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THE

HISTORICAL ANNALS

OF

CORNELIUS TACITUS:

WITH SUPPLEMENTS,

BY ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

Præcipuum munus annalium reor, ne virtutes silcantur utque pravis dictis Factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit.

Tacitus, Ann. III. s. 65.

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THE

ANNALS OF TACITUS.

BOOK XIII.

I. The new reign opened with the murder of Junius Silanus, proconsul of Asia. The deed was perpetrated by the contrivance of Agrippina, without the knowledge of Nero. In the character and conduct of Silanus there was nothing that could provoke his fate. Under the preceding emperors he had led a life so inactive, that he fell into contempt, and was called by Caligula, "The Golden Calf." But Agrippina had cut off his brother Lucius Silanus, and lived in fear of the vengeance due to her crime. Her son Nero, not yet arrived at years of discretion, was raised by her treacherous arts to the sovereign power, and, in opposition to that measure, the public voice was loud in favour of Silanus, a man every way qualified, of an understanding matured by years, an unblemished character, by his birth illustrious, and (what was then of great importance) descended from the house of Cæsar. Silanus, in fact, was the great grandson of Augustus. Those circumstances conspired to work his ruin. The actors in this dark transaction were Publius Celer, a Roman knight, and Helius, an enfranchised slave; both employed in Asia to collect the revenues of the prince. At a public feast those two conspirators administered a dose of poison to the proconsul with so little precaution, that secrecy did not seem to be worth their care. The murder of Narcissus, the freedman of Claudius, was despatched with as little ceremony. The quarrel between him and Agrippina has been already stated. He was thrown into prison, and there confined in close and rigorous custody, till, driven to the extre-

mity of want, he put an end to his misery with his own hand. Nero wished to prolong his days. The secret vices of the prince, though they had not then broke out into action, inclined him by a wonderful bias of nature, to favour a man in whose avarice and prodigality he saw the counterpart of himself.

II. A number of other victims were marked for destruction; and Rome would have been a theatre of blood, had not Afranius Burrhus and Annæus Seneca prevented the impending danger. The education of the emperor had been committed to those two ministers: both high in power, and yet (uncommon as it is) free from jealousy; possessing different talents, united by sentiment, and each, in his peculiar province, of great consideration. Burrhus gave the prince instructions in the military science, and the austerity of his manners added weight to his precepts. Seneca taught the principles of eloquence, and charmed by the suavity of his manners. The two preceptors exerted their joint endeavours to fix in the prince's mind the principles of virtue, or, if that could not be, to restrain his youthful passions, and, by moderate indulgence, infuse into his mind a taste for elegant, if not innocent pleasures.

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

quies. He was, afterwards, added to the number of the gods.

III. Nero pronounced the funeral oration. He represented, in the brightest colours, the illustrious birth of the deceased emperor, the number of his consulships, and the triumphal honours of his ancestors. On those topics he dwelt with propriety, and commanded attention. The taste of Claudius for the liberal arts, and the undisturbed tranquillity that prevailed throughout his reign, afforded ample room for panegyric, and the orator was heard with pleasure. But when the judgment and political wisdom of Claudius were mentioned with praise and decorations of language, the ridicule was too strong, and none could refrain from laughter. And yet the speech was written by Seneca, in a style of elegance peculiar to that amiable writer, who possessed a vein of wit and fancy, that charmed the taste of the age in which he lived. It was observed, on this occasion, by men advanced in life, who love, at leisure, to compare the past with the present times, that of all the emperors, Nero was the first, who was content to be the organ of another's eloquence. In Cæsar the dictator the most eminent orators found an illustrious rival. Augustus had a flow of language, easy, clear, and copious, well suited to the dignity of a prince. Precision was the talent of Tiberius; and if his meaning was sometimes obscure, it was when he chose to be dark and impenetrable. The confused and turbulent genius of Caligula did not transfuse itself into his discourse. Even in Claudius, when he came with a speech prepared and studied, there was no want of elegance. Nero, in the prime of life, took a different turn, and, with lively parts, applied himself to other objects. Engraving, painting, music, and horsemanship, were his favourite pursuits. At intervals he was fond of poetry, and his verses showed that he had, at least, a tincture of letters.

IV. Having played the part of a public mourner, Nero made his appearance in the senate. He began with a florid compliment, to the authority of the fathers, and the concurrent suffrages of the army, which

raised him to the imperial dignity. He added "that he "had many bright examples to excite emulation, and in "his councils superior wisdom to direct his conduct. "His youth had not been engaged in civil commo- "tions, and to the rage of contending factions he was, "by consequence, an utter stranger. He brought "with him no private animosity, no sense of injuries, "no motives to inspire revenge. He explained the "system of government, which he intended to pur- "sue; the abuses which occasioned discontent and "murmurings in the former reign, were to be reformed "altogether; and, in particular, the decision of causes, "he was determined, should no longer depend on the "authority of the prince. The practice of hearing in "a chamber of the palace the accuser and the accused, "and thereby subjecting the lives and fortunes of men "to the influence of a few favourites, was to be abo- "lished. In his palace nothing should be venal; no- "thing carried by intrigue, by bribery, or secret influ- "ence. The revenues of the prince, and the public "treasure, should be distinct and separate rights. "The senate might retain the full exercise of the "powers vested in that assembly by the spirit of the "constitution. Italy and the provinces might, in all "cases, address themselves to the tribunal of the con- "suls, and, through that channel find their way to "the senate. The executive power over the army "was his peculiar province, and he claimed no more."

V. The promise was fair, and for some time regularly observed. The fathers of their own authority made several regulations, and among other things ordained, that no advocate should hire out his talents in any cause whatever. The law requiring a spectacle of gladiators from such as were chosen to the office of quæstor, was entirely abrogated. To these resolutions, tending, in effect, to repeal the acts of Claudius, Agrippina made a strong opposition. In order to carry her point, she caused the senate to be convened in the palace, where, at a convenient station at the door behind the arras, she might conceal her person and overhear the debate. The fathers acted with a spirit of independence, and a decree was passed

accordingly. On a subsequent occasion the ambassadors of Armenia were admitted to an audience before the prince. Agrippina advanced to the tribunal to take her seat, and preside with joint authority. All who beheld the scene were struck with terror and amazement, when Seneca, in the general confusion, had the presence of mind to bid the emperor step forward to meet his mother. Under an appearance of filial piety, the honour of the state was saved.

VI. Towards the end of the year, a report prevailed that the Parthians had once more invaded Armenia, and that Rhadamistus, tired of a kingdom so often taken and retaken, declined to end the dispute by force of arms. At Rome, where public affairs were discussed with freedom, the popular opinion was, "that Nero, young in life, just out of his seventeenth "year, would not be equal to a conjuncture so arduous and important. What dependence could be had "on the flexibility of a boy, still under the government "of his mother? He had tutors, indeed; but would "they undertake the command of armies, the conduct "of sieges, and all the various operations of war?" It was argued on the other hand, "that the situation "of affairs was better than it could have been under "a prince like Claudius, worn out with age, and sunk "in sloth, the willing dupe of his favourite freedmen. "Burrhus and Seneca were men of experience: and, "with such advisers, why conclude that Nero, bordering on the season of manly vigour, was unequal to "the task? Pompey, at the age of eighteen, and Octavianus Cæsar, having barely passed his nineteenth "year, were both at the head of armies, in times big "with danger, amidst the distractions of a civil war. "It is by the wisdom of their councils, and not by "personal valour, that princes are crowned with "glory. Whether the cabinet of Nero was filled with "evil counsellors, or with men of talents and integrity, "would soon be evident. If the emperor, without regarding party connexions, and court intrigue, chose "a general, not on account of his wealth and interest, "but for his military character, the question would be "then fairly decided."

VII. While these different opinions kept the public mind in agitation, Nero ordered levies to be made in the eastern nations, and the legions, thus recruited, to take post on the confines of Armenia. He desired, at the same time, that Agrippa and Antiochus, two oriental kings, should hold their forces in readiness to enter the territory of the Parthians. For the convenience of his armies, bridges were thrown over the Euphrates. The lesser Armenia was committed to Aristobulus, and the country called Sophenes to Sohemus: both princes were allowed to assume the ensigns of royalty. In this crisis a fortunate circumstance gave a sudden turn in favour of Rome. Vardanes, the son of Vologeses, became a competitor for the crown in opposition to his father. The Parthians were, by consequence, obliged to recal their armies, and under colour of deferring, not of abandoning the war, Armenia was evacuated.

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

all military operations, makes a deep impression, that general advanced by rapid journeys, and at Ægea, a city of Cilicia, met Quadratus, who chose an interview at that place, rather than wait till Corbulo showed himself at the head of his army in the province of Syria, where he had reason to fear that the eyes of the people would be fixed on his rival in command. The fact was, Corbulo possessed many advantages: in his person manly, of a remarkable stature, and in his discourse magnificent, he united with experience and consummate wisdom those exterior accomplishments, which, though in themselves of no real value, give an air of elegance even to trifles.

IX. The two commanders sent a joint message to Vologeses, warning him to prefer the sweets of peace to the calamities of war, and, by sending hostages, to mark his respect for the Roman name. The Parthian monarch, intending to wait for a more favourable opportunity, or perhaps, wishing to remove from his court his most dangerous enemies, gave up as hostages the most distinguished of the line of the Arsacides. Histerius, a centurion, sent by Quadratus with orders to travel with expedition, received the hostages under his care; but Corbulo, apprised of this artful project, despatched Arrius Varus, the commander of a cohort, to claim the care and custody of the Parthian nobles. The centurion resisted. A warm dispute ensued between the two officers, till at length that they might not exhibit a ridiculous scene to foreign nations, the matter was referred to the decision of the hostages themselves, and the ambassadors who accompanied them. The Parthians, struck with the recent fame of the commander in chief, and, as often happens even among enemies, conceiving the highest respect for his person, gave the preference to Corbulo. Hence a new source of discord between the two generals. Quadratus complained, that the honour which he had acquired was unfairly wrested from him. Corbulo maintained his right, insisting that the idea of delivering up hostages had never occurred to Vologeses, till such time as his hopes were humbled by the name of the superior officer who had the conduct of the

war. To appease their jealousy, Nero issued an order, that on account of the prosperous events achieved by the conduct of both generals, the imperial fasces under each of them should be decorated with wreaths of laurel. These transactions happened in different years; but, for the sake of perspicuity, they are here related in one connected series.

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

XI. Nero and Lucius Antistius were the next consuls. During the solemnity of swearing the magistrates, according to custom, on the acts of the emperor, Antistius had it in command not to include in his oath the acts of the reigning prince; an instance of modesty and self-denial, which the fathers thought could not be too highly commended. They were lavish of praise, in hopes that the sense of honest fame, even in matters of little moment, implanted early in the mind of a young man, might shoot up to a principle of honour, and the love of solid glory. In a short time after, Nero distinguished himself by an act of clemency in the case of Plautius Lateranus, who, for his criminal intrigues with Messalina, had been expelled the senate. The emperor restored him to his rank. He even bound himself to observe

throughout his reign the virtues of humanity. This promise he renewed in several speeches prepared for him by the pen of Seneca, and probably written to display the moral lessons which the philosopher taught, or to show the brilliant talents of that lively writer.

XII. The authority of Agrippina was now on the decline. An enfranchised female slave of the name of ACTE had gained an entire ascendant over the affections of the prince. To conduct this intrigue, Nero chose Otho and Claudius Senecio for his confidential friends; the former descended from a family of consular rank; the latter, the son of a freedman belonging to the late emperor. They were both elegant in their persons. Their taste for debauchery and clandestine vices introduced them to the notice of the prince. Their first approaches to his friendship were unperceived by Agrippina: she endeavoured afterwards to remove them from his presence, but her efforts were without effect. The emperor's friends, though famed for wisdom and the severity of their manners, made no opposition to his new intrigue. A courtesan, who gratified the ardour of a young man's passion, without injury to any person whatever, was thought an object of no importance. Nero, it is true, was married to Octavia; but neither the nobility of her birth, nor her unspotted virtue, could secure his affections. By some fatality, or, perhaps, by the secret charm of forbidden pleasures, his heart was alienated from his wife. The connexion with his favourite concubine served to restrain the prince from other pursuits; and there was reason to fear, that detached from her, he might riot in scenes of higher life, and destroy the peace and honour of the noblest families.

XIII. Agrippina was fired with indignation. She complained aloud that an enfranchised slave was put in competition with the emperor's mother, and a wretch of mean extraction was to be treated as her daughter-in-law. She stormed with all the rage of female pride, never reflecting that the prince might see his error, or that satiety and cold indifference

might in time, succeed to the vehemence of youthful passion. The haughty spirit of the mother served only to inflame the ardour of her son. He gave a loose to love, and threw off all regard for his mother, determined, for the future, to yield to no authority but that of Seneca. Among the friends of that minister was a man of the name of Annæus Serenus, who pretended to admire the person of Acte, and, to throw a veil over the growing passion of Nero, conveyed to her, in his own name, the presents sent by the secret gallantry of the prince. Agrippina thought it time to abate from her ferocity. She had recourse to art, and hoped by gentle methods to regain her influence. Her own apartment was now at her son's service. Love, at his time of life was natural, and his superior rank demanded some indulgence. Under the care and management of his mother he might enjoy his secret pleasures. She apologized for the warmth with which she broke out at first, and even made an offer of all her treasure, little inferior to imperial riches. Her conduct was always in extremes; violent in the beginning, and in the end too complying.

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

entirely to her protection. Her words were reported to the emperor with additional malice.

XIV. In order, by a sudden blow, to humble Agrippina and her party, Nero dismissed Pallas from all his employments. By the favour of Claudius this man had been raised to a degree of power that made him assume the air and importance of first minister, and sovereign arbiter of the empire. As he withdrew from court with his train of followers, Nero pleasantly said, "Pallas is going to abdicate." Before he retired, it is certain that he had bargained for himself. It was agreed that no inquiry should be had into his conduct, and that all accounts between him and the public should be considered as closed and balanced The indignation of Agrippina was not to be restrained: in a tone of menace she endeavoured to intimidate her enemies; even in the emperor's hearing, she exclaimed aloud, "Britannicus is grown up, the genuine issue of Claudius, and every way worthy of "the succession to his father. The sovereignty has "been wrested from him by an intruder, who owes his "title to adoption only, and now presumes to trample "on the rights of a mother, who gave him all. But "every thing shall be brought to light: the misfortunes "which she herself had caused in the imperial family, "her incestuous marriage with her uncle, and the poi-"son that put an end to his life; all shall be disclosed, "all laid open to the world. By the favour of the "gods Britannicus is still alive: that resource still re-"mains. With that young prince she would join the "army: in the camp should be heard the daughter of "Germanicus; Burrhus, and Seneca, the famous ex-"ile, might present themselves before the prætorian "soldiers; the first with his maimed hand and the se-"cond, armed with his tropes and flowers of rhetoric; "both worthy ministers, fit, in their own opinion, to "govern the Roman world." In this strain she raved with vehemence, brandishing her hands, and pouring out a torrent of invective. She appealed to the deified Claudius; she invoked the manes of the murdered Silani, and of others who perished by her guilt,

though now, in return for all, she met with nothing but treachery and ingratitude.

XV. These violent declarations made a deep impression on the mind of Nero. The birth-day of Britannicus, when that prince was to enter on his fifteenth year, was near at hand. This gave rise to a number of reflections. The turbulent spirit of Agrippina, and the character of the prince, filled him with apprehensions. On a late occasion Britannicus had given a specimen of early acuteness, slight, indeed, in itself, but such as disposed the people in his favour. It happened, during the Saturnalian festival, that among the diversions usual among young people, the play, "WHO SHALL BE KING," became part of the amusement at court. The lot fell to Nero: he imposed his commands on the company, in no instance aiming at ridicule or inconvenience, till he came to Britannicus. He ordered the young prince to stand in the middle of the room and sing a song to the company. By this device he hoped that a stripling, not yet accustomed even to sober conversation, much less to revelry and the joys of wine, would be exposed to derision. Britannicus performed his part without embarrassment. His song alluded to his own case, expressing the situation of a prince excluded from the throne of his ancestors. The whole company felt a touch of compassion, and, in the moment of gaiety, when wine, and the midnight hour had thrown off all dissimulation, they expressed their feelings without disguise. Nero found that his pleasantry recoiled upon himself. Hatred from that moment took possession of his heart. The furious and implacable spirit of Agrippina kept him in constant alarm. No crime could be alleged against Britannicus, and, by consequence, there was no colour to justify a public execution.

Nero resolved to act by covert stratagem. A preparation of poison was ordered, and Julius Pollio, a tribune of the prætorian cohorts, was called in as an accomplice. This man had in his custody the famous Locusta, a woman guilty of various crimes, and

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

XVI. According to the custom at that time established at court, the children of the imperial family dined in a sitting posture, with the nobility of their own age, in sight of their relations, at a table set apart, and served with due frugality. Whenever Britannicus was, in this manner, seated at his meal, it was a settled rule that an attendant should taste his food and liquor. To preserve this custom and prevent detection by the death of both, an innocent beverage, without any infusion that could hurt, was tried by the proper officer, and presented to the prince. He found it too hot, and returned it. Cold water, in which the poison had been mixed, was immediately poured into the cup. Britannicus drank freely; the effect was violent, and, in an instant, it seized the powers of life: his limbs were palsied, his breath was suppressed, and his utterance failed. The company were thrown into consternation. Some rushed out of the room, while others who had more discernment, staid, but in astonishment, with their eyes fixed on Nero, who lay stretched at ease on his couch, with an air of innocence, and without emotion. He content-

ed himself with calmly saying, "This is one of the "epileptic fits to which Britannicus has been subject "from his infancy. The disorder will go off, and he "will soon recover his senses." Agrippina was struck with horror. She endeavoured to suppress her feelings; but the inward emotions were too strong; they spoke in every feature, plainly showing that she was as innocent as Octavia, the sister of Britannicus. By this horrible act the emperor's mother saw all her hopes at once cut off, and from so daring a step, she could even then foresee that her son would wade in blood, and add to his crimes the horror of parricide. Octavia, though still of tender years, had seen enough of courts to teach her the policy of smothering her grief, her tenderness, and every sentiment of the heart. In this manner the scene of distraction ended, and the pleasures of the table were renewed.

XVII. One and the same night saw the murder of Britannicus and his funeral. Both were preconcerted. Without expense or any kind of pomp, the prince's remains were interred in the Field of Mars, under a shower of rain, which fell with such violence, that it passed with the multitude as the sure forerunner of divine vengeance on the authors of so foul a deed; a deed, notwithstanding all its horrors, which many were inclined to think of with less severity, when they considered that, from the earliest times, a spirit of jealousy always subsisted between brothers, and that the nature of sovereign power is such as not to endure a rival. From the writers of that period there is reason to conclude, that Nero, on various occasions, had taken advantage of the tender years of Britannicus, and offered vile indignities to his person. If the anecdote be founded in truth, the death, which delivered a descendant of the Claudian line from foul disgrace, cannot be deemed premature or cruel. The prince, it is true, died in the hour of hospitality, without warning, without time allowed to his sister to take the last farewell; and his mortal enemy saw him in the pangs of death. After all his sufferings, the poisoned cup was mercy. The hurry with which the funeral was performed, was justified by Nero in a

proclamation, stating the practice of the ancient Romans, who ordained with wisdom, "That the bodies "of such as died in the prime of life should, as soon "as possible, be removed from the public eye, without "waiting for funeral orations, and the slow parade of "pomp and ceremony. For himself, deprived as he "was of the assistance of a brother, he depended al-"together on the affections of the people, in full per-"suasion, that the senate, and all orders of men, "would exert their best endeavours to support a "prince, who now remained the only branch of a fa-"mily born to rule the empire of the world." After this public declaration, his next care was, by large donations, to secure in his interest all his most powerful friends.

XVIII. The conduct of such as were most distinguished by the munificence of the emperor, did not pass uncensured. They were men who professed integrity, and yet did not blush to take palaces, country-seats, and extensive lands, all equally willing to have share of the plunder. By their apologists it was argued, that they could not avoid submitting to the will of a prince, who knew the horror of his crimes, and hoped by his liberality to soften the public resentment. Agrippina continued implacable. Indignation like hers was not to be appeased by presents. She cherished Octavia with the tenderest regard; she had frequent meetings with the leaders of her party; and, with more than her natural avarice, she collected money in all quarters; she courted the tribunes and centurions: and to the thin nobility, which then remained, she paid every mark of respect, dwelling with pleasure on their names, applauding their virtues, with a view to strengthen her interest by a coalition of the first men in Rome. Nero was apprised of all that passed. By his orders the sentinels who guarded her gates (as had been done in the time of Claudius, and since his decease) were all withdrawn. The German soldiers, who had been added by way of doing honour to the emperor's mother, were likewise dismissed from her service. Nor did the matter rest here. To retrench the number of her adherents and

visitors, Nero resolved to hold a separate court. He assigned to his mother the mansion formerly occupied by Antonia. He visited her in her new situation, but his visits were a state farce: he went with a train of attendants, and, after a short salute, took his leave with cold civility.

XIX. In the mass of human affairs there is nothing so vain and transitory as the fancied pre-eminence which depends on popular opinion, without a solid foundation to support it. Of this truth Agrippina is a melancholy proof. Her house was deserted; no friend to comfort her; no courtier to flutter at her levee; and none to visit her, except a few women who frequented her house, perhaps with a good intention, or, more probably, with the little motives of female triumph. In the number was Junia Silana, formerly divorced, as has been mentioned, from Caius Silius, at the instigation of Messalina. Since that time she became the intimate friend of Agrippina; by her birth illustrious, distinguished by her beauty, and not less so by her lascivious conduct. Her friendship for Agrippina, soured afterwards by contentions between themselves, turned to bitter hatred. A treaty of marriage between Silana and Sextius Africanus, a citizen of illustrious rank, was rendered abortive by the ill offices of Agrippina. She told the lover, that his mistress, though no longer in the prime of life, was of a dissolute character, and still abandoned to her vicious pleasures. In this act of hostility love had no kind of share. Agrippina had not so much as a wish for the person of Africanus; but Silana enjoyed large possessions, and being a widow without children, her whole fortune might devolve to the husband.

Silana, from that moment, was stung with resentment. The season for revenge she thought was now arrived, and for that purpose, she employed Iturius and Calvisius, two of her creatures, to frame an accusation against Agrippina, not on the ground of the old and threadbare story about her grief for Britannicus, and her zeal for Octavia; but with a deeper intent, that revenge might have its full blow. The head of the accusation was, That Agrippina had conspired

with Rubellius Plautus, a descendant of Augustus, by the maternal line in the same degree as Nero, to bring about a revolution, and, in that event, to marry the usurper, and once more invade the commonwealth. With this charge, drawn up in form, Iturius and Calvisius sought Atimetus, one of the freedmen of Domitia, the emperor's aunt. A fitter person could not be chosen; he knew the enmity that subsisted between his mistress and Agrippina, and, for that reason, listened eagerly to the information. Having heard the particulars, he employed Paris, the comedian (who had likewise received his freedom from Domitia,) and, by him, conveyed the whisper to the emperor, with circumstances of aggravation.

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

The historical evidence is fairly before the reader, agreeably to the design of this work, which professes to depend, at all times, on the testimony of authors, when they agree among themselves; and, when they differ, to state the points in dispute, with the reasons on each side. Nero was distracted with doubt and

fear. In the tumult of his thoughts, he determined to despatch his mother without delay. Nor was his fury to be restrained, till Burrhus pledged himself, if the charge was verified, to see execution done upon her; but to be heard in answer to the accusation, he said, was the right of the meanest person, much more so of a mother. In the present case, no charge was made in form; no prosecutor appeared; the whole was nothing but the whisper of a busy tale-bearer, who brought intelligence from the house of an enemy; but the time chosen for the discovery makes the whole improbable. Paris, the informer, came in the dead of night; and after many hours spent in carousing, what can be expected, but confusion, ignorance, and fatal temerity?

XXI. Nero was pacified by this reasoning. At the dawn of day, proper persons were sent to Agrippina, to inform her of the allegations against her, and to hear her defence. The commission was executed by Burrhus in the presence of Seneca, and a number of freedmen, who were sent to watch the whole proceeding. Burrhus stated the charge; he named the informers, and, in a tone of severity, enforced every circumstance. Agrippina heard him undismayed, and with the pride and spirit of her character, replied as follows: "That Silana, who has never known the labours of child-bed, should be a stranger to the affections of a mother, cannot be matter of surprise. "A woman of profligate manners may change her "adulterers, but a mother cannot renounce her children. If Iturius and Calvisius, two bankrupts in "fame as well as fortune, have sold themselves to an "old woman, is it of course that I must be guilty of a "crime which they have fabricated? And must my "son, at the instigation of two such miscreants, commit a parricide? Let Domitia show her kindness to "my son; let her vie with tenderness like mine, and "I will forgive her malice; I will even thank her for "it. But she is in league with Atimetus who is "known to be her paramour: Paris, the stage-player, "lends his aid: the talents that figured in the theatre, "he hopes will be able to plan a real tragedy.

"At the time when my cares were busy to make "Nero the adopted son of Claudius; to invest him "with proconsular dignity, and declare him consul "elect; when I was labouring to open to my son the "road to empire, where was Domitia then? Her "ponds and lakes at Baiæ engrossed all her attention. "Stand forth the man, who can prove that I tampered "with the city guards; that I seduced the provinces "from their allegiance, or endeavoured to corrupt the "slaves and freedmen of the emperor. Had Britan-"nicus obtained the imperial dignity, could I have "hoped to live in safety? And if Rubellius Plautus, "or any other person, had seized the reins of govern-"ment, can it be supposed that my enemies would not "have seized their opportunity to exhibit their charge, "not for intemperate words, thrown out in the "warmth of passion, the effusion of a mother's jea-"lousy, but for real crimes, and those of so deep a "dye, that no man can forgive them, except a son, for "whom they were committed." Such was the language of Agrippina. The warmth and energy with which she delivered herself, made an impression on all who heard her. They endeavoured to soften affliction, and mitigate the violence of her feelings. She demanded an interview with her son, and the meeting was granted. In his presence she scorned to enter into a vindication of herself. To answer the charge might betray too much diffidence: nor did she dwell on the services which she had rendered to her son; that were to tax him with ingratitude. Her object was to punish her accusers, and reward her friends. She succeeded in both.

XXII. The superintendence of corn and grain was granted to Fænius Rufus. The public spectacles, then intended by the emperor, were committed to the care of Arruntius Stella. The province of Egypt was assigned to Caius Balbillus, and that of Syria to Publius Anteius. But the last was the bubble of promises, and never suffered to proceed to his government. Silana was sent into exile. Calvisius and Iturius shared the same fate. Atimetus was punished with death Paris, the comedian, was of too much conse-

quence: he had the art of ministering to the pleasures of the prince: his vices saved him. Rubellius Plautus was, for the present, passed by in silence.

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

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

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

Nero persisted in this course of debauchery, and, for the safety of his person, took with him a party of soldiers, and a gang of gladiators. These men, in slight and accidental skirmishes, kept aloof from the fray; but if warm and active spirits made a stout resistance, they became parties in the quarrel, and cut their way sword in hand. The theatre, at the same time, was a scene of uproar and violent contention. The partisans of the players waged a kind of civil war. Nero encouraged them, not only with impunity,

but with ample rewards. He was often a secret spectator of the tumult; and at length, did not blush to appear in the face of the public. These disturbances were so frequent, that, from a people divided into factions, there was reason to apprehend some dreadful convulsion: the only remedy left, was to banish the players out of Italy, and once more make the soldiers mount guard at the theatre.

XXVI. About this time, the enfranchised slaves, by the insolence of their behaviour to the patrons who had given them their freedom, provoked a debate in the senate. It was proposed to pass a law, empowering the patron to reclaim his right over such as made an improper use of their liberty. The fathers were willing to adopt the measure, but the consuls did not choose to put the question before due notice was given to the emperor. They reported the case, and the substance of the debate, requesting to know whether the prince would, of his own authority, enact a law that had but few to oppose it. In support of the motion, it had been argued, that the freedmen were leagued in a faction against their patrons, and had the insolence to think them answerable for their conduct in the senate. They went so far as to threaten violence to their persons; they raised their hands against their benefactors, and, with audacious contumacy, presumed to hinder them from seeking redress in due course of law. The patron, it is true, has peculiar privileges: but in what do they consist? In the empty power of banishing the freedman, who proves unworthy of the favour bestowed upon him, to the distance of twenty miles from Rome; that is, to send him, by way of punishment, to the delightful plains of Campania. In every other point of view, the freedman is on a level with the highest citizen. He enjoys equal privileges. It were therefore, a prudent measure to arm the patron with coercive authority, effectual for the purpose, and of force not to be eluded. The manumitted slave, should "be taught "to prolong the enjoyment of his liberty by the same "behaviour that obtained it at first. Nor could this "be deemed an oppressive law; since, as often as the

"freedmen showed no sense of duty or subordination, "to reduce them to their primitive servitude, would "be the soundest policy. When gratitude has no "effect; coercion is the proper remedy."

XXVII. In answer to this reasoning, it was contended by the opposite party, "That, in all cases of "partial mischief, punishment should fall on the "guilty only. For the delinquency of a few, the "rights of all ought not to be taken away. The "freedmen were a large and numerous body. From "them the number of the tribes was completed, the "magistrates were supplied with inferior officers, "the sacerdotal orders with assistants, and the præ-"torian cohorts with recruits. Many of the Roman "knights, and even the senators had no other origin. "Deduct the men whose fathers were enfranchised, "and the number of freeborn citizens will dwindle "into nothing. When the ranks of society were es-"tablished at Rome, it was the wisdom of the old "republic, to make liberty the common right of all, "not the prerogative of a few. The power of confer-"ring freedom was also regulated, and two different "modes were established, to the end that the patron, "if he saw reason for it, might either revoke his grant, "or confirm it by additional bounty. The man en-"franchised, without proper ceremonies before the "prætor, was liable to be claimed again by his master. "But it is the business of the patron to consider well "the character of his slave; till he knows the merit "of the man, let him withhold his generosity; but "when freedom is fairly bestowed, there ought to be "no resumption of the grant." To this last opinion Nero acceded. He signified his pleasure to the senate, that, in all causes between the patron and his freedman, they should decide on the particular circumstances of the case, without derogating from the rights of the body at large. Soon after this regulation, Paris, who had received his freedom from Domitia, the emperor's aunt, was removed from her domestic train, and declared to be a freeborn citizen. The colour of law was given to this proceeding; but the judgment was

known to be dictated by the prince, and the infamy, therefore, was all his own.

