accustomed to be flattered by their emperors, were grown insolent, mutinous, and seditious, and could be kept quiet only by dint of money. It was not to them that Alexander made presents in kind. They would not have been satisfied with such gifts.
Gold

* Prorsus censuram suis temporibus de moribus propriis gessit. Imitati sunt eum magni viri, & uxorem ejus matronæ per-nobiles. 11.

Gold and silver were lavished out to them in vast abundance : but even this could not entirely prevent their seditions, of which Alexander, after having calmed several with difficulty and danger, was at last the victim. In this situation, obliged on one hand to give away vast sums, and fully determined on the other not to oppress his people, and even to lessen their burdens, his economy was his only resource ; and in that light it cannot be sufficiently commended. Accordingly, he prided himself upon it, and omitted nothing that could help to favour it ; as appears by the alteration he made in the coin of the empire.

*Crono. de
Pec. Vet.
III. 15.*

From the most remote antiquity the Romans had but one sort of gold coin, which, for the convenience of expression, I shall call a *crown*. This piece of gold weighed two pennyweights and an half, and was worth twenty-five pennyweights of silver. Heliogabalus, delighting in extravagance and profusion, ordered pieces of two, four, ten, fifty, and an hundred crowns to be coined. The consequence of this was, that in liberalities made from hand to hand, the emperor was often obliged to exceed the just measure, and to give an hundred pieces of gold where ten might have sufficed. This abuse did not escape Alexander's vigilance. He forbid the currency of these unreasonably weighty pieces, and ordered that they should be looked upon only as bullion. Not satisfied with thus bringing matters back to their ancient standard, he coined half-crowns of gold, and thirds of crowns, by which means he had it in his power to proportion his gifts to the different circumstances of persons and of things.

et.

Though very religious, as I shall take care to shew, his offerings in the temples were by no means great or magnificent. He never gave any gold. Five or six pound weight of silver was the most he ever consecrated at any one time to the worship of the gods.

gods. He repeated frequently, and with a visible pleasure, these words of Persius, *In sancto quid facit aurum?* "What has gold to do with sacred things?" Pers. Sat. II. v. 69.

His economy was, with reason, still much greater with respect to the professors of arts, of which pleasure was the only object. It is well known how excessively fond the Romans were of all theatrical entertainments, and especially of pantomimes. They thought no reward too great for them, and even the richest men often ruined themselves by the immense presents they took delight in lavishing upon them. Alexander liked these amusements well enough, and often went to them: Lamprius, Al. 33, 37. but he esteemed the actors who diverted him, no more than they deserved. It was right, he said, to take care of them, as a master takes care of his slaves; but not to enrich them. He never gave them any piece of plate, either of gold or silver. A small sum of money was all they could expect from him. He even stript them of the rich cloaths which Heliogabalus had given them.

It is generally thought that strict parsimony either produces or indicates a narrowness of mind. The example of Alexander is sufficient to refute this prejudice. As great an economist as I have described him to be, he was capable of superior views, and his government was founded on, and directed by the greatest and best of maxims. Superior views of Alexander in the choice of those he employed

He never * looked upon the offices of the state as favours which he could bestow upon whom he pleased, but as ministries of which the duty was to be performed. None could obtain them who had not first merited his esteem and that of the public. It was even a maxim with him †, that they who shunned dignities were the most worthy of them; and

* *Præsidēs, proconsules, & legatos nunquam fecit ad beneficium, sed ad iudicium vel suum vel Senatus.*

† . . . dicens, *Invites non ambiens in Republica collocandos*

and that the fittest persons to be employed in places of trust, were those who wanted to avoid them, and not those who made interest to get them. He greatly approved of the custom even then used in the Christian church, of proclaiming publicly the names of those that were to be promoted to the priesthood, in order that if there was any objection against them, it might be made known and be examined into. Alexander imitated this method, by declaring before-hand the names of those he intended to appoint governors of provinces. But at the same time, not to stir up against them the rage of groundless envy and malice, he insisted that the accusations should be important and well proved; otherwise the accusers were punished as being guilty of calumny.

46.

Another of his maxims was, that every man should know * the business he undertook: and in consequence of this he promoted none to the first offices of the state, but such as were capable of doing their duties themselves, without being directed, but only assisted by their assessors.

Marks of
his regard
for them.

Governors of provinces chosen with such care could not fail to be respected. The emperor himself shewed a great regard for them, as I observed before. He never gave any one of them a successor, without saying to the person who went out of place, "The republic thanks you;" nor without making him a present sufficient to enable him to live according to his rank.

His care
not to put
them in
danger of
ruining
them-
selves.

Alexander's intention was not that the administration of the affairs of the public should enrich those to whom he intrusted them: nor on the other hand, did he mean that they should be losers by their offices. The proconsuls and proprætors had always been paid at the expence of the republic.

* Eos esse promovendos qui per se Rempublicam gerere possent, non per assessores. . . . unumquemque id agere debere quod noscet.

lic. Augustus had fixed a sum for that purpose. Alexander thought it more eligible to furnish them with plate, equipages, domestics, and all other necessaries for their houses, on condition that at the expiration of their office they should return the horses and slaves, and keep the rest if they had behaved well; or, on the contrary, pay four times their value, if their administration had not been just.

Suet. Aug.
96.
Lamprid.
Al. 42.

The same spirit of equity made Alexander ease them of the burden of paying their assessors. Pescennius Niger had thought of reforming this abuse: but Alexander did it in reality, as assigning salaries to the assessors of the proconsuls and proprætors in the provinces.

46.

The ancient splendour of the consulship was now dwindled into little more than an empty pomp attended with enormous expences. Alexander lessened these expences, in order, without doubt, to render accessible to merit, though not blessed with the gifts of fortune, an office which was still looked upon as the highest of honours.

He lessens
the expen-
ces of the
consulship.
43.

His careful vigilance extended to every part of the state, for the better regulating of which he passed a great number of laws, of which we cannot but regret our not knowing the particulars: but we know that after making them, he took care to have them duly executed, and observed them strictly himself: a proof of the firmness and rectitude of his mind. Neither can we doubt their having been extremely wise and judicious, if we consider how carefully they were examined and discussed before he gave them his final sanction. They were first proposed in a council of twenty, or sometimes fifty senators, all learned in the law, and well acquainted with the maxims and interests of the government. These counsellors were allowed sufficient time to consider of them, and to weigh their advantages and their inconveniencies. They voted afterwards, when the opinion of each was committed

Laws made
with great
judgment.
16. 42. 44.

to writing, together with the motives on which it was grounded. The ordinance that was passed, was the result of these deliberations.

Some regulations relative to the police of the city. 33.

This is all we can say upon this subject, which ought to have afforded us abundant matter. Lampridius mentions only some regulations relative to the police of Rome, which scarcely deserve being noticed. Alexander established in the fourteen districts of the city fourteen inspectors, all of consular rank, who were to be the standing council of the præfect or governor of the city, and to judge jointly with him all causes brought before his tribunal. He distributed all the arts and trades into different classes, or companies, and appointed them their proper officers and judges. He likewise thought of distinguishing the different conditions of men, by their dresses; with a view, undoubtedly, of restraining luxury, which confounds all distinction. But Ulpian and Paul, to whom he communicated his plan, were afraid it might be a means of creating riots and seditions in a city so large as Rome, where, upon the least quarrel, the dress of either of the adversaries would become a signal to those of the same class to run to his assistance: and the prince, sensible of the justness of this objection, yielded to it. Seneca tells us, that it had formerly been proposed in the senate to distinguish slaves from free men by their cloaths; and that the wisest men were then of opinion, that it would not be prudent to make the slaves too sensible of the superiority of their number over that of persons of free condition.

Sen. de Clem. l. 24.

Alexander's veneration for the memory of great men. Lamprid. Al. 26, 28, 29—31.

A prince so virtuous as Alexander, was personally interested in honouring virtue. We have seen how he protected and rewarded it in the living. He respected it equally in the dead, and the glory of the great men of former ages was dear and precious to him. He collected in Trajan's square the statues of the deified emperors of Rome, and of the most famous

famous Roman commanders, which were before dispersed in different parts of the city, and adorned them with inscriptions setting forth their great exploits and eminent virtues. He had two chapels in his palace, in which the principal objects of his veneration were ranged in two classes, the one destined to virtue, and the other to talents. In the first of these were placed the good emperors, among whom he ranked Alexander the Great; and next to them the wise men by whose useful lessons mankind had been benefited, Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius Tyanæus, and Jesus Christ: a strange mixture! but which however shews the inclination of this prince to venerate virtue, wherever he thought he found it. The second chapel was for military heroes and men conspicuous in the republic of letters, Achilles, Cicero, Virgil, whom he called the Plato of the Poets, and some other famous names. He offered sacrifices every day in each of these chapels. It was with this act of religion that he began his day, the remainder of which was divided between business and the indispensable necessity of some relaxation.

The greatest part of his morning was devoted to the dispatch of business with his ministers, to which end he rose even before it was light, if the urgency of affairs required it, and spent several hours together in this occupation; without ever seeming tired or displeased. A countenance always placid and serene, and an invariable sweetness of temper; rendered labour easy to himself and to others. After this he allotted some time to reading, and to bodily exercise, such as wrestling, running, or playing at tennis: he then bathed, but seldom dined, contenting himself generally with a little bread and milk, just sufficient to support him. In the afternoon he returned again to business, had his letters read to him, corrected them with his own hand, and signed them. The humanity of this good prince was conspicuous on

His distribution of the day.

these occasions, in his making his secretaries sit down, if they were tired by standing too long.

41. It was not until after all these duties were performed that he received his courtiers. He went often to plays and other entertainments of that kind, in which he took some delight. He had procured himself a very innocent amusement within his palace, by means of a great aviary of all sorts of birds, partridges, pheasants, ducks, peacocks, pigeons, &c. This feathered world often served him for relaxation. A prince cannot well divert himself in a cheaper manner. But yet Alexander would not suffer even this expence to be paid by his treasury. He sent the young ones of his fowls to market, there to be sold, in order to maintain his aviary.

He loved learning and learned men.

27. The reader may have observed by several things which have been already mentioned, that Alexander loved learning and learned men: a disposition perfectly consistent, and almost necessarily connected with the love of virtue. He was himself a man of great knowledge. He spoke Greek better than he did Latin, and made verses upon several subjects worthy of a prince like him. As
- Hom. 77.*
I. K. v. 180. Achilles sung upon the lyre the glory of former heroes, so Alexander wrote in verse the lives of the good and wise emperors. He understood geometry and music, and played upon several instruments, but always with a decency becoming his high station. I could wish that those to whom the care of his education was committed, had not made him join to these useful and pleasing accomplishments the study of the deceitful and frivolous arts of divination, astrology, the pretended science of the augurs, and that of the aruspices. Such was the superstition of the times in which he lived. A part of his day was regularly devoted to reading: and, guided by his love of serious and solid inquiries, he read those works in which he found the best instruction with regard
- 30.

regard to morality and government, such as the writings of Plato, and of Cicero upon the subject of the republic, and the offices of this last. Sometimes, too, he amused himself with the poets. Lampridius mentions particularly Horace, who cannot but please every intelligent reader; and Serenus Sammonicus, whom Alexander esteemed probably as a modern writer, and as an author whom he had seen and known. He frequently went to hear the orators and poets, when they recited their works, especially if the subject of them was the praise of the good princes who had preceded him, or of the great men of ancient Rome, or of Alexander the Great, for whom he had a singular veneration. The pleadings of the celebrated lawyers were also a subject which excited his curiosity; and when they read them in private assemblies as pieces of eloquence, after they had been re-touched, the emperor took a pleasure in being one of their hearers.

35.

It was not only in these actions of a more public nature that he shewed his regard for the learned: he was glad, as I said before, to have them at his table, to converse with them; and in these conversations he was not deficient on his side, having the talent of speaking well and agreably, and of enlivening what he said with pleasing and pertinent remarks. He loved the learned, and which is not a little singular, he feared them. He looked upon them as the arbiters of his reputation, of which he was extremely jealous: and lest they should tarnish it by false colours, he was willing they should learn from himself all they would have to write concerning him, without prejudice however to the sacred laws of truth.

34.

44.

34.

To favour the progress of letters, and of science in general, he allotted pensions to rhetoricians, grammarians, physicians, architects, men skilled in mechanics, and even to aruspices and astrologers, of whom he had a better opinion than they deserved.

44.

He established schools for all these arts, and enabled the professors of them, by his liberalities, to receive poor children who had a turn for study. He likewise gave stipends to advocates in the provinces, provided he was well assured that they pleaded without being feed by their clients.

Reflections
on the
causes to
which the
wisdom of
Alexander's
government
ought to be
ascribed.
Lamprid.
Al. 64, 65.

This picture of Alexander's conduct and government must not only give us a great esteem for him, but must also fill us with surprize, when we find this prince, who was not fourteen years old when he came to the throne, and who did not live to be twenty-seven, thus setting a pattern which few sovereigns, even of a much riper age, can equal. Lampridius, inquiring into the cause of this kind of phænomenon, ascribes it in the first place to the vigilant cares of Mamæa, for whom the young emperor always had the utmost deference; and next to that, to the counsels of the wise and honest friends who were always about him. Alexander's friends, says that historian, were men venerable for the purity of their morals, neither evil-doers, robbers, factious, cheats, inclined to unite for any bad design, enemies to the good, disciples of debauchery, cruel, nor capable of deceiving their master, or of exposing him thereby to the laughter of the public: but they were upright, incorruptible, modest, religious, and sincerely attached to their prince, whose reputation was dearer to them than any other thing. They never sold their interest with him, nor ever dealt in lies and cunning; but always let him know the truth upon every occasion, unbiassed by any private interest.

Such friends are a great help and an uncommon blessing to a prince. But in vain would they be near him, if he himself had not sagacity to find them out, and love of virtue to attach them to him. To the causes assigned by Lampridius we may therefore add, as the chief of all, Alexander's excellent disposition, which enabled him to profit by the wise
lessons

lessons of his mother, and the salutary counsels of his friends. He had been seduced by flatterers, immediately after his accession to the throne, and had suffered himself to be prejudiced against those who aimed at nothing but his real glory, inseparable from the welfare of the state. But that illusion did not last long. The young prince soon returned to the right way; and the solidity of his mind, and the goodness of his heart, fixed him in it for ever.

68.

So fair a life is however not without its blemishes; but they are few, and not considerable in themselves. The greatest blame laid to Alexander's charge is his extreme deference for his mother, a princess of heroic courage, but excessively imperious, and greedy after money. He is said to have connived at, and even to have authorized, Mamæa's rapines; which, undoubtedly, deserves blame, though it may not be totally inexcusable in a prince who owed every thing to his mother, and who found in her so many great qualities, that he could no more refuse her his esteem, on many accounts, than he could his respect and gratitude.

He has been blamed for his excessive deference for his mother. *Jul. Cæs.*

Herodian relates a thing, which if true, does not admit of any apology. He says that Mamæa, after giving her son a wife of illustrious birth, grew jealous of the young emperor's affection for a spouse who was worthy of him: that she could not bear to see her daughter-in-law share with her the honours of the supreme rank, and that, in order to enjoy them alone, she drove her from the palace: that the emperor's father-in-law, provoked by this treatment of his daughter, and by insults of every kind offered to himself, went to the camp of the prætorians, where, at the same time that he bestowed the greatest praises upon Alexander, he complained bitterly of the injustices of Mamæa; that it cost him his life; that Mamæa caused him to be killed, and that she banished his daughter to Africa. The same writer adds, that Alexander remained

Herod. l. VI.

remained a quiet spectator of a scene which ought to have interested him so deeply; that fear of his mother shut his mouth; and that he suffered with a patience little better than that of an idiot, what the most sacred laws of justice and humanity called upon him to prevent.

49. Herodian is the only * author in whom we find this story. Lampridius, following Dexippus an almost cotemporary writer, relates the thing quite otherwise. According to him, Alexander's father-in-law, whose name was Macrinus, loaded with dignities and honours, harboured criminal thoughts of greater grandeur, and endeavoured to deprive the emperor of his throne and life. His crime being discovered, condign punishment was inflicted on him; and his daughter was repudiated. This account, which neither charges Mamæa with an atrocious violence, nor her son with a despicable pusillanimity, seems to me by so much the more preferable, as Herodian may justly be suspected in the ill he says of Alexander. He shews himself, for what reason I know not, a declared enemy to the glory of this young prince, and represents him every where as a poor timorous child, stupidly governed by other people. If this writer had shewn any elevation of thought, any judgment, any accuracy, or any sound criticism in any part of his work, his testimony would be of great weight. But I find in him no other merit than that of elegance; a style often declamatory, and very little exactness in any of his accounts.

† or being too inquisitive and distrustful; Lamprid. c. 64. § 3. The second fault imputed to Alexander is that he was too inquisitive and suspicious. This reproach seems not to be groundless. Persons on whom he could depend, observed by his order all that was done in Rome, and brought him an account of it. Their particular

* I do not reckon Zoraras, who probably did no more than copy Herodian.

particular commissions were known to none but himself, because he feared their being corrupted by money; a temptation which he thought no man could resist. But, on the other hand, what danger of mistakes must there not always be in these secret reports, in which the informer alone is heard, in which he never is confronted with the accused, and in which it is so easy for him to indulge his own prejudices and passions, and to communicate even them to the prince who neither sees nor hears but through him. If these proceedings drew upon Alexander nothing worse than the bare reproach of being inquisitive, it must have been the goodness of his heart which preserved him from more fatal consequences: for the thing certainly is in itself an act of tyranny.

We have endeavoured to clear him of the charge of avarice. Perhaps it may not be so easy to justify him with regard to that of vanity. His timid regard for men of learning, strongly indicates in him the weakness of wanting to be praised. Nor can his thinking himself disparaged by his being looked upon as a Syrian, and his whim of pretending to a Roman origin, in consequence of which he drew up a pedigree deriving his descent in a direct line from the * Marcelli, be imputed to any thing but an ill-judged vanity. It would doubtless have been an advantage to a Roman emperor to be born a Roman. But not being so, Alexander's sole aim ought to have been to make amends for that defect by his virtues. To deny an origin known to all the world, and to forge a false genealogy, are tricks which should be left to very narrow minds.

These are the principal outlines of Alexander's portrait. But before we proceed to his war against the

* The text of Lampridius says the *Metelli*: but Casaubon prefers the *Marcelli*. In effect, Alexander is called Marcellus in the abridgment of Aurelius Victor; and his father's name was *Murianus*, which is more like *Marcellus* than *Metellus*.

and for being too much inclined to vanity.

29. 44.

the Parthians, and that with the Germans in which he perished; I shall place here the few facts which history furnishes us with relative to the first years of his reign; and shall add to them, in order to finish the picture, what we know of his behaviour towards the soldiery.

The first years of his reign little disturbed by foreign enemies.
Lamprid. Al. 58.

Alexander, in the first years of his reign, enjoyed peace with foreign nations, if we except some slight commotions of the barbarians towards the frontiers. Lampridius speaks of advantages gained by Furius Celsus in Mauritania Tingitana; by Varius Maecrinus, who was related to the emperor, in Illyricum; and by Julius Palmatus in Armenia. This is all we know of these events, which cannot have been very considerable.

Continual seditions of the prætorians. Ulpian falls a victim to them.

The prætorians gave Alexander much more trouble at the times I am now speaking of, than any of his foreign enemies. Those insolent and intractable troops could not bear the severity of a prince zealous for discipline and good order. Ulpian, to whose counsels they ascribed every thing that displeased them in the emperor's conduct, was the victim of their seditious fury.

Tillem. Al. rt. 17.

Domitius Ulpianus, whom we for brevity call Ulpian, held the first rank amongst Alexander's friends. He was a native of Tyr, and, in the reign of Severus, was the assessor and disciple of the great Papinianus, under whom he acquired a perfect knowledge of the law, and confirmed himself in the principles of strict probity. I have already said, that his merit procured him the honour of being chosen from among numbers as the fittest person to instruct and direct the infancy of Alexander, then Cæsar; and that the same cause made him afterwards be removed from that post by Heliogabalus, who hated virtue. Alexander, when emperor, replaced him near his person, as his tutor and director, and reposed such confidence in him as gave uneasiness and umbrage to his mother Mamea, who, jealous of every one that shared

Sup. l. 4. 51.

the

the least part of the prince's favour, which, with his authority, she wanted to engross wholly to herself, feared Ulpian at first as a dangerous rival. But his prudent behaviour soon removed her suspicions, insomuch that she herself became the readiest of any to commend the judicious choice her son had made. Alexander trusted Ulpian with the most important employments. He made him his secretary of state, and appointed him assistant to, and in some measure inspector over, the prætorian præfects Flavius and Chrestus. These last, cramped by his vigilance, spirited up a sedition among their soldiers, in order to get rid of him: but their wicked contrivance fell upon their own heads. The emperor, informed of their design, put them both to death, and made Ulpian * sole prætorian præfect. Every thing then rested upon him, and he might be reckoned the second person in the empire. Whatever affairs were to be laid before the emperor went first through his hands, that he might examine and report them. I have already said that this faithful minister was the only man with whom the emperor conferred alone. If any one desired a private audience of the prince, Ulpian was present at it. He was the friend at all hours; Alexander inviting him to partake of his amusements, as well as of his labours, and making him dine and sup with him oftener, and with more pleasure, than he did any one else.

But all the emperor's kindness and attention could not protect his minister against the unbounded

* Niphilinus and Zonaras, to whom we owe the abridgment of Dion Cassius, relate this affair otherwise, and charge Ulpian with causing the death of the two prætorian præfects purposely that he might succeed them. For the honour of this great ornament of the law, I have chosen, with M. de Tillemont, to follow Zosinus, who had the text of Dion Cassius before his eyes, and who may have understood the meaning of his author better than the other two.

26.
Zos. l. J.

Lampriid.
Al. 15.

31.

34.

51. bounded licentiousness of the prætorians. Ulpian was in perpetual danger from their seditions; and Alexander saved his life more than once by stepping in between him and them, and by covering him with his robe. At length, however, their fury rising to an uncommon height, Ulpian fled for shelter to the palace: but neither the emperor nor his mother could, with all their efforts, hinder him this time from being massacred before their eyes. M. de Tillemont places this tragical event in the year of Christ 228, which answers to the sixth and seventh of Alexander's reign.

Ulpian certainly deserved a better fate. He has been praised by all the Pagans, without exception and without reserve. The Christians have reproached him with hating them, and with carrying his aversion so far as, contrary to the inclination of his sovereign who did not dislike them, to collect all the edicts which former emperors had published against them. Let us pity a blindness, in which he was confirmed even by his regard for the laws which he had studied so much.

The rage of the prætorians increased with the success of their criminal attempts. They fell upon Dion Cassius, who was just returned from his government of the upper Pannonia, where he had found means to bring the troops to a just sense of their duty, and to make them respect the authority of their superiors. The prætorians, fearing lest this example should be productive of consequences disagreeable to them, had the insolence to demand Dion's head. The emperor, far from listening to them, honoured Dion with a second consulship, in which he promised to be his colleague, and to defray all his expences. This resolution was laudable: but Alexander did not persist in it. Apprehending lest the prætorians should fly to extremities which it might not be in his power to check, if they saw the object of their hatred invested with the ornaments of the first dignity of the

*Tactant.
Inst. V. 11.*

The prætorians demand the death of Dion Cassius, who retires into Bithynia.

*Dion. lib.
LXXV.*

the empire, he advised Dion to pass the time of his consulship out of Rome. Dion obeyed, went into Campania, where the emperor then was, staid some days with him, shewed himself without fear to the soldiers of the guard, and afterwards, under pretence of being ill of the gout, retired to Bithynia his native country, there to spend the remainder of his days : happy in being able to extricate himself, like Hector, in Homer *, from among tumults, darts and swords, murders and carnage.