XXVIII. There remained, notwithstanding, even at this juncture, an image of ancient liberty. A proof of this occurred in a contest that took place between Vibullius, the prætor, and Antistius, tribune of the people. Certain partisans of the players had been, for their tumultuous behaviour, committed to jail by the prætor. The tribune interposed his authority, and released the prisoners. This conduct was condemned by the senate, as extrajudicial and illegal. A decree passed, ordaining that the tribunes should not presume to counteract the jurisdiction of the prætor, or the consuls, nor to summon to their own tribunal men, who resided in different parts of Italy, and were amenable to the municipal laws of the colony. It was further settled, on the motion of Lucius Piso, consul elect, that it should not be competent to the tribunes to sit in judgment at their own houses; and that fines, imposed by their authority, should not be entered by the quæstor in the registers of the treasury, before the end of four months from the day of the sentence, that, in the mean time, the party aggrieved might have the benefit of an appeal to the consuls. The jurisdiction of the ædiles, patrician as well as plebeian, was defined and limited; the sureties which they might demand were stated with precision; and the penalties to be imposed by their authority were reduced to a certain sum. In consequence of these regulations, Helvidius Priscus, tribune of the people, seized the opportunity to proceed against Obultronius Sabinus, a quæstor of the treasury. He charged him with harassing the poor with unreasonable confiscations, and unmercifully seizing their effects to be sold by auction. To redress the grievance, Nero removed the register out of the hands of the quæstor, and left that business to the care of præfects, commissioned for the purpose.

XXIX. In this department of the treasury various changes had been made, but no settled form was established. In the reign of Augustus, the præfects

of the treasury were chosen by the senate; but there being reason to suspect that intrigue and private views had too much influence, those officers were drawn by lot out of the list of the prætors. This mode was soon found to be defective. Chance decided, and too often wandered to men unqualified for the employment. Claudius restored the quæstors, and, to encourage them to act with vigour, promised to place them above the necessity of soliciting the suffrages of the people, and, by his own authority, to raise them to the higher magistracies. But the quæstorship being the first civil office that men could undertake, maturity of understanding was not to be expected. Nero, for that reason, chose from the prætorian rank, a set of new commissioners of known experience and tried ability.

XXX. During the same consulship, Vipsanius Lænas was found guilty of rapacity in his government of Sardinia. Cestius Proculus was prosecuted for extortion; but his accusers giving up the point, he was acquitted. Clodius Quirinalis, who had the command of the fleet at Ravenna, and by his profligate manners and various vices harassed the people in that part of Italy, with a degree of insolence not to be endured by the most abject nation, was brought to his trial on a charge of rapine and oppression. To prevent the final sentence, he despatched himself by poison. About the same time Caninius Rebilus, a man distinguished by his knowledge of the laws, and his ample riches, determined to deliver himself from the miseries of old age and a broken constitution. He opened a vein, and bled to death. The event was matter of surprise to all. The fortitude, that could voluntarily rush on death, was not expected from a man softened by voluptuous enjoyments, and infamous for his effeminate manners. Lucius Volusius, who died in the same year, left a very different character. He had lived in splendid affluence, to the age of ninety-three, esteemed for the honest arts by which he acquired immense wealth, under a succession of despotic emperors, yet never exposed to danger. He found the art of being rich and virtuous with impunity.

XXXI. Nero, with Lucius Piso for his colleague, entered on his second consulship. In this year we look in vain for transactions worthy of the historian's pen. The vast foundation of a new amphitheatre, built by Nero in the Field of Mars, and the massy timbers employed in that magnificent structure, might swell a volume; but descriptions of that kind may be left to grace the pages of a city-journal. The dignity of the Roman people requires that these annals should not descend to a detail so minute and uninteresting. It will be proper to mention here, that Capua and Nuceria, two Roman colonies, were augmented by a body of veterans transplanted to those places. A largess of two hundred small sesterces to each man was distributed to the populace, and, to support the credit of the state, the sum of four hundred thousand great sesterces was deposited in the treasury. The twenty-fifth penny, imposed as a tax on the purchase of slaves, was remitted, with an appearance of moderation, but, in fact, without any solid advantage to the public. The payment of the duty was only shifted to the vender, and he, to indemnify himself, raised his price on the purchaser. The emperor issued a proclamation forbidding the magistrates and imperial procurators to exhibit, in any of the provinces, a show of gladiators, wild beasts, or any other public spectacle. The practice of amusing the people with grand exhibitions had been as sore a grievance as even the grasping hand of avarice. The governors plundered the people, and by displays of magnificence hoped to disguise, or, in some degree, to make atonement for their crimes.

XXXII. A decree passed the senate to protect, by additional terrors of law, the life of the patron from the malice of his slaves. With this view, it was enacted, that, in the case of a master slain by his domestics, execution should be done, not only on such as remained in a state of actual servitude, but likewise on all, who, by the will of the deceased, obtained their freedom, but continued to live under his roof at the time when the murder was committed. Lucius Varius, who had been degraded for rapacious avarice, was restored to his consular rank, and his seat in the

senate. Pomponia Græcina, a woman of illustrious birth, and the wife of Plautius, who, on his return from Britain, entered the city with the pomp of an ovation, was accused of embracing the rites of a foreign superstition. The matter was referred to the jurisdiction of her husband. Plautius, in conformity to ancient usage, called together a number of her relations, and, in their presence, sat in judgment on the conduct of his wife. He pronounced her innocent. She lived to a great age, in one continued train of affliction. From the time when Julia, the daughter of Drusus, was brought to a tragical end by the wicked arts of Messalina, she never laid aside her mourning weeds, but pined in grief during a space of forty years, inconsolable for the loss of her friend. During the reign of Claudius nothing could alleviate her sorrow, nor was her perseverance imputed to her as a crime: in the end, it was the glory of her character.

XXXIII. This year produced a number of criminal accusations. Publius Celer was prosecuted by the province of Asia. The weight of evidence pressed so hard, that Nero, unable to acquit him, drew the cause into a tedious length. During that state of suspense, the criminal died of old age. Celer, the reader will remember, was an instrument in the murder of Silanus, the proconsul. The magnitude of his guilt on that occasion so far surpassed the rest of his flagitious deeds, that nothing else was deemed worthy of notice. The enormity of one atrocious crime screened him from punishment.

The Cilicians demanded justice against Cossutianus Capito, a man of an abandoned character, who at Rome had set the laws at defiance, and thought, that, with equal impunity, he might commit the same excesses in the government of his province. The prosecution was carried on with such unremitting vigour, that he abandoned his defence. He was condemned to make restitution. A suit of the same nature was commenced against Eprius Marcellus by the people of Lycia, but with different success. A powerful faction combined to support him. The consequence was,

that some of the prosecutors were banished for a conspiracy against an innocent man.

XXXIV. Nero entered on his third consulship, having for his colleague Valerius Messala, the great grandson of Corvinus Messala, the celebrated orator, who, in the memory of a few surviving old men, had been associated in the consulship with Augustus, the great grandfather of Nero's mother, Agrippina. The prince granted to his colleague an annual pension of fifteen hundred thousand sesterces, and with that income Messala, who had fallen into blameless poverty, was able to support the dignity of his rank and character. Yearly stipends were also granted to Aurelius Cotta, and Haterius Antoninus, though they were both, by dissipation, the authors of their own distress.

In the beginning of this year, the war between the Romans and the Parthians, hitherto slow in its operations, grew warm and active on both sides. The possession of Armenia was the point still in dispute. Vologeses saw with indignation the crown, which he had settled on his brother Tiridates, withheld by force, and, to let him receive it as the gift of a foreign power, was a degree of humiliation to which his pride could not submit. On the other hand, to recover the conquest formerly made by Lucullus and Pompey, was in Corbulo's judgment worthy of the Roman name. The Armenians balanced between the powers at war, and in their turn invited each. Their natural bias inclined them to the Parthians. Neighbours by situation, congenial in their manners, and by frequent intermarriages closely allied, they were willing to favour the enemies of Rome, and even inclined to submit to a Parthian master. Inured by habit to a state of servitude, they neither understood, nor wished for civil liberty.

XXXV. Corbulo had to struggle with the slothful disposition of his army; a mischief more embarrassing than the wily arts of the enemy. The legions from Syria joined his camp, but so enervated by the languor of peace, that they could scarce support the labours of a campaign. It is certain, that there were amongst them veterans who had seen no service; who

had never been on duty at a midnight post; who never mounted guard, and were such total strangers to a fosse and a palisade, that they gazed at both as at a novelty. They had served the term prescribed in garrison-towns, without helmets, and without breast-plates, spruce and trim in their attire, by profession soldiers, yet thinking of nothing but the means of enriching themselves. Having dismissed all such as were by age and infirmity rendered unfit for the service, Corbulo ordered new levies to be made in Galatia and Cappadocia. To these he added a legion from Germany, with some troops of horse, and a detachment of infantry from the cohorts. Thus reinforced, his army kept the field, though the frost was so intense, that, without digging through the ice, it was impossible to pitch their tents. By the inclemency of the season many lost the use of their limbs, and it often happened that the sentinel died on his post. The case of one soldier deserves to be mentioned. He was employed in carrying a load of wood: his hands, nipt by the frost, and cleaving to the faggot, dropt from his arms, and fell to the ground.

The general, during the severity of the weather, gave an example of strenuous exertion; he was busy in every quarter, thinly clad, his head uncovered, in the ranks, at the works, commending the brave, relieving the weak, and by his own active vigour exciting the emulation of the men. But the rigour of the season, and the hardship of the service, were more than the soldiers could endure. The army suffered by desertion. This required an immediate remedy. The practice of lenity towards the first or second offence, which often prevailed in other armies, would have been attended with dangerous consequences. He who quitted his colours suffered death as soon as taken; and this severity proved more salutary than weak compassion. The number of deserters, from that time, fell short of what happens in other camps, where too much indulgence is the practice.

XXXVI. Having resolved to wait the return of spring, Corbulo kept his men within their entrenchments during the rest of the winter. The auxiliary

cohorts were stationed at proper posts, under the command of Pactius Orphitus, who had served as principal centurion. The orders given to this officer were, that the advanced posts should by no means hazard an engagement. Orphitus sent to inform the general, that the barbarians spread themselves round the country with so little caution, that advantage might be taken of their imprudence. Corbulo renewed his orders, that the troops should keep within the lines, and wait for a reinforcement. Orphitus paid no regard to the command of his superior officer. A few troops of horse from the adjacent castles, came up to join him, and, through inexperience, demanded to be led against the enemy. Orphitus risked a battle, and was totally routed. The forces posted near at hand, whose duty it was to march to the assistance of the broken ranks, fled in confusion to their entrenchments. Corbulo no sooner received intelligence of his defeat, than he resolved to pass the severest censure on the disobedience of his officer. He ordered him, his subalterns, and his men, to march out of the entrenchments, and there left them in disgrace, till, at the intercession of the whole army, he gave them leave to return within the lines.

XXXVII. Meanwhile Tiridates, at the head of his vassals and followers, with a strong reinforcement sent by his brother Vologeses, invaded Armenia, not, as before, with sudden incursions, but with open hostility. Wherever the people were in the interests of Rome, he laid waste their lands; if an armed force advanced against him, he shifted his quarters, and, by the velocity of his flight, eluded the attack. He moved with rapidity from place to place, and, by the terror of a wild and desultory war, more than by the success of his arms, kept the country in a constant alarm. Corbulo endeavoured, but without effect, to bring him to an engagement. He determined, therefore, to adopt the plan of the enemy, and, for that purpose, spread his forces round the country, under the conduct of his lieutenants and other subordinate officers. At the same time he caused a diversion to be made by Antiochus, king of Syria, in the provinces

of Armenia that lay contiguous to his dominions. Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, was willing, in this juncture, to co-operate with the Roman arms. He had put his son Rhadamistus to death for imputed treason, and, to make terms with Rome, while, in fact, he gratified his rooted aversion to the Armenians, he pretended to enter into the war with the zeal and ardour of a friend to the cause. The Isichians also declared for Corbulo. That people were now, for the first time, the allies of Rome. They made incursions into the wild and desert tracts of Armenia, and by a desultory rambling war distracted the operations of the enemy.

Tiridates, finding himself counteracted on every side, sent ambassadors to expostulate, as well in the name of the Parthians, as for himself. "After hostages so "lately delivered, and a renewal of friendship, that "promised mutual advantages, why was his expul- "sion from the kingdom of Armenia the fixed, the "avowed intention of the Roman army? If Vologeses "was not as yet in motion with the whole strength "of his kingdom, it was because he wished to prevail "by the justice of his cause, and not by force of arms. "If the sword must be drawn, the event would show "that the Arsacides had not forgot that warlike spirit "which, on former occasions, had been fatal to the "Roman name." Corbulo heard this magnificent language; but, being informed, by sure intelligence, that the revolt of the Hyrcanians found employment for Vologeses, he returned for answer, that the wisest measure Tiridates could pursue, would be to address himself in a suppliant style to the emperor of Rome. The kingdom of Armenia, settled on a solid basis, might be his without the effusion of blood and the havoc of a destructive war, if to distant and chimerical hopes he preferred moderate measures and present security.

XXXVIII. From this time the business fell into a train of negotiation. Frequent despatches passed between both armies, but no progress being made towards a conclusive treaty, it was at length agreed that, at a fixed time and place, the two chiefs should

come to an interview. Tiridates gave notice, that he should bring with him a guard of a thousand horse: the number which Corbulo might choose for his own person, he did not take upon him to prescribe; all he desired was, that they should come with a pacific disposition, and advance to the congress without their breast-plates and their helmets. This stroke of eastern perfidy was not so fine, but even the dullest capacity, not to mention an experienced general, might perceive the latent fraud. The number limited on one side, and to the opposite party left indefinite, carried with it a specious appearance; but the lurking treachery was too apparent. The Parthian cavalry excelled in the dexterity of managing the bow and arrow; and, without defensive armour, what would be the use of superior numbers? Aware of the design, but choosing to disguise his sentiments, Corbulo calmly answered, that the business being of a public nature, the discussion of it ought to be in the presence of both armies. For the convention he appointed a place inclosed on one side by a soft acclivity of gently rising hills, where the infantry might be posted to advantage, with a vale beneath, stretching to an extent that gave ample space for the cavalry. On the stated day Corbulo advanced to the meeting, with his forces in regular order. In the wings were stationed the allies and the auxiliaries sent by the kings in friendship with Rome. The sixth legion formed the centre, strengthened by a reinforcement of three thousand men from the third legion, drafted in the night from the neighbouring camp. Being embodied under one eagle, they presented the appearance of a single legion. Towards the close of day, Tiridates occupied a distant ground, visible indeed, but never within hearing. Not being able to obtain a conference, the Roman general ordered his men to file off to their respective quarters.

XXXIX. Tiridates left the field with precipitation, alarmed at the various movements of the Roman army, and fearing the danger of an ambuscade, or, perhaps, intending to cut off the supplies of provisions then on the way from the city of Trebizonde and the

Pontic sea. But the supplies were conveyed over the mountains, where a chain of posts was formed, to secure the passes. A slow and lingering war was now to be apprehended: to bring it to a speedy issue, and compel the Armenians to act on the defensive, Corbulo resolved to level their castles to the ground. The strongest fort in that quarter was known by the name of VOLANDUM: the demolition of that place he reserved for himself, and against the towns of inferior note he sent Cornelius Flaccus, a lieutenant-general, and Insteius Capito, præfect of the camp. Having reconnoitred the works and prepared for the assault, he harangued his men in effect as follows: "You "have now to do with a dastardly and fugitive enemy; "a vagabond race, always roving in predatory bands, "betraying at once their unwarlike spirit and their "perfidy; impatient of peace, and cowards in war. "The time is arrived, when the whole nation may be "exterminated: by one brave exploit you may gain "both fame and booty to reward your valour." Having thus inflamed the spirit of his men, he arranged them in four divisions; one close embodied under their shields, forming a military shell, to sap the foundation of the ramparts; a second party advanced with ladders to scale the walls; a third with their warlike engines threw into the place a shower of darts and missive fire; while the slingers and archers, posted at a convenient distance, discharged a volley of metal and huge massy stones.

To keep the enemy employed in every quarter, the attack was made on all sides at once. In less than four hours the barbarians were driven from their stations; the ramparts were left defenceless, the gates were forced, and the works taken by scalade. A dreadful slaughter followed. All who were capable of carrying arms were put to the sword. On the part of the Romans only one man was killed; the number of wounded was inconsiderable. The women and children were sold to slavery: the rest was left to be plundered by the soldiers. The operations of Flaccus and Capito were attended with equal success. In one day three castles were taken by storm. A gene

ral panic overspread the country. From motives of fear or treachery the inhabitants surrendered at discretion. Encouraged by these prosperous events, Corbulo was now resolved to lay siege in form to Artaxata, the capital of the kingdom. He did not however think it advisable to march the nearest way. The river Araxes washes the walls of the city: the legions would have found it necessary to construct the requisite bridges in sight of the enemy, exposed to their darts and missive weapons. They took a wider circuit, and forded over where the current was broad and shallow.

XL. Tiridates was thrown into the utmost distress. Shame and fear took possession of him by turns. If he suffered a blockade to be formed, his weak condition would be too apparent; if he attempted to raise the siege, his cavalry might be surrounded in the narrow defiles. He resolved to show himself towards the close of day in order of battle, and, next morning, either to attack the Romans, or, by a sudden retreat, to draw them into an ambuscade. With this intent he made a sudden movement, and surrounded the legions. The attempt gave no alarm to Corbulo: prepared for all events, he had marshalled his men either for action or march. The third legion took post in the right wing; the sixth advanced on the left; and a select detachment from the tenth formed the centre. The baggage was secured between the ranks: a body of a thousand horse brought up the rear, with orders to face the enemy whenever an attack was made, but never to pursue them. The foot archers, and the rest of the cavalry, were distributed in the wings. The left extended their ranks towards the foot of the hills, in order, if the barbarians advanced on that side, to hem them in between the front lines, and the centre of the army. Tiridates contented himself with vain parade, shifting his ground with celerity, yet never within the throw of a dart, advancing, retreating, and, by every stratagem, trying to make the Romans open their ranks, and leave themselves liable to be attacked in scattered parties. His efforts were without effect: one officer, who commanded a troop of horse, ad-

vanced from his post, and fell under a volley of darts. His temerity restrained the rest of the army. Towards the close of day, Tiridates, seeing his wiles defeated, withdrew with all his forces.

XLI. Corbulo encamped on the spot. Having reason to imagine that Tiridates would throw himself into the city of Artaxata, he debated whether it would not be best, without loss of time, to push forward by rapid marches, and lay siege to the place. While he remained in suspense, intelligence was brought by the scouts that the prince set off at full speed towards some distant region, but whether to Media or Albania, was uncertain. He resolved, therefore, to wait the return of day, and in the mean time despatched the light armed cohorts, with orders to invest the city, and begin their attack at a proper distance. The inhabitants threw open their gates, and surrendered at discretion. Their lives were saved, but the town was reduced to ashes. No other measure could be adopted; the walls were of wide extent, and a sufficient garrison could not be spared, at a time when it was necessary to prosecute the war with vigour; and if the city were left unhurt, the advantage, as well as glory of the conquest, would be lost. To these reasons was added an extraordinary appearance in the heavens. It happened that the sun-beams played with brilliant lustre on the adjacent country, making the whole circumference a scene of splendour, while the precinct of the town was covered with the darkest gloom, at intervals rendered still more awful by flashes of lightning, that served to show the impending horror. This phenomenon was believed to be the wrath of the gods denouncing the destruction of the city.

For these transactions Nero was saluted IMPERATOR. The senate decreed a solemn thanksgiving. Statues and triumphal arches were erected, and the prince was declared perpetual consul. The day on which the victory was gained, and also that on which the news arrived at Rome, and the report was made to the senate, were by a decree to be observed as annual festivals. Many other votes were passed with the

same spirit of adulation, all in their tendency so excessive, that Caius Cassius, who had concurred with every motion, observed at last, that if, for the benignity of the gods to the Roman people, due thanks were to be voted, acts of religion would engross the whole year; and, therefore, care should be taken to fix the days of devotion at proper intervals, that they might not encroach too much on the business of civil life.

XLII. About this time a man who had suffered various revolutions of fortune, and by his vices had brought on himself the public detestation, was cited to answer a charge exhibited against him before the senate. He was condemned, but not without fixing a stain on the character of Seneca. Suillius was the person: in the reign of Claudius he had been the scourge and terror of his fellow-citizens; a venal orator, and an informer by profession. In the late changes of government he had been much reduced, but not low enough to gratify the resentment of his enemies. His spirit was still unconquered. Rather than descend to humble supplications, he preferred the character of a convicted malefactor. To come at this man, a late decree of the senate, reviving the pains and penalties of the Cincian law against such advocates as received a price for their eloquence, was thought to have been framed by the advice of Seneca. Suillius exclaimed against the proceeding. At his time of life he had little to fear. To the natural ferocity of his temper he now added a contempt of danger.

He poured out a torrent of invective, and in particular railed with acrimony against Seneca. "The "philosopher," he said, "was an enemy to the friends "of Claudius. He had been banished by that empe- "ror, and the disgrace was not inflicted without just "reason. He is now grown old in the pursuit of fri- "volous literature, a vain retailer of rhetoric to raw "and inexperienced boys. He beholds with an eye "of envy all, who, in the defence of their fellow-citi- "zens, exert a pure, a sound, a manly eloquence. "That Suillius lived with reputation in the service of "Germanicus, is a fact well known. He was quæstor "under that prince, while Seneca corrupted the mo-

"rals of his daughter, and dishonoured the family. "If it be a crime to receive from a client the reward "of honest industry, what shall be said of him, who "steals into the chamber of a princess to debauch her "virtue? By what system of ethics, and by what rules "of philosophy, has this professor warped into the "favour of the emperor, and, in less than four "years, amassed three hundred millions of sesterces? "Through the city of Rome his snares are spread; "last wills and testaments are his quarry; and the "rich, who have no children, are his prey. By exor- "bitant usury he has overwhelmed all Italy; the pro- "vinces are exhausted, and he is still insatiate. The "wealth of Suillius cannot be counted great; but it "is the fruit of honest industry. He is now deter- "mined to bid defiance to his enemies, and hazard all "consequences, rather than derogate from his rank "and the glory of his life, by poorly yielding to a new "man; an upstart in the state; a sudden child of for- "tune."

XLIII. By a set of officious tale-bearers, who love to carry intelligence, and inflame it with the addition of their own malevolence, these bitter invectives were conveyed to Seneca. The enemies of Suillius were set to work: they charged him with rapine and peculation during his government in Asia. To substantiate these allegations, twelve months were allowed to the prosecutors: but that put off their vengeance to a distant day. To shorten their work, they chose to proceed upon a new charge, without going out of Rome for witnesses. The accusation stated, "That "by a virulent prosecution he had driven Quintus "Pomponius into open rebellion; that by his perni- "cious arts Julia, the daughter of Drusus, and Pop- "pæa Sabina, were forced to put a period to their "lives; that Valerius Asiaticus, Lusius Saturninus, "and Cornelius Lupus, with a long list of Roman "knights, were all cut off by his villany; and, in short, "every act of cruelty in the reign of Claudius "was imputed to him." To these charges Suillius answered, That he acted always under the immediate orders of the prince, and never of his own motion.

Nero overruled that defence, averring, that he had inspected all the papers of the late emperor, and from those vouchers it plainly appeared, that not one prosecution was set on foot by the order of Claudius. The criminal resorted to the commands of Messalina; but, by shifting his ground, his cause grew weaker. Why, it was argued, was he the only person who lent himself to the wicked designs of that pernicious prostitute? Shall the perpetrator of evil deeds, who has received his hire, be allowed to transfer his guilt to the person who paid him the wages of his iniquity?

Suillius was condemned, and his effects were confiscated, except a part allowed to his son and granddaughter, in addition to what was left to them under the will of their mother, and their grand-mother. He was banished to the islands called the Baleares. During the whole of the trial, he behaved with undaunted firmness, and even after the sentence his spirit was still unbroken. He is said to have lived in his lone retreat, not only at ease, but in voluptuous affluence. His enemies intended to wreak their malice on his son Nerulinus, and, with that view, charged him with extortion. Nero checked the prosecution; the ends of justice being, as he thought, sufficiently answered.

XLIV. It happened, at this time, that Octavius Sagitta, tribune of the people, fell in love to distraction with a married woman of the name of Pontia. By presents and unbounded generosity he seduced her to his embraces, and, afterwards by a promise of marriage, engaged her to consent to a divorce from her husband. Pontia was no sooner free from the nuptial tie, than her imagination opened to her other prospects. She affected delays; her father made objections; she had hopes of a better match, and finally she refused to perform her contract. Octavius expostulated, he complained; he threatened; his reputation suffered; and his fortune was ruined. His life was all that he had left, and that he was ready to sacrifice at her command. His suit, however earnest, made no impression. In despair, he begged one night only; that small indulgence would assuage his sorrows, and take the sting from disappointment. The

assignation was made. Pontia ordered her servant, who was privy to the intrigue, to watch her bedchamber. The lover went to his appointment. He carried with him one of his freedmen, and a poniard under his robe. The scene which usually occurs, when love is stung to jealousy, was acted between the parties; reproaches, fond endearments, rage and tenderness, war and peace, took their turn.

Part of the night was passed in mutual enjoyment. At length, Octavius, in the moment of soft security, when the unhappy victim thought all violence at an end, seized his dagger, and sheathed it in her heart. The maid rushed in to assist her mistress. Octavius wounded her, and made his escape. On the following day, the murder was reported abroad; and the hand that gave the blow was strongly suspected. Octavius, it was certain, had passed the night with the deceased; but his freedman boldly stood forth, and took the crime upon himself. It was his deed; an act of justice due to an injured master. This generous fortitude from the mouth of an assassin was heard with astonishment, and for some time gained credit, till the maid, who had recovered from her wound, disclosed the particulars of the whole transaction. Pontia's father appealed to the tribunal of the consuls, and Octavius, as soon as his office of tribune ceased, was condemned to suffer the penalties of the Cornelian law against assassins.

XLV. In the course of the same year, another scene of libidinous passion was brought forward, more important than that which we have related, and, in the end, the cause of public calamity. Sabina Poppæa, at that time, lived at Rome in a style of taste and elegance. She was the daughter of Titus Ollius, but she took her name from Poppæus Sabinus, her grandfather by the maternal line. Her father Ollius was, at one time, rising to the highest honours; but being a friend to Sejanus, he was involved in the ruin of that minister. The grandfather had figured on the stage of public business. He was of consular rank, and obtained the honour of a triumph. To be the known descendant of a man so distinguished, flattered

the vanity of Poppæa. Virtue excepted, she possessed all the qualities that adorn the female character. Her mother was the reigning beauty of her time. From her the daughter inherited nobility of birth, with all the graces of an elegant form. Her fortune was equal to her rank; her conversation had every winning art; her talents were cultivated, and her wit refined. She knew how to assume an air of modesty, and yet pursue lascivious pleasures; in her deportment, decent; in her heart, a libertine. When she appeared in public, which was but seldom, she wore a veil, that shaded, or seemed to shade her face, perhaps intending, that her beauty should not wear out and tarnish to the eye; or because that style of dress was most becoming. To the voice of fame she paid no regard: her husband and her adulterer were equally welcome to her embraces. Love, with her, was not an affair of the heart. Knowing no attachment herself, she required none from others. Where she saw her interest, there she bestowed her favours; a politician even in her pleasures. She was married to Rufius Crispinus, a Roman knight, and was by him the mother of a son; but Otho, a youth of expectation, luxurious, prodigal, and high in favour with Nero, attracted her regard. She yielded to his addresses, and, in a short time, married the adulterer.

XLVI. Otho, in company with the emperor, grew lavish in her praise. Her beauty and her elegant manners were his constant theme. He talked, perhaps, with the warmth and indiscretion of a lover; perhaps, with a design to inflame the passions of Nero, and from their mutual relish of the same enjoyments to derive new strength to support his interest. Rising from Nero's table, he was often heard to say, "I am going to the arms of her, who possesses every "amiable accomplishment; by her birth ennobled; "endeared by beauty; the wish of all beholders, and "to the favoured man the source of true delight." Nero became enamoured. No time was lost. Poppæa received his visits. At the first interview she called forth all her charms, and ensured her conquest. She admired the dignity of the prince. His air, his

manner and his looks, were irresistible. By this well-acted fondness she gained entire dominion over his affections. Proud of her success, she thought it time to act her part with female airs and coy reluctance. If Nero wished to detain her more than a night or two, she could not think of complying; she was married to a man whom she loved. She could not risk the loss of a situation so perfectly happy. Otho led a life of taste and elegance, unrivalled in his pleasures. Under his roof she saw nothing but magnificence, in a style worthy of the highest station. She objected to Nero that he had contracted different habits. He lived in close connexion with Acté, a low-born slave; and from so mean a commerce, what could be expected but sordid manners and degenerate sentiment! From that moment, Otho lost his interest with the prince: he had orders neither to frequent the palace, nor to show himself in the train of attendants. At length, to remove a rival, Nero made him governor of Lusitania. Otho quitted Rome, and, till the breaking out of the civil wars, continued in the administration of his province, a firm and upright magistrate, in this instance exhibiting to the world that wonderful union of repugnant qualities which marked the man; in private life, luxurious, profligate, and prone to every vice; in his public capacity, prudent, just, and temperate in the use of power.

XLVII. It was in this juncture that Nero first threw off the mask. He had hitherto cloaked the vices of his nature. The person whom he dreaded most, was Cornelius Sylla; a man, in fact, of a dull and sluggish understanding; but his stupidity passed with Nero for profound thinking, and the deep reserve of a dangerous politician. In this idea he was confirmed by the malignity of one Graptus, a man enfranchised by the emperor, and from the reign of Tiberius hackneyed in the practice of courts. He framed an artful story. The Milvian bridge was, at that time, the fashionable scene of midnight revelry: being out of the limits of Rome, the emperor thought that he might riot, at that place, with unbounded freedom. Graptus told him, that a conspiracy had been

formed against his life, and the villains lay in ambush on the Flaminian way; but as fortune would have it, the prince, by passing through the Sallustian gardens, escaped the snare. To give colour to this invented tale, he alleged the following circumstance: In one of the riots, which were common in those dissolute times, a set of young men fell into a skirmish with the attendants of the emperor. This, he said, was a concerted plot, and Sylla was the author of it, though not so much as one of his clients, or even a slave of his, was found to have been of the party. Sylla, in fact, had neither capacity nor spirit for an undertaking so big with danger; and yet, on the suggestion of Graptus, which was received as positive proof, he was obliged to quit his country, and reside, for the future, in the city of Marseilles.

XLVIII. During the same consulship, the senate gave audience to the deputies from the magistrates and the people of Puteoli. The former complained of the licentiousness of the populace, and the latter retaliated, in bitter terms, against the pride and avarice of the nobles. It appeared that the mob rose in a tumultuous body, discharging volleys of stones, and threatening to set fire to the houses. A general massacre was likely to be the consequence. Caius Cassius was despatched to quell the insurrection. His measures, too harsh and violent for the occasion, served only to irritate the people. He was recalled, at his own request, and the two Scribonii were sent to supply his place. They took with them a prætorian cohort. By the terror of a military force, and the execution of a few ringleaders, the public tranquillity was restored.

XLIX. A decree of the senate, which had no higher object than to authorize the people of Syracuse to exceed, in their public spectacles, the number of gladiators limited by law, would be matter too trite and unworthy of notice, if the opposition, made by Pætus Thrasea, had not excited against that excellent man a number of enemies. They seized the opportunity to traduce his character. "If he is, as he pretends to be, "seriously of opinion, that the public good requires "liberty of speech and freedom of debate, why de-

"scend to things so frivolous in their nature? Are "peace and war of no importance? When laws are "in question; when tributes and imposts are the sub "jects before the fathers, and, when points of the first "importance are in agitation, where is his eloquence "then? Every senator who rises in his place, has the "privilege of moving whatever he conceives to be "conducive to the public welfare; and what he moves, "he has a right to discuss: to debate, and put to the "vote. And yet to regulate the amphitheatre of Sy- "racuse is the sole business of a professed and zeal- "ous patriot. Is the administration in all its parts so "fair and perfect, that even Thrasea himself, if he "held the reins of government, could find nothing to "reform? If he suffers matters of the first importance "to pass in silence, why amuse us with a mock de- "bate on questions, wherein no man finds himself "interested?"

The friends of Thrasea desired an explanation of his conduct: his answer was as follows: when he rose to make his objections to the law in question, he was not ignorant of the mismanagement that prevailed in all departments of the government; but the principle on which he acted, had in view the honour of the senate. When matters of little moment drew the attention of the fathers, men would see that affairs of importance could not escape a body of men, who thought nothing that concerned the public beneath their notice.

L. The complaints of the people, in the course of this year, against the oppressions practised by the collectors of the revenue, were so loud and violent, that Nero was inclined to abolish the whole system of duties and taxes, thereby to serve the interests of humanity, and bestow on mankind the greatest blessing in his power. To this generous sentiment the fathers gave the highest applause; but the design, they said, however noble, was altogether impracticable. To abrogate all taxes, were to cut off the resources of government, and dissolve the commonwealth. Repeal the imposts on trade, and what would be the consequence: The tribute paid by the provinces must, in like manner, be remitted. The several companies that

farmed the revenue were established by the consuls and tribunes of Rome, in the period of liberty, when the old republic flourished in all its glory. The revenue system, which has since grown up, was formed on a fair estimate, proportioned to the demands of government. It would indeed, be highly proper to restrain within due bounds the conduct of the collectors, that the several duties, which were sanctioned by the acquiescence of ages, might not, by oppression and rapacity, be converted into a grievance too rigorous to be endured.

LI. Nero issued a proclamation, directing that the revenue laws till that time kept among the mysteries of state, should be drawn up in form, and entered on the public tables for the inspection of all degrees and ranks of men. It was also made a rule, that no arrear of more than a year's standing should be recovered by the tax-gatherers, and, in all cases of complaint against those officers, the same should be heard and decided in a summary way, by the prætor at Rome, and in the provinces by the proprætors or proconsuls. To the soldiers all former privileges and immunities were preserved, with an exception of the duties on merchandise, if they entered into trade. Many other regulations were added, all just and equitable, and for some time, strictly observed, but suffered afterwards to fall into disuse. The abolition, however, of the fortieth and the fiftieth penny, with many other exactions, invented by the avarice of the publicans, still continues in force. The exportation of corn, from the provinces beyond sea, was also put under proper regulations; the imposts were diminished; the shipping employed in commerce was not to be rated in the estimate of the merchants' effects, and, of course, stood exempted from all duties.

LII. Sulpicius Camerinus and Pomponius Silvanus, who had governed in Africa with proconsular authority, were both accused of mal-administration, and acquitted by the emperor. The accusers of Camerinus were few in number, and their allegations were private acts of cruelty to individuals, not rapine or extortion, or any charge of a public nature. Silvanus

was beset by powerful enemies. They prayed time to produce their witnesses: the defendant pressed for an immediate hearing. He was rich, advanced in years, and had no children; the consequence was, that a strong party espoused his interest. He triumphed over his enemies, and his friends went unrewarded. They hoped by their services to merit his estate, but he survived them all.

LIII. During this whole period, a settled calm prevailed in Germany. The commanders, in that quarter, plainly saw that triumphal ornaments, granted, as they had been, on every trifling occasion, were no longer an honour. To preserve the peace of the provinces they thought their truest glory. Paulinus Pompeius and Lucius Vetus were then at the head of the legions. That the soldiery, however, might not languish in a state of inaction, Paulinus finished the great work of a bank, to prevent the inundations of the Rhine; a project begun by Drusus sixty-three years before. Vetus had conceived a vast design: he had in contemplation a canal, by which the waters of the Moselle and the Arar were to be communicated, to the end that the Roman forces might be able, for the future, to enter the Rhone from the Mediterranean, and passing thence into the Arar, proceed through the new channel into the Moselle, and sail down the Rhine into the German Ocean. This plan was on a great scale: fatiguing marches over a long tract of land would be no longer necessary, and a commodious navigation would be opened between the western and the northern seas.

Ælius Gracilis, who commanded in the Belgic Gaul, heard of this magnificent plan with the jealousy of a little mind. He gave notice to Vetus, that he and his legions must not think of entering the province of another officer. Such a step, he said, would have the appearance of a design to gain the affections of the people of Gaul, and, by consequence, might give umbrage to the emperor. In this manner, as often happens, the danger of having too much merit laid aside a project of great importance to the public.

LIV. The barbarians, having seen the long inacti-

vity of the Roman armies, conceived a notion, that the generals had it in command not to march against the enemy. In this persuasion, the Frisians, having ordered the weak, through sex or age, to be conveyed across the lakes, marched with the flower of their young men through woods and morasses towards the banks of the Rhine, where they took possession of a large tract, vacant, indeed, at the time, but in fact appropriated to the use of the Roman soldiers. In this emigration, the leading chiefs were Verritus and Malorix, both of them sovereign princes, if sovereign power may be said to exist in Germany. They had already fixed their habitations; they began to cultivate the soil, and the lands were sown in as full security as if they occupied their native soil; when Vibius Avitus, who succeeded Paulinus in the government of the province, threatened to attack them with his whole force, if they did not evacuate the country, or obtain a settlement from the emperor. Intimidated by these menaces, the German chiefs set out for Rome. Being there obliged to wait till Nero was at leisure from other business, they employed their time in seeing such curiosities as are usually shown to strangers. They were conducted to Pompey's theatre, where the grandeur of the people, in one vast assembly, could not fail to make an impression. Rude minds have no taste for the exhibitions of the theatre. They gazed at every thing with a face of wonder: the place for the populace, and the different seats assigned to the several orders of the state, engaged their attention. Curiosity was excited: they inquired which were the Roman knights, and which the senators? Among the last they perceived a few, who, by their exotic dress, were known to be foreigners. They soon learned that they were ambassadors from different states, and that the privilege of mixing with the fathers was granted by way of distinction, to do honour to men, who by their courage and fidelity surpassed the rest of the world. The answer gave offence to the two chieftains. In point of valour and integrity, the Germans, they said, were second to no people upon earth. With this stroke of national pride, they rose abruptly, and took

their seats among the senators. Their rough, but honest simplicity, diffused a general pleasure through the audience. It was considered as the sudden impulse of liberty; a glow of generous emulation. Nero granted to the two chiefs the privilege of Roman citizens, but, at the same time, declared, that the Frisians must depart from the lands which they had presumed to occupy. The barbarians refused to submit. A detachment of the auxiliary horse was sent forward, with orders to dislodge them. The attack was made with vigour, and all who resisted, were either taken prisoners or put to the sword.

LV. Another irruption was soon after made in the same quarter by the Ansibarians, a people respected for their own internal strength, and still more formidable, on account of the general sympathy with which the neighbouring states beheld their sufferings. They had been driven by the Chaucians from their native land, and having no place which they could call their country, they roamed about in quest of some retreat, where they might dwell in peace, although in exile. Boiocalus, a warlike chief, was at the head of this wandering nation. He had gained renown in arms, and distinguished himself by his faithful attachment to the interests of Rome. He urged, in vindication of his conduct, that in the revolt of the Cheruscans, he had been loaded with irons by the order of Arminius. Since that time, he had served in the Roman armies; at first under Tiberius, and afterwards under Germanicus; and now, at the end of fifty years, he was willing to add to his past services the merit of submitting himself and his people to the protection of the Romans. "The country in dispute," he said, "was of wide extent; and under colour of reserving "it for the use of the legions, whole tracts of land "remained unoccupied, waste, and desolate. Let "the Roman soldiers depasture their cattle; let them "retain lands for that purpose; but let them not, "while they feed their horses, reduce mankind to the "necessity of perishing by famine. Let them not "prefer a dreary solitude to the interest of humanity. "The affections of a people, willing to live in friend-

"ship with them, are preferable to a wide waste of "barren lands. The exclusive possession of the "country in question was by no means a novelty. "It had been occupied, first by the Chamavians; after "them by the Tubantes; and, finally, by the Usipians. "The firmament over our heads is the mansion of "the gods; the earth was given to man; and what "remains unoccupied, lies in common for all." At these words he looked up to the sun, and appealing to the whole planetary system, asked with a spirit of enthusiasm, as if the heavenly luminaries were actually present, whether an uncultivated desert, the desolation of nature, gave a prospect fit for them to survey? Would they not rather let loose the ocean, to overwhelm in a sudden deluge a race of men, who made it their trade to carry devastation through the nations, and make the world a wilderness?

LVI. Avitus answered in a decisive tone, that the law of the strongest must prevail. "The gods, whom "Boiocalus invoked, had so ordained. By their "high will, the Romans were invested with supreme "authority: to give, or take away was their prerogative; they were the sovereign arbiters, and would "admit no other judges." Such was the answer given in public to the Ansibarians. To Boiocalus, in consideration of his former merit, an allotment of lands was privately offered. The German considered it as the price of treachery, and rejected it with disdain: "The earth," he said, "may not afford a "spot where we may dwell in peace; a place where "we may die we can never want." The interview ended here. Both sides departed with mutual animosity. The Ansibarians prepared for war. They endeavoured to rouse the Bructerians, the Tencterians, and other nations still more remote. Avitus sent despatches to Curtilius Mancia, the commander in chief on the Upper Rhine, with instructions to cross the river, and show himself in the rear of the enemy. In the mean time, he put himself at the head of the legions, and entered the country of the Tencterians, threatening to carry sword and fire through their territories, if they did not forthwith re-

nounce the confederacy. The barbarians laid down their arms. The Bructerians in a panic followed their example. Terror and consternation spread through the country. In the cause of others none were willing to encounter certain danger.

In this distress, the Ansibarians, abandoned by all, retreated to the Usipians and Tubantes. Being there rejected, they sought protection from the Cattians, and afterwards from the Cheruscans. In the end, worn out with long and painful marches, no where received as friends, in most places repulsed as enemies, and wanting every thing in a foreign land, the whole nation perished. The young, and such as were able to carry arms, were put to the sword; the rest were sold to slavery.

LVII. In the course of the same summer, a battle was fought, with great rage and slaughter, between the Hermundurians and the Cattians. The exclusive property of a river, which flowed between both nations, impregnated with stores of salt, was the cause of their mutual animosity. To the natural fierceness of barbarians, who knew no decision but that of the sword, they added the gloomy motives of superstition. According to the creed of those savage nations, that part of the world lay in the vicinity of the heavens, and thence the prayers of men were wafted to the ear of the gods. The whole region was, by consequence, peculiarly favoured; and to that circumstance it was to be ascribed, that the river and the adjacent woods teemed with quantities of salt, not, as in other places, a concretion on the sea-shore, formed by the foaming of the waves, but produced by the simple act of throwing the water from the stream on a pile of burning wood, where, by the conflict of opposite elements, the substance was engendered. For this salt a bloody battle was fought. Victory declared in favour of the Hermundurians. The event was the more destructive to the Cattians, as both armies, with their usual ferocity, had devoted the vanquished as a sacrifice to Mars and Mercury. By that horrible vow, men and horses, with whatever belonged to the routed army, were doomed to destruction.

The vengeance meditated by the Cattians fell with redoubled fury on themselves.

About the same time, a dreadful and unforeseen disaster befel the Ubians, a people in alliance with Rome. By a sudden eruption of subterraneous fire, their farms, their villages, their cities, and their habitations were all involved in one general conflagration. The flames extended far and wide, and well nigh reached the Roman colony, lately founded in that part of Germany. The fire raged with such violence, that neither the rain from the heavens, nor the river-waters could extinguish it. Every remedy failed, till the peasants, driven to desperation, threw in heaps of stones, and checked the fury of the flames. The mischief beginning to subside, they advanced with clubs, as if to attack a troop of wild beasts. Having beat down the fire, they stripped off their clothes, and throwing them, wet and besmeared with filth, upon the flames, extinguished the conflagration.

LVIII. This year the tree, called RUMINALIS, which stood in the place assigned for public elections, and eight hundred and forty years before had given shelter to the infancy of Romulus and Remus, began to wither in all its branches. The sapless trunk seemed to threaten a total decay. This was considered as a dreadful prognostic, till new buds expanding into leaf, the tree recovered its former verdure.

THE

ANNALS OF TACITUS.

BOOK XIV.

I. Caius Vipstanus and Lucius Fonteius succeeded to the consulship. Nero was determined no longer to defer the black design which had lain for some time fostered in his heart. He had gained in four years a taste of power, and was now grown sanguine enough to think that he might hazard a daring stride in guilt. His love for Poppæa kindled every day to higher ardour. To be the imperial wife was the ambition of that aspiring beauty; but while Agrippina lived, she could not hope to see Octavia divorced from the emperor. She began, by whispered calumny, to undermine the emperor's mother, and, at times, in a vein of pleasantry, to alarm the pride and jealousy of Nero. With an air of raillery she called him a pupil, still under tuition; a dependant on the will of others, in fancy guiding the reins of government, but, in reality, deprived of personal liberty. "For what other "reason was her marriage so long deferred? Had her "person already lost the power of pleasing? Were "the triumphal honours obtained by her ancestors a "bar to her preferment? Or was it supposed that she "was not of a fruitful constitution, capable of bearing "children? Perhaps the sincerity of her love was "called in question. No; the voice of a wife might "be heard, and the pride and avarice with which an "imperious mother insulted the senate and oppressed "the people, might be exposed in open day. If, how-"ever, it was a settled point with Agrippina, that no "one but the bosom plague of the emperor should be "her daughter-in-law, Poppæa could return to the

"embraces of Otho; with him she could retire to some "remote corner of the world, where she might hear, "indeed, of the emperor's disgrace, but at a distance, "with the consolation of neither being a spectatress "of the scene, nor a sharer in his afflictions." By these and such like suggestions, intermixed with tears and female artifice, she ensnared the heart of Nero. No one attempted to weaken her influence. To see the pride of Agrippina humbled was the wish of all; but that the son would renounce the ties of natural affection, and imbrue his hands in the blood of his mother, was what never entered the imagination of any man.

II. In the history of those times, transmitted to us by Cluvius, we read, that Agrippina, in her rage for power, did not scruple to meet the emperor, about the middle of the day, as he rose from table, high in blood, and warm with wine. Having adorned her person to the best advantage, she hoped, in those moments, to incite desire, and allure him to the unnatural union. Wanton play and amorous dalliance were seen by the confidential attendants, and deemed a certain prelude to the act of criminal gratification. Against the artifices of one woman Seneca resolved to play off the charms of another, and Acté was accordingly employed. The jealousy of the concubine was easily alarmed: she saw her own danger, and the infamy that awaited the prince. Being taught her lesson, she gave notice to Nero that he was publicly charged with incest, while his mother gloried in the crime. The army, she said, would revolt from a man plunged in vice of so deep a dye. Fabius Rusticus differs from this account. If we believe that author, Agrippina did not seek this vile pollution. It was the unnatural passion of Nero, and Acté had the address to wean him from it. Cluvius, however, is confirmed by the testimony of other writers. The report of common fame is also on his side. Men were willing to believe the worst of Agrippina. If she was not, in fact, guilty of a design so detestable, a new inclination, however shocking to nature, seemed probable in a woman of her character; who, in the prime of her youth from mo-

tives of ambition, resigned her person to Lepidus; who afterwards, with the same view, descended to be the prostitute of Pallas, and, to crown the whole, by an incestuous marriage with her uncle, avowed herself capable of the worst of crimes.

III. From this time Nero shunned the presence of his mother. Whenever she went to her gardens, or to either of her seats at Tusculum or Antium, he commended her taste for the pleasures of retirement. At length, detesting her wherever she was, he determined to despatch her at once. How to execute his purpose, whether by poison or the poniard, was the only difficulty. The former seemed the most advisable; but to administer it at his own table might be dangerous, since the fate of Britannicus was too well known. To tamper with her domestics was equally unsafe. A woman of her cast, practised in guilt, and inured to evil deeds, would be upon her guard; and besides, by the habit of using antidotes, she was fortified against every kind of poison. To assassinate her, and yet conceal the murder, was impracticable. Nero had no settled plan, nor was there among his creatures a single person in whom he could confide.

In this embarrassment Anicetus offered his assistance. This man had a genius for the worst iniquity. From the rank of an enfranchised slave he rose to the command of the fleet that lay at Misenum. He had been tutor to Nero in his infancy, and always at variance with Agrippina. Mutual hostility produced mutual hatred. He proposed the model of a ship upon a new construction, formed in such a manner that, in the open sea, part might give way at once, and plunge Agrippina to the bottom. The ocean, he said, was the element of disasters; and if the vessel foundered, malignity itself could not convert into a crime what would appear to be the effect of adverse winds and boisterous waves. After her decease the prince would have nothing to do but to raise a temple to her memory. Altars and public monuments would be proofs of filial piety.

IV. Nero approved of the stratagem, and the circumstances of the time conspired to favour it. The

court was then at Baiæ, to celebrate, during five days, the festival called the QUINQUATRUA. Agrippina was invited to be of the party. To tempt her thither Nero changed his tone. "The humours of a parent claimed indulgence; for sudden starts of passion allowance ought to be made, and petty resentments could not be effaced too soon." By this artifice he hoped to circulate an opinion of his entire reconciliation, and Agrippina, he had no doubt, with the easy credulity of her sex, would be the dupe of a report that flattered her wishes. She sailed from Antium to attend the festival. The prince went to the sea-coast to receive her. He gave her his hand: he embraced her tenderly, and conducted her to a villa called Bauli, in a pleasant situation, washed by the sea, where it forms a bay between the cape of Misenum and the gulph of Baiæ. Among the vessels that lay at anchor, one in particular, more superb than the rest, seemed intended by its decorations to do honour to the emperor's mother. Agrippina was fond of sailing parties. She frequently made coasting voyages in a galley with three ranks of oars, and mariners selected from the fleet. The banquet, of which she was to partake, was fixed at a late hour, that the darkness of the night might favour the perpetration of an atrocious deed.

But the secret transpired: on the first intelligence, Agrippina, it is said, could scarce give credit to so black a story. She chose, however, to be conveyed to Baiæ in a land carriage. Her fears, as soon as she arrived, were dissipated by the polite address of her son. He gave her the most gracious reception, and placed her at table above himself. He talked with frankness, and, by intermixing sallies of youthful vivacity with more sedate conversation, had the skill to blend the gay, the airy, and the serious. He protracted the pleasures of the social meeting to a late hour, when Agrippina thought it time to retire. The prince attended her to the shore; he exchanged a thousand fond endearments, and, clasping her to his bosom, fixed his eyes upon her with ardent affection, perhaps intending, under the appearance of filial piety,

to disguise his purpose; or, it might be, that the sight of a mother doomed to destruction, might make even a heart like his yield, for a moment, to the touch of nature.

V. That this iniquitous scene should not be wrapped in darkness, the care of Providence seems to have interposed. The night was calm and serene; the stars shot forth their brightest lustre, and the sea presented a smooth expanse. Agrippina went on board, attended only by two of her domestic train. One of them, Crepereius Gallus, took his place near the steerage; the other, a female attendant, by name Acerronia, stretched herself at the foot of the bed where her mistress lay, and in the fulness of her heart expressed her joy to see the son awakened to a sense of his duty, and the mother restored to his good graces. The vessel had made but little way, when, on a signal given, the deck over Agrippina's cabin fell in at once. Being loaded with lead, Crepereius was crushed under the weight. The props of the bed-room, happening to be of a solid structure, bore up the load, and saved both Agrippina and her servant. Nor did the vessel, as was intended, fall to pieces at once. Consternation, hurry, and confusion followed. The innocent, in a panic, bustled to and fro, embarrassing and confounding such as were in the plot. To heave the ship on one side, and sink her at once, was the design of the accomplices; but not acting in concert, and the rest making contrary efforts, the vessel went down by slow degrees. This gave the passengers an opportunity of escaping from the wreck, and trusting to the mercy of the waves.

Acerronia, in her fright, called herself Agrippina, and, with pathetic accents, implored the mariners to save the emperor's mother. The assassins fell upon her with their oars, with their poles, and with whatever instruments they could seize. She died under repeated blows. Agrippina hushed her fears: not a word escaping from her, she passed undistinguished by the murderers, without any other damage than a wound on her shoulder. She dashed into the sea, and, by struggling with all her efforts, kept herself

above water, till the small barks put off from the shore, and, coming in good time to her assistance, conveyed her up the Lucrine lake to her own villa.

VI. She was now at leisure to reflect on the misery of her situation. The treachery of her son's letter, conceived in terms of affection, and his mock civility, were too apparent. Without a gust of wind, and without touching a rock, at a small distance from the shore, the vessel broke down from the upper deck, like a piece of mechanism constructed for the purpose. The death of Acerronia, and the wound which she herself received, were decisive circumstances. But even in that juncture she thought it best to temporize. Against powerful enemies not to see too much is the safest policy. She sent her freedman Agerinus to inform her son that, by the favour of the gods, and the good auspices of the emperor, she had escaped from a shipwreck. The news, she had no doubt, would affect her son, but for the present, she wished he would forbear to visit her. In her situation, rest was all she wanted. Having despatched her messenger, she assumed an air of courage; she got her wound dressed, and used all proper applications. With an air of ease she called for the last will of Acerronia, and, having ordered an inventory to be made of her effects, secured every thing under her own seal; acting in this single article without dissimulation.

VII. Nero, in the mean time, expected, with impatience, an account of his mother's death. Intelligence at last was brought that she still survived, wounded, indeed, and knowing from what quarter the blow was aimed. The prince heard the news with terror and astonishment. In the hurry of his imagination, he saw his mother already at hand, fierce with indignation, calling aloud for vengeance, and rousing her slaves to an insurrection. She might have recourse to the army, and stir up a rebellion; she might open the whole dark transaction to the senate; she might carry her complaints to the ear of the people. Her wound, the wreck, the murder of her friends, every circumstance would inflame resentment. What

course remained for him? Where was Seneca? and where was Burrhus? He had sent for them on the first alarm: they came with expedition, but whether strangers to the plot, remains uncertain. They stood, for some time fixed in silence. To dissuade the emperor from his fell design, they knew was not in their power; and, in the present dilemma, they saw, perhaps, that Agrippina must fall, or Nero perish. Seneca, though on all other occasions ready to take the lead, fixed his eyes on Burrhus. After a pause, he desired to know whether it were advisable to order the soldiers to complete the business? Burrhus was of opinion, that the prætorian soldiers, devoted to the house of Cæsar, and still respecting the memory of Germanicus, would not be willing to spill the blood of his daughter. It was for Anicetus to finish the last act of the tragedy.

That bold assassin undertook the business. He desired to have the catastrophe in his own hands. Nero revived at the sound. From that day he said, the imperial dignity would be his, and that mighty benefit would be conferred by an enfranchised slave. "Haste, fly," he cried; "take with you men fit for "your purpose, and consummate all." Anicetus heard that a message was sent by Agrippina, and that Agerinus was actually arrived. His ready invention planned a new scene of villany. While the messenger was in the act of addressing the prince, he dropped a poniard between his legs, and instantly, as if he had discovered a treasonable design, seized the man, and loaded him with irons, from that circumstance taking colour to charge Agrippina with a plot against the life of her son. When she was disposed of, a report that, in despair, she put an end to her life, would be an apt addition to the fable.

VIII. Meanwhile, the news of Agrippina's danger spread an alarm round the country. The general cry imputed it to accident. The people rushed in crowds to the sea-shore; they went on the piers that projected into the sea: they filled the boats; they waded as far as they could venture; stretching forth their hands, and calling aloud for help: the bay resounded

with shrieks and lamentations, with distracting questions, dissonant answers, and a wild confusion of voices. Amidst the uproar, numbers came with lighted torches. Finding that Agrippina was safe, they pressed forward to offer their congratulations, when a body of armed soldiers, threatening violence, obliged the whole crowd to disperse. Anicetus planted a guard round the mansion of Agrippina, and having burst open the gates, he seized the slaves, and forced his way to her apartment.

A few domestics remained at the door to guard the entrance; fear had dispersed the rest. In the room, the pale glimmer of a feeble light was seen, and only one maid in waiting. Before the ruffians broke in, Agrippina passed the moments in dreadful agitation: she wondered that no messenger had arrived from her son. What detained Agerinus? She listened, and on the coast where, not long before, the whole was tumult, noise, and confusion, a dismal silence prevailed, broken, at intervals, by a sudden uproar, that added to the horror of the scene. Agrippina trembled for herself. Her servant was leaving the room: she called to her, "And do you too desert me?" In that instant she saw Anicetus entering the chamber. Herculeus, who had the command of a galley, and Oloaritus, a marine centurion, followed him. "If "you come," said Agrippina, "from the prince, tell "him I am well; if your intents are murderous, you "are not sent by my son: the guilt of matricide is fo- "reign to his heart." The ruffians surrounded her bed. The centurion of the marines was drawing his sword: at the sight Agrippina presented her person, "And here," she said, "PLUNGE YOUR SWORD IN MY "WOMB." Herculeus, in that moment, gave the first blow with a club, and wounded her on the head. She expired under a number of mortal wounds.

IX. The facts here related stand confirmed by the concurrent testimony of historians. It is added, but not with equal authority, that Nero beheld his mother stretched in death, and praised the elegance of her form. This, however, is denied by other writers. The body was laid out on a common couch, such as is

used at meals, and without any other ceremony, burnt that very night. During the life of Nero, no honour was offered to her remains; no tomb was erected to tell where she lay: nor was there so much as a mound of earth to enclose the place. After some time an humble monument was raised by her domestics on the road to Misenum, near the villa of Cæsar the Dictator, which, from an eminence, commands a beautiful prospect of the sea and the bays along the coast. Mnester, one of the enfranchised slaves of Agrippina, attended the funeral. As soon as the pile was lighted this man, unwilling to survive his mistress, or, perhaps, dreading the malice of her enemies, despatched himself with his own sword. Of her own dreadful catastrophe Agrippina had warning many years before, when consulting the Chaldeans about the future lot of her son, she was told, that he would reign at Rome, and kill his mother. "Let him," she said, "let him kill me, but let him reign."

X. This dreadful matricide was no sooner executed, than Nero began to feel the horrors of his guilt. He lay, during the rest of the night, on the rack of his own mind; silent, pensive, starting up with sudden fear, wild and distracted. He lifted his eyes in quest of day-light, yet dreaded its approach. The tribunes and centurions, by the advice of Burrhus, were the first to administer consolation. The flattery of these men raised him from despair. They grasped his hand, congratulating him on his escape from the dark designs of his mother. His friends crowded to the temples to offer up their thanks to the gods. The neighbouring cities of Campania followed their example. They offered victims, and sent addresses to the prince. Nero played a different part: he appeared with a dejected mien, weary of life, and inconsolable for the loss of his mother. But the face of a country cannot, like the features of a man, assume a new appearance. The sea and the adjacent coast presented to his eyes a scene of guilt and horror. It was reported at the time that the sound of trumpets was distinctly heard along the ridge of the hills, and groans and shrieks issued from Agrippina's grave. Nero removed to

Naples, and from that place despatched letters to the senate, in substance as follows:

XI. "Agerinus, the freedman of Agrippina, and of "all her creatures, the highest in her confidence, was "found armed with a poniard; and the blow being "prevented, with the same spirit that planned the mur- "der of her son, she despatched herself." The letter proceeded to state a number of past transactions: "her ambition aimed at a share in the supreme power, "and the prætorian bands were obliged to take an "oath of fidelity to her. The senate and the people "were to submit to the same indignity, and bear the "yoke of female tyranny. Seeing her schemes de- "feated, she became an enemy to the fathers, to the "soldiers, and the whole community; she neither suf- "fered a donative to be distributed to the army, nor a "largess to the populace. At her instigation prose- "cutions were set on foot against the best and most "illustrious men in Rome. If she did not enter the "senate, and give audience to the ambassadors of fo- "reign nations, all would remember how that dis- "grace was prevented." The reign of Claudius did not escape his animadversion; but whatever were the enormities of that period, Agrippina, he said, was the cause of all. Her death was an event in which the good fortune of the empire was signally displayed. He gave a circumstantial account of the shipwreck: but what man existed so absurd and stupid, as to believe it the effect of chance? Was it probable that a woman, who had just escaped from the fury of the waves, would send a single ruffian to attempt the life of a prince, surrounded by his guards and his naval officers? The indignation of the public was not confined to Nero: with regard to him, who had plunged in guilt beyond all example, it was useless to complain. Censure was lost in mute astonishment. The popular odium fell on Seneca: his pen was seen in the prince's letters, and the attempt to gloss and varnish so vile a deed, was considered as the avowal of an accomplice.

XII. The voice of the people did not restrain the adulation of the senate. Several decrees were passed in a strain of servile flattery; such as supplications

and solemn vows at all the altars throughout the city of Rome; the festival called the Quinquatrua (during which the late conspiracy was detected) was to be celebrated, for the future, with the addition of public games; the statue of Minerva, wrought in gold, to be placed in the senate house, with that of the emperor near it; and finally, the anniversary of Agrippina's birth-day to be unhallowed in the calendar. Pætus Thrasea had been often present, when the fathers descended to acts of meanness, and he did not rise in opposition; but, upon this occasion, he left his seat, and walked out of the house, by his virtue provoking future vengeance, yet doing no service to the cause of liberty.