Ulpian's death, and the danger of Dion Cassius, prove evidently a weakness in this emperor's government with respect to the soldiery ; which is still farther confirmed by the timidity with which he proceeded in the punishment of Epagathus, the principal author of the murder of Ulpian. Alexander removed him from Rome and from Italy, under pretence of sending him to command Egypt, from whence he had him brought back to Crete, and there put to death.

Reflection on these marks of weakness in Alexander's government, compared with his vigour upon other occasions.

Another event which gives us no great opinion of Alexander's firmness with regard to the prætorians, is a violent sedition that broke out between them and the people, and lasted three days, with continual and bloody battles, in which numbers perished on both sides. We are not told that either the prince, or Ulpian, who was then alive and was prætorian præfect, contributed in the least to appease this terrible tumult. The prætorians, being worsted, began to set fire to the city, upon which the people submitted.

It is, however, certain that Alexander was far from wanting courage to check the audaciousness of the soldiery. Lampridius gives us a detail of several

* It is Dion Cassius who applies to himself these two lines of Homer :

Ἐκίσρα δ' ἐκδιδίωκεν ὕπερθε Ζεῦ, ἐν ἧς κοίτῃ,

Ἐκ τ' ἀλδρεκλήστῃς, ὅτε θ' αἰματ' ἔειπε κλυδαίμῃ.

Iliad. XI. 168, 164.

Lampriid.
Al. 51—54.

several facts, which remove all doubt in that respect. When the troops were in the field, he never suffered any officer or soldier to quit his standard. If any did, in order to maraud and plunder upon their march, or otherwise, they were punished either by bastonade, whipping, or a pecuniary fine, according to the rank of the offender: or if that rank was such that he could not subject them to any of these punishments, he reprimanded them severely, asking them, “Whether they would like to have their lands treated in the manner they treated those of others?” He broke a soldier who had done considerable mischief to an old woman, and condemned him to be her slave, that he, being a farrier by trade, might maintain her by his labour, in order to repair the injury he had done her. The comrades of the soldier thus rigorously punished, murmured: but the emperor was resolute, and made them fear and respect his authority.

But the strongest instance of his boldness in punishing the soldiery, was his breaking a whole legion, as Cæsar had formerly done. Alexander being at Antioch, at the time of his preparing to make war against the Persians, learnt that the morals of his troops were corrupted by their abode in that voluptuous city; upon which he ordered some of those who had signalized themselves most by their debauchery, to be seized and put in prison. The legion to which these soldiers belonged grew mutinous, and demanded them back with seditious cries. Alexander ascended his tribunal, ordered the prisoners to be brought before him, loaded with chains, and then spoke, as follows to the mutineers: “Fellow-soldiers! for such I am willing still to call you, because I make no doubt but that you disapprove of the behaviour of those who have incurred my displeasure; you must know that it is the discipline of our ancestors which preserves the
“ power

“ power and glory of the republic. Without this
“ support, the empire and the Roman name would
“ infallibly perish. No, I will not suffer the infam-
“ ous disorders which reigned under that mon-
“ ster of impurity, my predecessor, ever to be re-
“ vived whilst I am on the throne. Roman soldiers,
“ your companions, my comrades in war, bathe,
“ drink to excess, spend their time in dalliance
“ with women, and, in short, live like the most
“ effeminate and most debauched among the
“ Greeks. Shall I suffer such licentiousness! and
“ shall not the death of the offenders expiate their
“ crime!” At these words the legion grew ex-
tremely clamorous. “ Forbear that noise,” said
Alexander to them. “ It may be proper in war,
“ and against the enemy, but not against your
“ emperor. Your officers have certainly taught
“ you to use it against the Sarmatians, the Ger-
“ mans, and the Persians; and not against him
“ who employs in feeding and cloathing you with
“ the money he receiveſ from the provinces. For-
“ bear those furious clamours, if you will not have
“ me send you all away, and with a word reduce
“ you to the condition of private subjects of Rome.
“ Though I doubt whether you deserve even that
“ name, whilst you violate the most sacred laws
“ of the Roman discipline.” The mutineers, in-
stead of growing quiet, murmured more auda-
ciously than before, and menaced him with their
arms: upon which, resuming his speech in a more
commanding and resolute tone of voice; “ Prove
“ your valour,” said he to them, “ if you have
“ any, against the enemy. I fear not your me-
“ naces. In killing me, you kill but one man;
“ and the republic, eternally subsisting, the senate
“ and the Roman people, will not fail to avenge
“ my cause.” Still nothing could awe the sedi-
tious, who grew more outrageous than ever: when
Alexander, taking his resolution, “ Begone,” said
he to them, “ subjects, and no longer soldiers of
“ the

“the Romans: begone, and quit your arms.” He was obeyed: and those very men who had so obstinately opposed the punishment of their comrades, submitted quietly to the punishment inflicted on themselves. They laid down their arms and military accoutrements, and instead of returning to the camp, dispersed in different places. What is more, they solicited Alexander in the most humble manner to reinstate them; but he was inexorable for thirty days, at the end of which he was prevailed upon to grant their request; though it then cost the lives of their tribunes, who had suffered corruption to creep in among them, and whose connivance had fomented their sedition. The legion thus broken and restored was afterwards extremely attached to Alexander, and served him remarkably well in the Persian war.

The facts I have now related, and especially the last, are such striking proofs of firmness and elevation of soul as deserve the name of heroism. How then shall we reconcile them with the former instances of weakness in this prince? Neither the one nor the other can be denied. Dion Cassius attests things which he saw, and in which he was personally interested. Lampridius cannot have invented the facts which he relates with all their circumstances. The only way to reconcile them is by distinguishing the times they speak of. Alexander, young as he was when he ascended the throne, could not yet have acquired, in the first years of his reign, that proper and personal authority which heightens the respect due to the sovereign's command: and the troops, accustomed to give the law to their emperors, maintained for some time the licentiousness they were in possession of. But when the young prince was turned of twenty, and became capable of displaying his talents and of acting vigorously, he asserted his rights, made the pride of the soldiers bend, and forced them so much the more to respect him,

him, as, to a firm and resolute conduct, he joined a mildness well suited to gain their affection.

His first care with respect to the troops was, that they should not want for any thing. He used frequently to say, "The soldier * does not fear
" his commanders, unless he be fed and cloathed,
" and has some money in his purse." According- 18
ly he made this a capital point, and insisted so strictly on its being observed, that if the officers purloined the least part of the soldiers dues, the fraud was punished with death.

To this act of justice he added marks of kind- 47
ness. He eased them greatly of their fatigues, and furnished them with mules and camels to carry part of their baggage in their marches. If they fell sick, he visited them himself in their tents; and if the sickness was great, he lodged them in good houses, where he desired that all possible care might be taken of them, at his expence. These paternal cares were accompanied with the most obliging speeches, such † as, "That he took
" more care of his soldiers than of himself, be-
" cause it was upon them that the welfare of the
" republic depended."

The emperors had always undertaken to secure 58.
to the troops a decent and comfortable retreat in their old age. Alexander perfected this plan, and endeavoured to render it more useful both to the government and to individuals. He distributed among the officers and soldiers who had served their time, the lands that bordered upon the barbarians, and stocked those lands with cattle and all other things necessary to till them; thinking it equally dangerous and unbecoming, that the frontiers of the empire should remain uncultivated desarts. These gifts were appropriated to the military

* Miles non timet, nisi vestitus, armatus, calceatus & satur.
& habens aliquid in zonula. 52.

† Dicunt milites se magis servare, quam seipsum, quod salus publica in his esset.

litary people only, and that for ever, to prevent their falling into the hands of men who might not belong to that noble profession: nor were they allowed to pass from father to son, unless the son was in the army. This institution of Alexander's, has been looked upon by many as the origin and model of the feudal tenures, of which military service was the essential condition.

It results from what we have said, that from the time when Alexander became capable of taking the reins of government into his own hands, and of exerting his genius and courage, no prince ever deserved more either to be feared or to be loved by the soldiery; consequently that the weakness of his government in the first years of his reign ought to be imputed to his great youth, which did not permit him to act entirely as master; and lastly, that if the Roman soldiers had then been disciplinable, he would have restored discipline among them, and that his reign would have been as happy and peaceable, as it was wise and virtuous.

Disturbances and commotions. Several pretenders to the empire.

The intractable obstinacy of the troops was such, as left this great and good prince scarce any repose. Dion Cassius speaks of a sedition of the legions in Mesopotamia, who killed their commander, Flavius Heracleo. Other monuments of history mention several pretenders to the empire, who set up against Alexander. I have already taken notice of Ovinius Camillus. Zosimus and the epitome of Aurelius Victor name an Uranes, an Antoninus, a Taurinus, who assumed the purple. All these rebels had their partizans in the army; and though their attempts did not succeed, they do not the less prove the extreme readiness of the troops to mutiny, and conspire against their prince; so that it is not to be wondered at if he at last perished by their hands. But before that melancholy event happened, he made war against the Persians, and prepared to attack the nations of Germany, as I shall now relate.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

Revolution in the East. Artaxerxes king of the Persians revolts against Artabanes king of the Parthians, and transfers the empire to his nation. He prepares to make war upon the Romans. Alexander charged with timidity by Herodian, without cause. He sends an embassy to Artaxerxes to exhort him to keep peace ; but in vain. He prepares for war, and sets out for it. The order of the march was given out two months before-hand. He makes his troops observe an exact discipline upon their march. He sends a second embassy to Artaxerxes, from Antioch. Arrogant answer of Artaxerxes, brought by an embassy of four hundred Persian lords. Slight commotions among the troops of Syria and Egypt. Alexander forms a most judicious plan of war. The execution of it was not equal to the design, according to Herodian His account does not seem at all probable. Different account given by Lampridius, who says that Alexander gained a great victory over the Persians. Alexander returning to Rome, gives the senate an account of his exploits. He triumphs. He sets out for the war against the Germans. Arriving in Gaul, he endeavours to persuade the Barbarians to peace. Bad inclinations of his troops. Origin of Maximin. He cabals against Alexander : and causes him to be assassinated by some of the soldiers. Alexander is universally regretted. Dreadful disorders which followed his death. How far he favoured the Christians. The Civil Law ceases to flourish. Modestinus the last of the civilians. No writer of distinguished eminence. Marius Maximus. Dion Cassius. Alexander's marriages. His sister Theoclea.

It volution
in the east.
Artax-
erxes king
of the Per-
sians re-
verts u-
gainst Ar-
tabanes
king of the
Parthian,
and trans-
fer. the
empire to
his nation.

WE have hitherto seen frequent wars be-
tween the Romans and the Parthians,
ever since the unfortunate expedition of Crassus.
These two rival empires had looked upon each
other with a jealous eye. Often in arms, always
under uneasiness and mutual distrust, they seem-
ed to maintain a sort of equality: and though the
Parthians were obliged to give the Romans the
pre-eminence of honour, they still preserved their
independence, and never submitted to the yoke
of that power which swallowed up all the other
kingdoms of the known world. Trajan broke in
upon them, and made himself master of consider-
able parts of their dominions. He shook their
monarchy to its very foundations, and would per-
haps have completed the conquest of the whole,
and have reduced the empire of the Parthians to
a Roman province, had he not been prevented by
sickness and death. No one of the Roman em-
perors that came after him was equally skilled in
war, nor capable of prosecuting what he had un-
dertaken. The equilibrium between the two em-
pires was restored; and the victories of L. Verus,
and those of Severus, checked the Parthians, but
did not endanger them. I do not speak of Cara-
calla's war, begun foolishly, and ended shamefully
for Rome. This was the last attempt against them
by the Romans, with respect to whom they still re-
tained the title of *Invincible*, when an intestine
revolution totally changed their situation, and made
them disappear from off the scene of the universe.

To avoid ambiguity, we must here distinguish
the nation of the Parthians from the empire of
the Parthians, which contained eighteen king-
doms, or great provinces. The nation, I say, dis-
appeared, and returned to the obscurity from
which Arsaces had drawn it. Before Arsaces,
scarce any mention is made of the Parthians:
and after the era I am now going to speak of, his-
tory

tory no longer knows them. But the empire which they had founded continued, with this only change, that it passed from one people to another. This little we know of this great event is as follows :

Artabanes, the last king of the Parthians, had obtained the throne by a civil war against his brother, who disputed it with him. We may believe that this domestic division, though terminated in his favour, weakened his power, and gave the Persians room to attempt a revolt, and means to succeed therein.

We learn from Strabo, that the Persians formed a separate body of the state under the empire of the Parthians, and had their particular king. Notwithstanding their reverse of fortune, the glory of the great Cyrus, and the long succession of kings which their nation had given to Asia, were ever present to their minds ; and at length there rose up among them a man who undertook to restore their ancient splendour.

His name was Artaxerxes, and, if we believe Agathias, he was an adventurer, the son of a soldier called Sasan, by the wife of a shoemaker named Pabec, who, being skilled in astrology, and knowing by that means that the son of Sasan would become a great man, delivered his wife to this soldier. The story, as it is told, looks much like a fable. I do not deny but that the name of Artaxerxes's father was Sasan : which seems to be confirmed by the authority of Abulfaragius, who calls by the common name of Sasanides, all the princes that reigned in Persia from the Artaxerxes we are now speaking of, down to the time when that country was invaded by the successors of Mahomet. But the other circumstances of the birth of this Persian hero border too much upon the marvellous to deserve the least degree of credit. Dion Cassius likewise speaks of Artaxerxes,

as of an unknown upstart. Herodian styles him king of the Persians, and I shall do the same.

This Artaxerxes spirited up the Persians his countrymen and his subjects to revolt against Artabanes, defeated this prince in three battles, killed him, and caused himself to be acknowledged in his stead king of all the empire of which the Parthians were then the ruling nation. M. de Tillemont, following father Petavius, places this revolution under the year of Christ 226; between the fourth and fifth of the reign of Alexander Severus. Consequently the empire of the Arsacidæ, which began in the year of Rome five hundred and two, and ended in the year nine hundred and seventy-seven, lasted four hundred and seventy-five years.

He prepares to make war upon the Romans.

The change of the domination of the Parthians into that of the Persians, made no alteration with respect to the Romans. That empire still remained their enemy, and caused them even greater disasters than before, under its new masters. Artaxerxes had no sooner settled his rule over all the countries which Artabanes had possessed, than he carried his ambition farther, and prepared to make war against the Romans. He passed the Tigris, and laid siege to Atræ, intending to make that city his place of arms in Mesopotamia. His success in this attempt was the same as that of Trajan and Severus; and he was forced to raise the siege. This check having probably encouraged those who were dissatisfied with the new government, he was obliged to carry his arms into Media, Parthiænæ, and Armenia, whither the sons of Artabanes had retired. He was not successful in this last country, though he certainly did not suffer much in his expedition, since he immediately after resumed his design of making war against the Romans. He made great preparations to that purpose, threatened Mesopotamia and Syria, and even claimed all Asia Minor as far as the Egean sea; alledging that these countries had been conquered

conquered by Cyrus, and governed by Persian satraps, under the authority of that great king, and down to the time of Darius Codomanus; and that they consequently were appendages of the empire of the Persians, whose glory he had retrieved, and whose ancient rights he was determined to assert.

This news, when carried to Rome, terrified Alexander, if we believe Herodian. Nurtured in peace, and accustomed to the pleasures of that great city, the young prince, says that historian, was seized with grief and fear at the prospect of the fatigues and dangers of so distant a war against so powerful an enemy. Such is the light in which Herodian, as I said before, always represents Alexander. Lampridus gives us a quite different idea of him: he ascribes to him the glory of having been great in arms: and the testimony of this last writer seems to me preferable here. For, if Alexander was afraid, why did he put himself at the head of his armies? And as to his pretended attachment to the pleasures of Rome, that reproach is flatly contradicted by the whole tenor of this young emperor's conduct, which bordered more upon austerity, than upon luxury or love of pleasure.

It is true he had no violent passion for war, and did all he could to avoid it: in which his prudence cannot but be commended. He sent ambassadors to Artaxerxes, to represent to him that he ought not, upon vain hopes, to kindle a war which would set the whole universe on fire; and that the two empires were great enough for each of them to be satisfied with their limits. The ambassadors were also ordered to remind him of the victories which Trajan, L. Verus, and Severus had gained over the Parthians, as pledges of those the Romans might still expect if he dared to attack them.

The king of the Persians paid no regard to these remonstrances. Naturally haughty and presumptuous, and elated by his success at home, he answered

Dio.

swered Alexander's messages by actual hostilities. He entered Mesopotamia, laid waste the country, carried off a considerable booty, attacked the camps of the legions who guarded the passes of the rivers; and all these advantages he owed less to his own valour and audaciousness, than to the bad behaviour of the Roman soldiers, some of whom would not defend themselves, whilst others were even so perfidious as to join him. George Syncellus relates, that the king of the Persians besieged Nisibis in this expedition, and extended his ravages into Cappadocia.

He pre-
pares for
war.
Lamprid.
ll. 50. &
Herod.

Alexander, finding that there was no prospect of maintaining peace, resolved to make war in a manner becoming a Roman emperor. He proposed to himself no less a model, than the famous conqueror whose name he bore. Mistrusting the legions of Syria, always effeminated by the mildness and pleasures of that climate and country, he judged it necessary to carry with him not only his prætorians, but part of the European legions. He raised new troops throughout the whole extent of the empire, and mixed the Macedonian discipline with the Roman, forming a phalanx of six legions, and establishing two bodies of old soldiers, whom he called, the one * Chryspides, and the others Argyræpides: and finally, satisfied that the presence of the prince is always a powerful incentive to the soldier, he resolved to march in person at the head of his army.

And sets
out for it.
Herod.

When the time of their departure drew near, he assembled the soldiers that were in and about Rome,

to

* Soldiers who bore shields of gold, as those of the Argyræpides were of silver. Alexander the Macedonian, when he set out for his expedition to the Indies had formed a corps of Argyræpides, that is to say, of soldiers whose bucklers were plated with silver. Alexander Severus refined upon his model, by instituting the Chryspides, whose shields were covered with gold.

to notify to them his resolution; and exhort them to behave well in the war to which he was going to lead them. The speech which Herodian lends him on this occasion, favours more of the elegance of a timid sophist, than of the noble confidence of a warrior and a general. I shall not extract any part of it here, but shall content myself with saying, that Alexander made use of an argument more prevalent with the troops, that of giving them an ample largess. He went afterwards to the senate, to whom he likewise communicated his design, informing them also of the day he was to set out; which seems to have been in the year of Christ 232, when he was near twenty-four years of age, and entered into the eleventh year of his reign.

Before he left Rome he went up to the capitol, and there offered the usual sacrifices: after which he set out, accompanied to some distance by the whole senate and all the people, whose tenderness for so good a prince, then on the point of leaving them, made them shed many tears. Alexander himself, according to Herodian, could not help shewing the same marks of concern, and often turned his eyes back towards the city. His tears were far from being unworthy of a great soul, if they proceeded, not from weakness, but, which it is more equitable to suppose, from a grateful sense of the affliction his people expressed for him.

He took his rout through Illyricum, from whence he was to carry with him part of the troops that were generally quartered there. His march had been settled two months before, and notified by placards posted up in Rome, and all other places where it was thought necessary. “On such a day, at such an hour, said the placard, I shall set out from Rome, and shall lay the first night at such a place.” All the places through which he was to pass, all those in which the troops were to be furnished with provisions, and those at which they

The order of his march was given out two months before-hand. *I. i. pri. Al. 43.*

were

were to halt, were particularly specified : and this plan was punctually executed.

He makes his troops observe an exact discipline upon their march.

50.

I have already said with what severity he caused strict discipline to be observed in all his marches. Every man kept his post : the soldier was modest and reserved ; the officer amiable and polite : so that one would rather have thought it a company of senators passing by, than an army upon its march. Accordingly all the people of the provinces heaped blessings upon Alexander. Even the troops themselves, whom he thus tied down to their duty, loved their young emperor, as a brother, a son, or a father ; because he took great care, as I said before, not to let them want for any thing. The soldier was well fed, well cloathed, well shod, had neat arms, and good horses with rich furniture : nothing was more magnificent, nor at the same time better disciplined, than the Roman army. Alexander was affable to all. He neither distinguished himself by luxury nor good living. When he dined, his tent was open on all sides, that the soldiers might see the frugality of his table.

51.

He sends a second embassy to Artaxerxes, from Antioch.

Herod.

In this manner he arrived at Antioch, from whence, still more fully to justify the steps he was going to take, and hoping too that his presence upon the spot, which had already obliged Artaxerxes to retire from before Nisibis, might be productive of some farther good event, he sent a second embassy to that king, exhorting him to moderate his vast projects, and to remain quiet. Artaxerxes probably looked upon these repeated endeavours to avoid a war, as the effect of fear and weakness ; and growing thereupon more intractable than ever, he sent his answer to the Roman emperor by four hundred Persian lords, magnificently dressed, armed with their bows, and mounted upon fine horses. Upon their arrival, the chief of this embassy declared to Alexander, that the great king Artaxerxes ordered the Romans and their commander to relinquish

Artaxerxes sent his answer to the Roman emperor by four hundred Persian lords, magnificently dressed, armed with their bows, and mounted upon fine horses. Upon their arrival, the chief of this embassy declared to Alexander, that the great king Artaxerxes ordered the Romans and their commander to relinquish

quish

quish to him Syria and all the countries situated between the sea of Cilicia, the Ægæan sea, and the Pontus Euxinus, as belonging to the ancient domain of the Persians. If we credit Herodian, Alexander violated the law of nations with regard to these Persian ambassadors, not so far indeed as to take away their lives; but he ordered them to be arrested, stripped them of all the riches they had brought with them, and confined them in different towns of Phrygia. This writer has so little judgment, that he almost praises Alexander for his moderation in not inflicting a greater punishment upon these ministers, who, after all, did no more than execute the commands of their master. So bad a judge of things deserves little credit as a witness. M. de Tillemont is inclined to deny the fact, and we are of his opinion.

Alexander finding that Artaxerxes was absolutely bent on war, prepared to carry it on vigorously on his side. He was stopt a little by some seditious commotions, or rather by a revolt of the troops of Egypt and Syria. Perhaps what we before said of some rash pretenders to the empire, may belong to this time. These disturbances, however, did not extend far, but were soon and easily appeased by the punishment of the offenders. I have already spoken of the mutiny of a legion which he was obliged to break, and which obtained its restoration by prayers and supplications. These and all other cares of the like nature being over, Alexander thought of nothing more than how he might form the best plan for his campaign against Artaxerxes.

It was a maxim with him always to consult the most intelligent whenever he wanted to be instructed in any thing. So, when this war was in agitation, he advised with old warriors, trained up to arms, and who to the experience they had personally acquired, joined a knowledge of history, fit to direct them, by past examples, how to be-

Slight
commo-
tions a-
mong the
troops of
Syria and
Egypt.

Alexander
forms a
most judi-
cious plan
of war.
L. ii. p. 16.

have

have in similar cases. With the help of a council thus formed, Alexander settled a most excellent plan of his campaign.

Herod.

As he had a fine army, composed of troops as numerous as they were well appointed, it was resolved to divide them into three bodies, in order to attack the empire of the Persians in three different parts. One of these detachments was to cross Armenia, a country in alliance with the Romans, and from thence to penetrate into Media: another was to march southward, towards the conflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris; that is to say, towards Susiana* and Persia properly so called; and the emperor himself, with the main body of his army, purposed taking the middle road, by passing through Mesopotamia, thereby to carry the war at once into the center of his enemy's dominions. All these troops were afterwards to rejoin at a place indicated for that purpose.