There happened, about this time, a number of prodigies, all deemed striking prognostics, but no consequence followed. A woman was delivered of a serpent: another died in the embrace of her husband, by a stroke of thunder. The sun suffered an eclipse, and the fourteen quarters of Rome were struck with lightning. In these extraordinary appearances the hand of Providence, it is evident, did not interpose; since the vices and tyranny of Nero continued to harass mankind for several years. The policy of the prince had now two objects in view; the first to blacken the memory of his mother; and the second, to amuse the people with a show of his own clemency, when left, without control, to the bent of his own inclination. To this end, he recalled from banishment, to which they had been condemned by the vindictive spirit of Agrippina, two illustrious women, namely, Junia and Calpurnia, together with Valerius Capito, and Licinius Gabolus, both of prætorian rank. He permitted the ashes of Lollia Paulina to be brought to Rome, and a mausoleum to be erected to her memory. To Iturius and Calvisius, whom his own violence had driven into exile, he granted a free pardon. Silana had paid her debt to nature. Towards the end of Agrippina's life, when the power of that princess began to decline, or her resentment to be appeased, she had obtained leave to return from her distant

exile as far as Tarentum. At that place she closed her days.

XIII. Nero loitered in the towns of Campania, full of doubts and perplexity, unable to determine how he should enter the city of Rome. Would the senate receive him with a submissive and complying spirit? Could he rely on the temper of the people? These were points that made him anxious and irresolute. The vile advisers of his court (and never court abounded with so pernicious a race) interfered to animate his drooping spirit. They assured him, with confidence, that the name of Agrippina was held in detestation, and since her death, the affections of the people for the person of the emperor knew no bounds. He had only to show himself, and it would be seen that he reigned in the hearts of the multitude. To prepare the way, they desired leave to enter the city of Rome before him.

On their arrival, they found all things favourable beyond their hopes; they saw the several tribes going forth in procession to meet the prince; the senate in their robes of state; whole crowds of women, with their children, ranged in classes according to their respective ages, in the streets through which Nero was to pass; rows of scaffolding built up, and an amphitheatre of spectators, as if a triumph were to enter the city. Nero made his entry, flushed with the pride of victory over the minds of willing slaves, and proceeded, amidst the acclamations of gazing multitudes, to the capitol, where he offered thanks to the gods. From that moment he threw off all restraint. The authority of his mother, feeble as it was, had hitherto curbed the violence of his passions: but that check being now removed, he broke out at once, and gave a full display of his character.

XIV. To acquire the fame of a charioteer, and to figure in the race with a curricle and four horses, had been long the favourite passion of Nero. He had besides another frivolous talent: he could play on the harp and sing to his own performance. With this pitiful ambition he had been often the minstrel

of convivial parties. He justified his taste by observing, that "in ancient times, it had been the practice "of heroes and of kings. The names of illustrious "persons, who consecrated their talents to the ho-"nour of the gods, were preserved in immortal verse. "Apollo was the tutelar deity of melody and song; "and, though invested with the higher attributes of "inspiration and prophecy, he was represented, not "only in the cities of Greece, but also in the Roman "temples, with a lyre in his hand, and the dress of "a musical performer." The rage of Nero for these amusements was not to be controlled. Seneca and Burrhus endeavoured to prevent the ridicule, to which a prince might expose himself by exhibiting his talents to the multitude. By their direction, a wide space, in the vale at the foot of the Vatican, was inclosed for the use of the emperor, that he might there manage the reins, and practise all his skill, without being a spectacle for the public eye. But his love of fame was not to be confined within those narrow bounds. He invited the multitude. They extolled, with raptures, the abilities of a prince, who gratified their darling passion for public diversions.

The two governors were in hopes that their pupil, as soon as he had his frolic, would be sensible of the disgrace; but the effect was otherwise. The applause of the populace inspired him with fresh ardour. To keep himself in countenance, he conceived if he could bring the practice into fashion, that his own infamy would be lost in the disgrace of others. With this view, he cast his eyes on the descendants of families once illustrious, but at that time fallen to decay. From that class of men he selected the most necessitous, such as would be easily tempted to let themselves out for hire. He retained them as actors, and produced them on the public stage. Their names I forbear to mention: though they are now no more, the honour of their ancestors claims respect. The disgrace recoils on him, who chose to employ his treasure, not for the noble end of preventing scandal, but to procure it. Nor was he willing to stop here: by vast rewards he bribed several Roman knights to

descend into the Arena, and present a show to the people, the situation of these unhappy men deserves our pity: for what are the bribes of an absolute prince, but the commands of him who has power to compel?

XV. Nero was not as yet hardy enough to expose his person on a public stage. To gratify his passion for scenic amusements, and at the same time to save appearances, he established an entertainment, called the JUVENILE SPORTS. To promote this institution, numbers of the first distinction enrolled their names. Neither rank, nor age, nor civil honours were an exemption. All degrees embraced the theatrical art, and, with emulation, became the rivals of Greek and Roman mimickry; proud to languish at the soft cadence of effeminate notes, and to catch the graces of wanton deportment. Women of rank studied the most lascivious characters. In the grove planted round the lake, where Augustus gave his naval engagement, booths and places of recreation were erected, to pamper luxury, and inflame desire. By the prince's orders sums of money were distributed. Good men, through motives of fear, accepted the donation; and to the profligate, whatever ministered to sensuality, was sure to be acceptable. Luxury and corruption triumphed.

The manners, it is true, had, long before this time, fallen into degeneracy; but in these new assemblies a torrent of vice bore down every thing, beyond the example of former ages. Even in better days, when science and the liberal arts had not entirely lost their influence, virtue and modesty could scarce maintain their post; but in an age, that openly professed every species of depravity, what stand could be made by truth, by innocence, or by modest merit? The general corruption encouraged Nero to throw off all restraint. He mounted the stage, and became a public performer for the amusement of the people. With his harp in his hand, he entered the scene; he turned the chords with a graceful air, and with delicate flourishes gave a prelude to his art. He stood in a circle of his friends, a prætorian cohort on guard,

and the tribunes and centurions near his person. Burrhus was also present, pleasure in his countenance, and anguish at his heart. He grieved, while he applauded. At this time was instituted a company of Roman knights under the title of THE AUGUSTAN SOCIETY, consisting of young men in the prime of life, some of them libertines from inclination, and others hoping by their profligacy to gain preferment. They attended night and day, to applaud the prince; they admired the graces of his person, and, in the various notes of that exquisite voice, they heard the melody of the gods, who were all excelled by the enchanting talents of the prince. The tribe of sycophants assumed airs of grandeur, swelling with self-importance, as if they were all rising to preferment by their genius and their virtue.

XVI. Theatrical fame was not sufficient for the ambition of Nero: he wished to excel in poetry. All, who possessed the art of versification, were assembled to assist his studies. In this society of wits, young men, not yet qualified by their years to figure in the world, displayed the first essays of their genius. They met in the dearest intimacy. Scraps of poetry, by different hands, were brought to the meeting, or composed on the spot; and those fragments, however unconnected, they endeavoured to weave into a regular poem, taking care to insert the words and phrases of the emperor, as the most brilliant ornaments of the piece. That this was their method, appears from a perusal of the several compositions, in which we see rhapsody without genius, verse without poetry, and nothing like the work of one creative fancy. Nor was philosophy disregarded by the emperor. At stated hours, when his convivial joys were finished, the professors of wisdom were admitted. Various systems were dogmatically supported; and to see the followers of different sects quarrel about an hypothesis was the amusement of Nero. He saw besides, among the venerable sages, some with formal mien and looks of austerity, who under an air of coyness plainly showed that they relished the pleasures of a court.

XVII. About this time a dreadful fray broke out

between the inhabitants of Nuceria and Pompeii, two Italian colonies. The dispute, slight in the beginning, soon rose to violence, and terminated in blood. It happened that Livineius Regulus, who, as already mentioned, had been expelled the senate, gave a spectacle of gladiators. At this meeting jests and raillery, and the rough wit of country towns, flew about among the populace: abuse and scurrility followed; altercation excited anger; anger rose to fury; stones were thrown, and finally they had recourse to arms. The people of Pompeium, where the spectacle was given, were too strong for their adversaries. The Nucerians suffered in the conflict. Numbers of their friends, covered with wounds, were sent to Rome. Sons wept for their parents, and parents for their children. The senate, to whom the matter was referred by the prince, directed an inquiry before the consuls, and, upon their report, passed a decree, prohibiting for the space of ten years, the like assemblies at Pompeium, and moreover, dissolving certain societies established in that city, and incorporated contrary to law. Livineius and others, who appeared to be ring-leaders in the riot, were ordered into banishment.

XVIII. At the suit of the Cyrenians, Pedius Blæsus was expelled the senate. The charge against him was, that he had pillaged the sacred treasure of Æsculapius, and, in the business of listing soldiers, had been guilty of receiving bribes, and committing various acts of gross partiality. A complaint was preferred by the same people against Acilius Strabo, a man of prætorian rank, who had been sent a commissioner by the emperor Claudius, with powers to ascertain the boundaries of the lands which formerly belonged to king Apion, and were by him bequeathed, with the rest of his dominions, to the Roman people. Various intruders had entered on the vacant possession, and from occupancy and length of time hoped to derive a legal title. The people disappointed in their expectations, appealed from the sentence of Strabo. The senate, professing to know nothing of the commission granted by Claudius, referred the business to the decision of the prince. Nero ratified the award made

by Strabo; but to show a mark of good will to the allies of Rome, he restored the land in question to the persons who had been dispossessed.

XIX. In a short time after died Domitius Afer and Marcus Servilius, two illustrious citizens, eminent for the civil honours which they attained, and not less distinguished by their eloquence. Afer had been a shining ornament of the bar: Servilius entered the same career, but having left the forum, gave a signal proof of his genius by a well digested history of Roman affairs. Elegant in his life and manners, he formed a contrast to the rough character of Afer, to whom in point of genius he was every way equal, in probity and morals his superior.

XX. Nero entered on his fourth consulship, with Cornelius Cossus for his colleague. On the model of the Greek olympics, he instituted public games to be celebrated every fifth year, and, for that reason, called quinquennial. In this, as in all cases of innovation, the opinions of men were much at variance. By such as disliked the measure, it was observed, "that even "Pompey, by building a permanent theatre, gave "offence to the thinking men of that day. Before "that period, an occasional theatre, with scenery and "benches to serve the purpose, was deemed sufficient; "and, if the inquiry were carried back to ancient "times, it would be found that the spectators were "obliged to stand during the whole representation. "The reason was, that the people accommodated "with seats, might be tempted to waste whole days "in idle amusements. Public spectacles were, indeed, "of ancient origin, and, if still left to the direction of "the prætor, might be exhibited with good order and "propriety. But the new mode of pressing the citi-"zens of Rome into the service of the stage had "ruined all decorum. The manners had long since "degenerated, and now, to work their total subver-"sion, luxury was called in from every quarter of the "globe; foreign nations were ransacked for the incen-"tives of vice; and, whatever was in itself corrupt, or "capable of diffusing corruption, was to be found at "Rome. Exotic customs and a foreign taste infected

"the young men of the time; dissipation, gymnastic "arts, and infamous intrigues were the fashion, en- "couraged by the prince and the senate, and not only "encouraged, but established by their sanction, en- "forced by their authority.

"Under colour of promoting poetry and eloquence, "the patricians of Rome disgraced themselves on the "public stage. What further step remained? Nothing, "but to bare their bodies; to anoint their limbs; to "come forth naked in the lists; to wield the cæstus, "and, throwing aside their military weapons, fight "prizes for the entertainment of the rabble. Will the "sanctity of the augur's office, or the judicial charac- "ter of the Roman knights, edify by the manners "now in vogue? Will the former be held in higher "reverence, because he has been lately taught to "thrill with ecstacy at the soft airs of an effeminate "song? And will the judge decide with greater "ability, because he affects to have a taste, and to "pronounce on music? Vice goes on increasing; the "night is added to the day; and, in mixed assemblies, "the profligate libertine, under covert of the dark, "may safely gratify the base desires, which his ima- "gination formed in the course of the day."

XXI. Licentious pleasure had a number of advo- cates; all of them the apologists of vice disguised under specious names. By these men it was argued, "that the citizens of Rome, in the earliest period, "were addicted to public shows, and the expense "kept pace with the wealth of the times. Pantomime "players were brought from Tuscany, and horse-races "from Thurium. When Greece and Asia were re- "duced to subjection the public games were exhibited "with greater pomp; though it must be acknow- "ledged, that in two hundred years (the time that "elapsed from the triumph of Lucius Mummius, who "first introduced theatrical representations) not one "Roman citizen of rank or family was known to de- "grade himself by listing in a troop of comedians. "But it is also true, that, by erecting a permanent "theatre, a great annual expense was avoided. The "magistrate is now no longer obliged to ruin his pri-

"vate fortune for the diversion of the public. The "whole expenditure is transferred to the state, and, "without encumbering a single individual, the people "may enjoy the games of Greece. The contests between "poets and orators would raise a spirit of emulation, "and promote the cause of literature. Nor will the "judge be disgraced, if he lends an ear to the produc- "tions of genius, and shares the pleasures of a liberal "mind. In the quinquennial festival, lately instituted, "a few nights, every fifth year, would be dedicated, "not to criminal gratifications, but to social gaiety, in "a place fitted for a large assembly, and illuminated "with such a glare of light, that clandestine vice "would by consequence be excluded."

Such was the argument of the advocates for dissipation. It is but fair to acknowledge, that the celebration of the new festival was conducted without any offence against decency or good manners. Nor did the rage of the people for theatrical entertainments break out into any kind of excess. The pantomime performers, though restored to the theatre, were still excluded from such exhibitions as were held to be of a sacred nature. The prize of eloquence was not adjudged to any of the candidates; but it was thought a fit compliment to the emperor, to pronounce him conqueror. The Grecian garb, which was much in vogue during the festival, gave disgust, and from that time fell into disuse.

XXII. A comet having appeared in this juncture, that phenomenon, according to the popular opinion, announced that governments were to be changed, and kings dethroned. In the imaginations of men Nero was already deposed, and who should be his successor was the question. The name of Rubellius Plautus resounded in every quarter. By the maternal line this eminent citizen was of the Julian house. A strict observer of ancient manners, he maintained a rigid austerity of character. Recluse and virtuous in his family, he lived remote from danger, but his fame from the shade of obscurity shone forth with brighter lustre. The report of his elevation was confirmed by an accident, slight in itself, but by vulgar error re-

ceived as a sure prognostic. While Nero was at table at a villa called SUBLAQUEUM, on the borders of the Simbruine lakes, it happened that the victuals, which had been served up, received a stroke of lightning, and the banquet was overturned. The place was on the confines of Tivoli, where the ancestors of Plautus by his father's side derived their origin. The omen, for that reason, made a deeper impression, and the current opinion was, that Plautus was intended for imperial sway. The men whom bold, but often misguided, ambition leads to take an active part in revolutions of government, were all on his side. To suppress a rumour so important, and big with danger, Nero sent a letter to Plautus, advising him "to consult the public tranquillity, and withdraw himself "from the reach of calumny. He had patrimonial "lands in Asia, where he might pass his youth, remote from enemies, and undisturbed by faction." Plautus understood the hint, and with his wife, Antistia, and a few friends, embarked for Asia.

In a short time after, Nero, by his rage for new gratifications, put his life in danger, and drew on himself a load of obloquy. He chose to bathe at the fountain-head of the Marcian waters, which had been brought to Rome in an aqueduct of ancient structure. By this act of impurity he was thought to have polluted the sacred stream, and to have profaned the sanctity of the place. A fit of illness, which followed this frolic, left no doubt in the minds of the populace. The gods, they thought, pursued with vengeance the author of so vile a sacrilege.

XXIII. We left Corbulo employed in the demolition of Artaxata. That city being reduced to ashes, he judged it right, while the consternation of the people was still recent, to turn his arms against Tigranocerta. The destruction of that city would spread a general panic; or, if he suffered it to remain unhurt, the fame of his clemency would add new laurels to the conqueror. He began his march, and, that the barbarians might not be driven to despair, preserved every appearance of a pacific disposition, still maintaining discipline with the strictest rigour. He knew,

by experience, that he had to do with a people prone to change; cowards in the hour of danger, but, if occasion offered, prepared, by their natural genius, for a stroke of perfidy. At the sight of the Roman eagles the Armenians were variously affected. They submitted with humble supplications; they fled from their villages; they took shelter in their woods; and numbers, carrying off all that was dear to them, sought a retreat in their dens and caverns. To these different movements the Roman general adapted his measures; to the submissive he behaved with mercy; he ordered the fugitives to be pursued with vigour; but for such as lay hid in subterraneous places he felt no compassion. Having filled the entrances, and every vent of the caverns, with bushes and faggots, he set fire to the heap. The barbarians perished in the flames. His march lay on the frontier of the Mardians, a race of freebooters, who lived by depredation, secure on their hills and mountains from the assaults of the enemy. They poured down from their fastnesses, and insulted the Roman army. Corbulo sent a detachment of the Iberians to lay waste their country, and thus at the expense of foreign auxiliaries, without spilling a drop of Roman blood, he punished the insolence of the enemy.

XXIV. Corbulo had suffered no loss in the field of battle; but his men exhausted by continual toil, and forced, for want of grain and vegetables, to subsist altogether on animal food, began to sink under their fatigue. The heat of the summer was intense; no water to allay their thirst; long and laborious marches still remained; and nothing to animate the drooping spirits of the army but the example of their general, who endured more than even the common soldiers. They reached, at length, a well cultivated country, and carried off a plentiful crop. The Armenians fled for shelter to two strong castles. One of them was taken by storm; the other, after resisting the first assault, was, by a close blockade, obliged to surrender. The army marched into the territories of the Tauranitians. In that country Corbulo narrowly escaped a snare laid for his life. A barbarian, of high

distinction among the people, was found lurking with a concealed dagger near the general's tent. He was instantly seized, and, being put to the rack, not only confessed himself the author of the plot, but discovered his accomplices. The villains, who, under a mask of friendship, meditated a foul assassination, were, on examination, found guilty of the treachery, and put to death. Ambassadors arrived soon after from Tigranocerta, with intelligence, that their gates stood open to receive the Roman army, and the inhabitants were ready to submit at discretion. As an earnest of hopitality and friendship they presented a golden crown. Corbulo received it with all marks of honour. To conciliate the affections of the people, he did no damage to their city, and left the natives in full possession of their effects.

XXV. The royal citadel, which was considered as the strong hold of the Armenian kings, did not immediately surrender. A band of stout and resolute young men threw themselves into the place, determined to hold out to the last. They had the spirit to sally out, but, after a battle under the walls, were driven back within their lines, and, the Romans entering sword in hand, the garrison laid down their arms. This tide of success, however rapid, was in a great measure forwarded by the war, that kept the Parthians engaged in Hyrcania. From the last mentioned country ambassadors had been sent to Rome, soliciting the alliance of the emperor, and, as an inducement, urging, that in consequence of their rupture with Vologeses, they had made a powerful diversion in favour of the Roman army: the deputies, on their way back to their own country, had an interview with Corbulo. The general received them with marks of friendship, and fearing, if they passed over the Euphrates, that they might fall in with detached parties of the Parthian army, he ordered them to be escorted, under a military guard, as far as the margin of the Red-sea. From that place, their road was at a distance from the Parthian frontier.

XXVI. Meanwhile Tiridates, after a march through the territory of the Medians, was hovering on the

extremities of Armenia, intending from that quarter to invade the country. To counteract his motions, Corbulo despatched Verulanus with the auxiliary forces and, to support him, made a forced march at the head of the legions. Tiridates retired with precipitation, and, in despair, abandoned the war. The Roman general proceeded with severity against all who were known to be disaffected: he carried fire and sword through their country, and took upon himself the government of Armenia. The whole kingdom was reduced to subjection, when Tigranes arrived from Rome, by the appointment of Nero, to assume the regal diadem.

The new monarch was by birth a Cappadocian, of high nobility in that country, and grandson to king Archilaus; but the length of time which he had passed at Rome in the condition of a hostage broke the vigour of his mind, and sunk him to the meanest servility. He was not received with the consent of the nation. A strong party still retained their old affection for the line of the Arsacides; but an inveterate antipathy to the Parthians, on account of their pride and arrogance, inclined the majority to accept a king from Rome. Corbulo placed Tigranes on the throne, and assigned him a body-guard, consisting of a thousand legionary soldiers, three cohorts from the allied forces, and two squadrons of horse. That his new kingdom might not prove unwieldy, parts of the country, as they happened to lie contiguous to the neighbouring princes, were parcelled out to Pharasmanes, to Polemon, Aristobulus, and Antiochus. Having made these arrangements, Corbulo marched back into Syria, to take upon him the administration of that province, vacant by the death of Ummidius Quadratus, the late governor.

XXVII. In the course of the same year, Laodicea, a celebrated city in Asia, was destroyed by an earthquake, and though Rome in so great a calamity contributed no kind of aid, it was soon rebuilt, and, by the internal resources of the inhabitants, recovered its former splendour. In Italy, the ancient city of Puteoli received new privileges, with the title of the

Neronian colony. The veteran soldiers, entitled to their discharge from the service, were incorporated with the citizens of Tarentum and Antium; but the measure did not increase population in those deserted places. The soldiers rambled back to the provinces, where they had formerly served, and by the habits of a military life, being little inclined to conjugal cares and the education of children, the greatest part mouldered away without issue. The old system of colonization was at this time greatly altered. Entire legions were not, as had been the practice, settled together, with their tribunes, their centurions, and soldiers, in one regular body, forming a society of men known to each other, and by sentiments of mutual affection inclined to act with a spirit of union. A colony, at the time we speak of, was no more than a motley mixture, drawn together from different armies, without a chief at their head, without a principle to unite them, and, in fact, no better than a mere conflux of people from distant parts of the globe; a wild heterogeneous multitude, but not a colony.

XXVIII. The election of prætors had been hitherto subject to the discretion of the senate; but the spirit of competition breaking out with unusual violence, Nero interposed his authority. He found three candidates more than usual. By giving to each the command of a legion, he allayed the ferment. He also made a considerable addition to the dignity of the senate by an ordinance, requiring that, in all appeals from an inferior judicature to that assembly, a sum equal to what was customary in like cases before the emperor, should be deposited by the appellant, to wait the final determination. Before this rule was established, an appeal to the fathers was open to all, without being subject to costs, or any kind of penalty. Towards the end of the year, Vibius Secundus, a Roman knight, was accused by the Moors of rapine and extortion, and, being found guilty of the charge, was banished out of Italy. For so mild a sentence he was indebted to the weight and influence of his brother, Vibius Crispus.

XXIX. During the consulship of Cæsonius Pætus

and Petronius Turpilianus, a dreadful calamity befel the army in Britain. Aulus Didius, as has been mentioned, aimed at no extension of territory, content with maintaining the conquest already made. Veranius, who succeeded him, did little more: he made a few incursions into the country of the Silures, and was hindered by death from prosecuting the war with vigour. He had been respected, during his life, for the severity of his manners; in his end, the mask fell off, and his last will discovered the low ambition of a servile flatterer, who, in those moments, could offer incense to Nero, and add, with vain ostentation, that, if he lived two years, it was his design to make the whole island obedient to the authority of the prince. Paulinus Suetonius succeeded to the command; an officer of distinguished merit. To be compared with Corbulo was his ambition. His military talents gave him pretensions, and the voice of the people, who never leave exalted merit without a rival, raised him to the highest eminence. By subduing the mutinous spirit of the Britons, he hoped to equal the brilliant success of Corbulo in Armenia. With this view, he resolved to subdue the isle of Mona; a place, inhabited by a warlike people, and a common refuge for all the discontented Britons. In order to facilitate his approach to a difficult and deceitful shore, he ordered a number of flat-bottom boats to be constructed. In these he wafted over the infantry, while the cavalry, partly by fording over the shallows, and partly by swimming their horses, advanced to gain a footing on the island.

XXX. On the opposite shore stood the Britons, close embodied, and prepared for action. Women were seen rushing through the ranks in wild disorder; their apparel funereal; their hair loose to the wind; in their hands flaming torches, and their whole appearance resembling the frantic rage of the furies. The Druids were ranged in order, with hands uplifted, invoking the gods, and pouring forth horrible imprecations. The novelty of the sight struck the Romans with awe and terror. They stood in stupid amazement, as if their limbs were benumbed, riveted

to one spot, a mark for the enemy. The exhortations of the general diffused new vigour through the ranks, and the men, by mutual reproaches, inflamed each other to deeds of valour. They felt the disgrace of yielding to a troop of women, and a band of fanatic priests; they advanced their standards, and rushed on to the attack with impetuous fury. The Britons perished in the flames, which they themselves had kindled. The island fell, and a garrison was established to retain it in subjection. The religious groves, dedicated to superstition and barbarous rites, were levelled to the ground. In those recesses, the natives imbrued their altars with the blood of their prisoners, and in the entrails of men explored the will of the gods. While Suetonius was employed in making his arrangements to secure the island, he received intelligence that Britain had revolted, and that the whole province was up in arms.

XXXI. Prasutagus, the late king of the Icenians, in the course of a long reign had amassed considerable wealth. By his will he left the whole to his two daughters and the emperor in equal shares, conceiving, by that stroke of policy, that he should provide at once for the tranquillity of his kingdom and his family. The event was otherwise. His dominions were ravaged by the centurions; the slaves pillaged his house, and his effects were seized as lawful plunder. His wife, Boadicea, was disgraced with cruel stripes; her daughters were ravished, and the most illustrious of the Icenians were, by force, deprived of the possessions which had been transmitted to them by their ancestors. The whole country was considered as a legacy bequeathed to the plunderers. The relations of the deceased king were reduced to slavery. Exasperated by these acts of violence, and dreading worse calamities, the Icenians had recourse to arms. The Trinobantians joined in the revolt. The neighbouring states, not as yet taught to crouch in bondage, pledged themselves, in secret councils, to stand forth in the cause of liberty. What chiefly fired their indignation was the conduct of the veterans, lately planted as a colony at Camalodunum.

These men treated the Britons with cruelty and oppression; they drove the natives from their habitations, and calling them by the opprobrious names of slaves and captives, added insult to their tyranny. In these acts of oppression, the veterans were supported by the common soldiers; a set of men, by their habits of life, trained to licentiousness, and, in their turn, expecting to reap the same advantages. The temple built in honour of Claudius was another cause of discontent. In the eye of the Britons it seemed the citadel of eternal slavery. The priests, appointed to officiate at the altars, with a pretended zeal for religion, devoured the whole substance of the country. To over-run a colony, which lay quite naked and exposed, without a single fortification to defend it, did not appear to the incensed and angry Britons an enterprise that threatened either danger or difficulty. The fact was, the Roman generals attended to improvements of taste and elegance, but neglected the useful. They embellished the province, and took no care to defend it.

XXXII. While the Britons were preparing to throw off the yoke, the statue of Victory, erected at Camalodunum, fell from its base, without any apparent cause, and lay extended on the ground with its face averted, as if the goddess yielded to the enemies of Rome. Women in restless ecstacy rushed among the people, and with frantic screams denounced impending ruin. In the council-chamber of the Romans hideous clamours were heard in a foreign accent; savage howlings filled the theatre, and near the mouth of the Thames the image of a colony in ruins was seen in the transparent water; the sea was purpled with blood; and, at the tide of ebb, the figures of human bodies were traced on the sand. By these appearances the Romans were sunk in despair, while the Britons anticipated a glorious victory. Suetonius, in the mean time, was detained in the isle of Mona. In this alarming crisis, the veterans sent to Catus Decianus, the procurator of the province, for a reinforcement. Two hundred men, and those not completely armed, were all that officer could spare. The

colony had but a handful of soldiers. Their temple was strongly fortified, and there they hoped to make a stand. But even for the defence of that place no measures were concerted. Secret enemies mixed in all their deliberations. No fosse was made; no palisade thrown up; nor were the women, and such as were disabled by age or infirmity, sent out of the garrison. Unguarded and unprepared, they were taken by surprise, and, in the moment of profound peace, overpowered by the barbarians in one general assault. The colony was laid waste with fire and sword.

The temple held out, but, after a siege of two days, was taken by storm. Petilius Cerealis, who commanded the ninth legion, marched to the relief of the place. The Britons, flushed with success, advanced to give him battle. The legion was put to the rout, and the infantry cut to pieces. Cerealis escaped with the cavalry to his entrenchments. Catus Decianus, the procurator of the province, alarmed at the scene of carnage which he beheld on every side, and further dreading the indignation of a people, whom by rapine and oppression he had driven to despair, betook himself to flight, and crossed over into Gaul.

XXXIII. Suetonius, undismayed by this disaster, marched through the heart of the country as far as London; a place not dignified with the name of a colony, but the chief residence of merchants, and the great mart of trade and commerce. At that place he meant to fix the seat of war; but reflecting on the scanty numbers of his little army, and the fatal rashness of Cerealis, he resolved to quit that station, and, by giving up one post, secure the rest of the province. Neither supplications, nor the tears of the inhabitants could induce him to change his plan. The signal for the march was given. All who chose to follow his banners were taken under his protection. Of all who, on account of their advanced age, the weakness of their sex, or the attractions of the situation, thought proper to remain behind, not one escaped the rage of the barbarians. The inhabitants of Verulamium, a municipal town, were in like manner put to the sword. The genius of a savage people

leads them always in quest of plunder; and, accordingly, the Britons left behind them all places of strength. Wherever they expected feeble resistance, and considerable booty, there they were sure to attack with the fiercest rage. Military skill was not the talent of barbarians. The number massacred in the places which have been mentioned, amounted to no less than seventy thousand, all citizens or allies of Rome. To make prisoners, and reserve them for slavery, or to exchange them, was not in the idea of a people, who despised all the laws of war. The halter and the gibbet, slaughter and desolation, fire and sword, were the marks of savage valour. Aware that vengeance would overtake them, they were resolved to make sure of their revenge, and glut themselves with the blood of their enemies.

XXXIV. The fourteenth legion, with the veterans of the twentieth and the auxiliaries from the adjacent stations, having joined Suetonius, his army amounted to little less than ten thousand men. Thus reinforced, he resolved, without loss of time, to bring on a decisive action. For this purpose he chose a spot encircled with woods, narrow at the entrance, and sheltered in the rear by a thick forest. In that situation he had no fear of an ambuscade. The enemy, he knew, had no approach but in front. An open plain lay before him. He drew up his men in the following order: the legions in close array formed the centre; the light armed troops were stationed at hand to serve as occasion might require: the cavalry took post in the wings. The Britons brought into the field an incredible multitude. They formed no regular line of battle. Detached parties and loose battalions displayed their numbers, in frantic transport bounding with exultation, and so sure of victory, that they placed their wives in wagons at the extremity of the plain, where they might survey the scene of action, and behold the wonders of British valour.

XXXV. Boadicea, in a warlike car, with her two daughters before her, drove through the ranks. She harangued the different nations in their turn: "This," she said, "is not the first time that the Britons have

"been led to battle by a woman. But now she did "not come to boast the pride of a long line of ancestry, "nor even to recover her kingdom and the plundered "wealth of her family. She took the field, like the "meanest among them, to assert the cause of pub- "lic liberty, and to seek revenge for her body seamed "with ignominious stripes, and her two daughters "infamously ravished. From the pride and arro- "gance of the Romans nothing is sacred; all are sub- "ject to violation; the old endure the scourge, and "the virgins are deflowered. But the vindictive gods "are now at hand. A Roman legion, dared to face "the warlike Britons: with their lives they paid for "their rashness; those who survived the carnage of "that day, lie poorly hid behind their entrenchments, "meditating nothing but how to save themselves by "an ignominious flight. From the din of preparation, "and the shouts of the British army, the Romans, "even now, shrink back with terror. What will be "their case when the assault begins? Look round, "and view your numbers. Behold the proud display "warlike spirits, and consider the motives for which "we draw the avenging sword. On this spot we "must either conquer, or die with glory. There is "no alternative. Though a woman, my resolution "is fixed: the men, if they please, may survive with "infamy, and live in bondage."

XXXVI. Suetonius, in a moment of such impor- tance, did not remain silent. He expected every thing from the valour of his men, and yet urged every topic that could inspire and animate them to the attack. "Despise," he said, "the savage uproar, "the yells, and shouts of undisciplined barbarians. In "that mixed multitude, the women out-number the "men. Void of spirit, unprovided with arms, they "are not soldiers who come to offer battle; they are "dastards, runaways, the refuse of your swords, who "have often fled before you, and will again betake "themselves to flight when they see the conqueror "flaming in the ranks of war. In all engagements it "is the valour of a few that turns the fortune of the "day. It will be your immortal glory, that with a

"scanty number you can equal the exploits of a great "and powerful army. Keep your ranks; discharge "your javelins; rush forward to a close attack; bear "down all with your bucklers, and hew a passage "with your swords. Pursue the vanquished, and "never think of spoil and plunder. Conquer, and "victory gives you every thing." The speech was received with warlike acclamations. The soldiers burned with impatience for the onset, the veterans brandished their javelins, and the ranks displayed such an intrepid countenance, that Suetonius, anticipating the victory, gave the signal for the charge.

XXXVII. The engagement began. The Roman legion presented a close embodied line. The narrow defile gave them the shelter of a rampart. The Britons advanced with ferocity, and discharged their darts at random. In that instant, the Romans rushed forward in the form of a wedge. The auxiliaries followed with equal ardour. The cavalry, at the same time, bore down upon the enemy, and, with their pikes, overpowered all who dared to make a stand. The Britons betook themselves to flight, but their wagons in the rear obstructed their passage. A dreadful slaughter followed. Neither sex nor age was spared. The cattle, falling in one promiscuous carnage, added to the heaps of slain. The glory of the day was equal to the most splendid victory of ancient times. According to some writers, not less than eighty thousand Britons were put to the sword. The Romans lost about four hundred men, and the wounded did not exceed that number. Boadicea, by a dose of poison, put a period to her life. Pænius Posthumus, præfect in the camp of the second legion, as soon as he heard of the brave exploits of the fourteenth and twentieth legions, felt the disgrace of having, in disobedience to the orders of his general, robbed the soldiers under his command of their share in so complete a victory. Stung with remorse, he fell upon his sword and expired on the spot.

XXXVIII. Suetonius called in all his forces, and having ordered them to pitch their tents, kept the field in readiness for new emergencies, intending not to

close the campaign till he put an end to the war. By directions from the emperor a reinforcement of two thousand legionary soldiers, eight auxiliary cohorts, and a thousand horse arrived from Germany. By this accession of strength the ninth legion was completed. The cohorts and cavalry were sent into new quarters, and the country round, wherever the people had declared open hostility, or were suspected of treachery, was laid waste with fire and sword. Famine was the evil that chiefly distressed the enemy: employed in warlike preparations, they had neglected the cultivation of their lands, depending altogether on the success of their arms, and the booty which they hoped to seize from the Romans. Fierce and determined in the cause of liberty, they were rendered still more obstinate by the misunderstanding that subsisted between the Roman generals. Julius Classicianus had succeeded to the post vacant by the sudden flight of Catus Decianus. Being at variance with Suetonius, he did not scruple to sacrifice the public good to private animosity. He spread a report, that another commander in chief might be soon expected, and in him the Britons would find a man, who would bring with him neither ill will to the natives, nor the pride of victory. The vanquished would, by consequence, meet with moderation and humanity. Classicianus did not stop here: in his despatches to Rome, he pressed the necessity of recalling Suetonius. The war would, otherwise, never be brought to a conclusion by an officer who owed all his disasters to his own want of conduct, and his success to the good fortune of the empire.

XXXIX. In consequence of these complaints, Polycletus, one of the emperor's freedmen, was sent from Rome to inquire into the state of Britain. The weight and authority of such a messenger, Nero flattered himself, would produce a reconciliation between the hostile generals, and dispose the Britons to a more pacific temper. Polycletus set out with a large retinue, and on his journey through Italy and Gaul, made his grandeur a burthen to the people. On his arrival in Britain he overawed the Roman soldiers; but his

magnificent airs and assumed importance met with nothing from the Britons but contempt and derision. Notwithstanding the misfortunes of the natives, the flame of liberty was not extinguished. The exorbitant power of a manumitted slave was a novelty which those ferocious islanders could not digest. They saw an army that fought with valour, and a general who led them on to victory; but both were obliged to wait the nod of a wretched bondsman. In the report made by this man the state of affairs was such as gave no jealousy to Nero. Suetonius, therefore, was continued in his government. It happened, in a short time afterwards, that a few ships were wrecked on the coast, and all on board perished in the waves. This was considered as a calamity of war, and, on that account Suetonius was recalled. Petronius Turpilianus, whose consulship had just then expired, succeeded to the command. Under him a languid state of tranquillity followed. The general saw the passive disposition of the Britons, and not to provoke hostilities was the rule of his conduct. He remained inactive, content to decorate his want of enterprise with the name of peace.

XL. This year was remarkable for two atrocious crimes; one the act of a senator, and the other perpetrated by the daring spirit of a slave. Domitius Balbus, of prætorian rank, was at that time, far advanced in years. His wealth and his want of issue, made him obnoxious to the arts of ill designing men. His relation, Valerius Fabianus, a man high in rank, and likely to obtain the first honours of the state, forged his will. To give colour to the fraud, he drew into his plot Vincius Rufinus and Terentius Lentinus, two Roman knights, who chose to act in concert with Antonius Primus and Asinius Marcellus. Antonius was a prompt and daring spirit, ready for any mischief. Marcellus was grandson to the renowned Asinius Pollio: his character was, till that time, without a stain; but his favourite maxim was, that poverty is the worst of evils. In the presence of those conspirators, and other witnesses of inferior note, Fabianus sealed the will. The fraud being brought to light

before the senate, the author of it, with three of his accomplices, namely, Antonius, Rufinus, and Terentius, were condemned to suffer the penalties of the Cornelian law. Marcellus found in the favour of the prince, and the dignity of his ancestors, a powerful protection. He was saved from punishment, not from infamy.

XLI. The same day was fatal to two others of rank and distinction. Pompeius Ælianus, a young man who had already passed with honour through the office of quæstor, was charged as an accessary in the guilt of Fabianus. He was banished, not only from Italy, but from Spain, the place of his birth. Valerius Ponticus met with equal severity. The crime alleged against him was, that, with a design to elude the jurisdiction of the præfect of Rome, he had accused several delinquents before the prætor; intending, in the first instance, under colour of a legal process, and afterwards, by abandoning the prosecution, to defeat the ends of justice. The fathers added a clause to their decree, whereby all persons concerned either in procuring or conducting for hire a collusive action, were to be treated as public prevaricators, and to suffer the pains and penalties inflicted by the law on such as stood convicted of a false and calumnious accusation.

XLII. The second daring crime that marked the year, as mentioned above, was the act of a slave. This man murdered his master, Pedanius Secundus, at that time præfect of the city. His motive for this desperate act was either because his liberty, after a bargain made, was still withheld, or being enamoured of a foreign pathic, he could not endure his master as his rival. Every slave in the family where the murder was committed, was by ancient usage subject to capital punishment; but the populace, touched with compassion for so many innocent men, opposed the execution with rage and tumult little short of a seditious insurrection. In the senate many of the fathers embraced the popular side, but the majority declared for the rigour of the law without innovation. In the

debate on this occasion, Caius Cassius spoke to the following effect:

XLIII. "I have been often present, conscript fathers, when motions have been made in this assembly for new decrees, repugnant of the laws in being and utterly subversive of all ancient establishments. "To those measures I made no opposition, though "well convinced, that the regulations made by our "ancestors were the best, the wisest, the most conducive to the public good. To change that system is "to change for the worse. This has ever been my "settled opinion; but I forbore to take a part in your "debates, that I might not be thought bigoted either "to antiquity, or to my own way of thinking. I had "another reason for my conduct. The weight and "influence which I flattered myself I had acquired "in this assembly, might, by frequently troubling you, "lose its effect. I determined, therefore, to reserve "myself for some important conjuncture, when my "feeble voice might be of use. That conjuncture "occurs this very day. A man of consular rank, "without a friend to assist him, without any one person to oppose the ruffian's blow, no notice given, "no discovery made, has been in his own house barbarously murdered. The law which dooms every "slave under the roof to execution, is still in force. "Repeal that law, and, if you will, let this horrible "deed pass with impunity; but when you have done "it, which of us can think himself safe? Who can "depend on his rank or dignity, when the first magistrate of your city dies under the assassin's stroke. "Who can hope to live in security amongst his slaves, "when so large a number as four hundred could not "defend Pedanius Secundus? Will our domestics "assist us in the hour of need, when we see, in the "instance before us, that neither their own danger "nor the terrors of the law could induce them to protect their master? Will it be said that the murderer "struck his blow to revenge a personal injury? "What was the injury? The paternal estate of a "ruffian, perhaps, was in danger; or the foreign pathic, whom they were going to ravish from him,

"descended to him from his ancestors. If that be so, "the deed was lawful, and by consequence, we, con- "script fathers, ought to pronounce it justifiable "homicide.

XLIV. "But let me ask you; are we, at this time "of day, to support by argument, what has been long "settled by the wisdom of ages? Suppose the point "in dispute were a new question, to be now decided "for the first time: can we imagine that a ruffian, "who had formed a black design to murder his mas- "ter, kept the whole closely locked up in his breast, "that, in the agitations of a guilty mind, nothing "escaped from him? Not a menace, not so much "as a rash word to give the alarm? Nothing, we are "told, of this sort happened; we are to believe that "the assassin brooded over his horrible purpose in "sullen silence; that he prepared his dagger unseen "by every eye, and that his fellow-slaves knew no- "thing of it. Be it so; did he pass unseen through "the train of attendants that guarded the bed-cham- "ber? Did he open the door unperceived by all? "Did he enter with a light, and strike the mortal "blow, without the knowledge of any person whatever?

"Between the first design, and the final execution "of evil deeds, symptoms of guilt are often seen. If "our slaves are faithful, if they give timely intelli- "gence, we may live secure in our houses; or if we "must fall by the murderer's dagger, it is a satisfac- "tion to know, that justice will overtake the guilty. "The mind and temper of the slave, though born on "the master's estate, or even in his house, imbibing "with his first milk affection and gratitude to the "family, were always suspected by our ancestors. "At present, we have in our service whole nations of "slaves; the scum of mankind, collected from all "quarters of the globe; a race of men, who bring "with them foreign rites, and the religion of their "country, or, probably, no religion at all. In such "a conflux, if the laws are silent, what protection re- "mains for the master? But, it is said, the innocent "may suffer with the guilty. To this I answer, when "an army, seized with a general panic, turns its

"back on the enemy, and, to restore military disci-
"pline, the men are drawn out and decimated; what
"distinction is then made between the gallant soldier
"and the coward, who fled from his post? In politi-
"cal justice there is often something not strictly right:
"but partial evil is counterbalanced by the good of
"the whole."

XLV. To this reasoning no reply was made, and yet a murmur of disapprobation ran through the assembly. The number doomed to suffer, their age, their sex, and the undoubted innocence of the greatest part, awakened sentiments of compassion; but the majority was for letting the law take its course. Their opinion prevailed. The popular cry was still for mercy. The rabble rose in a tumultuous body, and with stones and firebrands stopped the execution. To quell their fury, Nero issued a proclamation, and by his orders the streets were lined with soldiers under arms. The unhappy victims suffered death. Cingonius Varro moved, that even the freedmen, who were actually in the house at the time of the murder, should, by a decree of the senate, be banished out of Italy. To this Nero answered, that since mercy was not allowed to mitigate the system of ancient laws, to increase their rigour by new pains and penalties, would be an act of cruelty.

XLVI. During the same consulship, Tarquitius Priscus, at the suit of the people of Bithynia, was convicted of extortion, and condemned to make restitution. The senate remembered the violence of this man in the prosecution against Statilius Taurus, his own proconsul in Africa, and now retaliated with a vindictive spirit. The people in both the Gauls were reviewed and rated by Quintus Volusius, Sextius Africanus, and Trebellius Maximus. The two former, elate with family pride, passed their time in mutual jealousy, thwarting each other, and struggling for pre-eminence. They looked down with contempt on Trebellius; but their petty animosities served only to degrade themselves, and give to their colleague a decided superiority.

XLVII. In the course of this year died Memmius

Regulus, distinguished by his virtues, and his unblemished character. Admired for his constancy and unshaken firmness, he rose to as high a pitch of credit and authority, as can be attained under a government where the grandeur of the prince throws a shade over the merit of every private citizen. As a proof of this, we have the following anecdote. Nero being confined with a fit of illness, the tribe of sycophants, fluttering about his person, poured forth the anguish of their hearts, and, "if any thing happened to the "emperor, the day," they said, "that put a period to "his life, would be the last of the empire." "No," replied the prince, "a pillar of the state will still re-"main." The courtiers stood at gaze, wondering who that person could be; Nero told them, "Memmius "Regulus is the man." Strange as it may seem, Regulus survived that opinion of his virtue. In his love of retirement he found a retreat from danger. A man, whose family had lately risen to honours, gave no alarm; and his fortune raised no envy. It was in the same year that Nero dedicated a gymnasium, or public school for athletic exercises, and, with the obliging facility of Greek manners, gave orders that the senators and Roman knights, without any expense on their part, should be provided with oil, to prepare their limbs for that elegant exhibition.

XLVIII. During the consulship of Publius Marius and Lucius Asinius, a prosecution was set on foot against Antistius, then invested with the office of prætor. The conduct of this man, when tribune of the people, has been already mentioned. The charge against him was, that being the author of sarcastic verses against the emperor, he produced his poem to a large company at the table of Ostorius Scapula. For this libel he was arraigned on the law of majesty. The cause was conducted by Cossutianus Capito, who had been lately raised, by the interest of Tigellinus, his father-in-law, to the senatorian order. The law of majesty had fallen into disuse, and was now revived, for the first time in the reign of Nero, not, as was imagined, to make Antistius feel its severity, but, in fact, to give the emperor an opportunity, after

judgment of death was passed, to interpose his tribunitian authority, and, by preventing the execution, add new lustre to his name. Ostorius Scapula was called as a witness. He remembered nothing of the verses in question. The evidence of others was believed; and, thereupon, Junius Marcellus, consul elect, moved, that the criminal, divested in the first instance of his prætorship, should suffer death according to the laws in force, and the practice under former emperors. The rest of the senate concurring in the same opinion, Pætus Thrasea rose to oppose the motion. He began with honourable mention of the prince, nor did he take upon him to defend the conduct of Antistius. On the contrary, he blamed the licentious spirit of the man in terms of severity; but under a virtuous emperor, and, in a senate left to act with independence, the question, he said, was not the magnitude of the crime, nor what punishment the rigour of the law would warrant. The executioner, the gibbet, and the halter were, for some time, unknown at Rome. Other pains and penalties were provided by law, and those might be inflicted, without branding the judges with cruelty, and the age with infamy. Antistius may be condemned to banishment; his effects may be confiscated. Let him pass the remainder of his days in one of the islands. His life, in that situation, will be protracted misery. He will there continue to languish in exile, a burthen to himself, yet a living monument of the equity and moderation of the times.

XLIX. The firmness with which Thrasea delivered his sentiments inspired the senate with the same ardour. The consul put the question, and the fathers divided. The majority voted with Thrasea. The dissentients were but a small number. Amongst them was Aulus Vitellius, of all the flattering crew, the most corrupt and servile; fluent in invective; eager to attack the most eminent characters, and ever sure, with the confusion of a little mind, to shrink from the reply. He heard his adversary with silent patience. The consuls, however, did not presume to close the business by a decree in form: they chose to make their report to the emperor, and wait his pleasure. Nero,

for some time, balanced between shame and resentment. At length his answer was, "That Antistius, "without provocation, or any cause of complaint, had "distilled the venom of his pen on the name and cha- "racter of his sovereign. The matter had been refer- "red to the senate, and justice required a punishment "adequate to the crime. Nevertheless, as it had been "from the first his resolution to mitigate a rigorous "sentence, he would not now control the moderation "of the fathers. They might determine, as to their "wisdom should seem meet. They were even at "liberty to acquit the criminal altogether." From this answer it was evident, that the conduct of the senate had given offence at court. The consuls, however, were not inclined to alter their report. Thrasea maintained his former opinion, and all who had voted with him followed his example. Some were unwilling, by a change of sentiment, to expose the prince to the popular odium; others thought themselves safe in a large majority; and Thrasea, with his usual elevation of mind, would not recede from the dignity of his character.

L. On a charge of the same complexion as the former, Fabricus Veiento was involved in similar danger. In certain writings, which he called the LAST WILLS of persons deceased, he had inserted strokes of satire reflecting on several members of the senate, and others of the sacerdotal order. Talius Geminus was the prosecutor. He added another allegation, charging, that the criminal abused his credit at court, and disposed of the favours of the prince, and the honours of the state, by bargain and sale, for his own private emolument. This last article roused the resentment of Nero; he removed the cause to his own tribunal. Veiento was banished out of Italy. His books were condemned to the flames, but eagerly sought, and universally read. Men perused with avidity what was procured with danger. When no longer prohibited, the work sunk into oblivion.

LI. Meanwhile, the public grievances went on with increasing violence, and the means of redress diminished every day. Burrhus died at this time, whe-

ther in the course of nature, or by poison, cannot now be known. The general opinion ascribed his death to a fit of illness. He was seized with a disorder in the throat, and the inflammation in the glands swelling to a prodigious size, suffocation followed. There was, however, a current report, that, under a pretence of administering a proper gargle, poison was mixed in the medicine, by order of Nero, and that Burrhus, having discovered the villany, as soon as he perceived the prince entering his room, turned from him with aversion, and to all inquiries shortly answered, "I am "well at present." He died universally lamented. His virtues were long remembered and long regretted. Nor was the public grief alleviated by the two persons, who succeeded to his employments, namely, Fenius Rufus and Sofonius Tigellinus, the former a man of undoubted innocence, but the innocence that proceeds from want of spirit. Tigellinus stood distinguished by a life of debauchery, and the infamy of his character. Rufus owed his advancement to the voice of the people, who were pleased with his upright management of the public stores. Tigellinus was a favourite of the emperor. The early vices of the man recommended him to notice. The command of the prætorian guards, which had been entrusted to Burrhus only, was granted to those two by a joint commission. The impression, which they had given of their characters, was confirmed by their conduct in office. Tigellinus gained an absolute ascendant over the mind of a debauched and profligate emperor. In all scenes of revelry he was a constant companion. Rufus obtained the good will of the soldiers and the people, but his merit ruined him with the prince.

LII. By the death of Burrhus, Seneca lost the chief support of his power. The friend of upright measures was snatched away, and virtue could no longer make head against the corruption of a court, governed altogether by the wild and profligate. By that set of men Seneca was undermined. They blackened his character, and loaded him with various imputations. "His wealth was exorbitant, above the condition of a "private citizen; and yet his unappeasable avarice

"went on without intermission, every day grasping at "more. His rage for popularity was no less violent. "He courted the affections of the people, and by the "grandeur of his villas, and the beauty of his gardens, "hoped to vie with imperial splendour. In matters "of taste and genius he allows no rival. He claims "the whole province of eloquence as his own; and "since Nero showed his taste for poetry, from that "moment Seneca began to court the muse, and he "too has his copy of verses.

"To the other diversions of the prince he is an "avowed, an open enemy. The skill of the charioteer "provokes his raillery; he sneers at the management "of horses; and the melody of the prince's voice is "a subject for his wit and ridicule. In all this what "is his drift? Why, truly, that, in the whole extent "of the empire, there should be nothing worthy of "praise but what flows from his superior talents. But "Nero is no longer the pupil of this subtle philoso- "pher; he has attained the prime season of manhood, "and may now discard his tutor. He has before his "eyes the brightest model for his conduct, the exam- "ple of his own illustrious ancestors."

LIII. These insidious arts were not unknown to Seneca. There were still at court a few in the interests of virtue, and from such men he received intelligence of all that passed. Finding that the prince had withdrawn his friendship, and no longer admitted him to his conversation, he demanded an audience, and spoke to the following effect: "It is now, Cæsar, "the fourteenth year since I was placed near your "person; of your reign it is the eighth. In that space "of time you have lavished upon me both wealth and "honours, with so liberal a hand, that to complete "my happiness nothing now is necessary but modera- "tion and contentment. In the humble request, "which I presume to make, I shall take the liberty to "cite a few examples, far, indeed, above my condi- "tion, but worthy of you. Augustus, your illustrious "ancestor, permitted Marcus Agrippa to retire to "Mitylene; he allowed Mæcenas to live almost a "stranger in Rome, and in the heart of the city to

"dwell as it were in solitude. The former of those "illustrious men had been the companion of his wars; "the latter supported the weight of his administration: "both, it is true, received ample rewards, but rewards "fairly earned by great and eminent services. For "myself, if you except some attainments in literature, "the fruit of studies pursued in the shade of retire- "ment, what merit can I assume? My feeble talents "are supposed to have seasoned your mind with the "first tincture of letters, and that honour is beyond "all recompense.

"But your liberality knows no bounds. You have "loaded me with favours, and with riches. When I "reflect on your generosity, I say to myself, Shall a "man of my level, without family pretensions, the "son of a simple knight, born in a distant province, "presume to rank with the grandees of Rome? My "name, the name of a new man, figures among those "who boast a long and splendid line of ancestors. "Where is now the mind, which long since knew, that "to be content with little is true happiness? The "philosopher is employed in laying out gardens, and "improving pleasure grounds. He delights in the "extent of ample villas, he enjoys a large rent-roll, "and has sums of money laid out at interest. I have "but one apology; your munificence was a command, "and it was not for me to resist.

LIV. "But the measure of generosity on your part, "and submission on mine, is now complete. What a "prince could give, you have bestowed; what a friend "could take, I have received. More will only serve "to irritate envy, and inflame the malice of my ene- "mies. You indeed tower above the passions of ill "designing men; I am open to their attacks; I stand "in need of protection. In a campaign, or on a march, "if I found myself fatigued and worn out with toil, I "should not hesitate to sue for some indulgence. "Life is a state of warfare; it is a long campaign, in "which a man in years, sinking under a load of cares, "and even by his riches made obnoxious, may crave "leave to retire. I am willing to resign my wealth: "let the auditors of the imperial revenue take the

"account, and let the whole return to its fountain-
"head. By this act of self-denial I shall not be re-
"duced to poverty; I shall part with that superfluity
"which glitters in the eyes of my enemies; and for
"the rest, the time, which is spent in the improving
"of gardens, and the embellishing of villas, I shall
"transfer to myself, and for the future lay it out in
"the cultivation of my mind. You are in the vigour
"of your days; a long train of years lies before you.
"In full possession of the sovereign power you have
"learned the art of reigning. Old age may be per-
"mitted to seek repose. It will, hereafter, be your
"glory, that you knew how to choose men of mode-
"ration, who could descend from the summit of for-
"tune, to dwell with peace and humble content in the
"vale of life."

LV. Nero replied as follows: "If I give an imme-
"diate answer to a speech of prepared eloquence, the
"power of doing it I derive from you. The faculty
"of speaking, not only when the matter has been pre-
"meditated, but also on sudden occasions, I possess
"(if I do possess it) by your care and instruction.
"Augustus, it is true, released Agrippa and Mæcenas
"from the fatigue of business; but he did it, at a time,
"when his authority was established on the firmest
"basis, and his own experience was equal to the cares
"of government. He did not, however, resume the
"grants which he had made. What those eminent
"citizens obtained, they deserved in war and civil
"commotions; for in those busy scenes Augustus pass-
"ed his youth. Had my lot been the same, your
"sword would not have been idle. What the con-
"juncture demanded, you supplied; you formed my
"mind to science, and you assisted me with your wis-
"dom and advice. The advantages which I derived
"from you are not of a perishable nature; they will
"cleave to me through life. As to the favours which
"it was in my power to grant, such as houses, gar-
"dens, and sums of money, they are precarious gifts,
"subject to accidents and the caprice of fortune.
"Presents of that kind may seem magnificent; but
"they fall short of what I have bestowed on others,

"who had neither your accomplishments, nor your "merit. I could mention freedmen, who flourish in "higher splendour; but I blush to name them. I "blush, that you, who are the first in my esteem, "should not, at the same time, be the first man in my "dominions.

LVI. "I grant that you are advanced in years, "but the vigour of your constitution is still unbroken. "You are equal to business, and the fruit of your la- "bours you can still enjoy. My reign is but just be- "gun; and what has been my liberality? Vitellius "was three times consul, and Claudius was his friend: "are you to be deemed inferior to the former? and "must I, in point of munificence, yield to the latter? "Volusius, by a long life of parsimony, raised an im- "moderate fortune; and shall not my generosity put "you on a level with a man of that description? The "impetuosity of youth may hurry me beyond the "bounds of prudence: it will then be yours to recall "my wandering steps, and lead me to the paths of "honour. You helped to form my youthful under- "standing, and to what you polished you still can "give life and energy. If you resign your wealth, "can you suppose that your moderation will be deem- "ed the cause? If you desert your prince, will your "love of quiet be thought the motive? Far otherwise: "my avarice will be arraigned; my cruelty will be the "general topic. The praise, indeed, of wisdom may "pursue you in your retreat; but will it be generous "to build your fame on the disgrace and ruin of your "friend?"

To this flattering speech Nero added fond embraces, and all the external marks of affection. Inclined by nature to disguise his sentiments, and by habit exercised in the arts of dissimulation, he knew how to hide, under the surface of friendship, the secret malice of his heart. Seneca answered in a submissive tone. He returned his best thanks, the usual close of every conference in the cabinet of the prince. He resolved, however, to change his mode of living: he resigned his power, and retained no appearance of his former splendour; the crowd of visiters no longer fre-

quented his house; he dismissed his train of followers, and but rarely appeared abroad, willing to be considered as an infirm old man, obliged to take care of his health at home, or a philosopher, absorbed in abstract speculations.

LVII. Seneca's influence was now in its wane. To ruin the credit of Fenius Rufus was the next object. In this his enemies found no difficulty. The crime of being attached to Agrippina was sufficient. Tigellinus, in the mean time, rose to the highest pitch of credit and influence at court. Possessing a genius for every mischief, and having no other talents, he resolved to draw the prince into a confederacy in guilt. Congenial vices, he had no doubt, would render him still more dear to his master. With this view he began to watch the passions of Nero, and to explore the secrets of his heart. He found that the two persons whom the emperor dreaded most were Plautus and Sylla; both lately removed out of Italy; the former into Asia, and the latter to Narbon Gaul. Tigellinus began his secret hostilities against them both. He talked of their rank and high descent. Plautus, he observed, was not far distant from the armies in the east; and Sylla was near the legions in Germany. For himself, he had not, like Burrhus, the art of managing parties for his own private advantage. The welfare of his sovereign was his only object. At Rome, he could insure the safety of the prince. If plots were formed, by vigilance and activity they might be crushed in the bud. But for distant provinces who could answer? The name of Sylla, rendered famous by the celebrated dictator of that name, would rouse and animate the people of Gaul. In Asia the grandson of Drusus would have a number of adherents, and might, by consequence, excite the nations to a revolt. Sylla, indeed, was indigent and distressed: but his very poverty would be a source of courage, a motive for vigorous enterprise; and though he seemed to languish in repose and indolence, his love of ease was a cloak to cover his ambition. He waited for an opportunity to avow his dark designs.

Plautus, on the other hand, possessed immoderate wealth. To lead a sluggish life was not in his temper or his character: he did not even affect it. He copied, with emulation, the manners of the ancient Romans, and to his austerity added the maxims of the stoic sect: a sect at all times fond of public commotions, proud, fierce and turbulent. By this reasoning Nero was convinced. No delay intervened. Assassins were despatched. On the sixth day they landed at Marseilles, where, without notice, or so much as a hint to alarm him, Sylla was taken by surprise at his own table, and instantly murdered. His head was conveyed to Rome. Nero amused himself with the sight; he saw that the hairs were grown gray before their time, and in that circumstance found a subject for mirth and brutal raillery.

LVIII. The murder of Plautus could not be executed with equal secrecy. His friends were numerous, and his life was valuable to many. The place lay remote; a voyage was to be performed, and, in the mean time, the plot began to transpire. A report prevailed at Rome, that Plautus had put himself under the protection of Corbulo, who was then at the head of powerful armies; a man, in that evil period, when merit and innocence were capital crimes, likely to fall a devoted victim. The rumour further added, that in favour of Plautus all Asia was up in arms, and that the ruffians sent from Rome had either failed in their resolution, or, not finding themselves in force, had gone over to the opposite party. The whole story was without foundation; but, according to custom, credulity swallowed it, and idle men added from their own invention. Plautus, in the mean time, received intelligence of the design against his life by one of his freedmen, who, having the advantage of a fair wind, got the start of the centurions despatched by Nero. This faithful servant was sent by Lucius Antistius, his master's father-in-law, with advice, that no time was to be lost. In such a crisis, sloth would ill become a man whose life was in danger. To fall a tame and passive victim were to die an ignominious death. He had but to exert his most strenuous ef-

forts, and good men, touched with compassion, would espouse his cause. The bold and turbulent would be sure to join him. Nothing should be left untried. It was only necessary to defeat sixty men (for that was the number employed in this bloody tragedy:) before Nero could receive intelligence, and despatch another band of ruffians, there would be time to concert bold and vigorous measures. The flame of war might be kindled all over Asia, and, by this resolute conduct, he might save his life. At the worst, by daring bravely, his case would not be more desperate. Courage might suffer, but it could not suffer more than cowardice.