This plan was extremely well concerted in order to embarrass Artaxerxes infinitely, to multiply his dangers, and to oblige him either to divide his forces, and consequently to weaken them, or to abandon to the Romans that part of his dominions which he should leave defenceless. But the execution of it was not equal to the design, if we believe Herodian; and that through the fault of Alexander, who, either withheld by his own timidity, or weak enough to be guided by the counsels of a mother alarmed and terrified without any cause, did not operate at all with the main body of his army, which

The execution of it was not equal to the design, according to Herodian.

* Herodian says Parthia, or the country of the Parthians, which is very distant from the conflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris. I have taken the liberty to substitute, by a conjecture, founded on the situation of the places, Susiana and Persia. That writer was far from being learned, as he himself proves on this very occasion. He says, the mouth of the Tigris is not known, what every one knows, and always has known, that the Tigris, after having received the waters of the Euphrates, discharges itself into the Persian gulph.

which he commanded in person. The detachment that was sent to Persia had some success at first: but Artaxerxes falling upon it afterwards with all his forces, it was cut to pieces, in such manner that not a single man escaped. That which marched by the way of Armenia succeeded, and penetrated into Media: but upon the news of the disaster I have been speaking of, it was recalled in the bad season of the year, and perished in great numbers, partly by famine, and partly through fatigue and misery, in a long retreat through a mountainous country. By this means Alexander, who had advanced no farther than the plains of Mesopotamia, returned to Antioch covered with shame and ignominy, sick, and loaded with the hatred of the soldiers, who justly imputed to him all their misfortunes, and whose anger he could not appease but by dint of money.

One would scarcely suspect the truth of an account delivered with such particular circumstances. But yet, that this of Herodian is false, appears plainly from the chain of subsequent events. For it is certain, even according to that writer himself, that Artaxerxes remained quiet all the next campaign, and it was not until four years after that the Persians renewed the war. It is true, that the historian we are speaking of, endeavours to account for this inactivity of the conquerors, by saying, that, notwithstanding their advantages, they suffered much, because the Romans made a brave defence, and killed great numbers of their men. He adds, that the kings of those countries had not any regular troops; but that when they wanted to take the field, they issued out their orders to their subjects, who thereupon repaired to them, bringing with them the necessary provisions, often accompanied by their wives, and forming a confused multitude, rather than an army. When the campaign was over, they separated and returned to their own homes, carrying with them, for the only reward

His account does not seem at all probable.

reward of their labour, the plunder they had taken from the enemy. All this is true: but still it is inconceivable that Artaxerxes, who before the war thought of nothing less than conquering all the countries betwixt him and the Ægean sea, should, when victorious, remain quiet and peaceable in his own dominions. We therefore chuse rather to follow Lampridius, whose account is entirely different from that of Herodian.

Different account given by Lampridius, who says that Alexander gained a great victory over the Persians.
Lamprid. Al. 55.

According to the Latin author, Alexander came to a battle with Artaxerxes, who had seven hundred elephants, a thousand chariots armed with scythes, and an hundred and twenty thousand horse. It is known that the Parthians, and the Persians who succeeded them, fought only on horseback. In this action the young emperor did the duty of a commander and a soldier. He flew to every part, exposed himself where the danger was greatest, and encouraged his troops by his words and example. In short, he gained a glorious victory, which enriched his army, and forced Artaxerxes to forget his former boastings, and to think himself happy that his enemies, called back to the West by the motions of the barbarians upon the Rhine and the Danube, could not pursue their advantages. The Romans took a prodigious number of prisoners, all of whom were carefully ransomed by Artaxerxes, that it might not be said that any Persians were slaves in a foreign country: a thing which would have been thought highly ignominious to their nation.

Alexander returning to Rome, gives the senate an account of his exploits.
Herod. Lamprid. 55.

Alexander, being obliged to return back to the West, took care to guard the frontiers of Syria and Mesopotamia against any insults from the Parthians, and then set out with all speed for Rome, covered with glory, as well by the victory he had gained over his enemies, as by the good discipline he had made his army observe. Upon his arrival, he gave the senate an account of his exploits, according to the custom of the ancient Roman generals. His speech,

speech, extracted from the registers of the senate, is given by Lampridius : and as it is very short, I think I may insert it here. "Conscript Fathers," said the emperor, "We have vanquished the Persians. I shall not launch out into words upon this subject, but only tell you what was the strength of our enemies. They had seven hundred elephants. Two hundred of them were killed : we have taken three hundred, of which we bring you eighteen. Of a thousand chariots armed with scythes, we have taken two hundred, which I have not thought worth bringing hither, because they would be but a doubtful token of our victory ; it being easy to have such made. We have put to flight an army of an hundred and twenty thousand horse. We have killed two thousand men armed with coats of mail, whose spoils have served to arm our troops. We have taken a great number of prisoners, which we have sold" (Artaxerxes had not yet ransomed them.) "We have recovered Mesopotamia, which our unworthy predecessor had neglected to defend. We have put to flight Artaxerxes, whom the East calls the Great King, and who is worthy of that name by his power. He has retired back to his kingdom, in disorder ; and the places which formerly saw our captive standards carried in triumph, have now seen this haughty king fly through them, leaving his own standards in our possession. This, Conscript Fathers, is a faithful account of our advantages over the Persians. There is no need of many words where facts speak. Our soldiers return rich and contented. Their victory has made them forget the fatigues and perils it has cost them. You, Conscript Fathers, will be pleased to order thanksgivings to the gods, that we may not seem ungrateful for the favours of heaven."

This plain but strongly expressive speech, was followed by the acclamations of all the senators.

"You

“ You justly deserve, cried they, the names of Parthicus and of Persicus. Your victories are real : and it is * by disciplining your troops that you have been able to conquer the enemy.” Thus did they delight in praising the exploits of Alexander at the expence of some of his predecessors, who had often claimed victories they never gained, and who, flattering their soldiers, and despised by their enemies, had rendered themselves formidable to none but the senate and good men.

The tri-
umphs.

57. Alexander triumphed for his victory over the Persians : and this ceremony was less brilliant by the spoils of the enemy, which were carried in procession, than by the zeal and affection which the senate and people expressed for their prince. After offering the usual sacrifices in the capitol, he went to the forum, where he ascended the tribunal for harangues, and said these few words to the people assembled : “ Romans, we have conquered the Persians. We bring back our soldiers enriched by the plunder they have made. To-morrow, we shall give games in the circus, to celebrate our victory.” He then returned on foot to the palace, followed by his triumphal car drawn by four elephants. The crowd of men, women, and children that surrounded him, was so great that he could scarcely get forward. He was four hours in going to the palace. The air resounded with shouts of joy, and these pleasing words, proceeding really from the hearts of the Romans, were repeated without ceasing : “ Rome is happy, whilst she sees Alexander alive and victorious.” The next day he gave the games in the circus which he had promised, and added to them some theatrical entertainments. He likewise kept his word in regard to the largess he had promised, and of his own accord, increased on this occasion the number of children of both sexes who

* Ille vincit qui milites regit.

who were maintained and educated at the public expence. He called those of his adding, Mameans, from the name of his mother; a name more honourable than that of Faustina, which the Antoninuses had given to similar foundations. Alexander triumphed in the year of Christ 234, and Lampridius fixes it to the twenty-fifth of September.

Alexander did not stay long at Rome after his triumph, but hastened to march against the Germans, who had passed the Rhine, and made incursions into every part of Gaul. It is proper to observe, that the borders of this river were no longer defended as they had been in the beginning of the monarchy of the Cæsars. Under Augustus, and down to the revolt of Vitellius against Galba, we know that the Romans maintained eight legions there. We cannot say exactly when they diminished this guard. But at the time we are now speaking of, they had thought proper to employ their greatest strength upon the Danube on one side, and upon the Euphrates and the neighbouring countries on the other. They kept but three legions upon the Rhine, two in upper, and one in lower Germany: probably imagining that they had least to fear on that side: but the event shewed them their mistake.

Alexander's departure for the German war, was attended with the same expressions of tenderness and regret on the part of the senate and people, as they had shewn two years before, when he set out for the east. He was now attended by his mother, who never quitted him, and carried with him a great army, the country into which he was going not being sufficiently provided with troops. In particular, he took care to procure the assistance of light horse, Mauritians accustomed to throw darts and javelins, and Osrhoënian and Parthian deserters expert at shooting with the bow.

He

He sets out
for the war
against the
Germans.
Herod. l.
VI. §. Lom-
prid. Al.
59.

Dio. lib.
LV. p. 504.

Lamprid. §
Herod.

He knew the Germans had often successfully opposed the Roman legions, merely by the firmness with which they stood their ground : whereas they were desolated and quite at a loss what to do when they were forced to engage enemies who flew about them, and attacked them from afar, without ever coming within reach of their blows.

Arriving
in Gaul, i. e.
endeavours
to persuade
the barba-
rians to
peace.

When Alexander arrived in Gaul, the Germans, probably intimidated by the news of his approach, had left that country. Equally ready for peace or war, the emperor, on one hand, built a bridge of boats over the Rhine, in order to pass into the enemy's country ; and on the other, he sent ambassadors to the barbarians, to treat with them if they were inclined so to do. According to Herodian, he offered to purchase peace of them, rather than expose himself to the hazards of war. That writer is no more to be credited in what he here imputes to Alexander, than he is when he reproaches him with having lost a great deal of precious time in idle amusements, giving himself up to pleasure, and particularly to driving of chariots. That Alexander cannot have lost any time is plain from this circumstance, that he set out from Rome in the autumn and was killed before the beginning of the next spring : and as to the indecent exercise of driving chariots, that certainly never was the taste of this prince, always attentive to the laws of decency, even to a degree of severity.

Bad incli-
nations of
his troops.

Alexander passed the winter in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, where he endeavoured to discipline the legions of Gaul, long accustomed to licentiousness. These stubborn troops opposed the reformation which the emperor wanted to introduce among them, and even grew seditious. We may however suppose, that they would not have proved more intractable than those of Syria, but, like them, would have yielded at last, had they not been encouraged to rebel by an ambitious wretch, who,
though

though he had been raised from the meanest station in which a man could be, to the rank of a general officer, was not yet satisfied, but resolved to invade the throne by the murder of his prince.

Maximin, who killed Alexander, and made himself emperor in his stead, was born in a town of Thrace bordering upon the barbarians, and was himself a barbarian both by his father's and his mother's side; the former being a Goth, and the latter an Alan. He made no scruple of declaring his origin, when fortune first began to lavish her smiles upon him: but he endeavoured to conceal it, when it was no longer possible, after he had attained the top-most height of grandeur. His first occupation was that of a herdsman, in which station he began early to exercise his courage against a gang of robbers who infested the country. He dispersed several of them, at the head of a troop of peasants and herdsmen like himself, whom he had collected together, and who acknowledged him for their chief. As his age increased, his size became enormous; being, we are told, when a man, eight feet and an half high, and bulky in proportion. His strength was not less surprizing than his stature. He could move a waggon heavily laden, without any sort of assistance: a blow of his fist would break the leg or teeth of a horse; and he could crumble pumice stones into dust between his fingers, or split young trees with only his hands. In short, he was compared for strength, to Milo the Crotonian, Hercules, and Antæus. Like them too he was a great eater and a great drinker. An *amphora* of wine, (which might contain about seven of our gallons) and forty pounds of meat, were his usual allowance. This extraordinary bulk of body was accompanied with that brutality which is its almost natural concomitant, especially in an uncultivated mind. He despised all mankind, and was harsh and haughty even to ferocity. But with all this, he had some good

qualities. He was an excellent warrior, and is commended for his love of justice; though we must doubtless except in his practice of this virtue, those cases which did not square with his own interest.

A man like this was cut out for war: and accordingly he entered into the horse-service when very young, after having made himself known to Severus, who was then upon the throne, at certain games which that emperor gave to celebrate the birth-day of his son Geta. These were a kind of wrestlings, or trials of strength, in which the conquerors were rewarded with bracelets, gorgets, and little belts of silver. Maximin, more barbarian than Roman, scarcely knowing at all how to speak the Latin tongue, presented himself to the emperor, and, in very rough language, but with an air of assurance and even of audaciousness, desired to be admitted among the contenders. Severus was struck with the comeliness of his person, his gigantic size, and the confidence that appeared in his looks and deportment. However, he would not suffer him to engage with any of the soldiers, for fear of vilifying the dignity of the military profession; but appointed for his antagonists men of servile condition, of whom Maximin threw sixteen running without ever stopping to fetch breath. This astonishing exertion of strength was rewarded with prizes, but of less value than those that were given to the soldiers, among whom, however, the emperor immediately received him. Three days after, Severus seeing him perform some violent exercise, with vast impetuosity, and great awkwardness, after the manner of the barbarians, ordered his officer to teach him how to be more composed, to husband his strength, and to use it with art after the manner of the Romans. Maximin, observing that the emperor had taken notice of him, was greatly pleased, and went directly up to the prince, who, willing to try whether his new soldier could run as well as he could wrestle, put his

his horse upon a full gallop, and rode about for some time. Maximin kept pace with him all the while; until at length Severus, who was now grown old and infirm, finding himself fatigued, stopped. "Well! young Thracian, said he to Maximin, are you in a humour to wrestle after your race?" Maximin accepted the offer, and seven of the strongest soldiers that could be picked out engaging him one after another, he threw them all. Severus, charmed with his behaviour, gave him a gorget of gold, and ordered him to be enrolled among his guards. Such was the beginning of Maximin's fortune.

He behaved remarkably well in this new station, performing regularly all the duties of his post, and making his officers love, and his comrades admire him. He even obtained of the emperor whatever he asked for: though it was not until the reign of Caracalla that he attained the rank of centurion.

After Caracalla's death, detesting the murderer of the son of Severus, he would not serve under Macrinus, but retired to the town where he was born; near which he purchased some land, and carried on a trade with the Goths and Alans, from whom he was descended.

But this tranquil obscurity not suiting his temper, as soon as he saw the empire given to Heliogabalus, who pretended to be Caracalla's son, he went and offered him his service, begging him to shew him the same countenance as his grandfather Severus had done. This monster of impurity received Maximin with his usual lascivious speeches, at which the rough and haughty warrior was so incensed, that he would have returned back to his own country, had he not been prevented by some who had a regard for Heliogabalus's reputation. They were afraid lest the dissatisfaction of an officer who was greatly esteemed by the troops, and whom they commonly called an Ajax or an Achilles, should hurt the prince

in their opinions. Maximin was prevailed on to stay, and he accepted of the post of tribune. But he never once did duty whilst Heliogabalus reigned, nor ever went to pay his court to him; constantly alledging either sickness or business, in order to keep away.

Alexander's promotion to the empire recalled Maximin to actual service in the army, and to court. The new emperor, ever studious to distinguish merit, received him graciously. He even congratulated himself in full senate upon the important acquisition he had made of this brave officer, and gave him the command of a legion of new raised troops, accompanying his nomination with these most obliging words: "My dear Maximin, I have not given you veterans to govern, because I fear you would find it next to impossible to correct in them vices which have taken too deep root under other commanders. It will be casier for you to form new troops after the model of your manners, your bravery, and your assiduous attention to the duties of war. Instruct them so as to procure me many Maximins."

The emperor was not mistaken in his good opinion of him. Maximin disciplined his new legion with indefatigable care, making the soldiers go through their exercise every fifth day, and examining himself their swords, spears, cuirasses, helmets, shields, and, in short, all their armour, as well as their dress. His attention to their wants was truly paternal: but at the same time he insisted strictly on their doing their full duty. Some other tribunes, who thought ease and indulgence one of the privileges annexed to their rank, wondered at his taking so much pains as he did, when he was in so fair a way of rising to the highest posts in the army. "That, answered he, is not my way of thinking. The higher I rise, the more pains I shall take." An expression truly laudable, if it was not dictated by ambition.

He

He frequently exercised himself at wrestling with his soldiers, and, still as vigorous as in his younger days, he could throw five or six of them to the ground in a moment. One of the tribunes, a strong made man, and very bold, envying his fame, said to him one day: "A superior officer gains no great honour by conquering his own soldiers. Will you, answered Maximin, take a trial with me." The other accepted the challenge: they engaged; and Maximin, with the first blow he gave him, directed at his breast, knocked him down. "I am ready for another, said he then coolly, but let him be a tribune."

He never varied in any respect during the whole of Alexander's reign, but was as much the model of his soldiers as their commander, instructing them by his example even more than by his lessons and orders. The emperor, who esteemed him greatly, and did not in the least mistrust him, thought he did himself and the republic a service in giving him one of the first employments in the army he was then leading against the Germans, and in putting under his discipline the new troops, the greatest part of which came from Pannonia.

For a soldier of fortune, originally a shepherd, He calals against Alexan-der. this was surely a very high advancement. But Maximin did not think so. His ambition extended to the throne of the Cæsars, and he turned Jerod. l. VI. Lat. p. 1. against his benefactor the power and grandeur to which he had been raised. He began with gain- At. 59—62. & Cap. pit. ing the affections of the soldiery: and as they had long had an high opinion of him, he easily improved their esteem into love, by caresses, gifts, and honours which he bestowed upon them. He then proceeded sily to inspire them with contempt for the youth of their emperor, who was but twenty-six years old, and governed, said he, by a woman. He spread among them a report, destitute indeed even of probability, but which, how- Mar. 7. ever, found belief, that Mamaea had prevailed upon

upon her son to give over all thoughts of the German war, and to march his troops into Syria, her native country, where her vanity would be much more flattered in displaying her grandeur. The already long duration of this young prince's reign, was likewise another argument which he made use of with the soldiery, who, having been always used to receive a largess upon the accession of a new emperor to the throne, readily listened to it. Alexander had given them that largess: but thirteen years had since elapsed, and they had nothing farther to expect from him: on the contrary, the length of time it was probable he might live, postponed their greedy hopes to a very distant period; whereas a change of government would immediately procure them a plentiful harvest. This vile view of interest soon got the better of their duty, their oaths, their allegiance, and the attachment which so amiable a prince as Alexander justly deserved. Upon so slender a thread did the life and fortune of a Roman emperor depend.

and causes
him to be
assassinated
by some
of the sol-
diers.

The event answered Maximin's wishes. He procured the death of Alexander, and usurped his throne. This is almost the whole substance of what we know with any certainty, concerning this atrociously wicked affair. Herodian and Lampridius differ in their accounts of it. According to the former, Maximin caused himself to be proclaimed Augustus whilst Alexander was yet alive, and sent soldiers to kill him, who found the unfortunate young emperor abandoned by all, ready to fall an easy victim. This way of relating the story does not seem probable to M. de Tillemont, who very justly thinks it was impossible that such a prince as Alexander should be attacked in the midst of his army, and not find people ready to defend him. It is easier to believe that he was surprized by assassins sent privately to murder him; and this is also the opinion of Lampridius.

Alexander

Alexander was at a town called Sicila, near Mentz, with only a few troops about him, waiting until the season should permit him to open the campaign. After dining temperately, as he always did, he was taking an afternoon's nap, and most of his guards were likewise asleep, when assassins, posted by Maximin, seized that moment of neglect, easily forced their way into the emperor's ill guarded tent, fell upon him, and killed him, accompanying their horrid crime with outrageous invectives against the youth of the prince, and the avarice of his mother. Mama was also killed by the same murderers. This melancholy and shocking event happened, according to M. de Tillemont, on the nineteenth of March, in the year of Christ two hundred and thirty-five. Alexander was but twenty-six years and some months old when he perished, and had reigned full thirteen years.

He had always looked upon death with great indifference, nay even with contempt; as a proof of which Lampridius instances his inflexible firmness in the midst of repeated seditions of the troops: and, which is more, according to that historian, Alexander himself, one day, shewed plainly his sentiments on this subject in a manner truly heroical; when an astrologer, whom he had the weakness to consult, foretelling him that he would perish by the sword of a barbarian, the young prince, instead of being alarmed at the prediction, received it with joy, thinking it meant that he should be killed in battle. He observed, that few great and illustrious men had died a natural death, and mentioned on that occasion Caesar, Pompey, Demosthenes, Cicero, and Alexander the Great, whom he doubtless supposed to have been poisoned: and comparing with those violent ends, attended with no glory, that which he promised himself by falling in battle, he thought his fate, says Lampridius, such as the gods might envy.

If these facts are true, (and I see no reason why they should be doubted) we cannot easily give credit to Herodian, who writes, that Alexander, trembling and ready to faint at the sight of the assassins, threw himself into his mother's arms, as if to seek for an asylum there, and reproached her bitterly with being the cause of his misfortune. A behaviour not only mean and dastardly, but contrary to that filial respect which he is said to have carried even too far.

Alexander is universally regretted. *Lamprid. Al. 63.*

Alexander's untimely death occasioned an universal grief. The troops that were not concerned in the plot, not excepting even those which had felt his severity, and particularly the legion he had broken in Syria, and restored again after many intercessions, shewed their resentment by a speedy vengeance, in immediately killing the murderers of their prince. At Rome and in the provinces, where the mildness and equity of his government had rendered him infinitely dear to every one, his death was bitterly lamented. He was deified. A stately monument was erected to him in Gaul; and his body was carried to Rome, where it received the greatest honours, and was inclosed in a magnificent tomb. Religious worship and festivals were instituted to him and his mother, which were still observed at the time when Lamprius wrote.

Dreadful disorders which followed his death.

The disorders which followed Alexander's death were such as could not but make him be infinitely regretted. From this fatal period down to Dioclesian, being an interval of fifty years, historians reckon upwards of fifty Roman emperors, or princes who assumed that title. They did not indeed all succeed one another. Their reigns are intermixed, and the empire is dismembered into almost as many districts as it contained provinces. Civil wars multiplied without end, and perpetually breaking out anew, invasions of barbarians to whom intestine discords laid every place open, emperors

emperors tumultuously set up by the armies, de-throned, and massacred after a pageant govern-ment of as short duration as its bounds were of-ten narrow ; such is the desolation to which the greatest and finest empire in the universe was re-duced, through the licentiousness of the soldiery, the ambition of those who commanded, and the want of fixed maxims to establish the authority of the state and the succession to the throne. Of this we shall see the first fruits in the history of the reign of Maximin, to which I shall proceed after mentioning a few circumstances not yet taken notice of in that of Alexander.

I observed before, that he favoured the Christians, and honoured Jesus Christ in his domestic chapel. How far he favoured the Christians. Lamprid. ll. 22, 29, 43, 47. It is added, that he intended to build a public temple to him: but this is far from being proved. On the contrary, it seems as if, how much soever he might esteem the moral precepts of Christianity, he by no means approved of its religious worship : and this he shewed even upon an occasion in which he protected it. The Christians being molested by the vintners of Rome on account of a building where they used to assemble, the emperor determined the dispute in favour of the former, by saying, that the building in question had better be used for the worship of the Divinity in any manner whatever, than to be made a tavern. Thus Alexander, loving virtue, esteemed it in the Christians : but he must not be said to have favoured them any farther.

If the building I have been speaking of was a church belonging to the Christians, which may naturally enough be supposed, this is the oldest testimony we have of any edifice publicly consecrated to the worship of our holy religion, and known to be such by the Pagans. Tillem. Persec. de Maximin. art. 6.

The civil law had flourished greatly under the preceding emperors, and especially since the time of Severus, who was himself a good civilian. The illustrious Papinianus, the friend and relation of Severus, The civil law causes to flourish. Modestianus the last of the civilians.

*Gravin.
Orig. Jus-
isp. l. I.*

Severus, formed a great number of disciples, the most celebrated of which are Ulpian, of whom I have already spoken pretty fully, and Paul, who succeeded Ulpian in the dignity of prætorian præfect. Modestinus, a disciple of Ulpian, flourished under Alexander, and lived until the reign of Gordian. He is called the last oracle of the civil law, because he closes the succession of those learned civilians, whose decisions have acquired the authority of laws, and compose the finest part of the Roman code. So that, with Alexander perished, or at least drooped greatly, the civil law, which alone, of all the polite studies, had survived the ruin of the rest, extinguished long before. Laws and arms agree but ill together: where force does all, the authority of the wise is of no avail.

No writer
of distin-
guished
merit.

When I say, that the other branches of human knowledge were extinguished, I do not mean that there were not writers of several kinds in the times I am speaking of. I have already named some of them, but not one who excelled: they all wanted taste: and those I am still to mention under Alexander, have the same effect.

Marius
Maximus.
*Vers. Hist.
Lat.*

Marius Maximus, a man of distinction, twice consul and præfect of Rome, composed a history of the emperors, which we find quoted by the writers of the Byzantine history. Their quotations, which began at Trajan and end at Alexander, give us room to think that Marius Maximus lived under this last emperor, and no longer. What they say of him does not make us conceive any high opinion of his genius; and Vopiscus, who was one of them, calls him flatly a verbose writer, who blended fabulous accounts with real history. His being so much relished, as Ammianus Marcellinus relates, by those who, despising and detesting all learning, read only Juvenal and Marius Maximus, induces us to think that his works were full of obscenities,

ties, and that this was his merit with the revilers of the truly good and beautiful.

Dion Cassius is a writer of very different im-^{Dion Cas-}portance, and we are too much obliged to him to^{sus.} like to find fault with his works. We owe to him the most regular and best connected historical accounts of any we have from the time that Tacitus fails us: and it would be unjust to compare him to any of the intricate and confused writers of the Byzantine history. But still he is far from equalling the great historians.

He was a native of Nicæa in Bithynia, the son of^{Till. m. Al.} Apronianus, who was at different times governor^{art. 27, 6} of Cilicia and Dalmatia. He went to Rome under the reign of Commodus, and distinguished himself there at the bar. After passing through all the inferior dignities, he attained the consulship, probably under Severus. Alexander made him consul a second time, with himself, as we observed before. In the interval, between his consulships, he was several times governor of provinces: consequently the rank he held, and the offices he bore, must have qualified him to write the history of his own times, if he had had the talents necessary for such an undertaking; that is to say, prudence to guide and guard him from prejudice, sound criticism to discuss facts justly, and elevation of mind to form a right judgment of them. But it must be owned that these qualities shine little in him. He was one of those easy geniuses, who are fit to write a great deal, because they have no idea of what is fine and excellent, which always costs much time and labour.

We may judge of his turn of mind, from what he himself says of the motives which determined him^{Dion} to write history. He had composed a treatise on^{lib. LXXVII.} the dreams and presages by which the empire had^{p. 228.} been promised to Severus, and sent this mixture of flattery and superstition to Severus himself, who

was highly pleased with it, and returned the author thanks by a long and polite letter. Dion received this letter in the evening, and the next night he dreamt that he saw a divinity or genius, which ordered him to write history. He obeyed, and made his first trial on the reign of Commodus, in which he related what he himself had seen. Encouraged by the success of this first fruit of his historical labour, which was well received, he resolved to write a complete body of the Roman history, from the landing of Æneas in Italy, down to his own time. He spent ten years in collecting materials for this great work, and twelve in composing it: a space not too long, considering the many avocations he was liable to from the nature of his employments. When he had leisure, he retired into Campania, there to pursue his studies undisturbed by the noise and business of the city. He brought his work down to the eighth year of the reign of Alexander, in which he was consul with that prince, whose leave he afterwards obtained to end his days quietly in his own country.

His work was divided into eighty books: but the first thirty-four, and part of the thirty-fifth, are lost. What we have remaining begins with the sequel of Lucullus's victory over Mithridates and Tigranes. Of the next twenty-five which we have, the six last, from the fifty-fifth, which begins with the death of Drusus, son-in-law to Augustus, to the sixtieth, which ends with the reign of Claudius, are visibly abridgments, but in regular order, so as to form a connected narrative. The twenty last books have perished, except what has been preserved by Xiphilius, nephew of the patriarch of Constantinople of the same name, who lived in the eleventh century, and made a pretty good abridgment of Dion Cassius, divided into reigns from Pompey to Alexander Severus. We have likewise some extracts, all detached pieces, published

lished at different times by Fulvius Ursinus and Henricus Valensis. We were promised, a few years ago, the first twenty-one books of Dion Cassius's history, lately discovered, restored, and properly arranged. But this pretended discovery, published at Naples in 1747, when thoroughly examined into, proved only a compilation of the four first lives of the illustrious Romans by Plutarch, with an extract from Zonaras. However, it is not the beginning of Dion's work that we ought to be most desirous of having. We are rich enough in regard to the first times of Rome. But if any one could be so happy as to recover the last books of this historian, especially those after the reign of Vespasian, he would fill up a great chasm, and do an essential service to the republic of letters.

Dion Cassius has been justly charged with wronging some of the best men of antiquity, Cicero, Brutus, and Seneca. Credulous and superstitious to a vast degree, he has filled his work with prodigies. But this fault is more excusable in him than in his abbreviator, who was a Christian, and who has not copied him more faithfully in any one thing, than in these puerilities. The maxims which he has interspersed in his work are in general, solid, sensible, and judicious; though they have not the sublimity and strength of those of the great writers. He shews himself an honest man; so far at least as he could without hazarding too much. His stile is easy, and his narration clear. Upon the whole, he is a very valuable historian: and if Photius has done him too much honour in comparing him to Thucydides, it would be unjust to refuse him the glory of having been the best writer of his age.

M. de Tillemont gives us the names of other authors who lived under Alexander's reign: but I do not transcribe them, because they can interest none but professed Litterati.

Alexander

Alexander's marriages.
Lamprid.
Al. 20.

Alexander was married, as is pretended, more than once. But all that is said upon this subject, seems to me extremely dark and doubtful, except Lampridius's account of his being married to one Memmia, the daughter of Sulpicius a man of consular rank; and granddaughter of Catulus. I have already spoken of the storms which disturbed Alexander's domestic tranquillity. He himself gave no room for them by any part of his conduct. He was a lover of chastity, and history does not reproach him with the least irregularity. We do not find that he ever had any children.

His sister Theoclea.
Capit. Max.
jun. 3.

He had a sister named Theoclea, whom he thought of marrying to the son of Maximin, by whom he was killed. What prevented his making this match was, that he feared the young princes, educated in all the politeness of the Greeks, would not be able to bear the rustic manners of her intended father-in-law.

PRINCIPAL

 BOOK XXV.

P R I N C I P A L E V E N T S

OF THE REIGNS OF

" MAXIMIN *,

THE TWO GORDIANS,

AND

MAXIMUS AND BALBINUS.

..... SEVERUS.

..... QUINTIANUS.

A. R. 986.
A. C. 233.

MAXIMIN elected emperor by the army, demands and obtains the senate's confirmation.

He makes his son Cæsar.

He removes all those who had been Alexander's friends, and exercises great cruelties against the servants of that prince, among whom were many Christians.

He persecutes Christianity. Churches pulled down. First clear and express mention of the churches of the Christians.

The conspiracy of Magnus, either real or feigned. Four thousand persons put to death on this occasion.

Conspiracy of the Osrhoenians. T. Quartinus emperor for six days. His death stops an intended revolt.

Maximin passes the Rhine, fights the Germans several times, and is always victorious.

C. JULIUS

* I put these three reigns together, because they are blended with one another.

A. R. 987.
A. C. 236.

C. JULIUS VERUS MAXIMINUS AUGUSTUS.
..... AFRICANUS.

Exploits of Maximin towards the Danube.

He spends the winter at Sirmium, and from thence, as from a center, extends his cruelties and rapines over all the provinces of the empire.

Universal hatred and detestation of him. He is looked upon as a Phalaris, a Busiris, a Cyclops.

A. R. 986.
A. C. 237.

..... PERPETUUS.
..... CORNELIANUS.

Towards the middle of May Africa revolts, and, names for emperors the two Gordians, father and son, the former of whom was proconsul of that province, and other the lieutenant-general under his father.

They are acknowledged by the senate, and the Maximins are declared public enemies. Almost all the empire agrees to the decree of the senate.

Maximin's rage. Even his army, shocked at his cruelties, seconds him but coolly.

Capelian, governor of Numidia, whom Gordian wanted to turn out of his place, marches against Carthage with an army. Battle, in which the younger Gordian is killed. The father strangles himself. This catastrophe of the Gordians must have happened towards the end of June, or very early in July.

On the ninth of July the senate elects for emperors in their stead, Maximus and Balbinus, who, forced by the people, associate to their power Gordian III. with the title of Cæsar. Gordian III. then a child only twelve years old, was the son, or more probably the nephew of the younger Gordian.

Great preparations made, and prudent measures taken by the emperors and the senate to prevent
Maximin's

Maximin's entering Italy. Maximus sets out for the war, and repairs to Ravenna.

Dreadful sedition in Rome between the people and the prætorians. Fights. Great part of the city is burnt down.

ANNIUS PIUS or ULPIUS.

A. R. 959.

..... PONTIANUS.

A. C. 238.

Maximin marches with his army. Aquileia shuts its gates against him. Siege of that place, which makes a vigorous defence.

Maximin and his son are killed by their own soldiers, towards the end of March.

Their death restores peace. Maximus removes from Ravenna to Aquileia. He separates Maximin's army, and sends the troops back to their respective provinces. Returns triumphant to Rome.

Prudent government of the two emperors.

Secret jealousy between them.

They are massacred by the prætorians about the fifteenth of July.

MAXIMIN.

SECT. I.

Maximin is proclaimed emperor by the whole army. Is acknowledged by the senate. Gives his son the title of Cæsar. Hates all that are eminent in the state. Removes from about him all who had been Alexander's friends. His cruelty manifested on account of a conspiracy which he pretended had been carried on against him. Conspiracy of the Osrhoenians. They proclaim T. Quartinus, emperor, who is killed at the end of six days. Maxi-

min carries the war into Germany, and signalizes his valour there. He boasts greatly of his exploits. Behaves with the most odious tyranny towards the great men of the state and the people. Revolt in Africa. The intendant is killed. The authors of his death resolve to make Gordian emperor. Who Gordian was. Character of his son, who was also his lieutenant-general. They are both proclaimed and acknowledged emperors in Africa. They are likewise acknowledged at Rome, and the Maximins are declared public enemies.

Maximin is proclaimed emperor by the whole army. *Histod. l. K I.*

MAXIMIN easily reaped the fruit of his crime, which remained concealed for a while. It was not known that he had been the author of Alexander's death. For this reason not only the new raised levies which he commanded, and which held him in high esteem, proclaimed him Augustus; but soon after the other troops, influenced by example, forced to chuse themselves a chief at the opening of a campaign which might be dangerous, and not being checked by the horror of a crime whose circumstances they were strangers to, joined their suffrages to those of their companions, and Maximin was acknowledged and saluted emperor by the whole army.

Is acknowledged by the senate. *Aurel. Vict.*

He affected at first to respect the memory of Alexander, to whom, as I said before, a mausoleum was erected in Gaul, and whose ashes received the greatest honours at Rome, whither they were carried. Maximin likewise wrote to the senate, desiring that chief body of the republic to confirm the election of the soldiers in his favour; which was granted, because the fear of his arms, and the impossibility of making another choice, left no room to refuse his demand.

Gives his son the title of Cæsar.

He had a son, who was then about eighteen years of age, the handsomest youth in the whole empire, polite in his behaviour, master of the Greek and Latin languages, and already advanced

ced in the road of fortune and grandeur, since Alexander thought of giving him his sister in marriage, and, that match having been laid aside, probably because it did not please Mamaea, he was to make another, almost as brilliant, with *Aurel. Vict.* Junia Fadilla, the great-grand-daughter of Antoninus. His father was no sooner emperor than he advanced him to the nearest rank to the supreme power, by giving him the titles of Cæsar and prince of the youth.

Brutal ferocity was the natural character of Maximin, as we have already seen : and this vice was heightened in him by a consciousness of the meanness of his own birth, which made him conclude that others despised him. Hating, for this reason, all that were eminent in the state, he soon discovered his odious way of thinking. The respect which he pretended outwardly for the memory of Alexander, did not prevent his removing from the court and the army, all the friends of that young and amiable prince, and all those who had been of his council. He sent some of them back to Rome, and dispersed the rest in different countries, under pretence of employments to which he appointed them. These respectable men gave him umbrage. He wanted to be the only one that made a figure; and, freed from all those attentions which birth and merit necessarily command, to make his camp a citadel of tyranny, from whence he might spread terror all around him, without restraint. The officers who composed Alexander's household were still less spared, being treated even more rigorously than his friends. Maximin, who made no doubt but that they detested him, as the murderer of their master, returned them hatred for hatred; and not only broke them all, but put several of them to death. Among these officers of Alexander's palace were numbers of Christians, of whom Maximin's hatred was not confined to their persons, but ex-

Hates all that are eminent in the state. *Herod. l. VII. & Capitol. Maxim. 9.* Removes from about him all who had been Alexander's friends.

Ensch. Hist. Eccl. VI. 29.

tended also to their religion, which he persecuted violently. This persecution is reckoned the sixth. I shall take farther notice of it elsewhere.

His cruelty manifested, on account of a conspiracy which he pretended was carried on against him. *Herod. de Capit. Max.* 10.

A conspiracy, which either really was, or which he pretended to be carrying on against him, furnished him an opportunity of displaying all his cruelty. Magnus, a man of consular distinction, and of illustrious birth, was charged with having corrupted the fidelity of several soldiers and centurions, who were to kill Maximin, and he was to make himself emperor. The following was said to be the plan by which he hoped to accomplish his design.

Maximin, preparing to attack the Germans in their own country, had thrown a bridge over the Rhine. He loved war by inclination; and now thought it of high importance to him, to confirm by victories the great reputation he had gained in arms, and to which he owed the empire. He reproached Alexander, though unjustly, with having behaved poorly against the barbarians: and this was a fresh incitement to him to act with vivacity and vigour. Full of his approaching expedition, he exercised his troops incessantly, was himself continually under arms, and animated his soldiers by his speeches and example; behaving, now that he was emperor, just as he had done when centurion and tribune.

This perpetual hurry, which engrossed the attention of every one, seemed, we are told, to the conspirators a favourable juncture. Those who guarded the bridge were bribed, and had agreed to break it down as soon as Maximin should have passed over it, to cut off his communication with his army. By this means Maximin would have been left to the mercy of the conspirators, who were to pass over with him, in an enemy's country.

Whether this scheme was real or fictitious, is more than we can pretend to say with any certainty, because

because no regular inquiries were made, no person was examined, nor was any one tried according to the laws, on this occasion. Maximin said the fact was so: and in consequence of this determination he left no cruelty unpractised upon those he thought proper to deem suspicious persons. Up-^{Capit. 8. 9.}wards of four thousand persons are said to have been put to death in consequence of this affair, by every kind of torture that the tyrant could invent. Some were crucified; others were sewed up in the bellies of beasts killed for that purpose; several were exposed to wild beasts, and many were beaten to death; and all this without the least distinction of rank or age. The nobles were those he hated most. He would not suffer one of them to be about him, but exterminated them all; resolving to reign like Spartacus, who ruled over none but slaves.

After he had once given a loose to his cruelty, he no longer set any bounds to it. Always full of the idea, that the meanness of his origin exposed him to contempt, he endeavoured to remove the proofs of this reproach, by killing those who had any particular knowledge of his family or birth. He did not spare even friends, who, out of pity, had relieved him in his wants, the remembrance of which now galled his abominable soul.

It was with reason then that he was universally hated, that people sought among the monsters of fabulous antiquity for names that suited him, that he was called Cyclops, Busiris, Phalaris. He could not be ignorant of the horror which every one had of him: but he did not regard it; laying down as the rule of his conduct this horrid maxim, That a prince cannot preserve his power but by cruelty. Blinded by a brutal confidence in his strength, he seemed to think himself made only to kill others, and that no one could ever be able to kill him.

The contrary to this was however told him to his face, at a play, in a language which he did not under-

understand. One of the actors repeated some Greek verses the meaning of which is: “ * He “ that cannot be killed by one man, may be kill- “ ed by many. The elephant is very big, but “ yet men kill him. The lion and the tyger are “ strong and bold, but yet they are killed. Fear “ many, if you do not fear any single one.” Maximin, who did not understand Greek, but saw by the behaviour of the assembly that something uncommon had been said, asked those who sat next him what the actor had been saying. He was told something quite different from the truth, and was satisfied with the answer.

Conspiracy of the Os-
rhoenians. They pro-
claim T. Quartinus
emperor, who is kill-
ed at the end of six
days.
*Herod. &
Capit. Max.
11. & Tre-
bill. Tr.
Tyr. 32.*

Before he passed the Rhine, he was in real danger from a conspiracy, of the truth of which history makes no sort of doubt. It was occasioned by, not the ambition of any single person, but the discontent of a whole body of men. The Osrhoenians whom Alexander brought into Gaul had always been extremely attached to him; and the mystery of the murder of that prince, which could not be long concealed, beginning now to be discovered, they conceived a most violent hatred against Maximin. To satisfy their revenge, they looked out for a chief, and cast their eyes upon T. Quartinus, a man of consular dignity, a friend of Alexander's, and whom Maximin had for that reason ordered to resign his office. This wise and modest senator endeavoured to dissuade them from their design, and refused their offers: but they, by main force, invested him with the purple and the other ensigns of the imperial dig-
nity:

* Capitolinus gives us the following Latin translation of these Greek verses.

Et qui ab uno non potest occidi, a multis occiditur.
Elephas grandis est, & occiditur.
Leo fortis est, & occiditur.
Tigris fortis est, & occiditur.
Cave multos, si singulos non times.

nity : fatal ornaments, productive of no other effect, than the speedy death of him who was compelled to wear them. For, at the end of six days, a perfidious friend, who had used every persuasion to prevail upon him to consent to the desire of the soldiery, attacked him whilst he slept, and killed him. This traitor, whose name was Macedonius, expected great rewards from Maximin, to whom he carried Quartinus's head. Maximin was highly pleased at being delivered from an enemy : but reflecting, that Macedonius had been guilty towards him in exciting and fomenting the rebellion of the Osrhoënians, and judging also that he himself could never safely trust a man who had violated the most sacred laws with regard to his friend ; instead of paying him for his service, he justly ordered him to be punished for his crime, and by his death revenged that of Quartinus. This unfortunate emperor of six days was married to a Calpurnia, of the illustrious blood of the Pisos, whose name history has recorded with praise: Her austere virtue is particularly recommended. After she had lost Quartinus, she never would marry again ; and the whole tenor of her conduct was invariably such, that she was respected during her life, and revered after her death. Living, she was ranked among the priestesses ; and when dead, a statue was erected to her in the temple of Venus, where it shared divine honours and worship with that of the goddess.

The domestic dangers to which Maximin was exposed, and the cruel precautions he took for his safety, could not but retard the opening of the campaign, great as his ardour was to commence the war. However, these delays were not long ; for within a few months after his elevation to the empire, he passed the Rhine, and entered Germany. His army was numerous and well appointed. Alexander had raised very great forces, and Maximin augmented them,

Maximin carries the war into Germany, and signifies his valour there. *Herod. & Capit. Max.* 11. & 12.

The Germans were not in a condition to keep the field against so formidable an invasion. They abandoned all the open country, and retired to their forests and behind their marshes, which afforded them a natural defence. Maximin ravaged the country thus abandoned, giving his soldiers the plunder, which consisted in little else than cattle. He burnt the towns and villages, the houses of which were only of wood, the Germans not being used to build with stone or brick.

At length he came up with the enemy, whom he engaged several times, and always with success, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which he fought. The trees of the forests where these engagements happened, often interrupted the darts of the Romans, and rendered them useless. Often too they met with bogs and marshes, which they were obliged to cross over without knowing them: whereas the Germans were perfectly acquainted with every spot they trod on, as well as with all the passes through their woods; and besides this, accustomed as they were to swim, from their infancy, they were not at a loss when they came to waters too deep to be forded. History takes particular notice of a very sharp action in which Maximin *, acting the part of a common soldier, rather than that of a commander in chief, and thinking, like a barbarian, that personal bravery was the first and greatest quality of a general, exposed himself to imminent danger, without the least care or caution.

The Germans were defeated near a marsh, into which they threw themselves to avoid their conquerors. The Romans seemed afraid to follow them: upon which Maximin plunged in, the first of any, though his horse was more than up to the belly in water, and killed with his own hand some of the barbarians, who faced about, in order to
oppose

* Habebat hoc barbaricæ teneritatis, ut putaret imperatorem ratum etiam sua semper uti debere. *Capit. Maxim. 12.*

oppose him. His soldiers, ashamed to abandon their emperor who set them an example of such determined courage, followed him; and the enemies, finding themselves thus pursued, rallied, and began a new battle in the midst of the waters. The fight was long and obstinate: the Romans lost a great number of men, but at length were again victorious, and almost the whole of the German army perished. The fens were filled with dead bodies, and the waters tinged with blood.

Maximin prided himself greatly upon this victory. He not only sent an account of it to Rome, but ordered a representation of it to be painted and hung up in the most conspicuous part of the senate-house, that it might strike the eyes of the senators, who, he well knew, did not love him. His order was executed: but the picture did not remain long in that place, being taken down and destroyed with the other monuments erected in honour of Maximin, when the senate began to wage war against him.

He fought several other battles with the Germans, in which he always distinguished himself by his valour. This war seems to have busied him during the year of Christ 235, and the following. He took, in consequence thereof, the title of Germanicus, as did also his son. He must likewise have gained some advantages over the Sarmatians and Dacians, since we find him decorated with the surnames of Sarmaticus and Dacicus, upon his medals. His plan was to subdue all those barbarous nations, and to extend the dominion of the Romans as far as the North Sea.

He vaunted these exploits highly, writing to the senate concerning them in the following terms: He boasts greatly of his exploits.

“ We have done, Conscript Fathers, more than we can say. We have ravaged an extent of country of four hundred miles, burning the towns and villages, carrying off the cattle, taking numbers of prisoners, and cutting to pieces all that resisted

Capit. 12, & 13.

“sisted us. We have conquered the enemy, notwithstanding a thousand obstacles: and if we had not been stopped by impassable marshes, we should have pursued them into their forests, to which they fled for shelter.” And in another letter, directed likewise to the senate, he carried his rhodomontade still farther. “Conscript Fathers,” said he, “I, in a very short time, have waged more wars, and fought more battles, than any one of the ancients. The booty which I have brought into the Roman territories, has surpassed our hopes. We want room to lodge our prisoners.”

He be-
lieves with
the most
odious ty-
ranny to-
wards the
great men
of the state
and the
people.
*Herod. &
Capit. 13.*

But even if Maximin's victories over the barbarians had been as great as the terms in which he spoke of them were pompous, they could not have comforted the Romans for the evils his tyranny made them suffer. After the campaign of the year 236, he spent the winter at Sirmium in Pannonia, devising perpetual rapines and extortions accompanied with the greatest cruelties. He not only gave full liberty to all informers, but even encouraged them to harass and torment the people by odious accusations. The most notorious falsities were immediately listened to. Affairs which had been buried in oblivion upwards of an hundred years, were now revived, under pretence of maintaining the rights of the exchequer. Whoever was tried, was sure to be condemned: happy, if he came off with only the forfeiture of his estate. These acts of injustice were repeated daily, and nothing was more common than to see men who were rich the evening before, reduced the next day to absolute mendicity. Age and dignities were so far from being safeguards to any one, that the great men of the state were the very persons against whom Maximin was most embittered. Generals of armies, governors of provinces, after having been consuls, and decorated with the ornaments of triumph, were seized and carried off in a moment.

moment upon the slightest pretext, shut up in close carriages, like prisoners of state, without even a servant to attend them, and hurried away, day and night, from the extremities of the east, the west, and the south, into Pannonia, where, after suffering every kind of outrage and indignity, they were at last put to death, or banished.