LIX. This spirited advice had no effect on Plautus. Banished from his country, without arms, or any means of defence, he saw no gleam of hope, and was, therefore, unwilling to be the dupe of visionary schemes. Perhaps his affection for his wife and children softened and disarmed his mind. The emperor, if not exasperated by resistance, he imagined, would act with lenity towards his unhappy family. According to some historians, the advice sent by Antistius was of a different tendency, importing that there was no danger to alarm him. We are further told, that, by the exhortations of two philosophers, by name Cæranus, a Greek by birth, and Musonius, of Tuscan origin, he had been taught that, though life is a series of toil, and danger, and calamity, to wait with patience till the stroke of death delivered him from a scene of misery, would be heroic fortitude. Thus much is certain, he was surprised by the assassins in the middle of the day, disarmed and naked, attending to the refreshment and exercise of his body.

In that condition a centurion despatched him, while Pelagon, one of the eunuchs, stood a spectator of the tragic scene. This wretch was sent by Nero to superintend the ruffians, like the minister of a despotic prince, placed over the guards and tools of iniquity to see his master's orders strictly executed. The head of the deceased was carried to Rome. At the sight of the dismal object the emperor cried out (I give his very words,) "Nero, now you may safely marry Pop-

"pæa. What obstacle remains to defer a match, "long intended, and often deferred on account of this "very Plautus, and men of his description? Octavia "may be divorced without delay: her conduct, it is "true, has been blameless, but the imperial name of "her father, and the esteem of the people, have made "her in my eyes an object of terror and detestation." Having thus fortified his mind, he despatched a letter to the senate, written in guarded terms, without so much as glancing at the murder of Sylla and Plautus. He mentioned them both, charging them with seditious machinations, by which he himself was kept in a constant alarm, lest some dreadful convulsion should, by their means, shake the empire to its foundation. The fathers decreed public vows and supplications to the gods. Sylla and Plautus, though no longer in being, were expelled the senate; and with this mockery, to every good mind more grievous than the worst oppression, the people were amused and insulted.

LX. Nero finding, by the slavish tenor of the decree, that the fathers were willing to transform his vices into virtues, resolved to balance no longer. He repudiated Octavia, alleging her sterility for his reason, and immediately married Poppæa. This woman, some time the concubine of the emperor, and now his wife, continued to govern him with unbounded sway. Not content with her new dignity, she suborned a domestic servant of Octavia to charge his mistress with a dishonourable intrigue with one of her slaves. For this purpose they chose for the pretended adulterer a man of the name of Eucerus, a native of Alexandria, remarkable for his skill on the flute. The female servants were put to the torture. Some of them overcome by pain and agony, confessed whatever was demanded of them; but the greatest part persevered, with constancy, to vindicate the honour of their mistress. Tigellinus stood near at hand pressing them with questions. One of them had the spirit to answer, "The person of Octavia is freer from pollution than "your mouth." Sentence was pronounced against Octavia. With no more ceremony than what is usual among citizens of ordinary rank, she was dismissed

from the palace. The house of Burrhus, and the estates of Plautus, two fatal presents! were allotted for her separate use. She was soon after banished to Campania, under a military guard. Murmurs of discontent were heard in every quarter of Rome. The common people spoke out without reserve. To rules of caution and political wisdom their rough manners made them strangers, and the meanness of their condition left them nothing to fear. Their clamours were so loud and violent, that Nero gave orders to recall Octavia, but without affection, and without remorse.

LXI. The populace, transported with joy by this event, pressed in crowds to the capitol, to offer up their thanks to the gods. The statues of Poppæa were dashed to the ground, while those of Octavia, adorned with wreaths of flowers, were carried in triumph on men's shoulders, and placed in the forum and in the temples. The multitude went in a tumultuous body to greet the emperor; they surrounded his palace; they desired him to come forth and receive their congratulations. A band of soldiers rushed forth sword in hand, and obliged the crowd to disperse. Whatever was pulled down during the riot, was restored to its place, and the statues of Poppæa were once more erected. But her malice to Octavia was not to be appeased. To inveterate hatred she added her dread of a popular insurrection, in consequence of which, Nero might be compelled to renounce his passion for her person.

She threw herself at his feet: "I am not now," she said, "in a situation to contend for our nuptial union, "though dearer to me than life itself. But my life is "in danger. The slaves and followers of Octavia, "calling their own clamour the voice of the people, "have committed, in a time of profound peace, public "outrages little short of open rebellion. They are in "arms against their sovereign. They want nothing "but a leader, and, in civil commotions, that want is "soon supplied. What has Octavia now to do, but "to leave her retreat in Campania, and show herself "to the people of Rome? She, who in her absence "can raise a tumult so fierce and violent, will soon

"discover the extent of her power. But what is my "crime? What have I committed? Whom have I "offended? The people may see me the mother of "legitimate heirs to the house of Cæsar; but, perhaps, "they would fain reserve the imperial dignity for the "issue of an Egyptian minstrel. Submit to Octavia, "since your interest will have it so: recall her to your "embrace, but do it voluntarily, that the rabble may "not give the law to their sovereign. You must either "adopt that measure, or by just vengeance on the "guilty, provide for your own safety and the public "peace. The first alarm was easily quelled; a second "insurrection may prove fatal. Should the mob have "reason to despair of seeing Octavia the partner of "Nero's bed, they may, in their wisdom, find for her "another husband."

LXII. This artful speech, tending at once to inflame the prince with resentment, and alarm his fears, had its effect. Nero heard the whole with mixed emotions of rage and terror. That Octavia was guilty with one of her slaves, was a device of which men could be no longer made the dupes. The firmness of her servants on the rack removed even the shadow of suspicion. A new stratagem was now to be tried. A man was to be found who would dare to confess the guilt; and if the same person could, with some colour of probability, be charged with a conspiracy against the state, the plot would lie the deeper. For this dark design, no one was so fit as Anicetus, the commander of the fleet at Misenum, and the murderer of the prince's mother. This officer, for some time after that atrocious deed, enjoyed the smiles of the emperor, but soon experienced the common fate of all pernicious miscreants: he was favoured at first, and detested afterwards. It is the nature of great men, when their turn is served, to consider their tools as a living reproach, and standing witnesses against themselves. Nero summoned Anicetus to his presence: he thanked him for services already performed. "By you," he said, "I was delivered from the snares of an am- "bitious mother. A deed of greater moment still re- "mains. Set me free from the furious spirit of an

"imperious wife. To effect this you need not so "much as raise your hand. Neither sword nor dag- "ger will be wanted. Confess yourself guilty of "adultery with Octavia; I ask no more." He concluded with a promise of ample rewards, to be managed, indeed, with secrecy, but without bound or measure, and in the end, a safe retreat in some delightful country. "And now," he said, "accept the "offers which I have made, or certain death awaits "you."

Anicetus undertook the business. Practised in guilt, and by the success of his former crimes inspired with courage, he went even beyond his commission. In the presence of certain chosen persons, whom Nero summoned to a secret council, he told his story with circumstances that showed he had no need of a prompter. He was banished to the island of Sardinia. At that place he continued to live in affluence, and, died at last, in the course of nature.

LXIII. Nero issued a proclamation, declaring the guilt of Octavia, and in express terms, averring, that, to obtain the command of the fleet at Misenum, she had prostituted her person to Anicetus. He added, that by the use of medicines to procure abortion, she had thrown a veil over her adulterous commerce. In this public declaration, the objection on account of sterility, so lately urged, was no more remembered. The facts, however, were said to be clearly proved. She was banished to the isle of Pandataria. The public mind was never so deeply touched with compassion. The banishment of Agrippina, by order of Tiberius, was remembered by many; and that of Julia, in the reign of Claudius, was still more fresh in the memory of all: but those two unfortunate exiles had attained the vigour of their days, and were by consequence better enabled to endure the stroke of adversity. They had known scenes of happiness, and, in the recollection of better times, could lose, or, at least assuage the sense of present evils. To Octavia the celebration of her nuptials was little different from a funeral ceremony. She was led to a house, where she could discover nothing but memorials of affliction;

her father carried off by poison, and her brother, in a short time afterwards, destroyed by the same detestable machination. She saw herself superseded by the allurements of a female slave; she saw the affections of her husband alienated from herself, and a marriage, by which her ruin was completed, openly celebrated with Poppæa. Above all, she underwent a cruel accusation, to an ingenuous mind worse than death. At the time when the storm burst upon her, she was only in the twentieth year of her age, and even then, in the bloom of life, delivered to the custody of centurions and soldiers. Her present afflictions, she plainly saw, were a prelude to her impending fate. She was cut off from all the comforts of life; but the tranquillity of the grave was still denied to her.

LXIV. In a few days afterwards she received a mandate, commanding her to end her days. Alarmed and terrified, she descended to supplications; she admitted herself to be a widow; she claimed no higher title than that of the emperor's sister; she invoked the race of Germanicus, the common ancestors of Nero and herself, and, in the anguish of her heart, regretted even Agrippina, during whose life, she said, her marriage would have been a state of wretchedness, but would not have brought her to an untimely end. Amidst these effusions of sorrow, the ruffians seized her, and, having bound her limbs, opened her veins. Her blood was chilled with fear, and did not issue at the wound. The assassins carried her to a bath of intense heat, where she was suffocated by the vapour. To complete the horror of this barbarous tragedy, her head was cut off, and sent to Rome, to glut the eyes of Poppæa.

Such were the transactions, for which the fathers decreed oblations to the gods. I mention the fact in this place, that the reader of this or any other history of those disastrous times, may know, once for all, that as often as banishment, or a bloody execution was ordered, the senate never failed to thank the gods for their bounty. Those solemn acts, which, in the earlier periods of Rome, were the pious gratitude of the

people for increasing happiness, were now profanely and abominably converted to memorials of horror and public misery. This may be received as a general truth; and yet, whenever a decree occurs, remarkable either for a new strain of adulation, or the base servility of the times, it is my intention not to pass it by in silence.

LXV. In the course of this year, Nero is said to have destroyed by poison the most considerable of his freedmen. Among these, Doryphorus had opposed the marriage with Poppæa, and for that crime lost his life. Pallas was in possession of exorbitant wealth; but, living to a great age, he delayed the eager avarice of the emperor. He was murdered for his riches. Romanus, another of the freedmen, endeavoured, by clandestine calumny, to accomplish the ruin of Seneca. He charged the philosopher with being an accomplice in the machinations of Caius Piso; but the blow, warded off by Seneca, recoiled upon the accuser. By this incident Piso was alarmed for his own safety. A dark conspiracy followed, big with danger to Nero, but abortive in the end.

THE

ANNALS OF TACITUS.

BOOK XV.

I. During these transactions, Vologeses, king of the Parthians, began to raise new commotions in the East. The success of Corbulo alarmed his jealousy; he saw, with wounded pride, the defeat of his brother, Tiridates; and, in his room, Tigranes, an alien prince, seated on the throne of Armenia. The honour of the Arsacides was tarnished by these events, and he was determined to restore its former lustre. But the struggle was to be with a great and powerful empire. Treaties of alliance, long in force and long respected by the two nations, held him in suspense. By nature anxious and irresolute, he formed no settled plan. He was at variance with the Hyrcanians, and, after a long and obstinate conflict, that brave and powerful nation still made head against him. While he continued wavering, fresh intelligence fired him with indignation. Tigranes marched his army into the territory of the Adiabenians, a people bordering on Armenia, and laid waste their country. The enterprise did not resemble the sudden incursion of barbarians roving in quest of prey: a regular war seemed to be declared in form. The chiefs of the Adiabenians, saw, with resentment, their lands made a scene of desolation, not by a Roman army, but by a foreigner, a despicable hostage, who for years had lived at Rome undistinguished from the common slaves.

Monobazus, the sovereign of the province, inflamed the discontents of the people, and, at the same time, roused the pride of Vologeses by frequent messages,

importing, that he knew not which way to turn, nor from what quarter to expect relief. Armenia, he said, was lost, and the neighbouring states, if not reinforced by the Parthians, must be all involved in the same calamity, perhaps, with the consent of the people, as Rome, it was well known, made a distinction between the nations that fell by conquest, and those that submitted at discretion. Tiridates, by his behaviour, added force to these complaints. Driven from his throne, he appeared with all the silent dignity of distress, or, if he spoke occasionally, his words were few, short, and sententious. "Mighty kingdoms," he said, "are not supported by inactivity. "Men and arms, and warlike preparations, are necessary. The conqueror has always justice on his "side. In a private station, to defend their property "is the virtue of individuals; but to invade the "possessions of others is the prerogative and the "glory of kings."

II. Roused by these incentives, Vologeses summoned a council, and seating Tiridates next himself, spoke in substance as follows: "You see before you "a prince descended from the same father with myself. Acknowledging the right of primogeniture, "he ceded to me the diadem of Parthia: in return I "placed him on the throne of Armenia, the third "kingdom among the eastern nations. Media, in "fact, is the second, and Pacorus, at that time, was "in possession. By this arrangement, I provided for "my family, and, by the measure, extinguished for "ever, those unnatual jealousies, which formerly "envenomed brothers against brothers. This system, "it seems, has given umbrage to the Romans; they "declare against it; and though they never broke "with Parthia without paying dearly for their "temerity, they now are willing to provoke a war, "and rush on their own destruction. Thus much I "am willing to declare; the possessions, which have "descended to me from my ancestors, shall never be "dismembered; but I had rather maintain them by the "justice of my cause, than by the decision of the "sword. I avow the principle, and if in consequence

"of it, I have been too much inclined to pacific mea-
"sures, the vigour of my future conduct shall make
"atonement. The national honour, in the mean time,
"has suffered no diminution. Your glory is unim-
"paired, and I have added to it the virtues of modera-
"tion; virtues, which the gods approve, and which
"no sovereign, however great and flourishing, ought
"to despise."

Having thus delivered his sentiments, he placed the regal diadem on the head of Tiridates, and, at the same time, gave to Moneses, an officer of distinguished rank, the command of the cavalry, which, by established usage, is always appointed to attend the person of the monarch. He added the auxiliaries sent by the Adiabenians, and, with that force, ordered him to march against Tigranes, in order to exterminate the usurper from the throne of Armenia. In the mean time, he proposed to compromise the war with the Hyrcanians, and fall with the whole weight of his kingdom on the Roman provinces.

III. Corbulo was no sooner apprised of these transactions, than he despatched, to support Tigranes, two legions under the command of Verulanus Severus and Vettius Bolanus. In their private instructions those officers had it in command, to proceed with caution, and act on the defensive, without pushing on their operations with too much vigour. A decisive campaign was not Corbulo's plan. He wished to protract the war, and, in the mean time, stated, in his letters to the emperor, the necessity of appointing a commander, with a special commission to protect Armenia, as he foresaw a storm gathering in the province of Syria. If Vologeses made an irruption in that quarter, a powerful army would be wanted to repel the invader. With the rest of his legions he formed a chain of posts along the banks of the Euphrates, and, having made a powerful levy of provincial forces, he secured all the passes against the inroads of the enemy. In order to make sure of water in a country not well supplied by nature, he erected strong castles near the springs and fountains; and, where the stations were inconvenient, he choked up

a number of rivulets, with heaps of sand, with intent to conceal their source from the Parthian army.

IV. While Corbulo was thus concerting measures for the defence of Syria, Moneses advanced by rapid marches, and with all his forces entered Armenia. He hoped to outstrip the fame that flies before an enterprising general, and to fall upon Tigranes by surprise. That prince, aware of the design, had thrown himself into the city of Tigranocerta, a place surrounded by high walls, and defended by a numerous garrison. The river Nicephorius, with a current sufficiently broad, washes a considerable part of the walls. A deep trench inclosed the rest. There was a competent number of soldiers to man the works, and provisions had been laid in with due precaution. Some of the foraging parties having rashly ventured too far, were surrounded by the enemy. This check, however, instead of disheartening the garrison, served only to inspire them with a spirit of revenge. The operations of a siege are ill suited to the genius of the Parthians, whose courage always fails in a close engagement. A few arrows thrown at random made no impression on men sheltered by their fortifications. The besiegers could only amuse themselves with a feeble attack. An attempt was made by the Adiabenians to carry the works by assault. They advanced their scaling ladders and other military engines, but were soon repulsed, and, the garrison sallying out, the whole corps was cut to pieces.

V. Corbulo was not of a temper to be elated with success. He chose to act with moderation in prosperity, and, accordingly, despatched an embassy to expostulate with Vologeses on the violence with which he had invaded a Roman province, and not only besieged the cohorts of the empire, but also a king in alliance with Rome. If the Parthian prince did not raise the siege, he threatened to advance with the strength of his army, and encamp in the heart of the country. Casperius, a centurion, was charged with this commission. He met the king in the city of Nisibis, distant about seven and thirty miles from Tigranocerta, and there delivered his orders in a tone of

firmness. To avoid a war with Rome had been for some time the fixed resolution of Vologeses, and the success of the present enterprise gave him no reason to alter his sentiments.

The siege promised no kind of advantage; Tigranes possessed a strong hold, well garrisoned, and provided with ample supplies; the forces, that attempted to storm the works, met with a total overthrow; the Roman legions were in possession of Armenia, and others were in readiness, not only to cover the province of Syria, but to push the war into the Parthian territories: his cavalry suffered for want of forage, and, all vegetation being destroyed by a swarm of locusts, neither grass nor foilage could be found. Determined by these considerations, yet disguising his fear, Vologeses, with the specious appearance of a pacific disposition, returned for answer to Casperius, that he should send ambassadors to Rome, with instructions to solicit the cession of Armenia, and the re-establishment of peace between the two nations. Meanwhile, he sent despatches to Moneses, with orders to abandon the siege of Tigranocerta, and, without farther delay, returned to his capital.

VI. These events, ascribed by the general voice to the conduct of the general, and the terror impressed on the mind of Vologeses, were extolled in terms of the highest commendation. And yet malignity was at work. Some would have it, "That "there was at the bottom a secret compact to make "an end of the war. According to their sinister in- "terpretation, it was stipulated, that Vologeses should "return to his own dominions, and that Armenia "should be evacuated by Tigranes. With what "other view were the Roman soldiers withdrawn "from Tigranocerta? Why give up, by an ill-judged "peace, what had been so well defended in time of "war? Could the army find, at the extremity of "Cappadocia, in huts suddenly thrown up, better "winter-quarters, than in the capital of a kingdom, "which had been preserved by force of arms? Peace "is held forth; but it is, in fact, no more than a "truce, a suspension of arms, that Vologeses may

"have to contend with another general, and that "Corbulo should not be obliged to hazard the great "renown, which he had acquired during a service of "so many years.

The fact was, Corbulo, as we have stated, required a new commander for the special purpose of defending Armenia, and the nomination of Cæsennius Pætus was already announced. That officer arrived in a short time. A division of the forces was allotted to each commander. The fourth and twelfth legions, with the fifth, lately arrived from Mæsia, and a body of auxiliaries from Pontus, from Galatia and Cappadocia, were put under the command of Pætus. The third, the sixth, and tenth legions, with the forces of Syria, were assigned to Corbulo. Both commanders were to act in concert, or to push the war in different quarters, as the occasion might require. But the spirit of Corbulo could not brook a rival, and Pætus, though to be second in command under such a general would have been his highest glory, began to aspire above himself. He despised the fame acquired by Corbulo, declaring all his best exploits to be no better than boasted victories, without bloodshed, and without booty; mere pretended sieges, in which not a single place was carried by assault. For himself, he was resolved to carry on the war for more substantial purposes. By imposing tributes and taxes on the vanquished, he meant to reduce them to subjection, and, for the shadow of an oriental king, he would establish the rights of conquest, and the authority of the Roman name.

VII. In this juncture, the ambassadors, who had been sent by Vologeses to treat with Nero, returned back to their own country. Their negotiation was unsuccessful, and the Parthians declared war. Pætus embraced the opportunity to signalize his valour. He entered Armenia at the head of two legions; the fourth commanded by Funisulanus Vetonianus, and the twelfth by Calavius Sabinus. His first approach was attended with unpropitious omens. In passing over a bridge, which lay across the Euphrates, the horse that carried the consular ornaments, taking

fright without any apparent cause, broke from the ranks, and fled at full speed. A victim, likewise, intended for sacrifice, standing near the unfinished fortifications of the winter camp, escaped out of the entrenchments. Nor was this all: the javelins, in the hands of the soldiers, emitted sudden flashes of fire; and this prodigy was the more alarming, as the Parthians brandished the same weapon.

VIII. Portents and prodigies had no effect on Pætus. Without waiting to fortify his winter encampment, and without providing a sufficient store of grain, he marched his army over mount Taurus, determined, as he gave out, to recover Tigranocerta, and lay waste the country through which Corbulo had passed with vain parade. In his progress some forts and castles were stormed, and it is certain that his share of glory and of booty would have been considerable, if to enjoy the former with moderation, and to secure the latter, had been his talent. He overran by rapid marches vast tracts of country, where no conquest could be maintained. His provisions, in the mean time, went to decay, and, the winter season approaching fast, he was obliged to return with his army. His despatches to Nero were in a style as grand as if he had ended the war, high sounding, pompous, full of vain glory, but without any solid advantage.

IX. In the mean time Corbulo never neglected the banks of the Euphrates. To his former chain of posts he added new stations; and lest the enemy, who showed themselves in detached parties on the opposite plains, should be able to obstruct the building of a bridge over the river, he ordered a number of vessels of large size to be braced together with great beams, and on that foundation raised a superstructure of towers armed with slings and warlike engines. From this floating battery he annoyed the enemy with a discharge of stones and javelins, thrown to such a length, that the Parthians could not retaliate with their darts. Under this shelter the bridge was finished. The allied coherts passed over to the opposite hills. The legions followed, and pitched their camp. The whole of these operations was executed with such

rapidity, and so formidable a display of strength, that the Parthians abandoned their enterprise, and, without attempting any thing against the Syrians, drew off their forces to the invasion of Armenia.

X. Pætus had fixed his head-quarters in that country, little aware of the storm ready to burst upon him, and so much off his guard, that he suffered the fifth legion to remain in Pontus, at a considerable distance, while he still weakened his numbers by granting leave of absence to his soldiers without reserve. In this situation he received intelligence of the approach of Vologeses with a powerful army. He called the twelfth legion to his assistance, and, by the necessity of that reinforcement, betrayed to the enemy the feeble condition of his army. He was, notwithstanding, sufficiently strong to maintain his post, and baffle all the efforts of the Parthians, had it been in the genius of the man to pursue with firmness either his own idea, or the counsel of others. But in pressing exigencies, he no sooner embraced the plan recommended by officers of known experience, than his little spirit was stung with jealousy, and, lest he should be thought to stand in need of advice, he was sure to adopt very different measures, always changing for the worse.

On the first approach of the Parthians, he sallied out of his entrenchments, determined to hazard a battle. Ditches and ramparts, he said, were not given to him in commission, nor had he any need of that defence: the soldier and the sword were all he wanted. In this vapouring strain he led his legions to the field; but a centurion, and a few soldiers, who had been sent to reconnoitre the enemy, being cut off, his courage failed, and he sounded a retreat. He was no sooner in his camp, than perceiving that Vologeses had not pressed on the rear, he once more grew bold, and, in a fit of valour, ordered three thousand of his best infantry to take post on the next eminence of mount Taurus, to dispute the pass with the Parthian king. The Pannonians, who formed the strength of his cavalry, were drawn up on the open plain. He placed his wife and her infant son in a castle, called Arsamosata, and left a cohort to defend the place. In

this manner he contrived to divide an army, which, acting with united force, would have been able to repel the attack of a wild and desultory enemy. When pressed by Vologeses, we are told, it was with difficulty that he could submit to acquaint Corbulo with his situation. That officer did not hurry to his assistance. To augment the glory of delivering him, he was willing to let the danger increase. In the mean time, he ordered a detachment of a thousand men, drafted from each of his three legions, and a body of eight hundred horse, with an equal number from the cohorts, to hold themselves in readiness for a sudden enterprise.

XI. Vologeses knew from his scouts that his passage over mount Taurus was obstructed by the Roman infantry, and that the plain was occupied by the Pannonian horse; but the news did not deter him from pursuing his march. He fell with impetuous fury on the cavalry, who fled with precipitation. The legionary soldiers, in like manner, abandoned their post. A tower, commanded by Tarquitius Crescus, a centurion, was the only place that held out. That officer made several sallies with success, routing such of the enemy as dared to approach the walls, and pursuing the runaways with great slaughter, till by a volley of combustibles, thrown in by the besiegers, the works were set on fire. The gallant centurion perished in the flames. Some of the garrison escaped unhurt, and made the best of their way to distant wilds. The wounded returned to the camp, and there related wonders, magnifying beyond all bounds, the valour of the Parthian king, the number of his troops, and their ferocity in battle. A panic pervaded the army. Men, who feared for themselves, swallowed all that was said with easy credulity. Pætus felt the pressure of his misfortunes. He seemed to resign the command, unable to struggle with adversity. He sent again to Corbulo, with earnest prayers entreating him to save the Roman eagles, with the standards of an unfortunate army, and the army itself, from impending ruin. In the mean time, he and his men would hold out to

the last, determined to live or die in the service of their country.

XII. Corbulo, as usual, firm and collected in the moment of danger, prepared for the expedition. Having left a sufficient force to guard his posts on the banks of the Euphrates, he moved forward towards Armenia, taking the shortest route through Commagena, and next through Cappadocia, both fertile countries, and capable of furnishing supplies for his army. Besides the usual train attending on a march, he took with him a number of camels, loaded with grain, to answer the double purpose of preventing the want of provisions, and of striking the enemy with the terror of an unusual appearance. Pactius, a centurion of principal rank, was the first from the vanquished army that encountered Corbulo on his march. The common men came up soon after, all endeavouring by various excuses to palliate their disgrace. The general ordered them to join their colours, and try to gain their pardon from Pætus. The merciful disposition of that officer might incline him to forgive; but, for himself, he favoured none but such as conquered by their valour. He then addressed his own legions, visiting the ranks, and inspiring all with zeal and ardour. He called to mind their past exploits, and opened to their view a new field of glory. "It is not," he said, "the towns and villages of Armenia that now demand "our swords: a Roman camp invokes our aid, and "two legions look to us for relief. Their delivery "from the barbarians will be the reward of victory. "If to a private soldier the civic crown, delivered by "the hand of his general, is the brightest recompense "for the life of a citizen saved; how much greater will "be the glory of the present enterprise, in which the "number of the distressed is equal to those who bring "relief, and, by consequence, every soldier in this "army may save his man!" By this discourse one general spirit was diffused through the ranks. The men had private motives to inflame their courage; they felt for their brothers; they wished to succour their relations, and, without halting night or day, pursued their march with alacrity and vigour.

XIII. Meanwhile Vologeses pressed on the siege. He assaulted the entrenchment; he endeavoured to storm a castle, where the weaker sex, the aged, and infirm were lodged for security. In these several attacks he came to a closer engagement than usually consists with the military genius of his country. By a show of temerity he hoped to bring on a decisive action. The Romans remained close in their tents, content with a safe post within their entrenchments; some in deference to the orders of their general; others, through want of spirit, tamely waiting to be relieved by Corbulo. If, in the mean time, the enemy overpowered them, they called to mind, by way of consolation, the example of two Roman armies that passed under the yoke; one at Caudium, and the other at Numantia. By those two events submission, in their present distress, would be fully justified, since neither the Samnites, nor the Carthaginians, those famous rivals of the Roman republic, could be compared with the extensive power of the Parthian empire: and moreover, the boasted virtue of the ancient Romans, however decorated by the praises of posterity, was always pliant in misfortune, and willing to make terms with the conqueror. By this unwarlike spirit of his army Pætus was driven to despair. He wrote to Vologeses. His letter was more in the style of reproach than the language of a suppliant. "Hostilities," he said, "were commenced by the Parthians to wrest the kingdom of Armenia from the "Romans; a kingdom always in the power of the "emperor, or governed by kings invested by him with "the regal diadem. Peace is equally the interest of "both nations. From the present juncture no conclusion can be drawn, since the whole weight of "Parthia is employed against two legions, and Rome "has it still in her power to arm in her cause the "remaining nations of the world."

XIV. Vologeses, without entering into the question of right, returned for answer, "That he must wait for "his two brothers, Pacorus and Tiridates: when they "arrived, a convention might be held, and there the "rights of Armenia would be adjusted. The gods

"would then decide the fate of the Roman legions." Pætus sent another embassy, requesting an interview. The king sent Vasaces, his general of the cavalry, to act in the royal name. At that meeting Pætus cited a number of ancient precedents. He talked of Lucullus, Pompey, and the emperors of Rome, who had dealt out the sceptre of Armenia. Vasaces coolly answered, that some shadow of right must be allowed to have been claimed by the Romans; but the substantial power was always vested in the Parthian kings. After much debate, it was agreed, that on the next day, Monobazus, the Adiabenian, should attend as a witness to the compact. In his presence it was agreed that, the siege being raised, the Roman legions should forthwith evacuate Armenia; that the strong holds, with their stores and magazines, should be delivered up to the Parthians; and, these conditions duly performed, Vologeses was to be at liberty, by his ambassadors, to negotiate with Nero.

XV. These preliminaries being settled, Pætus ordered a bridge to be built over the Arsanias, a river that flowed by the side of his camp. For this work his pretext was, that it would be convenient to his army, when the march began: but the fact was, the Parthians, knowing the utility of a bridge, had made it an article of the treaty, intending, at the same time, that it should remain a monument of their victory. The Roman troops, instead of using the bridge, filed off another way. A report was spread abroad, that the legions had passed under the yoke, and, in addition to that disgrace, suffered all the humiliating circumstances, which usually attend the overthrow of an army. The Armenians gave some colour to the report. Before the Romans marched out, they entered the entrenchments, and formed a line on each side, in order to fix on the slaves and beasts of burthen that formerly belonged to themselves. Not content with seizing what they called their own property, they laid violent hands on the apparel of the soldiers, who yielded, with fear and trembling, to avoid a new cause of quarrel.