This cruel treatment of particular persons drew upon Maximin particular enmities. The common people, generally indifferent with regard to the rich and great, and often envious of their rank and wealth, were less concerned at the misfortunes which befel them. But Maximin's rapacious greediness, which nothing could satisfy, soon made cities and whole nations join their resentments to those of the injured individuals. He seized upon the public funds belonging to the cities, destined either to purchase their stores of provisions, to be distributed to their inhabitants, or to defray the expences of their games and festivals. The ornaments of the temples, the statues of the gods, the monuments of heroes, were ransacked by him; and all the gold and silver he could lay his hands on was converted into money. The people who saw their cities plundered in the midst of peace, and exposed to all the calamities even of an unsuccessful war, were highly exasperated, and shewed in several places a readiness to revolt; declaring openly they had rather die, than see their country thus stripped of all its splendour.

Maximin despised this universal discontent. He declared that his only view in what he did, was to enrich his soldiers: mistakingly thinking, like some of his predecessors, that if he had but the affection of the troops, he might safely oppress the other orders of the state as much as he pleased. He was doubly mistaken. The event shewed him how much the hatred of the people ought to be feared by bad princes: nor did he gain the love
of

of the soldiery, who, continually teased by their relations and friends on account of what they suffered for their sakes, and sensible that their complaints were just, shared their indignation against these violences of which they reaped the fruit. Their murmurs broke out, and were punished with cruelties, according to Maximin's constant practice.

Revolt in Africa.

The intendant is killed.

Herod.

Capit.

Max. 14.

& Gord. 7.

The whole universe groaned under this violent tyranny, and waited only for an opportunity to shake off the insufferable yoke. When the minds of men are thus disposed, the smallest spark is capable of producing at once a great flame: and this was what happened now. A commotion of some cities of Africa, dissatisfied with the behaviour of the intendant of that province, was the beginning of a chain of events which soon deprived Maximin of the empire and of life.

This prince always took care that the people he employed should be as barbarous as himself, strangers to justice and moderation, and solely intent upon draining the provinces of all their riches, in order to fill the imperial coffers. The intendant of Africa, who was of this stamp, and knew by what means he could best please Maximin, spared neither confiscations nor violences of any kind, but rendered his tribunal the public seat of rapine and oppression. Some young men, of the best and richest families of the country, having been condemned by this intendant to pay fines which would have stripped them of all they had, petitioned for, and obtained a delay of three days. Taking advantage of this respite, they applied to all those of their acquaintance who had suffered injustices of the same nature, and engaged them in a plot to kill the iniquitous judge, author of their misfortunes. The design being resolved on, in order to execute it with safety, they ordered all their slaves then employed in works of agriculture to attend them, with staves, hatchets, and other instruments of husbandry fit to

be

be converted into offensive weapons, concealed under their garments; to mix with the people that crowded round the intendant's tribunal, there to keep their eyes fixed upon their masters, and to remain quiet, whatever they saw them undertake; but in case of their being attacked by the soldiery that surrounded the magistrate, then to draw their rustic arms, and use them for their defence. The scheme succeeded. The chiefs of the conspiracy made their way up to the intendant, under pretence of speaking to him about the payment of their fines, fell upon him, and instantly killed him: and when his guards attempted to revenge his death, the peasants immediately appeared with their weapons, and being much more numerous than the soldiers, easily put them to flight. Our authors do not name the city in which this bloody scene was acted: but the circumstances of the affair incline us to think it was at Adrumetum. The inhabitants were glad to be delivered from an intendant who harassed and tormented them, and as soon as they saw the danger was over, they declared for the conspirators. Even the troops then in the city seem to have followed the general example.

Maximin's vengeance was the next thing to be guarded against: and this the conspirators were sensible they had no other way of doing, but by making a new emperor. The opportunity was favourable. All the earth detested Maximin: and Africa was then governed by a proconsul venerable for age, distinguished by his birth, his merit, the offices he had borne, generally esteemed, and in whose favour it seemed easy to unite the suffrages of all. This was Gordian, with whom we must now make the reader acquainted.

Gordian, *M. Antonius Gordianus**, was descended according to Capitolinus, by his father Metius Marcellus, who Gordian was the 12th emperor.

* Capitolinus is at great pains to discuss whether Gordian's family name was *Antonius* or *Antoninus*. Medals and inscriptions

Capit. Gord.
17. Marcellus, from the family of the Gracchi, and by his mother Ulpia Gordiana, from that of Trajan. His father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather had been consuls; and the family of his wife Fabia Orestilla had likewise been decorated with the same titles, and was, moreover, of the blood of the Antonini. Gordian himself had been twice consul, and saw his son invested with that high dignity. He was the richest subject in the whole empire; possessed vast districts of lands in the provinces; and lived magnificently when at Rome, in the house which had formerly belonged to Pompey.

These gifts of fortune were embellished in him by much knowledge and great virtues. His mind was perfectly cultivated. In his early youth he composed several poems, the most remarkable of which is an *Antoninad*, in thirty-six books, containing the history of Titus Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius; a subject of which the choice does honour to its author. He likewise studied eloquence, with success; and always retained a taste for useful and polite literature. He spent his life, to use his historian's expression, with Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Virgil.

His morals were worthy of so respectable a society. A perfect moderation, no excess of any kind, a conduct always regulated by reason and wisdom. He loved all that he ought to love, was a good citizen, a good father, so respectful a son-in-law that he never sat down in the presence of his father-in-law Annius Severus, before he obtained the priesthood, nor ever let a day pass without going to pay his respects to him.

Though extremely virtuous, he was not austere-ly rigid. He lived as became his rank, which was that

tions determine this question, by calling him always *Antoninus*. * they also do his son, and his grandson. *Vell. Gord.* 1. & 2.

that of a great Lord, and always exceeded the usual stated expences in every office he bore ; which shews that he loved to spend his riches nobly. In the course of his edileship, through a spirit of magnificence, of which we have not such another instance in history, he gave the people twelve shews, one every month, with sometimes five hundred couple of gladiators that fought, and never less than an hundred and fifty. In the sixth of these games, a prodigious number of all sorts of animals, such as stags, horses, wild sheep, elks, camels, &c. was turned in loose among the people for them to scramble for : and he caused a representation of this entertainment to be painted in one of the galleries of his house.

He held several great employments, and governed successively several provinces, in which he was esteemed and loved. This is all we can say of him ; our accounts extending no farther.

It is surprizing that so illustrious a man should not have been made consul until he was pretty far advanced in years. He was born in the year of Christ 157, since he died in 237, at the age of fourscore ; and he was consul for the first time with the emperor Caracalla in the year of Christ 213, being then in the fifty-sixth * year of his age. His splendour and magnificence during his consulship was proportioned to what it had always been in his other offices. His consular robes, of which he was the first Roman that ever had any belonging particularly to himself, were so beautiful, that Caracalla could not see them without envy. The emperor

* It might be supposed, in order to remove this difficulty, that Gordian may have been consul for the first time with Caracalla in one of the consulships which this last bore whilst his father was yet alive. But it is evident from the testimony of Capitolinus (*Gord.* 81) that the elder Gordian was not made consul until he was advanced in years: for what reason, we confess ourselves at a loss to determine.

peror Alexander Severus, as we observed before, had no consular robes of his own, but wore those that were kept in the capitol for the use of all the consuls. Gordian, when consul, gave extremely expensive games in the circus: he distributed to the factions of the chariot-drivers an hundred Sicilian, and an hundred Cappadocian horses: and he also caused theatrical entertainments and other shews to be exhibited at his own expence in all the cities of Umbria, Etruria, Picenum, and the country now called Romania, during the space of four days. He thus devoted immense sums to the pleasures of the people, and thereby doubtless gained their love: but wise men must certainly have thought these excessive expences blameable; and he himself must have been uncommonly modest in his personal behaviour, and absolutely exempt from all suspicion of ambitious views, not to give umbrage by all these doings to a prince so jealous as Caracalla.

Gordian found in Alexander Severus an emperor fond of virtue, who decorated him with a second consulship, in which that prince himself was his colleague; and Alexander's friends thought it an honour to his government to settle matters so, that Gordian at the expiration of his consulship, was appointed proconsul of Africa by the senate. They made no doubt but that the province would be happy under his administration; and hoped that the esteem and affection of its inhabitants for this magistrate, would extend to the sovereign whom he represented. Alexander thanked the senate for this nomination, by a letter infinitely obliging for the person elected. "You could not, Conscript Fathers," said the emperor to them, "give me greater satisfaction, or oblige me more, than in sending Gordian to Africa. He is a man of illustrious birth, generous, eloquent, a lover of justice, disinterested, and in every respect good."

Alexander

Alexander and his ministers were not deceived in their expectations. Gordian was beloved in his province, more than any of his predecessors had ever been. The Africans compared him to all that was most valuable in ancient Rome, calling him a Scipio, a Cato, a Scævola, a Rutilius, a Lælius, and saying, that all those great men lived again in him.

According to Augustus's institution, the proconsuls of provinces were not to continue in office longer than a year. But this ancient regulation had been greatly changed in many respects. Gordian was proconsul of Africa upwards of seven years, since setting out for that country immediately after his second consulship, which he bore in the year of Christ 229, he was still there at the time of the revolt which raised him to the empire in 237.

His son, of the same name as himself, about forty-five or forty-six years old, and who had been consul, was sent, either by Alexander Severus, or by Maximin, as a necessary assistant to him on account of his great age, and was his lieutenant-general at the time of this revolt. Gordian the son was a man of merit, but voluptuous, fond of magnificence, like his father, but different from him in his love of wine and women. It is said, that he never would marry, and that he kept two-and-twenty concubines at the same time, by each of which he had several children. His riches enabled him to indulge all his desires, and he never denied himself any kind of pleasure. He had immense parks, and delightful gardens, in which he spent great part of his life. With these enormous blemishes he possessed some truly estimable qualities. He was compassionate, had a taste for learning, understood the laws, and was so far master of himself, that he could forego his pleasures when business required his attendance.

Character
of his son,
who was
also his
lieutenant-
general.
Capit. Gord.
17—20.

In his youth, he studied under Serenus Sammonicus the son, who conceived an inclination and esteem for him, and left him when he died, as I have observed elsewhere, his father's library, consisting of sixty-two thousand volumes: * a present which did infinite honour to Gordian, and gave him a rank and reputation in the republic of letters. Gordian himself was an author. Some works of his in prose and in verse, in which a fine genius appeared in the midst of great negligence, were extant at that time when Capitolinus wrote.

Lamprid.
At. Sev. 68.

He was quæstor under Heliogabalus, who was very ready to advance a young man whose taste for pleasure, though confined within certain limits, seemed in some measure to agree with his own. A far different recommendation procured him Alexander's favour. This prince esteemed him for his probity and his knowledge of the laws. He made him præfect of Rome; and Gordian behaved so well in that important office, which placed him at the head of the civil judicature of the whole city, that he obtained the consulship very early. Alexander had always a great regard for him, and he † is ranked among those wise friends of which his privy council was composed. Learned as a civilian, and able as a statesman, he rendered himself useful to individuals who consulted him, and to his country. This account of him shews that he was very capable of assisting his father in the functions of the proconsulate of Africa: and he actually exercised the office of lieutenant-general of that province with honour, at the time of the commotion which has given us occasion to speak of the Gordians.

They are both proclaimed and acknowledged emperors in Africa.
Herod. & Capt. Max. 14. § Gord. i.

I have already mentioned the motives which induced the African conspirators to endeavour to make

* Quod eum ad cælum tulit. Si quidem tantæ bibliothecæ copia & splendore donatus, in famam hominum literarum decore pervenit. *Capit.*

† I understand and read Lampridius in this place according to Salmasius's correction.

make their proconsul emperor after they had killed the intendant. They were afraid of Maximin; and besides their hating his intendant, they loved Gordian, who had even shewn himself the protector of the people against the tyranny of that officer, and had frequently checked his violences; for which this audacious subaltern had insolently threatened to be the ruin of the proconsul and his son. The conspirators did not doubt but that the choice they had agreed on among themselves “ would be approved of by the whole province, and were satisfied that all its inhabitants would readily join with them the moment they should give the signal. Mauritius, who was one of them, and a man of considerable eminence, having assembled at his seat near the city of Tysdrus a great number of the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns and villages, communicated the design to them by a speech to the following effect: “ My
“ dear fellow-citizens! I thank the immortal gods
“ for having furnished us with an opportunity, or
“ rather for having laid us under a necessity of
“ guarding against the rage of Maximin: for af-
“ ter having killed an intendant worthy of him,
“ like unto himself in every respect, we are un-
“ done if we do not make another emperor. For-
“ tune, seconding this design, offers us a most fa-
“ vourable opportunity. We now have near us,
“ in the city of Tysdrus, the illustrious proconsul
“ of this province, and his son, both of whom the
“ wretch that has suffered the just penalty of his
“ crimes presumed to threaten with death. If
“ you will be advised by me, we will go to them
“ this instant, invest them with the purple, and
“ proclaim them emperors.” The whole assembly approved of the proposal. “ Nothing is more
“ just, cried they, nothing more prudent. Gor-
“ dian Augustus, may the gods favour you! Be
“ emperor with your son.”

Full of zeal and ardour, they all repaired immediately to Tysdrus where Gordian was. They entered his palace about noon, and found him upon a couch, quiet, easy, totally ignorant of what had passed, and, if we believe our authors, far from even dreaming of having the empire offered him. When the proposal was made to him, considering the danger of the attempt, more than the charms of sovereignty, he at first refused it, and resisted, until the ringleaders of the mob began to threaten him, and at last declared that they would kill him directly, if he did not consent to their desire. Gordian had another fear, which chiefly contributed to determine him. He was well acquainted with Maximin's temper, and knew it would be an unpardonable crime in his eyes to have been once thought worthy of the empire. The danger was sure and inevitable, if he persisted in refusing; and he dreaded it most of all on account of his son: for as to himself personally, now fourscore years of age, it was in some measure a matter of indifference to him how soon his feeble life was ended. Upon the whole, after weighing all things, he preferred a danger in which there was some gleam of hope, to one in which there was neither remedy nor resource; and considering, that, at all events, the imperial purple would reflect a splendour on his tomb, he gave his consent: upon which, not only the conspirators and the multitude that followed them, but all the inhabitants of the city, who had assembled round his palace, proclaimed him and his son emperors. The whole province immediately followed their example. Maximin's statues were pulled down, his name was effaced from off all monuments, and the honours he was stripped of were transferred to the Gordians. Numbers were for giving the father the surname of Africanus, as if to revive the glory of the Scipios in Africa.

The

The new emperors did not stay long at Tysdrus, a place neither suitable to their dignity, nor convenient for their affairs. They repaired to Carthage, with guards, fasces crowned with laurel, and all the pomp of the imperial dignity: and this city, the capital of Africa, and one of the most illustrious and most opulent in the whole empire, received them with infinite pleasure and applause. Thus Carthage became for a time a second Rome, by the residence of the emperors, the troops quartered in it, and the concourse of all sorts of people drawn thither by curiosity, interest, or business.

It was not enough for Gordian to be acknowledged in Africa; but it was likewise necessary that he should have the approbation of Rome, to obtain which, he left nothing undone. He wrote to the senate, and addressed an edict to the Roman people, acquainting them with what the province had done for him, and desiring their confirmation of it. In both these writings he inveighed against Maximin's cruelty, which he knew was extremely odious. On the other hand, he promised that his government should be directed by mildness and humanity; and as a specimen of his intention in this respect, he declared, that the proceedings against those who had been unjustly condemned should be revised, gave exiles leave to return to their own country, and ordered informers to be punished. Lastly, he promised the soldiers and citizens a great donative.

The edict and letter was carried to Rome by a deputation, at the head of which was Valerian, who had been consul, and who was afterwards emperor. Besides writing to the senate in general, Gordian sent particular letters to all the principal members of that assembly, most of whom were his friends or relations.

He need not have taken so many measures and precautions. The general esteem in which he was held

They are likewise acknowledged at Rome, and the Maximins are declared public enemies. Herod. & Capit. Max. 14—16. & Gord. 9—11.

Zos. l. 1.

held, and still more, the universal hatred which Maximin had incurred, were of themselves sufficient recommendations.

A proper and even necessary step, with which he began his administration, was the getting rid of the prætorian præfect Vitalianus, a man devoted to Maximin, and worthy to serve so infamous a master. There was reason to fear lest this magistrate, in whom both the civil and the military power were united, and whom all the prætorians in Rome obeyed, should exert his authority in support of the prince he was attached to, and hinder the senate and people from declaring in favour of Gordian. A stratagem was made use of against him. The quæstor of Africa, a young man of great resolution and courage, was sent to Rome, accompanied by a few brave soldiers, with directions to get a private audience of Vitalianus, by presenting to him a packet of letters, which were to be supposed to concern Maximin's safety. The scheme succeeded. Whilst Vitalianus examined the seals of the letters, the quæstor's soldiers fell upon him and killed him: and immediately after, Gordian's edict to the people was fixed up in the forum, his letters to the senate were put into the hands of the consuls, and his other letters were delivered as directed. To secure a speedier and more happy success, Gordian's deputies gave out that Maximin was dead.

The joy of the multitude was incredible. Their hatred, long suppressed by fear, now broke out in violent transports of rage. Maximin was loaded with the bitterest, but well deserved, invectives. His statues were pulled down, his pictures torn in pieces, and all the monuments which made honourable mention of him were destroyed.

The senate acted with more decency, though not with less vigour. The conscript Fathers, convened by the consul Junius Silanus, who had before

fore held a council at his own house with the prætors, ediles, and tribunes of the people, assembled the same day, which was the twenty-seventh of May, in the temple of Castor. There Gordian's letter was read, couched in respectful terms, and acknowledging that his situation would be instable and uncertain until the senators should declare their sentiments concerning him. The deliberation was neither long nor doubtful. All, with one voice, and one unanimous acclamation, declared the two Gordians, Augusti; and the Maximins, with all their partizans and abettors, enemies to their country.

From this moment, and in virtue of this decree, the Gordians ought, according to the maxims of the Roman government, to be looked upon as lawful emperors: and we accordingly place* them here as such.

THE TWO GORDIANS.

SECT. II.

The prætorians in Rome acknowledge the Gordians. The multitude, intoxicated with joy, commit great disorders. The provinces, encouraged by the deputies of the senate, declare against Maximin. Fury of Maximin, when informed of these events. Resolving to march against Rome, he harangues his soldiers. He finds but little ardour in his army, and is for that reason forced to lose a very precious time.

* Most of those who have drawn up lists of the Roman emperors, have either omitted the two Gordians, or placed them wrong. M. de Tillemont has not given them a separate title, but treats what concerns them under the title of Maximin

time. The Gordians perish, after having reigned only about six weeks. Carthage and the other cities of Africa are ravaged by the conqueror. Maximus and Balbinus are elected emperors by the senate. What we know of them to the time of their election. The manner of their election. Gordian III. named Caesar.

The prætorians in Rome acknowledge the Gordians.

Herod. l. VII. & Capit. Max. 15. & Gord. 10.

The multitude, intoxicated with joy, commit great disorders.

THE prætorian cohorts followed the example of the senate and people. Their præfect, who might have dissuaded them from so doing, had been killed; and being now without a chief, they were guided by the general torrent. They heard the letters of the Gordians read, and received their images into their camp, in the room of those of the Maximins.

The transition from a hard slavery to liberty was not effected without tumults in Rome. The multitude, always incapable of moderation, could not taste the sweets of an happy change, without being transported with a kind of intoxication, which produced many disorders. Armed with a decree of the senate, by which the ministers of the tyranny they had groaned under were sentenced to be put to death, the people righted themselves. Informers, that first and fit object of the public indignation, were torn in pieces, if they did not secure their lives by a speedy flight. The intendants and judges, who had deviated from the paths of justice, and assisted Maximin in his cruelties, shared the same fate. They were dragged along the streets, beaten, murdered, and then thrown into the kennels or common sewers. Numbers took advantage of the tumult to satisfy their particular passions or interests. Debtors massacred their creditors, and those that were at law their adverse parties; so that the restoration of peace became almost a civil war. The governor of the city, Sabinus, attempting to put a stop to this licentiousness,

licentiousness, was himself beaten to death. He was indeed thought to be a favourer of Maximin, and for that reason he was not regretted.

We are not told how this tumult ended; whether it was appeased by the magistrates, or whether the mob, tired of doing mischief, ceased their riots of their own accord. But the sequel will shew, that the flame was far from being totally extinguished, and that a very small matter was capable of kindling it up a-new.

The senators were busied in taking measures against Maximin, and in stirring up the whole empire to oppose him they had declared its enemy. They sent deputies, either chosen from among their own body, or out of the order of knights, into all the provinces, with letters directed to all the magistrates, military officers, cities, towns, and villages, acquainting them with the revolution in the government, and ordering them to acknowledge the Gordians for their emperors, and to destroy all the friends and partizans of Maximin. These letters had the desired effect almost every where. The cities and provinces, magistrates and people, vied with each other which should first shake off a tyrannical and odious yoke, and massacred the creatures of the public enemy wherever they found them. Some few, however, in high offices, remained attached to Maximin, and even sent him some of the deputies of the senate, upon whom this furious prince reeked his vengeance with his usual cruelty.

He was then at Sirmium *, as I said before, and had there received early intelligence of what passed at Rome. Some friends in the senate, had even sent him a copy of the resolutions of that assembly against him, though the

conscript

* We have no fact which proves that Maximin had left this city, in which he spent the winter. Aurelius Victor transports him into Thrace. But the testimony of that writer is of very little authority.

The provinces, encouraged by the deputies of the senate, declare against Maximin.

Fury of Maximin, when informed of these events. *Crit. Mac. 17, 18.*

Gord. 12. 11. 8. He. 1.

conscript Fathers had taken every precaution to keep their determination secret; having, as was their custom on very critical occasions, excluded all those that were not of their body, and the senators themselves performing the functions of clerks and secretaries. But the time was past in which all the members of the senate, animated with the same desire, and united by the love of their country, religiously kept the secret of the state. Maximin was informed of it, and flew into such a rage upon hearing the news, as nothing could equal but the violence of his temper. He threw himself upon the ground, beat his head against the wall, tore his cloaths, and drew his sword against the absent senate. At length, his friends, with much difficulty, carried him to his apartment, where, applying to a remedy worthy of him, he drowned his fury in wine.

The next day, being somewhat more calm, he held a council, to consider what steps he had best to take: and the third day he assembled his army, in which none could be ignorant of what had passed in Africa and at Rome. But all stood in such terror of Maximin, that not a man dared to mention what every one knew. Spies were feared in every corner, ready to catch each word, look, and action. All waited silently, until the tremendous emperor should explain himself.

Resolving
to march
towards
Rome he
harangues
his sol-
diers.

Maximin's harangue, though quite military and very laconic, was not of his own composing, and he was even obliged to read it. "Fellow-soldiers," said he to his troops, I inform you of an event "which will not at all surprize you. The Afri-
cans have broken their faith. But no: they
have not broken it, for they never had any.
They have given the title of emperor to the two
Gordians, the father and the son, one of whom
is so enfeebled with age that he can scarcely
crawl out of his bed, and the other is so ener-
vated by debauchery, that he is as infirm as if
" he

“ he was as old as his father. And our venerable
 “ senators, who killed Romulus and Cæsar, have
 “ declared me a public enemy, whilst I was fight-
 “ ing and conquering for them. They have like-
 “ wise included you in the same condemnation;
 “ you, and all that follow me; and they have
 “ given the name of Augustus to the Gordians.
 “ If, therefore, you have any hearts, if you are
 “ men of strength and courage, let us march
 “ against the senate and the Africans. All their
 “ spoils are yours.”

This speech breathed nothing but menaces and ardour for war: but the soldiers did not shew the zeal their leader wished to find. He had not made them love him; and now that he wanted them, they shewed no readiness to serve him. This, of course, made him lose an infinitely precious time. If he had immediately entered Italy, the senate had not any forces to oppose him: but instead of acting, he was reduced to the necessity of negotiating. In this situation, he offered the senators a general pardon, if they would return to him; and they, very justly, would not trust to his promises. His proposals were rejected, and the senators resolved to defend themselves by arms. Twenty of their members were accordingly singled out, and Italy was divided among them, with directions to each to defend the district committed to his care. New troops were raised, and great preparations made for war. But a catastrophe happened soon after in Africa, which plunged Rome into vast consternation.

Capelian, governor of Numidia, to which post he was promoted by Maximin, had always been disagreeable to Gordian, who, as soon as he was made emperor, ordered him to resign his office to another whom he sent to succeed him. This governor had a considerable number of troops under his command, for the defence of his province, which bordered upon certain restless enterprizing barbarians,

He finds but little ardour in his army, and is for that reason forced to lose a very precious time. *Capit. Gord. 20.*

The Gordians perish, after having reigned only about six weeks. *Herod. & Capit. M. 19. & Gord. 15, & 16.*

rians. Availing himself of his strength, he not only refused to obey the new emperor, whose authority was not yet well established; but, under pretence of remaining faithful to his prince, and of revenging Maximin's cause, he assembled his forces, formed an army, and marched against Carthage. The Gordians were extremely alarmed at this sudden attack. They had but few regular troops: the city of Carthage was filled with an immense number of people, enervated by pleasure, unaccustomed to war, and unprovided with arms: and Gordian the son, who alone could and ought to put himself at their head, had but little skill and experience in military affairs. The danger, however, pressed, and a battle became absolutely necessary. The Gordians joined to the few soldiers they had a great number of the inhabitants of Carthage, whose zeal was much greater than their abilities, and who formed rather a confused multitude, than an army. They wanted even arms, as I said before; every man catching up whatever weapon he could first lay his hands on, the best of which were hatchets, and long poles sharpened at the end. With this multitude, packed together in a hurry, the younger Gordian went out to meet the enemy. A violent storm quite disconcerted them and threw them into greater confusion than ever, just before the battle. Capelian's well-armed troops, accustomed to the operations of war, put them to flight in a moment, with dreadful slaughter. Gordian himself was killed, and buried under such heaps of slain, that it was not possible to distinguish or find his body.

The old emperor was informed of this disaster by the fugitives, who crowded in at the gates of Carthage, closely pursued by their conquerors: and as the entrances were too narrow for the numbers that rushed in, as many were killed now as had fallen on the field of battle. At length Capelian entered

entered triumphant into Carthage : and Gordian, who saw him, gave himself up to despair. Rather than fall alive into the hands of his enemy, he chose to put an end to his own life ; and to that end, retiring into his closet, he hung himself with the girdle he had used to wear round his waist. Thus perished this respectable old man, who certainly deserved a better fate. The supreme rank afforded him nothing but disquietude and bitterness. His reign, short as a dream, and thus unhappily ended, did not in the whole last six weeks. He was proclaimed emperor towards the middle of May, and, according to the most probable opinion, perished before the end of June of the same year. He left a grandson, who inherited his name and the love of the Romans.

Capelian made as cruel an use of his victory as Maximin himself could have done. He drowned Carthage in blood, all its most illustrious citizens who had survived the battle, being massacred by his order. The temples, the repositories of the public riches, and the houses of private men were given up to his troops to plunder. The other cities of Africa, in which Maximin's statues had been pulled down and his honours destroyed, were treated with equal rigour. Capelian visited them all, putting to death their chief inhabitants, oppressing the people, laying waste the country, and always giving up the plunder to his soldiers. In all this he pretended to have no other motive than zeal to revenge the injuries of his prince ; but, in reality, he was labouring for himself, endeavouring to gain the affection of the troops, in hopes of their raising him to the empire in case Maximin should fall. His projects, however, vanished : for we find that he never attained the throne. This is all we know concerning this affair ; our authors being so extremely negligent, that after having brought this actor upon the stage, they drop

drop him at once, without saying what became of him

Maximus and Balbinus are elected emperors by the senate. *Herod. & Capit. Max. 20. & Gord. 22. & Max. & Balb. 1. & 2.*

The defeat and death of the Gordians filled Rome with grief and terror. The senate and people, uniting in the same sentiments, regretted bitterly the loss of these princes in whom they had placed great hopes; and the thought of Maximin's cruelty, which, heightened by his love of vengeance, was now ready to fall upon them with redoubled fury, threw them into the utmost anxiety. In this situation, the senate, sensible that their lamentations would be of no avail, wisely resolved upon more effectual measures to guard against the impending danger, and, driven as they were to the necessity of either killing their enemy, or being killed themselves, they determined to fill up the vacant place of the Gordians, by giving the empire other heads.

Two reasons made them judge it most advisable to create, not one emperor, but two. In the first place they thought that the imperial power would be less despotic when divided between two colleagues: and secondly, the situation of affairs was sufficiently intricate, and the dangers attending them numerous enough, fully to occupy two princes, one of whom would carry on the war against Maximin, whilst the other remained at Rome, to pacify the people whom the late sudden revolutions had thrown into a violent ferment. Their choice fell upon Maximus and Balbinus, two illustrious personages, who were already of the number of the twenty commissaries deputed by the senate to defend Italy. The following is the substance of what history tells us concerning them, to the time of their being raised to the empire.

What we know of them to the time of their election.

M. Clodius Pupienus Maximus, whom we shall call by the name of Maximus only, was of mean extraction, being the son either of a lock-smith or a wheel-wright; but had advanced himself by his

his merit. Arms were his passion from his infancy, ^{Capit. Maer. & Bib. 5, 6.} and he shone in them. After passing through several gradations in the army, he became qualified for employments in Rome. He was made prætor: and as he was not rich, a lady called Pescennia Marcellina, who had received him into her house, and treated him as her son, defrayed his expences in the discharge of that office. He afterwards obtained the consulship; and was, as I observed among the principal events of the reign of Alexander Severus, probably the colleague of Nummius Albinus, in the year of Christ 227. The most important and most honourable employments gave him room to display his talents. He was successively proconsul of Bithynia, Greece, and Narbonnese Gaul. He commanded detachments in Illyricum against the Sarmatians, and upon the Rhine against the Germans, and every where maintained and increased his reputation. Being appointed præfect of Rome, he discharged that office with prudence, firmness, and due severity; and when he was chosen to the first in the empire, the many services he had done the state, and the glory he had acquired, made the obscurity of his origin be so far forgotten, that no one was thought more worthy of the throne.

His morals were irreproachable. His life, and even his countenance, were grave and austere. Attached to his own opinions, but not obstinately so, he laid it down as a rule always to hear those whom he thought he had any reason to complain of. If their excuses were good, he did them justice: and if they acknowledged their fault, and asked his pardon, he was easily moved to forgiveness. However, his general character of severity, which recommended him to the senate, struck a terror into the people, who did not much like to see a man of his disposition armed with the sovereign power. This consideration had doubtless no small weight

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in the choice of his colleague. The electors were willing to temper the austerity of Maximin with the mildness of Balbinus.

Id. ibid. 7. Cœlius Balbinus was rich, and loved pleasure. His table was well served, his wines were excellent, and he frequently indulged himself too much in feasting, though never in any kind of low or unseemly debauchery. He cultivated learning, and particularly eloquence, which had not yet lost its credit among the Romans, but was still looked upon as necessary in a statesman. He succeeded too in poetry, so far at least as to equal the best poets of his age. Called by his birth, which was looked upon as illustrious, to the highest dignities of the empire, he took care to qualify himself properly for them. He was twice consul; and governed successively a great number of provinces, Asia, Africa, Bithynia, Galatia, Pontus, Thrace, and Gaul. He likewise commanded the troops on certain occasions, the particulars of which have not been transmitted to us. But he shone less in arms, than in the conduct of civil affairs. Goodness was his real character: and our historian observes, that the contrasts with which Sallust has described Cato and Cæsar, were applied to Maximin and to him. The one was severe, the other indulgent: the one commanded esteem by his firmness, the other deserved love by his goodness: the one gave nothing more than was strictly due, the other took a pleasure in being liberal and generous.

J. h. p. Aus. ut l. 6. I said that Balbinus's birth was looked upon as illustrious: and so it really was according to the way of thinking of the times he lived in, when all the ancient Roman nobility was extinct. It is highly probable, that he was descended from Cœlius Balbinus, who was consul an hundred years before, under Adrian, and was created a patrician by that emperor. He himself dated his pedigree higher up, saying, if we believe Capitolinus, that he was descended

descended from Balbus Cornelius Theophanes, who was the friend and historiographer of Pompey, and was made a Roman citizen by his protection. If Balbinus really said this, if the ignorance of his historian has not misrepresented his words, he shewed a great want of proper information, and confounded two men into one: for Cornelius Balbus and Theophanes were two very different persons. The one was born at Cadiz in Spain, the other at Mitylene the capital of the isle of Lesbos. Both of them were attached to Pompey. But the moment the civil war broke out, Balbus went over to Cæsar: whereas Theophanes remained faithful to Pompey to the last; and for this very fidelity it was that Tiberius long after extirpated all his family. However, thus much is certain, that Balbinus was reputed very noble: and we see by this, as well as by many other instances, that the Romans were not very nice about their nobility at the time we are now speaking of.

He was elected emperor by the senate, together with Maximus, in a manner which does infinite honour to them both. The senate being assembled, as I said before, on the ninth of July, the first member that spoke proposed naming two emperors. Maximus, who spoke next, seconded the motion. Before he had done voting, Vectius Sabinus, of the family of the Ulpîi, that is to say, of the same blood as Trajan, finding that the deliberation went on coolly and slowly, desired the consul's leave to speak before his turn, and addressed the conscript Fathers to this effect: "In a situation so dangerous as ours now is, every moment is extremely precious. Words are misplaced where action cannot be too speedily resorted to. Let every one here consider the danger that threatens him: let him consider his wife, his children, his fortune, and all that he has inherited from his fathers. All this is actually endangered by Maximin, who, naturally

The manner of their election.
Capit. Max.
& *Balb. 1.*
& 2.

“cruel, violent, and ferocious, cannot fail to be-
 “come more so now, that he thinks his barbarity
 “authorized by a legitimate motive. He is
 “marching against us, whilst you are losing time
 “in deliberating.” After this vehement preamble, Sabinus immediately approved the proposal for making two emperors, and instantly gave his vote for Maximus and Balbus.

All this was probably concerted before-hand, at least with the principal members of the senate; for as soon as Sabinus had done speaking, the whole assembly unanimously cried out, “No-
 “thing is more just, nothing more fitting. We
 “are all of Sabinus’s opinion: we all name Maxi-
 “mus and Balbinus emperors.” The new sove-
 reigns were loaded with vows and wishes for their prosperity and for that of the republic, and the senate conferred upon them in common all the titles of the imperial power, except that of *High Priest*, which, according to the opinion most generally received among the learned, was particularly affected to one emperor only, even when there were several at the same time. Some inscriptions likewise give Maximus and Balbinus the uncommon title of Fathers of the senate.

Id. ibid. 8.

*Tillem.
 Max. art.
 7.*

*Gordian
 III. named
 Cesar.
 H. rod. &
 Capit. Max.
 20. &
 Gord. 22. &
 Max. &
 Balb. 3.*

After the election, the new emperors prepared to take possession of their dignity, and to offer up the first-fruits of it to the gods in the capitol. But they met with an unexpected obstacle. The people, as I said before, feared Maximin’s severity, and acknowledged him for their sovereign with great reluctance. An immense crowd of them surrounded Maximus and Balbinus, and stopped them in their way. The emperors, with the help of some of their guards, tried to disperse them: but the populace, backed by a considerable number of the soldiery, insisted on having an emperor of the family of the Gordians. The troops had, in this, what they thought a great interest at stake. The Gordians had promised them

Aurcl. Vict.

a largess,

a largess, which they were likely to lose by their death; and the placing of another prince of their name upon the throne, seemed to them a means of reviving their claim.

After what has been already said of the younger Gordian, we may reasonably conclude that this family was numerous, and that the mutineers had enough to chuse out of. But they were doubtless willing to have the nearest heir, and this was an infant of twelve years of age, the son of Junius Balbus * by the daughter of the elder Gordian. ^{Capit. Gord.}
 This is the prince who is known in history by the name of Gordian III. a name that was given him either on account of his being adopted by his uncle, or through the enthusiasm of the people at the time we are speaking of. The violence and obstinacy of the multitude were such, that Maximus and Balbinus were forced to give way, at least in some degree. They sent for the heir of the Gordians, and consented that the senate should name him Cæsar. On this condition, the people and the soldiery permitted them to be emperors, and to take up their abode in the palace.

MAXIMUS & BALBINUS.

S E C T. III.

Dangerous situation of the two emperors. Their first cares. Maximus sets out for the war. But first gives fights of gladiators. Dreadful sedition at Rome, and battles between the people and the prætorians. The presence of the young Cæsar Gordian calms the riot. Measures taken by the senate

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to

* Some make Gordian III. the son of the younger Gordian. Authors likewise differ concerning his age. I follow Herodian, as M. de Tillemont has done.

to prevent Maximin's entering Italy. Causes of Maximin's slow march. Approaching towards Italy, he finds the city of Æmona deserted. He passes the Alps, and arrives near Aquileia. Precautions of the senate to stop Maximin before that city. Maximin endeavours in vain to persuade the inhabitants to open their gates to him. He lays siege to Aquileia. Brave defence of the inhabitants. Maximin incurs the hatred of his troops. He and his son are killed by the prætorians. Some particulars concerning his son. Persecution of the Church, under Maximin. The army sends the heads of the Maximins to Maximus. Hostilities cease between the army and the city of Aquileia. Maximus removes from Ravenna to Aquileia. His speech to the army. He separates it. Great joy at Rome. Triumphant return of Maximus. Discontent of the soldiery. Wise government of the two emperors. Secret jealousy between them. The prætorians fall upon them unexpectedly, and murder them.

Dangerous
situation of
the two
emperors.

THE throne, which no wise man ever coveted, could not but fill Maximus and Balbinus with terror when they ascended it. At the gates of Italy, they saw an enemy formidable by his strength and cruelty, against whom they were under an absolute necessity of carrying on a violent and desperate war, without any hope of peace, or any other alternative than that of killing or being killed. In Rome, an undisciplined soldiery, and a turbulent people, always ready to rebel. Add to this, the jealousy which never fails to reign between two colleagues; and their contrariety of tempers and particular views. Such an assemblage of untoward circumstances were too sure prognostics of the misfortunes they afterwards experienced.

Their first
care,
Maximus
sets out for
the war.

After they had acquitted themselves of the first usual ceremonies; made the senate pass a decree by which the two Gordians were ranked among the gods;

gods; and disposed of the two important offices Capit. Max. & Balb. 4. & 5. of præfect of Rome and prætorian præfect, one of which was given to Sabinus, probably the same who had proposed making them emperors, and the other to Pinarius Valens, uncle to Maximus; they divided between them the management of the state. Maximus, as the most used to war, Id. ibid. 2. undertook to march against the enemy. Balbinus remained in the city, to preserve tranquillity there.

Urgent as the danger was with which Maximus threatened Rome, the Romans were so madly fond of shews, that Maximus was forced to treat them with plays, races, and fights of gladiators, before he could set out. In regard to this last article, Capitolinus furnishes us with an anecdote, which ought not to be omitted. He assures us, that by a law of the Romans, the emperors were obliged always to give fights of gladiators before they set out for war. He alledges two reasons for this custom. The first was superstition. The Romans imagined that the shedding of blood in the city satisfied the malevolent divinities, and induced them, in return, to spare the soldiers in battle. The other motive was less absurd: the intention of it being, says the abovementioned writer, to encourage those that were going to war, by shewing them the bravery of the gladiators, and to accustom them to the sight of blood. But however this may have been, Maximus was no sooner gone, than a violent * sedition endangered the very being of Rome, and shewed both the perverseness of its inhabitants, and the incapacity of Balbinus.

Maximus had left a great many of the prætorians, particularly the veterans, at Rome. Several of these, accompanied by a vast crowd of citizens Breadful sedition in Rome, and battles between the people and the prætorians. and

* Capitolinus contradicts himself, and is extremely perplexed in the different accounts he gives of this sedition. I shall chiefly follow Herodian. Herod. & Capit. Max. 20. & Cord.

22. & *Ma.*
& *B. lib.* 9.
c. 10.

and other people, assembled round the door of the senate-house, whilst the senators were deliberating about the affairs of the republic; and two or three of the soldiers, curious to know what was doing, found means to push in, and placed themselves near the altar of Victory, that they might hear the better. They were in their habit of peace, and unarmed. The senators, on the contrary, were armed; because the situation of things, both in the city and throughout the whole state, was such, as made them fear every instant some sudden and unforeseen danger, against which they thought it prudent to take every precaution. Gallicanus, a man of consular rank, and Mæcenas an ancient prætor, both hot and impetuous, perceiving the soldiers I am speaking of, were offended at their presumption, and, with a violence as rash as it was unjust, fell upon them with their daggers, which they drew from under their robes, and killed them upon the spot. The other prætorians, terrified by the death of their comrades, and not having their arms to defend themselves with, fled immediately towards their camp. Gallicanus went out of the senate-house with his bloody poignard in his hand, crying out that he had just killed two of Maximin's spies, charging the prætorians with being their accomplices, and exhorting the people to pursue them. His exhortations were but too well heeded; and the prætorians, pursued by an innumerable multitude, reaching their camp, shut themselves up in it, as their only place of safety, and put themselves in a posture of defence.

Gallicanus's mad temerity did not stop there. Working the populace up to a violent rage, he prevailed upon them to attack the camp, and to that end furnished them with arms out of the arsenals. The gladiators, who were then forming into different schools, and who were always near at hand, joined the people; and Gallicanus, at the
hea

head of this confused tumultuous mob, attacked the camp of the prætorians, who, being well armed, and accustomed to all the exercises of war, easily repulsed their assailants. At length the people grew tired, and towards the evening thought of returning to their respective homes. The prætorians seeing their adversaries retire as carelessly as if they had not been in the least danger, sallied out upon them, killed a prodigious number, and then returned to their camp, from which they had taken care not to go far.

From this moment a civil war began in Rome. The senate took the part of the people, and ordered new troops to be raised. The prætorians on their side, though few in number, compared to the multitude of their foes, defended themselves with all the advantage which their experience in war, and their possession of a well fortified place, gave them; nor were the people ever able to make a breach in their camp.

It seems to me surprising, that in so violent a commotion as this was, no sort of mention is made either of the city-præfect, or of the præfect of the prætorian cohorts. But this may perhaps be owing to the negligence of historians. Balbinus himself made but a poor figure on this occasion. Shut up within his palace, he published edicts, exhorting the people to peace, and promised an amnesty to the soldiers, who do not seem to have been the most to blame. But neither side minded him: on the contrary, their reciprocal rage increased every hour.

The generals of the people thought of an expedient to conquer the obstinacy of the prætorians: this was cutting off the water from their camp. The prætorians, driven to despair, sallied out furiously; a long and bloody battle was fought, in which, however, the people were at last worsted, and fled. The conquerors pursued them sword in hand,

hand, and entered the city with them : but there they were assaulted with showers of stones and tiles from the tops of the houses, to which they thereupon immediately set fire. The flames spread rapidly, and entirely consumed one of the quarters of Rome, which was larger and richer than any one city in the whole empire.

The presence of the young Cæsar, Gordian, calms the riot.

The fury of the contending parties seems at length to have roused Albinus from his inaction. He made his personal appearance, and tried to appease the tumult by his authority. But he was laughed at, and even wounded, some say by a stone thrown at him, others, by a blow with a stick. The only remedy was to shew the seditions the young Cæsar, Gordian, who was equally adored by both sides. The name he bore, and the high veneration in which the memory of his grandfather and uncle was held, rendered him infinitely dear to the people and the soldiery. He was shewn, mounted upon the shoulders of a very tall man ; and the moment he appeared, clad with the imperial purple, the tumult subsided, and every one grew calm.

Measures taken by the senate to prevent Maximin's entering Italy. *Capit. Max. 21. & Hist. & Ind. 10. & 11.*

The senate now enjoyed a little tranquillity, and was at liberty to think seriously of the war, for which the most prudent measures were immediately taken. The great point was to hinder Maximin's entering Italy. To this end, the senators sent to all the cities through which he might be expected to take his route, men well known in the state, and experienced in the art of war, with full power to repair fortifications, levy troops, or do whatever else they should judge necessary for the security of their possessions. They likewise ordered all defenceless places to be evacuated, and the inhabitants to retire into the principal cities with their corn, cattle, and other effects, that the enemy's army might not be able to subsist in any part of the country into which it might penetrate. Proclamations

tions were published in all the provinces, strictly forbidding any one to furnish Maximin with provisions or military stores, or to lend him the least assistance whatever, on pain of being treated as a public enemy. In short, the precaution was carried so far as to place guards all along the coasts and in every port of Italy, and to barricade all the high ways, and even the cross roads, that nothing might pass without being visited and examined, and that the public enemy might not be able to receive intelligence or succours by any means whatever. Maximus, to whom the execution of these orders was committed, repaired to Ravenna, to be the more within reach of the enemy, who was advancing by the way of the Pannonian Alps.

*Her. J.
l. VIII.*

Maximin had not made great dispatch; for it was in the month of May of the year of Christ 287, that the Gordians were proclaimed emperors in Africa, and his army did not reach the gates of Italy until the beginning of spring, in the year 238. I have already mentioned the principal cause of this slowness; namely, the coldness, or rather reluctance to serve him, which Maximin found in his troops. His bad behaviour had extinguished their former zeal in his behalf, and some time was necessary to revive it. We may add, that the resolution of entering Italy in an hostile manner having been taken suddenly, in consequence of an unexpected event, the necessary preparations for that expedition could not be made at once. Certain it is, that this delay cannot be imputed to Maximin, who was always alert and active, even to a degree of rashness.

*Causes of
Maximin's
slow*

march.

*Her. J.
l. VIII.*

Upon the news of the death of the Gordians, he at first flattered himself with some hopes that those whom he called rebels would submit of their own accord. But the election of the emperors Maximus and Balbinus, shewed him that the hatred of the senate was irreconcilable, and that nothing but arms

*Cytil. Ma.
10*

arms

arms could end the quarrel. He therefore employed the rest of the year in making formidable preparations: and the order of his march was disposed as follows, when he advanced towards Italy at the time I mentioned.

Approach-
ing towards
Italy he
finds the
city of
Æmona
deserted.
Herod.
VII. &
VIII.
(capit. Max.
2).

He set out from Sirnium: and when he arrived in the neighbourhood of Æmona *, the last city of Pannonia, at the foot of the Alps, after having sacrificed to the guardian deities of the country, in order to render them propitious to his entering Italy, he drew up his legions in square battalions, deeper however than they were wide, and placed them at the head of his army by way of advanced guard. In their rear was the baggage; and he himself closed the march with his prætorian guards. Upon the wings were his cavalry, part of which consisted of armed horses, and part of Germans; together with all his light troops, Mauritanian slingers, and Osrhoënian archers. In this order he arrived at Æmona, making his troops observe strict discipline all the way, in order to gain the good will of the people.