Vologeses, as a monument of his victory, raised a

pile of dead bodies, and arms taken from the enemy; but declined to be a spectator of the legions in their flight. He first indulged his pride, and then sought the fame of moderation. He waded across the Arsanias, mounted on an elephant, while his train and his near relations followed him on horseback. The reason was, a report prevailed, that by the fraudulent contrivance of the builders, the whole fabric of the bridge would give way at once; but by those who made the experiment, it was found to be a firm and solid structure.

XVI. The besieged, it is now clear, were provided with grain in such abundance, that, on their departure, they burned their magazines; and, on the other hand, by the account given by Corbulo, it appears, that the Parthians, having consumed their whole stock of provisions, were on the point of raising the siege, at the very time when he was within three days march of the place. Upon the same authority it may be averred as a fact, that Pætus, under the sanction of a solemn oath, sworn under the eagles, and in the presence of witnesses sent by Vologeses, took upon him to engage, that no Roman should set his foot within the territories of Armenia, till Nero's pleasure touching the terms of the treaty should arrive from Rome. These assertions, it may be said, were suggested by malignity, to aggravate the infamy of an unwarlike officer; but it is now known, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that Pætus made a forced march of no less than forty miles in one day; leaving behind him the sick and wounded, and flying, with as much disorder and confusion, as if he had been routed in the field of battle. Corbulo met the fugitives on the banks of the Euphrates. He received them without parade, and without that display of military pomp which might seem a triumph over the fate of the vanquished. His men beheld with regret the disgrace of their fellow-soldiers, and tears gushed from every eye. The usual forms of military salution were suppressed by the general condolence. The pride of courage and the sense of glory, which, in the day of prosperity, are natural passions, were now converted into

grief and sympathy. The lower the condition of the soldier, the more sincere his sorrow. In that class of men the honest emotions of the heart appeared without disguise.

XVII. The conference between the two commanders was short, and without ceremony. Corbulo complained that all his labours were rendered abortive, whereas the war might have been terminated by the total overthrow of the Parthians. Pætus observed in reply, that all things were still in the same condition. He proposed to turn the eagles against the enemy, and, since Vologeses had withdrawn his forces, by their joint force Armenia would be easily reduced. Corbulo rejected the offer. He had no such orders from the emperor. It was the danger, in which the legions were involved, that drew him out of his province, and, since it was uncertain where the Parthians would make their next attempt, he was determined to return into Syria with his army; and if his infantry, harassed out with fatiguing marches, could keep pace with the Parthian cavalry, who with their usual velocity could traverse the open plains, he should hold himself indebted to his own good fortune for so signal an event. Pætus fixed his winter-quarters in Cappadocia. Vologeses sent despatches to Corbulo, requiring that the strong-holds and fortresses on the banks of the Euphrates should be rased to the ground, and the river left, as heretofore, the common boundary of the two empires. Corbulo had no objection, provided both parties withdrew their garrisons, and left Armenia a free and independent country. The Parthian monarch, after some hesitation, acceded to the terms. The castles erected by Corbulo's order, on the banks of the Euphrates, were all demolished, and the Armenians were left to their natural liberty.

XVIII. Meanwhile trophies of victory were erected at Rome, and triumphal arches on the mount of the capitol. This was ordered by the senate, while the war was still depending; nor was the work discontinued, when the event was known. The public eye was amused at the expense of truth. To add to the imposition, and to appear free from all solicitude about

foreign affairs, Nero ordered all the damaged grain, that lay in the public stores, to be thrown into the Tiber. By this act of ostentation an idea of great abundance was to be impressed on the minds of the people. Nor did he suffer the price of corn to be raised, though near two hundred vessels, loaded with grain, were lost in the harbour by the violence of a storm, and a hundred more, working their way up the Tiber, were destroyed by the accident of fire. At the same time Nero committed the care of the public imposts to three men of consular rank, namely, Lucius Piso, Ducennius Geminus, and Pompeius Paullinus. In making this arrangement he animadverted with severity on the conduct of former emperors, whose extravagance made heavy anticipations of the revenue; whereas he himself, by his frugality, paid annually into the treasury, for the exigencies of the state, six millions of sesterces.

XIX. A custom highly unjust and prejudicial to the rights of others, was, at this time, in general vogue. When the time drew near for the election of magistrates, or the allotment of provinces, it was the practice of men, who had no issue, to become fathers by adoption. Having served their turn in a contest with real parents for the prætorship, and the administration of provinces, they emancipated their pretended sons, and resumed their former state. Against this abuse warm remonstrances were made to the senate. The complainants urged the rights of nature, the care and expense of rearing children, while the compensation by law established was wrested from them by fraud, by artifice, and the facility of feigned adoptions. It was surely a sufficient advantage to such as had no children, that they could live free from all charge and solicitude, without leaving the road to favour, to preferment, and honours open to them in common with men who are of service to the community. Real parents are taught by the laws to expect the reward due to useful members of the community; but the laws are eluded, and the promised reward is snatched away, if such, as have raised no heirs to themselves, are allowed to become parents without paternal affec-

tion, and childless again without regret. The deception of a moment serves to counterbalance whole years of expectation, and the true father sees all his hopes defeated. The senate passed a decree, by which it was provided, that in all cases, either of election to the magistracy, or succession by testament, no regard should be paid to adoptions merely colourable.

XX. Claudius Timarchus, a native of Crete, was cited to answer a prosecution commenced against him. Besides the allegations usually laid to the charge of such as rise in the provinces to overgrown wealth, and become the oppressors of their inferior neighbours, an expression that fell from him, excited the indignation of the senate. This man, it seems, had made it his boast, that addresses of public thanks to the proconsular governors of Crete depended entirely on his weight and influence. Pætus Thrasea seized this opportunity to convert the incident to the public good. He gave his opinion that the offender ought to be banished from the isle of Crete, and proceeded as follows: "Experience has taught us, conscript fathers, that the wisest laws and the best "examples of virtue owe their origin to the actual "commission of crimes and misdemeanours. Men of "integrity make it their study, on such occasions, to "deduce good from evil. To the corrupt practices "of public orators we are indebted for the Cincian "law, and for the Julian to the intrigues and open "bribery of the candidates for public honours. The "Calpurnian regulations were produced by the avarice and rapacity of the magistrates. Guilt must "precede the punishment, and reformation grows out "of abuse. We have now before us the pride and "insolence of petty tyrants in the provinces. To "check the mischief, let us come to a resolution, consistent with good faith, and worthy of the Roman "name. Protection is due to our allies; but let us "remember, that, to adorn our names, we are not to "depend on the voice of foreign nations. Our fellow-"citizens are the best judges of our conduct.

XXI. "The old republic was not content with sending prætors and consuls to administer the provinces.

"Men who sustained no public character were often "commissioned to visit the remotest colonies, in or- "der to report the condition of each, and the temper "with which the people submitted to the authority of "government. By the judgment of individuals whole "nations were kept in awe. What is our practice "now? We pay court to the colonies; we flatter the "provinces, and, by the influence of some powerful "leader, we receive public thanks for our administra- "tion. In like manner, accusations are framed at the "will and pleasure of some overgrown provincial. "Let the right of complaining still remain; and, by "exercising that right, let the provinces show their "importance; but let them not, by false encomiums, "impose upon our judgment. The praise, that springs "from cabal and faction, is more pernicious than even "malice or cruelty. Let both be suppressed. More "mischief is done by the governor who wishes to "oblige, than by him who shows himself not afraid "of offending. It is the misfortune of certain virtues "to provoke ill will. In that class may be reckoned "inflexible severity, and the firmness that never yields "to intrigue, or the arts of designing men. Hence it "happens, that every new governor opens a promis- "ing scene, but the last act seldom corresponds with "the outset. In the end we see an humble candidate "for the suffrages of the province. Remove the evil, "and government, in every quarter, will be more up- "right, more just, more uniform. By prosecutions, "avarice and rapine have received a check. Abolish "the custom of giving public thanks, and you sup- "press the pitiful ambition which, for vain applause, "can stoop to mean compliances."

XXII. This speech was received with the unanimous assent of the fathers. The proposition, notwithstanding, could not be formed into a decree, the consuls refusing to make their report. The prince interposed in the business, and, with his authority, a law was passed, forbidding any person whatever to move in a provincial assembly for a vote of thanks to the proconsul or prætor, or to send a deputation to Rome for that purpose. During the same consulship,

the gymnasium, or place of athletic exercises, was struck with lightning, and burnt to the ground. The statue of Nero was found in the ruins, melted down to a shapeless mass. The celebrated city of Pompeii, in Campania, was overthrown by an earthquake, and well nigh demolished. Lælia, the vestal virgin, departed this life; and Cornelia, descended from the family of the Cossi, succeeded to the vacant office.

XXIII. During the consulship of Memmius Regulus and Verginius Rufus, Poppæa was delivered of a daughter. The exultation of Nero was beyond all mortal joy. He called the new-born infant Augusta, and gave the same title to her mother. The child was brought into the world at Antium, where Nero himself was born. The senate, before the birth, had offered vows to the gods for the safe delivery of Poppæa. They fulfilled their obligations, and voted additional honours. Days of supplication were appointed; a temple was voted to the goddess of fecundity; athletic sports were instituted on the model of the religious games practised at Antium; golden statues to the two goddesses of fortune were to be erected on the throne of Jupiter Capitolinus; and in honour of the Claudian and Domitian families Circensian games were to be celebrated at Antium, in imitation of the public spectacles, exhibited at Bovillæ to commemorate the Julian race. But these honours were of short duration: the infant died in less than four months, and the monuments of human vanity faded away. But new modes of flattery were soon displayed; the child was canonized for a goddess; a temple was decreed to her, with an altar, a bed of state, a priest, and religious ceremonies.

Nero's grief, like his joy at the birth, was without bounds or measure. At the time when the senate went in crowds to Antium, to congratulate the prince on the delivery of Poppæa, a circumstance occurred worthy of notice. Pætus Thrasea was ordered by Nero not to appear upon that occasion. The affront was deemed a prelude to the ruin of that eminent citizen. He received the mandate with his usual firmness, calm and undismayed. A report prevailed soon

after, that Nero, in conversation with Seneca, made it his boast, that he was reconciled to Thrasea, and in return the philosopher wished him joy. In consequence of this incident the glory of those excellent men rose to the highest pitch; but their danger kept pace with their glory.

XXIV. In the beginning of the spring ambassadors from Vologeses arrived at Rome, with letters from the king, their master, in substance declaring, "that he "would not revive the question of right, so often "urged and fully discussed, since the gods, the sove-"reign, arbiters of nations, had delivered Armenia "into the hands of the Parthians, not without disgrace "to the Roman name. Tigranes had been hemmed "in by a close blockade; Pætus and his legions were "enveloped in the like distress, and, in the moment "when destruction hung over them, the whole army "was suffered to decamp. The Parthians displayed "at once their superior valour, and their moderation. "But even in the present juncture Tiridates had no "objection to a long journey to Rome, in order to be "there invested with the sovereignty; but, being of "the order of the Magi, the duties of the sacerdotal "function required his personal attendance. He was "willing, however, to proceed to the Roman camp, "and there receive the regal diadem under the eagles, "and the images of the emperor, in the presence of "the legions."

XXV. The style of this letter differed essentially from the account transmitted by Pætus, who represented the affairs of the east in a flourishing situation. To ascertain the truth, a centurion, who had travelled with the ambassadors, was interrogated concerning the state of Armenia. The Romans, he replied, have evacuated the country. Nero felt the insulting mockery of being asked to yield what the barbarians had seized by force. He summoned a council of the leading men at Rome, to determine, by their advice, which was most eligible, a difficult and laborious war, or an ignominious peace. All declared for war. The conduct of it was committed to Corbulo, who, by the experience of so many years,

knew both the temper of the Roman army, and the genius of the enemy. The misconduct of Pætus had brought disgrace on the Roman name; and to hazard the same calamities from the incapacity of another officer, was not advisable.

The Parthian deputies received their answer, but were dismissed with handsome presents, leaving them room to infer from the mild behaviour of the emperor, that Tiridates, if he made the request in person, might succeed to the extent of his wishes. The civil administration of Syria was committed to Cestius, but the whole military authority was assigned to Corbulo. The fifteenth legion, then in Pannonia under the command of Marius Celsus, was ordered to join the army. Directions were also given to the kings and tetrarchs of the east, as also to the governors and imperial procurators of the several provinces, in those parts, to submit in every thing to the commander in chief. Corbulo was now invested with powers little short of what the Roman people committed to Pompey in the war against the pirates. Pætus, in the meantime, returned to Rome, not without apprehensions of being called to a severe account. Nero appeased his fears, content with a few sallies of mirth and ridicule. His words were, "I make "haste to pardon you, lest a state of suspense should "injure a man of your sensibility. Since you are so "apt to take fright, delay on my part might hurt "your nerves, and bring on a fit of illness."

XXVI. Corbulo expected no advantage to the service from the fourth and twelfth legions, the bravest of their men being all cut off, and the survivors still remaining covered with consternation. He removed them into Syria; and, in exchange, reinforced himself with the sixth legion, and the third; both in full vigour, inured to hardship, and no less distinguished by their success than by their valour. To these he added the fifth legion, which happened to be quartered in Pontus, and, by consequence, had not suffered in the late defeat. The fifteenth legion had lately joined the army, as also a body of select troops from Illyricum and Egypt, with the cavalry, the cohorts, and auxi-

liaries sent by the confederated kings. The whole force assembled at Melitene, where Corbulo proposed to cross the Euphrates. His first care was to purify his army by a solemn lustration. Those rights performed, he called his men to a meeting, and in a spirited harangue painted forth the auspicious government of the reigning prince; he mentioned his own exploits, and imputed to the imbecility of Pætus all the disasters that happened. The whole of his discourse was delivered in a style of authority, the true eloquence of a soldier.

XXVII. He began his march without delay, and chose the road formerly traversed by Lucullus, having first given orders to his men to open the passes, and remove the obstructions, with which time and long disuse had choked up part of the way. He heard that ambassadors from Tiridates and Vologeses were advancing with overtures of peace, and having no inclination to treat them with disdain, he sent forward some chosen centurions, with instructions neither harsh nor arrogant, in substance stating, "that the "misunderstanding between the two nations might "still be compromised, without proceeding to the de- "cision of the sword. Both armies had fought with "alternate vicissitudes of fortune, in some instances "favourable to the Romans, in others to the Par- "thians; and from those events both sides might de- "rive a lesson against the pride and insolence of "victory. It was the interest of Tiridates to receive, "at the hands of the Roman emperor, a kingdom in "a flourishing state, before hostile armies laid a scene "of desolation; and Vologes would consult his own "advantage, as well as that of his people, by prefer- "ring the friendship of Rome to wild ambition and "the havoc of a destructive war. The internal dis- "sensions that distract the kingdom of Parthia are "too well known. It is also known that Vologeses "has for his subjects fierce and barbarous nations, "whom no law can check, no government can control. "Nero, on the contrary, sees a settled calm through- "out the Roman world, and, except the rupture with "Parthia, has no other war upon his hands." Such

was Corbulo's answer. To give it weight, he added the terrors of the sword. The grandees of Armenia, who had been the first to revolt, were driven out of their possessions, and their castles were levelled to the ground. Between the weak, who made no resistance, and the brave and resolute, no distinction was made. All were involved in one common danger; no place was safe; hills and mountains no less than the open plain were filled with consternation.

XXVIII. The name of Corbulo was not, as is usual among adverse nations, hated by the enemy. He was, on the contrary, held in high esteem, and, by consequence, his advice had great weight with the barbarians. Vologeses did not wish for a general war. He desired a truce in favour of some particular provinces. Tiridates proposed an interview with the Roman general. An early day was appointed. The place for the congress was chosen by the prince on the very spot where Pætus and his legions were invested. The scene of their late victory flattered the pride of the barbarians. Corbulo did not decline the meeting. The face of things he knew was changed, and the reverse of fortune was glorious to himself. The disgrace of Pætus gave him no anxiety. Having resolved to pay the last funeral rites to the slaughtered soldiers, whose bodies lay weltering on the field, he chose for that purpose, the son of the vanquished general, then a military tribune, and ordered him to march at the head of the companies appointed to perform that melancholy duty. On the day fixed for the convention, Tiberius Alexander, a Roman knight, who had been sent by Nero to superintend the operations of the campaign, and with him Vivianus Annius, son-in-law to Corbulo, but not yet of senatorian age, though, in the absence of his superior officer, he was appointed to command the fifth legion, arrived in the camp of Tiridates, in the character of hostages, chosen, not only to remove from the mind of the prince all suspicion, but at the same time to do him honour. The Parthian and the Roman general proceeded to the interview, each attended by twenty horsemen. As soon as they drew near, Tiridates

leaped from his horse. Corbulo returned the compliment. They advanced on foot, and took each other by the hand.

XXIX. The Roman general addressed the prince. He praised the judgment of a young man, who had the moderation to prefer pacific measures to the calamities of war. Tiridates expatiated on the splendour of his illustrious line, and then taking a milder tone, agreed to set out on a journey to Rome. In a juncture when the affairs of Parthia were in a flourishing state, a prince, descended from the Arsacides, humbling himself before the emperor, would present to the Roman people a new scene of glory. It was then settled as a preliminary article, that Tiridates should lay down the regal diadem at the foot of Nero's statue, and never again resume it, till delivered to him by the hand of the emperor. The parties embraced each other, and the convention ended.

In a few days afterwards the two armies were drawn out with great military pomp. On one side stood the Parthian cavalry, ranged in battalions, with all the pride of eastern magnificence. The Roman legions appeared on the opposite ground, the eagles glittering to the eye, the banners displayed, and the images of the gods, in regular order, forming a kind of temple. In the centre stood a tribunal, and upon it a curule chair, supporting the statue of Nero. Tiridates approached. Having immolated victims with the usual rites, he took the diadem from his brow, and laid it at the foot of the statue. The spectators gazed with earnest ardour, and every bosom heaved with mixed emotions. The place where the legions were besieged and forced to capitulate was before the eye, and the same spot exhibited a reverse of fortune. They saw Tiridates on the point of setting out for Rome, a spectacle to the nations through which he was to pass, and to exhibit, in the presence of Nero, the humble condition of a suppliant prince; how little better than a captive!

XXX. To the glory resulting from these events Corbulo added the graceful qualities of affability and condescension. He invited Tiridates to a ban-

quet. The prince was struck with the novelty of Roman manners. Every object awakened his curiosity. He desired to know the reason of all that he observed. When the watch was stationed, why was it announced by a centurion? Why did the company, when the banquet closed, rise from table at the sound of a trumpet? And why was the fire on the augural altar lighted with a torch? The Roman general answered all inquiries, not without partiality for his country. He aggrandized every thing, and gave the Parthian the noblest idea of the manners and institutions of the ancient Romans. On the following day Tiridates desired reasonable time to prepare for so long a journey, and, before he undertook it, desired that he might be at liberty to visit his mother and his brothers. His request was granted. The prince delivered up his daughter, as a hostage, and despatched letters to Nero in terms of submission.

XXXI. He met his two brothers, Pacorus in Media, and Vologeses at Ecbatana. The Parthian king was not inattentive to the interest of Tiridates. He had already sent despatches to Corbulo, requesting that his brother should not be disgraced by any circumstance that looked like a badge of slavery; that he should not be obliged to surrender his sword; that the honour of embracing the governors of the several provinces should not be denied to him; that he should not undergo the humiliating affront of waiting at their gates, or in their anti-chambers; and that at Rome he should be treated with all the marks of distinction usually paid to the consuls. The truth is, the Parthian king, trained up in all the pride of despotism, knew but little of the Romans. He was not informed, that it is the character and policy of that people to maintain, with zeal, the substantial interests of the empire, without any regard to petty formalities, the mere shadow of dominion.

XXXII. In the course of the year Nero granted the rights and privileges of Latium to the maritime nations at the foot of the Alps. He likewise assigned to the Roman knights distinct seats in the circus, advancing them before the space allotted to the popu-

lace. Till this regulation took place, the knights were mixed indiscriminately with the multitude, the Roscian law extending to no more than fourteen rows of the theatre. A spectacle of gladiators was exhibited this year, in nothing inferior to the magnificence displayed on former occasions; but a number of senators, and women of illustrious rank, descended into the arena, and, by exhibiting their persons in the lists, brought disgrace on themselves and their families.

XXXIII. In the consulship of Caius Læcanius and Marcus Licinius, Nero's passion for theatrical fame broke out with a degree of vehemence not to be resisted. He had hitherto performed in private only, during the sports of the Roman youth, called the JUVENALIA; but, upon those occasions, he was confined to his own palace or his gardens; a sphere too limited for such bright ambition, and so fine a voice. He glowed with impatience to present himself before the public eye, but had not yet the courage to make his first appearance at Rome. Naples was deemed a Greek city, and, for that reason, a proper place to begin his career of glory. With the laurels, which he was there to acquire, he might pass over into Greece, and after gaining, by victory in song, the glorious crown which antiquity considered as a sacred prize, he might return to Rome, with his honours blooming round him, and by his celebrity inflame the curiosity of the populace. With this idea he pursued his plan. The theatre at Naples was crowded with spectators. Not only the inhabitants of the city, but a prodigious multitude from all the municipal towns and colonies in the neighbourhood, flocked together, attracted by the novelty of a spectacle so very extraordinary. All who followed the prince, to pay their court, or as persons belonging to his train, attended on the occasion. The menial servants, and even the common soldiers, were admitted to enjoy the pleasures of the day.

XXXI. The theatre, of course, was crowded. An accident happened, which men in general considered as an evil omen: with the emperor it passed for a cer-

tain sign of the favour and protection of the gods. As soon as the audience dispersed, the theatre tumbled to pieces. No other mischief followed. Nero seized the opportunity to compose hymns of gratitude. He sung them himself, celebrating with melodious airs his happy escape from the ruin. Being now determined to cross the Adriatic, he stopt at Beneventum. At that place Vatinius entertained him with a show of gladiators. Of all the detestable characters that disgraced the court of Nero, this man was the most pernicious. He was bred up in a shoemaker's stall. Deformed in his person, he possessed a vein of ribaldry and vulgar humour, which qualified him to succeed as buffoon. In the character of a jester he recommended himself to notice, but soon forsook his scurrility for the trade of an informer; and having, by the ruin of the worthiest citizens, arrived at eminence in guilt, he rose to wealth and power, the most dangerous miscreant of that evil period!

XXXV. Nero was a constant spectator of the sports exhibited at Beneventum; but even amidst his diversions, his heart knew no pause from cruelty. He compelled Torquatus Silanus to put an end to his life, for no other reason, than because he united to the splendour of the Junian family the honour of being great grandson to Augustus. The prosecutors, suborned for the business, alleged against him, that, having prodigally wasted his fortune in gifts and largesses, he had no resource left but war and civil commotion. With that design he retained about his person men of rank and distinction, employed in various offices: he had his secretaries, his treasurers, and paymasters, all in the style of imperial dignity, even then anticipating what his ambition aimed at. This charge being made in form, such of his freedmen as were known to be in the confidence of their master were seized, and loaded with fetters. Silanus saw that his doom was impending, and, to prevent the sentence of condemnation, opened the veins of both his arms. Nero, according to his custom, expressed himself in terms of lenity. "The guilt of Silanus," he said, "was manifest; and, though, by an act of despair, he showed

"that his crimes admitted no defence, his life would "have been spared, had he thought proper to trust to "the clemency of his judge."

XXXVI. In a short time after, Nero, for reasons not sufficiently explained, resolved to defer his expedition into Greece. He returned to Rome, cherishing in imagination a new design to visit the eastern nations, and Egypt in particular. This project had been for some time settled in his mind. He announced it by a proclamation, in which he assured the people, that his absence would be of short duration, and, in the interval, the peace and good order of the commonwealth would be in no kind of danger. For the success of his voyage he went to offer up prayers in the capitol. He proceeded thence to the temple of Vesta. Being there seized with a sudden tremor in every joint, arising either from a superstitious fear of the goddess, or from a troubled conscience, which never ceased to goad and persecute him, he renounced his enterprise altogether, artfully pretending that the love of his country, which he felt warm at his heart, was dearer to him than all other considerations. "I have seen," he said, "the "dejected looks of the people; I have heard the "murmurs of complaint; the idea of so long a voyage "afflicts the citizens; and, indeed, how should it be "otherwise, when the shortest excursion I could "make was always sure to depress their spirits? "The sight of their prince has, at all times, been their "comfort and their best support. In private families "the pledges of natural affection can soften the "resolutions of a father, and mould him to their pur- "pose: the people of Rome have the same ascendant "over the mind of their sovereign. I feel their in- "fluence; I yield to their wishes." With these and such like expressions he amused the multitude. Their love of public spectacles made them eager for his presence, and, above all, they dreaded, if he left the capital, a dearth of provisions. The senate and the leading men looked on with indifference, unable to decide which was most to be dreaded, his presence in the city, or his tyranny at a distance. They agreed

at length (as in alarming cases fear is always in haste to conclude) that what happened was the worst evil that could befal them.

XXXVII. Nero wished it to be believed that Rome was the place in which he most delighted. To diffuse this opinion, he established convival meetings in all the squares and public places. The whole city seemed to be his house. Of the various feasts given upon this occasion, that, which was prepared for the prince by Tigellinus, exceeded in profusion and luxury every thing of the kind. I shall here give a description of this celebrated entertainment, that the reader, from one example, may form his idea of the prodigality of the times, and that history may not be encumbered with a repetition of the same enormities. Tigellinus gave his banquet on the lake of Agrippa, on a platform of prodigious size, built for the reception of the guests.

To move this magnificent edifice to and fro on the water, he prepared a number of boats superbly decorated with gold and ivory. The rowers were a band of Pathics. Each had his station, according to his age, or his skill in the science of debauchery. The country round was ransacked for game and animals of the chase. Fish was brought from every sea, and even from the ocean. On the borders of the lake brothels were erected, and filled with women of illustrious rank. On the opposite bank was seen a band of harlots, who made no secret of their vices, or their persons. In wanton dance and lascivious attitudes they displayed their naked charms. When night came on, a sudden illumination from the adjacent groves and buildings blazed over the lake. A concert of music, vocal and instrumental, enlivened the scene. Nero rioted in all kinds of lascivious pleasure. Between lawful and unlawful gratifications he made no distinction. Corruption seemed to be at a stand, if, at the end of a few days, he had not devised a new abomination to fill the measure of his crimes. He personated a woman, and in that character was given in marriage to one of his infamous herd, a Pathic, named Pythagoras. The emperor of

Rome, with the affected airs of female delicacy, put on the nuptial veil. The augurs assisted at the ceremony; the portion of the bride was openly paid; the genial bed was displayed to view; nuptial torches were lighted up; the whole was public, not even excepting the endearments which, in a natural marriage, decency reserves for the shades of night.

XXXVIII. A dreadful calamity followed in a short time after, by some ascribed to chance, and by others to the execrable wickedness of Nero. The authority of historians is on both sides, and which preponderates it is not easy to determine. It is, however, certain, that of all the disasters that ever befel the city of Rome from the rage of fire, this was the worst, the most violent, and destructive. The flame broke out in that part of the circus which adjoins, on one side, to mount Palatine, and, on the other, to mount Cœlius. It caught a number of shops stored with combustible goods, and, gathering force from the winds, spread with rapidity from one end of the circus to the other. Neither the thick walls of houses, nor the inclosure of temples, nor any other building, could check the rapid progress of the flames. A dreadful conflagration followed. The level parts of the city were destroyed. The fire communicated to the higher buildings, and, again laying hold of inferior places, spread with a degree of velocity that nothing could resist. The form of the streets, long and narrow, with frequent windings, and no regular opening, according to the plan of ancient Rome, contributed to increase the mischief. The shrieks and lamentations of women, the infirmities of age, and the weakness of the young and tender, added misery to the dreadful scene. Some endeavoured to provide for themselves, others to save their friends, in one part dragging along the lame and impotent, in another waiting to receive the tardy, or expecting relief themselves; they hurried, they lingered, they obstructed one another; they looked behind, and the fire broke out in front; they escaped from the flames, and in their place of refuge found no safety; the fire raged in every quarter; all were involved in one general conflagration.

The unhappy wretches fled to places remote, and thought themselves secure, but soon perceived the flames raging round them. Which way to turn, what to avoid, or what to seek, no one could tell. They crowded the streets; they fell prostrate on the ground; they lay stretched in the fields, in consternation and dismay resigned to their fate. Numbers lost their whole substance, even the tools and implements by which they gained their livelihood, and, in that distress, did not wish to survive. Others, wild with affliction for their friends and relations whom they could not save, embraced a voluntary death, and perished in the flames. During the whole of this dismal scene no man dared to attempt any thing that might check the violence of the dreadful calamity. A crew of incendiaries stood near at hand denouncing vengeance on all who offered to interfere. Some were so abandoned as to heap fuel on the flames. They threw in firebrands and flaming torches, proclaiming aloud, that they had authority for what they did. Whether, in fact, they had received such horrible orders, or, under that device, meant to plunder with greater licentiousness, cannot now be known.

XXXIX. During the whole of this terrible conflagration Nero remained at Antium, without a thought of returning to the city, till the fire approached the building by which he had communicated the gardens of Mæcenas with the imperial palace. All help however was too late. The palace, the contiguous edifices, and every house adjoining, were laid in ruins. To relieve the unhappy people, wandering in distress without a place of shelter, he opened the field of Mars, as also the magnificent buildings raised by Agrippa, and even his own imperial gardens. He ordered a number of sheds to be thrown up with all possible despatch, for the use of the populace. Household utensils and all kinds of necessary implements were brought from Ostia, and other cities in the neighbourhood. The price of grain was reduced to three sesterces. For acts like these, munificent and well-timed, Nero might hope for a return of popular fa-

vour; but his expectations were in vain; no man was touched with gratitude. A report prevailed that, while the city was in a blaze, Nero went to his own theatre, and there, mounting the stage, sung the destruction of Troy, as a happy allusion to the present misfortune.

XL. On the sixth day the fire was subdued at the foot of mount Esquiline. This was effected by demolishing a number of buildings, and thereby leaving a void space, where, for want of materials, the flame expired. The minds of men had scarce begun to recover from their consternation, when the fire broke out a second time with no less fury than before. This happened, however, in a more open quarter, where fewer lives were lost; but the temples of the gods, the porticos, and buildings raised for the decoration of the city, were levelled to the ground. The popular odium was now more inflamed than ever, as this second alarm began in the house of Tigellinus, formerly the mansion of Æmilius. A suspicion prevailed, that to build a new city, and give it his own name, was the ambition of Nero. Of the fourteen quarters, into which Rome was divided, four only were left entire, three were reduced to ashes, and the remaining seven presented nothing better than a heap of shattered houses half in ruins.