His scouts, who preceded the army, brought him word that Æmona was deserted, and not an inhabitant left in it. This news rejoiced him at first, on a supposition that the bare terror of his arms had made his enemies fly, and would put him in possession of all Italy with equal ease. But when it afterwards appeared, that this city had not been abandoned precipitately and in confusion, but in consequence of mature deliberation, and that the inhabitants had taken with them all their riches and provisions, and burnt what they could not carry away, so that no subsistence could be found in the city or the country round about, either for men or horses, he altered his opinion; and his troops, who had flattered themselves with expectations of finding plenty of every thing

* Now Laubach, in the district called Carniola.

thing in Italy, now reduced to distress, when they were only approaching that country, began to murmur. Maximin endeavoured to silence them with his usual rigour, and thereby made them hate him more than ever.

He crossed the Alps without meeting any enemy that opposed him. This he again looked upon as an happy presage, and began once more to think that the people of Italy, who had thus neglected the advantages they might have taken over him in the defiles of these mountains, did not intend to make any resistance. The news that was brought him from Aquileia, undeceived him. He learnt, that this city, the first he would come to in Italy, had shut its gates, and seemed determined to make an obstinate defence; that the Pannonian troops, which formed the van of his army, and in whom he reposed great confidence, because they were the first that proclaimed him emperor, and had always distinguished themselves by their zeal for his service, had gone up to the walls of the city, found them lined with soldiers, and, endeavouring to insult the place, had been repulsed with loss. Maximin, imagining that every thing must submit to him, imputed the bad success of the prætorians to their negligence and effeminacy, and made no doubt but that the city would surrender the moment he should appear in person before its walls, at the head of his army. But the event shewed him that he was again mistaken.

The senate had made choice of Aquileia for its place of arms in the war against Maximin. It was then a well peopled city, rich and flourishing by the trade it carried on with Italy and Illyricum, of which it was the center. The fortifications with which it had formerly been surrounded were fallen into great decay, during a peace of several ages. The senate repaired them, and put into the city a strong garrison, the command of which was given to

He passes the Alps, and arrives near Aquileia.

Herod. l. VIII. § Capit. Max. 21—23.

Precautions of the senate to stop Maximin before that city.

to Menophilus and Crispinus, both consulars, and men of merit and capacity. Menophilus had commanded the troops in Mœsia, with honour, for three years, under Alexander: and Crispinus, whose department seems properly to have been the interior government of the city, was endowed with mildness, dignity, and persuasive eloquence. These two governors had taken particular care to have their city well victualled, so that its inhabitants enjoyed plenty of all things when Maximin arrived before it.

Maximin
endeavours
in vain to
persuade
the inhabi-
tants to
open their
gates to
him.

He soon found that Aquileia would not be so easy a conquest as he had at first imagined; and, therefore, fond as he was of carrying every thing with a high hand, he now thought proper to try what gentle means would do, before he had recourse to violence. He had in his army a tribune, a native of Aquileia, and whose whole family was at this very time shut up in its walls. This officer, who seemed to him the most likely of any one to make an impression on his fellow-citizens, went, in his name, up to the walls of Aquileia, with some centurions, and exhorted the inhabitants to return to their duty and obedience to their lawful sovereign, representing to them, on one hand, the dreadful evils they exposed themselves to, and promising them, on the other, a general amnesty, on the faithful performance of which they might so much the more safely depend, as they deserved it, being guilty of no other fault than that of having suffered themselves to be deluded by the authors of the rebellion. The inhabitants, who were upon the walls, listened to the tribune. *The idea of peace is always pleasing. Crispinus hastened to them, and soon made one impression give way to another. Reminding them of their engagements to the senate and people of Rome, he dissuaded them from believing a cruel and deceitful tyrant, set before them the glory of being the saviours of

Italy;

Italy, and assured them of victory, promised them by the entrails of victims, and the oracles of their god Apollo Belænus. This god, whom we have mentioned elsewhere as one of the objects of the religious veneration of the ancient Gauls, was honoured at Aquileia with a particular worship: and upon the occasion we are now speaking of, several of the besiegers declared, after their enterprize had miscarried, that they had seen him in the air, fighting for the city: either, says Herodian, believing the apparition to be real; or chusing to invent it in order to cover their shame. Crispinus's arguments prevailed: and Maximin was at last convinced of the necessity of besieging the place in form.

The river Lisonzo stopped him three days: Though naturally but narrow, it was then swollen by the melting of the snow, so as to be very wide and extremely rapid: and a fine bridge of stone, which the emperors had formerly built over it, had now been destroyed by the inhabitants of Aquileia, who were not above twelve or fifteen miles off. It was impossible for an army to cross this river without a bridge. Some of the German cavalry who tried it, because they had been used to swim over the greatest rivers in their own country, were carried away by the rapidity of the current, and drowned with their horses. Maximin, for want of boats, was obliged to make a bridge with casks fastened together, and covered with bushes and earth, and his whole army passed over it.

Arriving before Aquileia, he immediately ravaged and burnt the fine suburbs of that city, embellished with many stately buildings and delightful gardens, which the inhabitants, from a natural attachment to their own possessions, had spared. The enemies pulled up their vines, and cut down their trees, of which, as well as of the timber of their houses which they beat down, they built machines of war.

After

Brave defence of the inhabitants. *Capit. Maxim. jun. 7. & Mar. & Balb. 11.*

After resting a day, they began their attacks with great fury. The besieged opposed them with equal vigour. Every person in the city became a soldier. The very women cut off their hair, to make ropes for the engines that were used in order to throw darts. Great quantities of boiling pitch and rosin were poured down upon the assailants when they attempted to scale the ramparts; and several skirmishes were fought, in which Maximin's troops suffered greatly, without ever being able to make the least breach in the walls. The courage of the besieged increased with their success, whilst the besiegers were, on the contrary, disheartened by the fruitlessness of their efforts, and grew weary of fighting for a cause unfortunate in itself, and detested by the whole empire. All these disgusts were heightened by the extreme distress to which they were reduced, receiving no assistance from the country before them, and having communication only with Pannonia, which they had quite eaten up: whereas Aquileia, well provided with every thing necessary, easily maintained all her inhabitants. Maximin's troops, thus circumstanced, thus justly dissatisfied already with the hardships they underwent, were besides all this exposed to such brutality from their prince, as soon drove them to the utmost fury, and even to despair. The barbarian, accustomed always to conquer, grew enraged by the resistance he now met with, which all his efforts could not overcome. The taunting insults with which the besieged loaded him and his son, stung him to the very soul. Ceasing to fear him, they now treated him with ridicule and contempt, and made him the butt of their sneers and sarcasms whenever he came near their walls. Unable to bear this treatment, he vented his wrath upon his troops, calling them cowards, and punishing their officers with ignominy or death. Detested before by almost all the universe, he drew upon

Maximin incurs the hatred of his troops.

upon

upon himself by this behaviour, the additional hatred of those from whom alone he could possibly expect the least resistance.

The most susceptible of the spirit of revolt were the prætorians, whose wives and children were at Rome. They animated each other by mutual complaints of the length of this laborious and bloody siege, of which they saw no end; of the hardship of being forced to make war against Italy for a tyrant hated by gods and men: and from these complaints they easily proceeded to a resolution to get rid of Maximin. An opportunity for so doing soon offered, and they immediately seized it. A day of rest being granted to the army, whilst the other troops were dispersed about the camp, or indulging themselves in their tents, the prætorians, armed, went to the imperial tent towards noon. The soldiers upon guard instantly joined their comrades, and plucked off their standards the images of him they no longer acknowledged for emperor. Maximin, warned of the danger by the noise he heard, went out to them, hoping to intimidate them by seeming not to be afraid: but, without staying to hear him, they fell upon him and his son, killed them both, cut off their heads, and left their bodies to the mercy of the birds and beasts of prey. Thus did Maximin expiate the murder of his master and benefactor, Alexander, by a catastrophe exactly similar to that he had made him suffer. His prætorian præfect Anulinus, and those that were thought to be his greatest favourites, were killed with him. M. de Tillemont places this event towards the end of March of the year of Christ 238. Maximin might then be about fifty-five years of age.

His son, who, as we said before, was Cæsar, and, according to some, even Augustus, was but twenty-one: a young prince, enveloped in the misfortunes of his father, and of whom history has preserved scarce any other remembrance, than

Some particulars concerning his son. Capit. Hist. ju.

that his person was beautiful. The friends of the Gordians have given him an exceeding bad character in regard to his morals: but their testimony is suspicious. Capitolinus taxes him with being over nice and curious in his dress: and he likewise accuses him of pride and arrogance. He says, however, that Maximin the father, notwithstanding his savage haughtiness, rose up to receive the people of distinction who came to wait on him; whilst the son remained seated, and even carried his insolence so far as to make many kiss his feet. In another place the same writer, on the contrary laments the fate of the younger Maximin as too hard, considering the goodness of his character: and he quotes an author who had written that the Romans were almost as much afflicted for his death, as they were rejoiced at that of his father. The reader may perceive by this, that all we know concerning the younger Maximin amounts to very little.

Persecution of the church under Maximin.
Enc. Hist. Eccl. VI. 28.
Oros. VII. 15.
Tillem. Hist. de Maximin. Art. 6.

Maximin reigned three years and some days, reckoning to the time of his death. I have already said, that his hatred of Alexander's memory induced him to persecute the Christians, whom this prince had favoured. This persecution fell only upon the bishops and priests: and Orosius assures us, that Maximin had a personal spite against Origen, who however escaped his fury, and survived him. In this same persecution the churches of the Christians were pulled down: and M. de Tillemont observes, that this is the oldest positive proof we have, of buildings publicly consecrated by the Christians to the worship of their religion, and known to be such by the Pagans. We have seen somewhat like it under the reign of Alexander Severus: and it was perhaps the protection that prince granted the Christians, which emboldened them to build churches, instead of the private oratories they had before in the inner parts of their houses.

The

The death of Maximin occasioned at first some disturbance in the army. The Pannonians, Thracians, and other bodies of barbarian troops, who had been the chief instruments of his promotion, retained an affection for him, and regretted him. But what was done could not be recalled: the majority approved of his death, and rejoiced at it; and the weakest were of course constrained to yield. The Maximins were unanimously deemed tyrants: their dead bodies were thrown into the river, and their heads were sent to Maximus, who was at Ravenna.

The army sends the heads of the Maximins to Maximus. Herod. & Capit. Mir. 24. & Bull. 11.

The whole army, with one accord, drew up before the walls of Aquileia, no longer with hostile menaces, but unarmed, and peaceably disposed. They acquainted the Aquileians with the death of Maximin, desired them to open their gates, and no longer to look upon them as enemies. The governors of the city, prudently doubting the truth of what they said, ordered the images of the two Augusti, Maximus and Balbinus, and that of Gordian Cæsar, to be held out to them, upon which they all, without the least difficulty, did homage to them, as to their lawful princes, and peace was in consequence thereof settled between the city and the camp, though not with full liberty of mutual intercourse. The gates of Aquileia continued shut: but such plenty of all sorts of provisions and refreshments were landed down from the tops of the walls to the late besiegers, as shewed them more plainly than ever, how long the city could have held out, and even how uncertain their taking it at last would have been. Things remained in this situation, until orders were received from Maximus.

Hostilities cease between the army and the city of Aquileia.

This prince, as I observed before, was then at Ravenna, raising forces for the war he was to carry on, not against a man, said he, but against a Cylops. All the youths of Italy flocked to him, and he had received considerable succours from the

Maxim. remove. from Ravenna to Aquileia

Germans, whom he had formerly governed with equity and wisdom, and who, remembering it with gratitude, were now extremely zealous to support his being emperor. His plan was to let Maximin waste his strength in the siege of Aquileia, which he knew was able to hold a great while; and, when the proper time should come, to fall upon his fatigued and diminished army, with troops quite fresh and fit for action.

Whilst he was preparing every thing for this design, not without some doubt whether it would succeed, messengers arrived with the heads of the two Maximins. His joy for this unexpected victory, gained even without his drawing his sword, may be easier imagined than described. He immediately offered up sacrifices of thanksgiving to the gods; and the news spreading in a moment throughout all Ravenna, every altar smoked with the blood of victims. Maximus, after sending the heads of the Maximins to Rome by the same messengers who had brought them to him, set out for Aquileia.

Upon his arrival, the gates were opened, and all appearance of war ceased. No doubt can be made but that he rewarded the zeal and fidelity of the inhabitants of this city, which had been the bulwark of Italy and the empire. He there received deputations from the neighbouring cities, which sent their magistrates to him, cloathed in white, crowned with laurel, and bringing with them the statues of their gods, and the most precious ornaments of their temples. The troops which had besieged Aquileia likewise appeared before him, drawn up in order, and bearing branches of laurel. They acknowledged him with a seemingly unanimous consent: but, in reality, their minds were altered from what they had lately been. Jealous of the usurped prerogatives of their corps, many of them were seemingly much dissatisfied at seeing an emperor whom they had raised to the throne, succeeded by princes of the senate's chusing.

Maximus

Maximus was not ignorant of their dispositions, but framed accordingly the speech he made them on the third day after his arrival. He assembled them in the plain, and, ascending his tribunal, congratulated them on their having returned to their duty, and renewed the oaths by which they were solemnly bound to their lawful emperors. He then observed to them, that the senate and people had made a just use of their power, in giving heads to the empire. "For, added he, the empire is not the inherent property of any man. It belongs in common to the senate and the people, even from its first origin. It is in the city of Rome that the public weal resides; and we are deputed to administer and govern the affairs of the state with your assistance. A due observance of good discipline, and a respectful obedience towards those that are appointed to command, will procure you advantageous settlements, and the universe an happy calm." Maximus concluded his speech, with assuring them that what was past would be entirely forgotten; that they might depend on a sincere amnesty, which he promised them; and with declaring, that they might look upon that day as the beginning of a perpetual treaty of alliance, and of an everlasting benevolence and union; to strengthen which he promised them the then necessary persuasive with the soldiery, an ample donative of money.

He then took the wise precaution of separating this army, by sending the legions and other troops into their quarters, and into the provinces from which Maximin and Alexander had drawn them; taking with him to Rome only the prætorians, the new levies raised by Balbinus, and the Germans, on whose affection and fidelity he fully depended.

Joy reigned throughout Rome. It is not possible to express the transports of gladness, which the death of the Maximius excited in that city. The messenger, who was but four days upon the road

thither from Aquileia, arrived with these welcome tidings whilst Balbinus and the young Cæsar Gordian were in the circus, assisting at games, which even the danger of so near and so perilous a war had not been able to interrupt. The moment it was known what the messenger had brought, pleasure gave way to more important thoughts: the senators repaired to their usual place of meeting, and the people flocked to the forum. In the senate-house, nothing was heard but acclamations and applause, mixed with the strongest expressions of detestation against the memory of the Maximins. Triumphal statues were decreed to the emperors, and solemn thanksgivings to the gods. The people had already of their own accord, began to fulfil the latter part of this decree, by repairing to all the temples, which were instantly filled with persons of every sex and age. The citizens, with a kind of enthusiasm, congratulating and embracing one another, repeated the pleasing news. In short, the joy upon this occasion was as great as it was universal. But no one felt it more than Balbinus, who, naturally timid, had not until then been able to hear the name of Maximin pronounced without trembling. His fears, however, being now removed, he offered up an hecatomb, attended by the magistrates and all the senate. The zeal even of private men was not less ardent; every one thinking himself personally delivered from impending ruin, and testifying his acknowledgment by sacrifices to the gods.

The public rejoicings were heightened still more by the sight of the heads of the Maximins, which were stuck upon spears, and carried through all the streets of Rome: after which the populace, intoxicated with joy, insulted them outrageously, and at last burnt them in the Campus Martius.

From the
phantom re-
turn of
Maximian.

Maximus's return to Rome was triumphant. A solemn deputation of twenty senators, four of whom were consulars, eight ancient prætors, and eight ancient

ancient quæstors, was sent to him at Ravenna; and when he drew near Rome, he was met at some distance from that capital by his colleague Balbinus, the young Cæsar, all the senate, and an innumerable crowd of the people, who received him as their saviour and deliverer. Though the war had been ended without him, the honour of the victory was nevertheless ascribed to him: and, in fact, it was chiefly owing to his prudence and good management that Maximin's efforts were rendered fruitless.

Herod. & Capit. Max. & Balb. 12—14.

Amidst this general joy of all the orders of the state, the soldiers were the only people who seemed dissatisfied. Neither Maximus's speech, the amnesty he had so strongly assured them of, the donatives he had promised them, nor any other consideration could make them brook the thoughts of being forced to obey emperors which they had not chosen: and this untoward disposition was increased by the imprudent acclamations of the senators, in which, heaping encomiums upon Maximus and Balbinus, and comparing their fortune with that of Maximin, they cried out: "Thus it is that emperors wisely chosen, triumph: and thus perish those that are raised by the favour of an inconsiderate multitude." The soldiers easily perceived that this reflection was aimed at them; and their resentment in consequence of it soon produced the most dreadful effects.

Discontent of the soldiery.

During a calm of very short duration which the two emperors enjoyed, they gave the world a good opinion of their government. They expressed great respect for the senate, administered justice themselves, made wise regulations, and prepared with vigilance and activity for a war which they intended against the Persians on the one hand, and the Germanic or Scythian nations on the other. Maximus was to march towards the east, and Balbinus towards the north.

Wise government of the two emperors.

This

Secret jealousy between them.

This conduct, so laudable in appearance, concealed however a fatal venom, scarce ever to be avoided between two colleagues who share the sovereign power. They seemed to act in concert in every thing: but, in reality, jealousy divided them. Balbinus had been hurt by the commendations bestowed on Maximus for a victory gained, said he, without the least labour or difficulty; whilst he himself was exposed to continual fatigue and danger, to quell a sedition which threatened the ruin of Rome. Besides, he despised his colleague, as his inferior in point of birth: and Maximus, on his side, priding himself on his superior merit in arms, ridiculed the cautious timidity of Balbinus. They looked upon one another in the light of rivals: and each of them, aspiring in his heart to be sole master, guessed his partners thoughts by his own. This disagreement did not break out openly: but some too certain symptoms of it appeared, which filled all good citizens with concern, and not only gave the prætorians hopes, but facilitated to them the means of executing the wicked design they had plotted against their emperors.

The prætorians fall upon them unexpectedly, and murder them.

For these troops, always enemies to wisdom and virtue in their princes, waited only for an opportunity to kill Maximus and Balbinus. To the motives of hatred already mentioned, were joined fear and distrust. They remembered that Severus, to revenge the death of Pertinax, had broken the whole body of the prætorians. They apprehended the same treatment from the present emperors: and the Germans, whom Maximus had brought with him, and who, as I said before, were strongly attached to him, seemed to them successors ready to take their place.

The Capitoline games furnished them with the opportunity they wished for, the whole city resorting thither, and the emperors being left almost alone in their palace. The prætorians, taking
advantage

advantage of this, assembled, armed themselves, and set out for the execution of their horrid design. Maximus was warned of the danger, and sent for his faithful Germans, with whose assistance, had he been able to collect them round his person, he might easily have defended himself against the fury of the assassins. But Balbinus, through a blindness equally strange and fatal, sent contrary orders, imagining that Maximus intended to make use of the Germans in order to get rid of him, and make himself sole sovereign. The consequence of this ill-grounded suspicion was that he perished with Maximus. The prætorians entered the palace, seized the two emperors, and thinking it not enough barely to take away their lives, they carried their rage so far as to insult their majesty, their age, their virtues, by stripping them naked, dragging them through the streets of Rome towards their camp, striking them on the face, plucking off their eye-brows and beards, mixing every kind of derision with their cruelty, and taking a barbarous pleasure in prolonging their sufferings, and in vilifying in them the character of emperors chosen by the senate: until at last, being informed that the Germans were coming up to defend their princes, they ended their torments with their lives, left their dead bodies in the middle of the street, and returned to their camp. The Germans, whose zeal was probably not very ardent, finding that those they came to succour were already killed, did not think proper to begin a battle for dead men, who could not be benefited by it, and therefore retired quietly.

Such was the deplorable end of two emperors, ^{Capit.} whose different talents were capable of restoring ^{Max. &} the glory and splendour of Rome, if the rage of ^{Balb. 13,} the soldiery had not thus untimely cut them off: ^{§ 16.} a dead so atrocious, as not to be exceeded by the most horrid actions even of the most barbarous nations: bitter, but certain fruit of the weak condescendence

descendence by which the government of the Cæsars nourished the insolence of the troops!

Maximus foresaw this melancholy fate, the moment he was raised to the empire. "What reward, said he to Balbinus, think you we may expect, if we do deliver the world from the monster who tyrannizes over it?" And upon Balbinus's answering him, "We may depend upon the thanks and love of the senate, of the Roman people, and even of the whole universe. Add, replied Maximus, and upon the hatred of the soldiers, which will prove fatal to us." Both their predictions were equally verified: for they died extremely regretted. They had always been greatly esteemed by the senate. Balbinus had ever been a favourite with the people; and Maximus himself had begun to gain the affection of the lower class of the citizens, who, terrified at first by the notion they had conceived of his severity, were now inclined to love him for the important service he had done them, and for the mildness of his government.

Balbinus left a posterity, which subsisted in a flourishing condition in the time of Dioclesian. History does not mention that of Maximus. The splendour of his family began and ended with him.

M. de Tillemont thinks these two emperors were killed about the fifteenth of July, of the year of Christ 238. They reigned somewhat more than a year.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS
OF THE REIGN
OF
GORDIAN III.

ANNIUS PIUS or ULPUS.
..... PONTIANUS.

A. R. 989.
A. C. 238.

GORDIAN, at the age of thirteen, is proclaimed Augustus by the soldiers, and acknowledged by the senate and people.

He is governed at first by eunuchs, and by rapacious and deceitful ministers, who make a bad use of their power.

M. ANTONIUS GORDIANUS AUGUSTUS.
..... AVIOLA.
..... SABINUS.
..... VENUSTUS.

A. R. 990.
A. C. 239.
A. R. 991.
A. C. 240.

Revolt of Sabinianus in Africa, speedily quelled.

M. ANTONIUS GORDIANUS AUGUSTUS II.
..... POMPEIANUS.

A. R. 992.
A. C. 241.

Sapor, son of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians, attacks the Roman empire.

Gordian marries the daughter of Mysithæus, and makes him his prætorian præfect. From this moment

moment every thing is reformed in the state, by the wise administration of Mysithæus.

Earthquakes.

First mention of the Franks in history.

A. R. 993.
A. C. 242.

C. VETTIUS AUFIDIUS ATTICUS.
C. ASINIUS PRÆTEXTATUS.

Gordian sets out from Rome, to make war against the Persians.

He passes through Mœsia and Thrace, defeats the barbarians, probably Sarmatians and Goths, dispersed over those countries, but meets with a repulse from the Alans.

Arriving in Syria, he drives the Persians from thence, pursues them into Mesopotamia, defeats Sapor near Resæna, and retakes Carrhæ and Nisibis.

Triumph decreed Gordian by the senate. Extraordinary honours conferred on Mysithæus.

A. R. 994.
A. C. 243.

..... ARRIANUS.
..... PAPUS.

Some of the events mentioned under the last year may belong to this.

The death of Mysithæus, hastened by the wickedness of Philip, who succeeded him in the post of prætorian præfect.

Philip is said to have been a Christian : but that does not seem to be proved.

A. R. 995.
A. C. 244.

..... PEREGRINUS.
..... ÆMILIANUS.

Argunthis, king of the Scythians, ravages the countries round about him.

Philip, by his perfidious intrigues, exasperates the soldiers against Gordian, takes away his life at
Zaïthus

Zaithus in Mesopotamia, and causes himself to be proclaimed emperor, towards the beginning of March.

He pretends to honour the memory of him he had killed.

Gordian ranked among the gods.

The tomb of this young and unfortunate prince near Circesium, a city built at the conflux of the Chaboras and Euphrates.

Censorinus and Herodian wrote in the time of Gordian.

GORDIAN III.

SECT. IV.

Gordian Cæsar is proclaimed Augustus by the soldiery, and acknowledged by the senate and people. Amiable qualities of the young emperor. He is governed at first by interested and corrupt ministers, who make a bad use of their power. Revolt of Sabinianus, speedily quelled. Mysithaus becomes father-in-law to Gordian, and prætorian præfect. Admirable conduct of this minister. The Persians attack the Roman empire. Gordian goes into the East, and distinguishes himself there in arms. The death of Mysithaus. Philip is made prætorian præfect in his stead. It is scarcely probable that Philip was a Christian. He murders Gordian, and causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by the soldiers. He pretends to honour the memory of the prince he has killed. Gordian's death was revenged. His epitaph. He was rather mild and good natured, than a man of shining parts. Privilege granted to his family. Earthquakes in his reign. Incursion of Argunthis, king of the Scythians.

First

First mention of the Franks in History. Herodian wrote in the reign of Gordian. Censorinus's book, De die Natali.

Gordian
Caesar is
proclaimed
Augustus
by the sol-
diery and
acknow-
ledged by
the senate
and people.
*Herod.
l. VIII. &
Capit.
Gord. 21.
& Max. &
Balb. 14.*

ROME, in the times of which we are now writing the history, was fallen into an absolute anarchy. Every thing was decided by force. Neither the laws of the state, nor those of nature, were of any avail. Never was a more horrid crime than the murder of Maximus and Balbinus: and yet the perpetrators of that shocking parricide were not so much as threatened with the least punishment. They secured their impunity by proclaiming young Caesar Gordian, Augustus.

Hurrying him away into their camp, and making a merit of their enormous guilt, they cried out to the astonished multitude of citizens, that they had just delivered them from princes whom they had disliked from the moment of their creation, and that they gave them for emperor one whom they loved, and whom they had already decorated with the title of Caesar. This was sufficient to give them all a new turn. Maximus and Balbinus were as much forgotten as if they had never existed; and Gordian, at the age of thirteen, was acknowledged by the people and senate with all possible demonstrations of joy and festivity.

Amiable
qualities of
the young
emperor.
*Capit.
Gord. 31.*

This prince had indeed, besides the recommendation of his name, every personal qualification that could please and captivate his subjects: an handsome countenance, mild and open; a sweetness of behaviour, an engaging address, and a taste for learning. Accordingly, he was tenderly beloved. The senate, the people, and the army called him their son. In short, he was the delight of the whole world.

He is go-
verned at
first by in-
testated
and cor-
rupt mini-
sters, who

Our memoirs, which grow more and more deficient from this time, for even Herodian fails us here, do not inform us what measures were taken

to supply the defect of non-age in an emperor, who was but thirteen years of age. He had been brought up until this time under the wing of his mother Mætia Faustina, who, as we may readily imagine, finding herself in the same situation as Mamma had been, claimed no less share in the government than that princess had enjoyed. But she was far from imitating her example in the education of her son, in giving them good and faithful governors, and in keeping from him such as were capable of corrupting him. She suffered herself to be guided by eunuchs and greedy courtiers, who studied only their own interest, without troubling themselves in the least about the honour of their prince. Their numberless abuses are so well described in a letter of Mysithæus, who reformed them, that I think I cannot do better than to transcribe it here.

“ To his most honoured and most august lord
 “ and son ; Mysithæus, father-in-law to the em-
 “ peror, and his præfect. It gives us great joy
 “ that we have wiped off the stain of those me-
 “ lancholy times, in which every thing was sold
 “ at court by the eunuchs, and those who called
 “ themselves your friends, whilst they were in fact
 “ your most pernicious enemies. But what re-
 “ joices me most of all, is, that you are pleased with
 “ the reformation : from whence it is plain, that
 “ the faults of the preceding times ought not to
 “ be imputed to you. Yes, my most respected
 “ lord and son, you remember it : the military
 “ commands were given away upon the recom-
 “ mendation of the eunuch of the chamber ; ser-
 “ vices remained unrewarded ; pardons and con-
 “ demnations were determined by caprice or mo-
 “ ney, without any regard to the merits of the
 “ cause ; the public treasure was plundered and
 “ absorbed by designing knaves, who framed to-
 “ gether snares, in which they hoped to catch you,
 “ and

“ and who agreed before-hand among themselves
 “ what part each of them should act with you.
 “ By these artifices, they succeeded so far as to
 “ supplant good men, to put wicked ones in their
 “ places, and, in short, to sell you, as things are
 “ sold in the market. Thanks to the gods! the
 “ government has been reformed with your full
 “ and entire consent. What happiness to me, to
 “ be the father-in-law of a prince, who desires to
 “ be informed of, and to know every thing him-
 “ self, and who has banished from about him those
 “ who abused his confidence?” Gordian, in his
 answer to this letter, confirms all that is said in
 it. He thanks Mysithæus for having opened his
 eyes, and concludes with a reflection extremely
 moving in the mouth of a young prince. “ * My
 “ father, give me leave to tell you this truth.
 “ The fate of an emperor is very hard. Truth is
 “ concealed from him. He cannot see every
 “ thing with his own eyes, and therefore is oblig-
 “ ed to rely on men who agree among themselves
 “ to deceive him.”

Capit. Gord.
23.

Revolt of
Sabinianus
speculily
quell'd.
Capit. &
Z. 5.

What the reader has now seen is nearly the
 substance of all we know of the first years of Gor-
 dian's reign, to the time of his making Mysithæus
 his father-in-law and minister. The rest consisted
 of games and shews, lavished to please the ple-
 beians, and of the revolt of Sabinianus in Africa.
 Our authors do not tell us, either who Sabi-
 nianus was, what motives induced him to rebel,
 or upon what strength he founded his hopes of
 success. He stirred up an insurrection in Africa
 in the year of Christ 240, with a design to make
 himself emperor. He had a party, which neither
 subsisted long, nor was difficult to be mastered;
 and he himself perished in this ill-concerted en-
 terprize.

* *Mi pater, verum audias velim. Miser est imperator, apud quem vera reticentur; qui quum ipse publice ambulare non possit, necesse est ut audiat, & vel audita, vel a plurimis roborata confirmet.*

terprize. The victory was however gentle, pardon being readily granted to the rebels, who immediately returned to their duty.

It was either in this year, or the following, that Gordian, for his own happiness, and for that of the whole empire, married the daughter of Mysithæus. Her name, as we find it upon medals, was Furia Sabina Tranquillina. We know not the ancestors of Mysithæus, nor even of what country he was; any farther than that his name, and that of Timesicles which Zosimus gives him, indicate a Greek origin. As to his person, Capitolinus calls him a very learned and very eloquent man. But his conduct speaks him possessed of very superior merit, and intitles him to the highest commendations both as a virtuous minister, and an able statesman.

Gordian, when he married his daughter, made him prætorian præfect, and thereby put him in a situation to display his talents. I have already observed, more than once, how great a power, both civil and military, was annexed to this office. A prætorian præfect was now the sovereign's principal minister, his lieutenant-general. Mysithæus made use of his power, to reform the abuses of the government, as we have seen by his letter. He made justice and the laws reign in the prince's councils; and his two great objects were the glory of his minister, and the happiness of the people. In regard to the troops, he restored their discipline, which the disorders of the late times had absolutely corrupted. The military profession was profitable among the Romans; and many, to reap the advantages of it, either enlisted before, or continued in the army after, the age at which they were deemed fit for service. Mysithæus dismissed all such as were either too young or too old; and would suffer none to be paid by the state, but those who actually served it. He entered into the most minute details, even examining himself the arms of the soldiers. He knew how

Mysithæus becomes father-in-law to Gordian, and prætorian præfect. Admirable conduct of this minister.

Capit. Gord. 28.

how to make himself be both loved and feared. In times of war, nothing could equal his activity and vigilance. Wherever he encamped, he always took care that the camp should be surrounded by a ditch. He himself often went the rounds in the night, and visited the guards and centinels. He had stored all the frontier cities with such plenty of provisions, that there was not one of them but could maintain the emperor and his army for a fortnight, and the great ones a whole year. Such was Mysithæus; and the success which Gordian had with him in the war against the Persians, shews that this wise minister was also a good general.

The Persians attack the Roman empire.

The Persians had not exercised the Roman arms since Alexander Severus. Artaxerxes, the restorer of their name and empire, had indeed made some motions in the year of Christ 237, which were near renewing the war. We observed before, that Maximus was preparing to march against the Persians, when he perished. His death, and that of Artaxerxes, which happened soon after, probably suspended hostilities. Artaxerxes dying, left the empire to his son Sapor, who was the perpetual scourge of the Romans, and did them infinite mischief, during thirty-one years that he reigned. He began war against them the moment he was seated on the throne; and, full of that confidence which youth, and the desire of signalizing the beginning of a new reign, inspire, he entered Mesopotamia, took Nisibis and Carrhæ, and if he did not make himself master of Antioch, he at least humbled the pride of that great city, and blocked it up. His progress was so great and rapid, that Italy almost began to fear him; and he himself was ambitious and haughty enough to extend his views and menaces even thither.

Cap't. 27.

Gordian

Gordian resolved to check this violent attack, and to that end made immense preparations of troops, military stores, and money. I have said how careful Mysithæus was to provide plenty of provisions. When every thing was ready, Gordian opened the temple of Janus, to shew that the war was begun: and this is the last time we find this ceremony mentioned in history. He set out in the spring of the year of Christ 242, taking his rout through Mœsia and Thrace, where he defeated the barbarians, probably Goths * and Sarmatians, who had over-run those provinces. He met, however, with a repulse, but which does not seem to have been considerable, from the Alans, in the plains of Philippi. From thence, crossing the Streights, he proceeded into Syria, and carried on the war against the Persians with a spirit and success which covered him with glory. Sapor's terror was so great, that he abandoned precipitately all the country and all the cities he had taken possession of, withdrew his garrisons in great haste, and restored the places to their former inhabitants, without plundering them: and when his soldiers, pursued by the conquerors, had repassed the Euphrates, their joy at having escaped the danger, as they thought, was so great, that they kissed that friendly land in which they imagined themselves safe. Sapor was in such a hurry to fly, that he sent all the money of Syria, which he intended to have carried off with him, to the inhabitants of Emessa, to purchase their leave to pass. Gordian, having delivered Antioch, and driven the enemy out of Syria, passed the Euphrates in his turn, defeated Sapor near the city of Resæna, retook Carrhæ and Nisibis, conquered back all Mesopotamia, and hoped to enter the territories of the

Gordian goes into the East, and distinguishes himself there in arms. *Capit. 26, 27.*

Petr. Patr. de Le. 8th.

Capit.

Ann. Mex. 1.

XXIX.

VOL. VIII.

E c

Persians,

* In an epitaph quoted by Capitolinus, n. 34. he is called the conqueror of the Goths and Sarmatians.

Persians, and penetrate to the royal city of Ctesiphon, by the end of his second campaign.

These were the terms in which he wrote to the senate: and in his letter he acknowledged, with admirable candour, that he owed his success to Mysithæus, and desired thanks might be returned, first to the gods, and next to the prætorian prefect. The senate decreed the emperor a triumph; and to shew that it was particularly for the victory over the Persians, his car was ordered to be drawn by four elephants. Mysithæus was rewarded with the honour of a triumphal car drawn by four horses, and with an inscription to his praise, part of which still subsists at Rome, and in which he is called the father of the emperor, and guardian of the republic.

T. Liv.

The death
of Mysithæus.
Philip is
made prætorian
prefect in his
stead.
*Capit. 28,
29.*

He well deserved every encomium: and the event proved but too plainly, that the prosperity of the emperor and the empire depended upon him. He died soon after the transactions we have been speaking of, leaving by will all his estate to the Roman republic, or rather to the city of Rome; and with him perished all the happiness and glory of Gordian. His death was thought not to be natural; Philip, who succeeded him in the office of prætorian prefect, being suspected of having hastened it. Mysithæus was taken ill of a dysentery, and it is said, that instead of the medicine which his physicians had ordered, Philip, having bribed the persons who attended him, gave him a dose which increased his disorder, and carried him off. I see no reason why we may not fairly suspect of this crime the man who reaped the fruit of it, and who afterwards crowned it by another still much greater.

Philip, M. Julius Philippus, was an Arabian, born at Bostra in the district of Trachonitum, of mean and even odious extraction, if it be true, as the epitome of Aurelius Victor says, that he was the son of the captain of a band of robbers. He had

had advanced himself in the army, so far as to be able to aspire to the post of prætorian præfect, which in fact Gordian gave him after the death of Mysithæus. He is said to have been a Christian; but if he was, it seems to me very strange that none of the Pagan writers who have spoken of him, should have mentioned it. Zosimus in particular, who is full of venom against Christianity, and who takes a pleasure in loading Constantine with the most atrocious calumnies, would surely not have spared Philip. The Christian writers, upon whose authority the notion of this prætorian præfect's Christianity is founded, certainly deserve respect: but their accounts are so confused, so full of circumstances either palpably contradictory, or absolutely refuted by history, that the weight of their testimony is considerably diminished. Though M. de Tillemont inclines to their opinion, I am not afraid to own that what he himself has written upon this subject makes me of a different mind. If Philip did profess our religion, he was certainly a bad Christian. I had rather believe, that being born in the neighbourhood of the country which was the cradle of Christianity, he might from thence acquire some tincture of it; and that he favoured it, as Alexander Severus had done; but without renouncing his idolatrous superstitions, to which he adhered when emperor.

Philip, looking upon the rank of prætorian præfect only as a step by which he was advanced nearer to the throne, determined to stick at no crime to gain entire possession of the sovereignty. To this end he resolved to wean the affections of the troops from Gordian, by bringing about a scarcity of provisions in the army. Mysithæus, as we observed before, had taken the most prudent measures for their being plentifully supplied with every thing: but Philip directed their march through the arid plains of Mesopotamia, far from their magazines, and perfidiously gave private or-

It is scarcely probable that Philip was a Christian. Tillem. n. 1. sur. Phil.

He murders Gordian and causes himself to be proclaimed emperor by the soldiers. Capit. 29. 30. Zos.

ders for the boats that carried their provisions not to follow them. The soldiers began to grow hungry, and consequently to murmur; whilst Philip, taking advantage of their discontent, of which he himself was the only cause, sily insinuated to them by his emissaries, that it was not to be wondered at if things were thus badly conducted by a prince, whose youth was such that he himself stood in need of a director: and that it would be much better to give the command to one whose capacity and experience would enable him to make a good use of it. He likewise gained over several of the principal officers; and in a short time things were carried to such a length, that the whole army demanded Philip for their emperor. Gordian and his friends did all they could to oppose the sedition: but the cabal was too strong: they were obliged to yield; and the soldiers, by way of compromise, ordered (this is the historian's expression) that Philip should be associated to Gordian, as his colleague and tutor.

But even this did not satisfy the ambitious Philip. Wanting to reign alone, and knowing how much the name of Gordian was cherished, both at Rome, and in the provinces; fearing, too, lest the soldiers should return to their former affection for this young emperor, when the cause of their present complaints should be removed; and sensible with what disadvantage a man of his mean extraction, who had attained the sovereign power by the worst of means, would contend against a prince lawfully elected, the nephew and grandson of emperors; he concluded, that there could be no safety for him whilst Gordian lived, and therefore procured his death, probably by secret practices.

Capitolinus places here a scene, which does not seem at all likely. He says that Gordian, treated by Philip with insufferable pride and arrogance, tried to shake off the odious yoke, and to prevail upon

upon the troops to depose his oppressor. That to this end he ascended his tribunal, accompanied by Metius Gordianus his relation, who held a considerable rank in the army. That he there complained to the officers and soldiers assembled, of Philip's ingratitude and insolence: but that his complaints were disregarded, and even treated with contempt. That finding himself looked upon as inferiour to his adversary, he desired to be placed upon an equal footing with him, and that this was refused. That he desired the title of Cæsar might at least be continued to him, and could not obtain it. That he even offered to be contented with the place of prætorian præfect, and that this was rejected. That he at last only desired security for his life, and that Philip, who was present, and had not said any thing all this while, letting his friends speak and act, seemed at first to agree to so humiliating and just a request; but that, a moment after, he ordered Gordian to be seized, carried away, and put to death: which was done, not immediately, but very soon after.

This account, which renders Gordian as despicable, as it shews Philip to have been cruel and tyrannical, contains circumstances badly introduced, and badly put together. Besides which, *Capit. 31.* if Philip had publicly ordered Gordian's death, he could not have denied his crime, as he did, nor have written to the senate that the young prince died of illness. We shall therefore suppose that he employed treachery against him, and got him killed privately. Gordian perished, according to M. de Tillemont, towards the beginning of March of the year of Christ 244, after having reigned with the title of Augustus five years and about eight months. He might then be in his twentieth year.

Philip, pretending to honour his memory, ordered his obsequies to be performed with great magnificence, sent his ashes to Rome, and allowed

He pretends to honour the memory of Gordian.

*Eutrop.
Amm.
Marc. l.
XXIII.
Capit.*

ed the soldiers to build him a tomb at Zaëthus, where he died, near Circæsium, a city built at the conflux of the Chaboras* and Euphrates. He let his images, his statues, and the inscriptions which made honourable mention of him, subsist; and after the senate had ranked this unfortunate prince among the gods, Philip himself was not ashamed to give the appellation of god to the man he had killed.

*Gordian's
death was
revenged.*

Gordian's death did not pass unrevenged. Philip, after enjoying the fruit of his crime a few years, was stript of it by Decius, who took from him the empire and his life: and his son, to whom he intended to leave the throne, shared his unhappy fate. Those who had lent their assistance to murder Gordian, being nine in number, finding themselves deprived of the protection of the princes who alone could secure their impunity, killed themselves, and, it is said, with the same swords which they had stained with the blood of their emperor.

Capit. 33.

*His epitaph. Ca-
pit. 34.*

It cannot have been until after the death of Philip that the following epitaph, mentioned by Capitolinus, was put upon Gordian's tomb: TO THE DIVINE GORDIAN, CONQUEROR OF THE PERSIANS, CONQUEROR OF THE GOTHIS AND SARMATIANS, PACIFICATOR OF THE SEDITIONS WHICH RENT THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, CONQUEROR OF THE GERMANS, BUT NOT THE CONQUEROR OF PHILIP. This last expression has a double meaning; expressing the crime of the murderer of Gordian in words which may be applied to the check that young emperor met with from the Alans in the plains of Philippi in Macedonia. Licinius, who reigned with Constantine, and who wanted to be thought a descendant

* This river still retains its name, being now called Chabor, with the Arabian article, Alchabor. It waters the provinces of Diarbeck. I find at its mouth, in M. de L'Isle's map, a city called *Kerkisen*, which doubtless is the *Circæsium*, or *Circusium*, here spoken of.

dant of the emperor Philip, is said to have removed this epitaph, which, after all, may perhaps have been in reality only a pun, which Capitolinus took seriously.

Gordian deserved the marks of tenderness and affection which were bestowed upon him after his death. History does not charge him with any one vice. He did well, as long as Mysithæus governed him: and after he was deprived of that wise counsellor, he can be accused only of weakness. His character was rather amiable, than fit for command; and he had more mildness and good nature, than shining parts.

His family subsisted, doubtless in collaterals of the same name, and the senate granted them the singular privilege of being exempted from all burdensome offices either public or private, and from being subjected to guardians whilst minors. The house in which the Gordians had lived, still continued to be one of the principal ornaments of Rome in the time of Constantine.

History does not mention any public work with which Gordian embellished the city. He began, indeed, a magnificent portico in the *Campus Martius*, and intended to add to it a basilic and baths: but death prevented his executing this design. Some curious antiquarians pretend to find by a medal, that he repaired the amphitheatre.

We shall mention here a few desultory events. Before Gordian set out for the Persian war, the universe, if we take the historian's expression literally, was shook with earthquakes; and that with such violence, that whole cities were swallowed up with their inhabitants. The books of the Sibyls were consulted. The ceremonies imagined to be ordered by them, were performed; and the evil ceased,—because it was to cease.

Argunthis, king of the Scythians, emboldened by the death of Mysithæus, ravaged the lands bordering upon his country. M. de Tillemont doubts whether

He was rather mild and good natured, than a man of shining parts.

Privilege granted to his family. *Capit. 32.*

Tillem.

Earthquakes in his reign. *Capit. 26.*

Incursions of Argunthis king of the Scythians.

Capit. 31.

whether by the word *Scythians* we ought to understand here the Carpians, of whom farther mention will be made in the reign of Philip, or the Goths.

First men-
tion of the
Franks in
history.
Till n.
Cois d. 3. &
Valer. 3:
Vopisc.
Aur. 7.

The same M. de Tillemont refers to the reign of Gordian, and to the time when this prince was preparing to march against the Persians, the first mention that history makes of the Franks. We learn from Vopiscus, that Aurelian, who was afterwards emperor, when only tribune of a legion, fought the Franks, who over-ran all Gaul, near Mentz; that he killed seven hundred of them, and took three hundred prisoners, who were sold; and that this exploit was celebrated by a military song, which the historian has not thought unworthy of his transcribing. This nation, now so powerful, and for many ages past one of the most illustrious in Europe; must have then been very weak, since so small a defeat was capable of quelling it. We likewise see, that it was then settled in the country which it always kept from this æra; down to the establishment of the French monarchy in Gaul: that is to say, that the Franks inhabited the right-hand side of the Rhine, between that river on the West, the Mein on the South, the Weser on the East, and the sea on the North. Whence they came, and what was their original country, is, through the obscurity of time, and the want of monuments and records, a matter of great uncertainty. We see that the orator Eumenes, in a panegyric upon Constantine, distinguishes the country they had possessed themselves of, which is that we have now described, from their original country, which he calls a distant * and barbarous land. Perhaps it may have been the coast of the Baltic sea. Yet we find among the Franks, all the names of the ancient inhabitants of this very country of which they are said to have possessed themselves,

the

* *Ultimus Barbaria littoribus.*

the Catti, the Camavi, the Bructeri, the Frisons, and several others: so that the nation of the Franks seems to have been composed partly of an emigration of people from beyond the Elbe, and partly of the ancient inhabitants settled along the Rhine, who, associating together under a new name, formed a common league, in which, however, each people was distinguished from the rest, and had its own king and government. All historical monuments prove, that this nation consisted of several people, and had several kings at one and the same time: and this continued until Clovis united under one government all the tribes which were before governed by different chiefs. The Franks which Aurelian conquered might be one of these tribes, which the Romans might take for the whole nation.

Herodian wrote in the reign of Gordian III. of whose accession to the throne he gives us an account. His history begins at the death of Marcus Aurelius, and consequently comprehends a space of seventy years. He says he has not written any thing but what he had seen and heard, and even been personally concerned in, having been employed in public ministries. Those ministries were probably not very high ones, since he gives them only that general appellation, without saying particularly what any of them were: and this is farther confirmed by the observation we made before, that in matters of importance he seems not to have been at all exactly informed. Besides, he does not date the events he speaks of, nor shew what connection they had with one another. He has no elevation of thought, no knowledge of the folds of the human heart, and but little judgment and erudition. He is a middling writer, whose greatest merit is, as I said before, the elegance of his stile.

Censorinus's book
de Die Natali,

Censorinus dates from the year of the consulship of Annius Pius and Pontianus, in which Gordian began his reign, his book *de Die Natali*, a well wrote work, and full of uncommon erudition. He dedicates it to a Q. Cærellius, whom he praises highly, and of whom we know nothing farther.

THE END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.



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