XLI. The number of houses, temples, and insulated mansions destroyed by the fire cannot be ascertained. But the most venerable monuments of antiquity, which the worship of ages had rendered sacred, were laid in ruins: amongst these were the temples dedicated to the moon by Servius Tullius; the fane and the great altar consecrated by Evander, the Arcadian, to Hercules his visiter and his guest; the chapel of Jupiter Stator, built by Romulus; the palace of Numa, and the temple of Vesta with the tutelar gods of Rome. With these were consumed the trophies of so many victories, the inimitable works of the Grecian artists, with the precious monuments of literature and ancient genius, all at present remembered by men advanced in years, but irrecoverably lost. Not even the splendour, with which the new city rose out of the ruins

of the old, could compensate for that lamented disaster. It did not escape observation, that the fire broke out on the fourteenth before the calends of July, a day remarkable for the conflagration kindled by the Senones, when those barbarians took the city of Rome by storm, and burnt it to the ground. Men of reflection, who refined on every thing with minute curiosity, calculated the number of years, months and days, from the foundation of Rome to the firing of it by the Gauls; and from that calamity to the present they found the interval of time precisely the same.

XLII. Nero did not blush to convert to his own use the public ruins of his country. He built a magnificent palace, in which the objects that excited admiration were neither gold nor precious stones. Those decorations, long since introduced by luxury, were grown stale, and hackneyed to the eye. A different species of magnificence was now consulted: expansive lakes and fields of vast extent were intermixed with pleasing variety; woods and forests stretched to an immeasurable length, presenting gloom and solitude amidst scenes of open space, where the eye wandered with surprise over an unbounded prospect. This prodigious plan was carried on under the direction of two surveyors, whose names were Severus and Celer. Bold and original in their projects, these men undertook to conquer nature, and to perform wonders even beyond the imagination and the riches of the prince. They promised to form a navigable canal from the lake Avernus to the mouth of the Tiber. The experiment, like the genius of the men, was bold and grand; but it was to be carried over a long tract of barren land, and, in some places, through opposing mountains. The country round was parched and dry, without one humid spot except the Pomptinian marsh, from which water could be expected. A scheme so vast could not be accomplished without immoderate labour, and, if practicable, the end was in no proportion to the expense and labour. But the prodigious and almost impossible, had charms for the enterprising spirit of Nero. He began to hew a passage through the hills that surround the lake

Avernus, and some traces of his deluded hopes are visible at this day.

XLIII. The ground, which, after marking out his own dominion, Nero left to the public, was not laid out for the new city in a hurry and without judgment, as was the case after the irruption of the Gauls. A regular plan was formed; the streets were made wide and long; the elevation of the houses was defined, with an open area before the doors, and porticos to secure and adorn the front. The expense of the porticos Nero undertook to defray out of his own revenue. He promised, besides, as soon as the work was finished, to clear the ground, and leave a clear space to every house, without any charge to the occupier. In order to excite a spirit of industry and emulation, he held forth rewards proportioned to the rank of each individual, provided the buildings were finished in a limited time. The rubbish, by his order, was removed to the marshes of Ostia, and the ships that brought corn up the river were to return loaded with the refuse of the workmen. Add to all this, the several houses, built on a new principle, were to be raised to a certain elevation, without beams or wood work, on arches of stone from the quarries of Alba or Gabii; those materials being impervious, and of a nature to resist the force of fire. The springs of water, which had been before that time intercepted by individuals for their separate use, were no longer suffered to be diverted from their channel, but left to the care of commissioners, that the public might be properly supplied, and, in case of fire, have a reservoir at hand to stop the progress of the mischief.

It was also settled, that the houses should no longer be contiguous, with slight party-walls to divide them; but every house was to stand detached, surrounded and insulated by its own inclosure. These regulations, it must be admitted, were of public utility, and added much to the embellishment of the new city. But still the old plan of Rome was not without its advocates. It was thought more conducive to the health of the inhabitants. The narrowness of the streets and the elevation of the buildings served to exclude the rays

of the sun; whereas the more open space, having neither shade nor shelter, left men exposed to the intense heat of the day.

XLIV. These several regulations were, no doubt, the best that human wisdom could suggest. The next care was to propitiate the gods. The Sybilline books were consulted, and the consequence was, that supplications were decreed to Vulcan, to Ceres, and Proserpine. A band of matrons offered their prayers and sacrifices to Juno, first in the capitol, and next on the nearest margin of the sea, where they supplied themselves with water, to sprinkle the temple and the statue of the goddess. A select number of women, who had husbands actually living, laid the deities on their sacred beds, and kept midnight vigils with the usual solemnity. But neither these religious ceremonies nor the liberal donations of the prince, could efface from the minds of men the prevailing opinion, that Rome was set on fire by his own orders. The infamy of that horrible transaction still adhered to him. In order, if possible, to remove the imputation, he determined to transfer the guilt to others. For this purpose he punished, with exquisite torture, a race of men detested for their evil practices, by vulgar appellation commonly called Christians.

The name was derived from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, suffered under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judæa. By that event the sect, of which he was the founder, received a blow, which for a time, checked the growth of a dangerous superstition; but it revived soon after, and spread with recruited vigour, not only in Judæa, the soil that gave it birth, but even in the city of Rome, the common sink into which every thing infamous and abominable flows like a torrent from all quarters of the world. Nero proceeded with his usual artifice. He found a set of profligate and abandoned wretches, who were induced to confess themselves guilty, and, on the evidence of such men, a number of Christians were convicted, not, indeed, upon clear evidence of their having set the city on fire, but rather on account of their sullen hatred of the whole human race. They

were put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and left to be devoured by dogs; others were nailed to the cross; numbers were burnt alive, and many, covered over with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night.

For the convenience of seeing this tragic spectacle, the emperor lent his own gardens. He added the sports of the circus, and assisted in person, sometimes driving a curricle, and occasionally mixing with the rabble in his coachman's dress. At length the cruelty of these proceedings filled every breast with compassion. Humanity relented in favour of the Christians. The manners of that people were, no doubt, of a pernicious tendency, and their crimes called for the hand of justice: but it was evident, that they fell a sacrifice, not for the public good, but to glut the rage and cruelty of one man only.

XLV. Meanwhile, to supply the unbounded prodigality of the prince, all Italy was ravaged; the provinces were plundered; and the allies of Rome, with the several places that enjoyed the title of free cities, were put under contribution. The very gods were taxed. Their temples in the city were rifled of their treasures, and heaps of massy gold, which, through a series of ages, the virtue of the Roman people, either returning thanks for victories, or, performing their vows made in the hour of distress, had dedicated to religious uses, were now produced to answer the demands of riot and extravagance. In Greece and Asia rapacity was not content with seizing the votive offerings that adorned the temples, but even the very statues of the gods were deemed lawful prey. To carry this impious robbery into execution, Acratus and Secundus Carinas were sent with a special commission: the former, one of Nero's freedmen, of a genius ready for any black design: the latter, a man of literature, with the Greek philosophy fluent in his mouth, and not one virtue at his heart. It was a report current at the time, that Seneca, wishing to throw from himself all responsibility for these impious

acts desired leave to retire to some part of Italy. Not being able to succeed in his request, he feigned a nervous disorder, and never stirred out of his room. If credit be due to some writers, a dose of poison was prepared for him by Cleonicus, one of his freedmen, by the instigation of Nero. The philosopher, however, warned by the same servant, whose courage failed him, or, perhaps, shielded from danger by his own wary disposition, escaped the snare. He lived at that very time on the most simple diet: wild apples, that grew in the woods, were his food; and water from the clear purling stream, served to quench his thirst.

XLVI. About the same time a body of gladiators, detained in custody at Prænestè, made an attempt to recover their liberty. The military guard was called out, and the tumult died away. The incident, notwithstanding, revived the memory of Spartacus. The calamities, that followed the daring enterprise of that adventurer, became the general topic, and filled the minds of all with dreadful apprehensions. Such is the genius of the populace, ever prone to sudden innovations, yet terrified at the approach of danger. In a few days after, advice was received, that the fleet had suffered by a violent storm. This was not an event of war, for there never was a period of such profound tranquillity; but Nero had ordered the ships, on a stated day, to assemble on the coast of Campania. The dangers of the sea never entered into his consideration. His orders were peremptory. The pilots, to mark their zeal, set sail in tempestuous weather from the port of Formia. While they were endeavouring to double the cape of Misenum, a squall of wind from the south threw them on the coast of Cuma, where a number of the larger galleys, and almost all the smaller vessels, were dashed to pieces.

XLVII. Towards the close of the year, omens and prodigies filled the minds of the people with apprehensions of impending mischief. Such dreadful peals of thunder were never known. A comet appeared, and that phenomenon was a certain prelude to some bloody act to be committed by Nero. Monstrous

births, such as men and beasts with double heads, were seen in the streets and public ways; and in the midst of sacrifices, which required victims big with young, the like conceptions fell from the entrails of animals slain at the altar. In the territory of Placentia a calf was dropped with its head growing at the extreme part of the leg. The construction of the soothsayers was, that another head was preparing for the government of the world, but would prove weak, insufficient, and be soon detected, like the monstrous productions, which did not rest concealed in the womb, but came before their time, and lay exposed to public view near the high road.

XLVIII. Silius Nerva and Atticus Vestinus entered on their consulship. In that juncture a deep conspiracy was formed, and carried on with such a spirit of enterprise, that in the moment of its birth it was almost ripe for execution. Senators, Roman knights, military men, and even women, gave in their names with emulation, all incited by their zeal for Caius Piso, and their detestation of Nero. Piso was descended from the house of Calpurnius, by his paternal line related to the first families in Rome. His virtues, or his amiable qualities that resembled virtues, made him the idol of the people. An orator of high distinction, he employed his eloquence in the defence of his fellow citizens; possessed of great wealth, he was generous to his friends; by nature courteous, he was affable and polite to all. To these accomplishments he united a graceful figure and an engaging countenance. In his moral conduct neither strict nor regular, he led a life of voluptuous ease, fond of pomp and splendour, and at times, free and luxurious in his pleasures. His irregularities served to grace his character. At a time when vice had charms for all orders of men, it was not expected, that the sovereign should lead a life of austerity and self-denial.

XLIX. The conspiracy did not originate from the ambition of Piso. Among so many bold and generous spirits it is not easy to name the persons who first set the whole in motion. Subrius Flavius, a

tribune of the prætorian guards, and Sulpicius Asper, were the active leaders. The firmness with which they afterwards met their fate sufficiently marks their characters. Annæus Lucan, the celebrated poet, and Plautius Lateranus, consul elect, entered into the plot with ardour and inflamed resentment. Lucan had personal provocations: Nero was an enemy to his rising fame: not being able to vie with that eminent genius, he ordered him not to make his verses public, determined to silence what he vainly strove to emulate. Lateranus brought with him no private animosity: he acted on nobler principles; the love of his country inspired him, and he knew no other motive. Flavius Scevinus and Afranius Quinctianus, both of senatorian rank, stood forward to guide the enterprise with a degree of spirit little expected from the tenor of their lives. Scevinus, addicted to his pleasures, passed his days in luxury, sloth, and languor. Quinctianus was decried for the effeminacy of his manners. Nero had lampooned him in a copy of defamatory verses, and to revenge the injury Quinctianus, became a patriot.

L. The conspirators had frequent meetings. They inveighed against the vices of Nero; they painted forth in glaring colours all his atrocious deeds, by which the empire was brought to the brink of ruin; they urged the necessity of choosing a successor equal to the task of restoring a distressed and tottering state, and, in the interval, enlisted in their confederacy several Roman knights, namely, Tullius Senecio, Cervarius Proculus, Vulcatius Araricus, Julius Tugurinus, Munatius Gratus, Antonius Natalis, and Martius Festus. Senecio, the first in the list, had lived in the closest intimacy with the prince, and, being still obliged to wear the mask, he found the interval big with anxiety, mistrust, and danger. Antonius Natalis was the bosom-friend and confidential agent of Piso: the rest had their separate views, and in a revolution hoped to find their private advantages. There were, besides Subrius Flavius and Sulpisius Asper, already mentioned, a number of military men ready to draw their swords in the cause. In this class were Granius

Silvanus and Statius Proximus, both tribunes of the prætorian bands; Maximus Scaurus and Venetus Paullus, two centurions. But the main strength and pillar of the party was Fenius Rufus, commander in chief of the prætorian guards; a man of principle, and for the integrity of his conduct esteemed and honoured by the people. But Tigellinus stood in higher favour with the prince, and by his cruel devices no less than by his taste for riot and debauchery, so ingratiated himself, that he was able to supplant the prætorian præfect, and by secret accusations to endanger his life. He represented him to Nero as the favoured lover of Agrippina, still cherishing a regard for her memory, and lying in wait for an opportunity to revenge her wrongs.

Rufus inclined to the discontented party, and, at length, declared himself willing to assist their enterprise. Encouraged by this accession of strength, the conspirators began to think of the decisive blow, and to deliberate about the time and place. We are told, that Subrius Flavius resolved to take to himself the glory of the deed. Two different schemes occurred to him. One was, while the prince was singing on the stage, to despatch him in sight of the whole theatre. His second project was, while Nero was rambling abroad in his midnight frolics, to set fire to the palace, and, in the tumult, to take him by surprise, unattended by his guards. The last seemed to be the safest measure. The tyrant, unseen and unassisted, would fall a devoted victim, and die in solitude. On the other hand, the idea of a brave exploit, performed in the presence of applauding numbers, fired the generous ardour of that heroic mind. But prudential considerations had too much weight. He wished to gain immortal fame, and he thought of his own personal safety; a tame reflection, always adverse to every great and noble enterprise.

LI. While the conspirators lingered in suspense, prolonging the awful period of their hopes and fears, a woman, of the name of Epicharis, apprised of the plot (by what means is still a mystery,) began to animate their drooping spirit, and to blame their cold

delay. What made her conduct singular on this occasion was, that, before this time, not one great or honourable sentiment was ever known to have entered her heart. Seeing the business languish, she retired in disgust, and went into Campania. But a spirit like hers could not be at rest. She endeavoured to seduce the officers of the fleet then lying at Misenum. She began her approaches to Volusius Proculus, an officer who had under his command a thousand marines. He was one of the assassins employed in the tragic catastrophe of Nero's mother. His reward, he thought, was in no proportion to the magnitude of the crime. Being known to Epicharis, or having then contracted a recent friendship, he began to disclose the secrets of his heart. He enumerated his exploits in Nero's service, and complained of the ingratitude with which he was ill requited; avowing, at the same time, a fixed resolution to revenge himself, whenever an opportunity offered. The woman, from this discourse, conceived hopes of gaining a proselyte, and by his means a number of others. She saw that a revolt in the fleet would be of the greatest moment. Nero was fond of sailing parties on the coast of Misenum and Puteoli, and would, by consequence, put himself in the power of the mariners.

Epicharis entered into close conference with Proculus; she recapitulated the various acts of cruelty committed by Nero. The fathers, she said, had no doubt remaining; they were of one mind; all agreed, that a tyrant, who overturned the laws and constitution of his country, ought to fall a sacrifice to an injured people. She added, that Proculus would do well to co-operate with the friends of liberty. If he kindled the same spirit in the minds of the soldiers, a sure reward would wait him. In the fervour of her zeal, she had the prudence to conceal the names of the conspirators. That precaution served to screen her afterwards, when the marine officer turned informer, and betrayed the whole to Nero. She was cited to answer, and confronted with her accuser; but the charge, resting entirely on the evidence of one man, without a circumstance to support it, was easily

cluded. Epicharis, notwithstanding, was detained in custody. Nero's suspicions were not to be removed. The accusation was destitute of proof, but he was not the less inclined to believe the worst.

LII. The undaunted firmness of Epicharis did not quiet the apprehensions of the conspirators. Dreading a discovery, they determined to execute their purpose without delay. The place they fixed upon was a villa belonging to Piso, in the neighbourhood of Baiæ, where the emperor, attracted by the beauties of that delightful spot, was used to enjoy the pleasure of bathing, and his convivial parties, divested of his guards, and unincumbered by the parade of state. Piso objected to the measure. "What would the "world say, if his table were imbrued with blood, and "the gods of hospitality violated by the murder of "a prince, however detested for his atrocious deeds? "Rome was the proper theatre for such a catastrophe. "The scene should be in his own palace, that haugh-"ty mansion built with the spoils of plundered citi-"zens. The blow for liberty would be still more "noble before an assembly of the people. The actions "of men, who dared nobly for the public, should be "seen by the public eye."

Such were the objections advanced by Piso in the presence of the conspirators: in his heart he had other reasons. He dreaded Lucius Silanus, knowing his high descent, and the rare accomplishments which he acquired under the care of Caius Cassius, who had trained him from his youth, and formed his mind to every thing great and honourable. A man thus distinguished might aspire to the imperial dignity. All who stood aloof from the conspiracy would be ready to second his ambition, and most probably, would be joined by others, whom the fate of a devoted prince, cut off by treachery, might touch with compassion. Piso was supposed to have another secret motive: he knew the genius and the ardent spirit of Vestinus, the consul. A man of his character might think of restoring the old republic, or be for choosing another emperor, to show mankind that the sovereign power was a gift to be disposed of according to his will and

pleasure. Vestinus, in fact, had no share in the conspiracy, though he was afterwards charged as an accomplice, and, under that pretence, doomed to death by the unappeasable malice and the cruelty of Nero.

LIII. At length the conspirators fixed their day. They chose the time of the public games, which were soon to be performed in the circus, according to established usage, in honour of Ceres. During that festival the emperor, who rarely showed himself to the people, but remained sequestered in his palace or his gardens, would not fail to attend his favourite diversions; and, in that scene of gaiety, access to his person would not be difficult. The assault was to be made in the following manner. Lateranus, a man of undaunted resolution, and an athletic form, was to approach the prince, with an humble air of supplication, as if to entreat relief for himself and family; and, in the act of falling at his feet, to overthrow him by some sudden exertion, and by his weight keep him stretched on the ground. In that condition the tribunes, the centurions, and the rest of the conspirators, as the opportunity offered, and as courage prompted, were to fall on, and sacrifice their victim to the just resentments of the people.

Scevinus claimed the honour of being the first to strike. For this purpose, he had taken a dagger from the temple of health, in Etruria, or, as some writers will have it, from the temple of Fortune, in the city of Ferentum. This instrument he carried constantly about him, as a sacred weapon, dedicated to the cause of liberty. It was further settled, that, during the tumult, Piso was to take his post in the temple of Ceres, and there remain till such time as Fenius and his confederates should call him forth, and conduct him to the camp. To conciliate the favour of the people, Antonia, the daughter of the late emperor was to appear in the cavalcade. This last circumstance, since it is related by Pliny, must rest upon his authority. If it came from a less respectable quarter, I should not think myself at liberty to suppress it; but it may be proper to ask, Is it probable that Antonia would hazard her reputation, and even her life, in a project

so uncertain and so big with danger? Is it probable that Piso, distinguished by his conjugal affection, could agree at once to abandon a wife whom he loved, and marry another to gratify his own wild ambition? But it may be said, of all the passions that inflame the human mind, ambition is the most fierce and ardent, of power to extinguish every other sentiment.

LIV. In a conspiracy like the present, so widely diffused among persons of different ages, rank, sex, and condition, some of them poor, and others rich, it may well be matter of wonder, that nothing transpired, till the discovery burst out at once from the house of Scevinus. This active partisan, on the day preceding the intended execution of the plot, had a long conference with Antonius Natalis; after which he returned home, and having sealed his will, unsheathed his sacred dagger, already mentioned. Finding it blunted by long disuse, he gave it to Milichus, his freedman, to be well whetted, and sharpened at the point. In the meantime, he went to his meal, more sumptuously served than had been his custom. To his favourite slaves he granted their freedom, and among the rest distributed sums of money. He affected an air of gaiety; he talked of indifferent things, with counterfeited cheerfulness; but a cloud hung over him, and too plainly showed, that some grand design was labouring in his breast. He desired the same Milichus to prepare bandages for the bracing of wounds, and applications to stop the effusion of blood. If this man was, before that time, apprised of the plot, he had till then acted with integrity; but the more probable opinion is, that he was never trusted, and now from all the circumstances drew his own conclusion.

The reward of treachery no sooner presented itself to the servile mind of an enfranchised slave, than he saw wealth and power inviting him to betray his master. The temptation was bright and dazzling; every principle gave way; the life of his patron was set at naught; and for the gift of freedom no sense of gratitude remained. He advised with his wife, and female advice was the worst he could take. The woman,

with all the art and malice of her sex, alarmed his fears. Other slaves, she said, and other freedmen had an eye on all that passed. The silence of one could be of no use. The whole would be brought to light; and he, who first made the discovery, would be entitled to the reward.

LV. At the dawn of day Milichus made the best of his way to the gardens of Servilius. Being refused admittance, he declared that he had business of the first importance, nothing less than the discovery of a dark and dangerous conspiracy. The porter conducted him to Epaphroditus, one of Nero's freedmen, who introduced him to the presence of his master. Milichus informed the emperor of his danger, and laid open the machinations of his enemies, with all that he knew and all that he conjectured. He produced the dagger, destined to give the mortal stab, and desired to be confronted with the criminal.

Scevinus was seized by the soldiers, and dragged in custody to answer the charge. "The dagger," he said, "was a sacred relic, left to him by his ances-"tors. He had preserved it with veneration, and kept "it safe in his chamber, till the perfidy of a slave sur-"reptitiously conveyed it away. As to his will, he "had often changed it, often signed and sealed a new "one, without any distinction of days. He had been "always generous to his domestics; nor was it now "for the first time that he had given freedom to some, "and to others liberal donations. If in the last instance "his bounty exceeded the former measure, the reason "was, that being reduced in his circumstances, and "pressed by his debts, he was afraid that his will "would be declared void in favour of his creditors. "With regard to his table, it was well known that his "style of living had ever been elegant, and even pro-"fuse, to a degree that drew upon him the censure of "rigid moralists. To the preparation of bandages and "styptics he was an utter stranger. None were made "by his order. The whole was the invention of a "vile informer, who found himself destitute of proof, "and, to prop his infamous calumny, dared to fabri-"cate a new charge, at once the author and the wit-

"ness of a lie." This defence was uttered by Scevinus in a tone of firmness, and the intrepidity of his manner gave it strength and credit. He pronounced the informer a notorious profligate, and, by consequence, an incompetent witness. This he urged with such an air of confidence, and with so much energy, that the information would have fallen to the ground, if the wife of Milichus had not observed, in the presence of her husband, that a long and secret interview had taken place between the prisoner and Natalis, both connected in the closest friendship with Caius Piso.

LVI. Natalis was cited to appear. Scevinus and he were examined apart, touching their late meeting. What was their business? and what was the conversation that passed between them? Their answers did not agree. Fresh suspicions arose, and both were loaded with irons. At the sight of the rack, their resolution failed. Natalis was the first to confess the guilt. He knew all the particulars of the conspiracy, and was, by consequence, able to support his information. He named Caius Piso, and proceeded next to Seneca. He had probably, been employed as a messenger between Seneca and Piso; or, knowing the inveterate rancour with which Nero sought the destruction of his tutor, he intended by that charge, however false, to make terms for himself. Scevinus, as soon as he heard that Natalis had made a discovery, saw the inutility of remaining silent. Thinking the whole conspiracy detected, he yielded to his fears; and, following a mean example of pusillanimity, discovered his accomplices. Three of the number, namely, Lucan, Quinctianus, and Senecio, persisted for some time to deny the whole with undaunted firmness, till induced, at length, by a promise of pardon, they thought they could not do enough to atone for their obstinacy. Lucan did not scruple to impeach his own mother, whose name was Acilia. Quinctianus gave information against Glicius Gallus, his dearest friend: and Senecio, in like manner, betrayed Annius Pollia.

LVII. Nero did not forget that Epicharis was still

detained in custody, on the evidence of Volusius Proculus. The weakness of a female frame, he imagined, would not be able to endure the pangs of the rack. He therefore ordered her to be put to the most exquisite torture. But neither stripes, nor fire, nor the brutal rage of the executioners, who were determined not to be baffled by a woman, could subdue a mind like hers, firm, constant, and undaunted to the last. Not a word was extorted from her. Her misery ended for that day. On the next, the same cruelty was prepared. Epicharis had no strength left. Her limbs were rent and dislocated. The executioners provided a chair to convey her to the place of torture. While they were conducting her, she took from her breast the girdle that braced her garment, and, having fastened one end of it to the top of the chair, made a noose for her neck, and, throwing herself from her seat, hung suspended with the whole weight of her body. In her mangled condition the remains of life were soon extinguished.

Such was the fate of this magnanimous woman. She left behind her a glorious example of truth and constancy, the more striking, as this generous part was acted by an enfranchised slave, to save the lives of men, in no degree related to her, and almost unknown. With heroic fortitude she endured the worst that malice could inflict, at a time when men of illustrious birth, when officers, Roman knights and senators, untried by the pangs of torture, betrayed, with a kind of emulation, their friends, their relations, and all that was dear to them. Quinctianus, Senecio, and even Lucan, continued to give in the names of the conspirators. Every new discovery filled Nero with consternation, though he had doubled his guard and taken every precaution to secure his person.

LVIII. Parties of soldiers under arms were stationed in every quarter, on the walls of Rome, on the sea-coast, and along the banks of the Tiber. The city presented the appearance of a garrisoned town. The forum and the open squares were filled with cohorts of horse and foot. The neighbouring villages and the country round were invested. Even private houses

were secured. The German soldiers, ordered out on duty, mixed with the rest of the army. Being foreigners, Nero depended on their fidelity. The conspirators were led forth in a long procession to the tribunal of the prince. They stood in crowds at his garden gate, waiting their turn to be summoned before him. In regular succession they were admitted to an audience, and every trifle was magnified into a crime. A smile, a look, a whisper, a casual meeting at a convivial party, or a public show, was evidence of treason. Nor was it sufficient that Nero and Tigellinus were keen and vehement in their inquiries: Fenius Rufus took an active part. Having hitherto escaped detection, he thought that violence against his accomplices would be the best way to screen himself. While he was eagerly pressing them with questions, Subrius Flavius, the prætorian tribune, by signs and tokens, signified to him his intention to cut off the tyrant in the midst of the examination. He had his hand on the hilt of his sword, when Rufus checked the brave design.

LIX. On the first detection of the plot, while Milichus was giving his evidence, and Scevinus was still wavering and irresolute, some of the conspirators exhorted Piso to show himself in the camp, or to mount the public rostra, in order to gain the affections of the army and the people. "Let your friends," they said, "assemble in a body; let them stand forth "in your cause, and they will be joined by numbers. "The fame of an impending revolution would excite "a general spirit; and fame in great undertakings "has been often known to decide the event. Nero "will be taken by surprise; on his part no measures "are concerted. In sudden commotions the bravest "are often struck with terror; and if courage may "be thus overpowered, what will be the case of a "theatrical emperor, a scenic performer, a vile co-"median, assisted by Tigellinus and his band of "harlots? In all great enterprises the attempt ap-"pears impracticable to little minds; but the brave "and valiant know that to dare is to conquer. In "a plot, in which numbers were embarked, the

"silence of all could not be expected. The mind "will waver, and the body will shrink from pain. "There is no secret so deeply laid, but bribery will "draw it forth, or cruelty can extort it. The guards "in a short time might seize Piso himself, and drag "him to an ignominious death. How much more "glorious to fall bravely in the cause of liberty! to "die sword in hand, vindicating the rights of freeborn "men, and rousing the army and the people to their "own just defence! The soldiers may refuse to join, "and the people may be guilty of treachery to them-"selves; but, even in that case, how noble to close the "scene with a spirit worthy of your ancestors, blest "with the wishes of the present age and the applause "of all posterity!"

These exhortations made no impression on Piso. He retired to his own house, and there fortified his mind against the worst that could happen. A band of soldiers broke in upon him, all selected from the recruits lately raised, undisciplined, and new to the service, but preferred by Nero to the veterans, whom he suspected of disaffection. Piso ordered the veins of both his arms to be opened, and expired: his will was a disgrace to his memory. It was written in a strain of fulsome flattery to the prince. He was betrayed into that act of meanness by his affection for his wife, a woman destitute of merit, who had great elegance of form, and nothing else to recommend her. Her name was Arria Galla. She had been married to Domitius Silius, and from him seduced by Piso. The passive spirit of the injured husband and the wanton character of the wife conspired to fix an indelible stain on the name of Piso.

LX. Plantius Lateranus, consul elect, was the next victim. He was seized, and dragged to instant death; no time allowed to take the last farewell of his children, nor even the usual liberty of choosing his own mode of dying. He was hurried to the place of execution usually allotted to slaves, and there despatched by the hand of Statius, a military tribune. He met his fate with a noble and determined silence, not so

much as condescending to tax the executioner with his share in the conspiracy.

The next exploit of Nero was the death of Seneca. Against that eminent man no proof of guilt appeared; but the emperor thirsted for his blood, and what poison had not accomplished he was determined to finish by the sword. Natalis was the only person who had mentioned his name. The chief head of his accusation was, "That he himself had been sent "on a visit to Seneca, then confined by illness, with "instructions to mention to him, that Piso often called "at his house, but never could gain admittance, "though it was the interest of both to live on terms "of mutual friendship." To this Seneca made answer, "That private interviews could be of no ser- "vice to either; but still his happiness was grafted "on the safety of Piso." Granius Silvanus, a tribune of the prætorian guards, was despatched to Seneca, with directions to let him know what was alleged against him, and to inquire whether he admitted the conversation stated by Natalis, with the answers given by himself. Seneca, by design or accident, was that very day on his return from Campania. He stopt at a villa of his own about four miles from Rome. Towards the close of day the tribune arrived, and beset the house with a band of soldiers. Seneca was at supper with his wife Pompeia Paulina, and two of his friends, when Silvanus entered the room, and reported the orders of the emperor.

LXI. Seneca did not hesitate to acknowledge that Natalis had been at his house, with a complaint that Piso's visits were not received. His apology, he said, imported no more than want of health, the love of ease, and the necessity of attending to a weak and crazy constitution. "That he should prefer the in- "terest of a private citizen to his own safety, was too "absurd to be believed. He had no motives to in- "duce him to pay such a compliment to any man; "adulation was no part of his character. This is a "truth well known to Nero himself: he can tell you "that, on various occasions, he found in Seneca a "man, who spoke his mind with freedom, and dis-

"dained the arts of servile flattery." Silvanus returned to Rome. He found the prince in company with Poppæa and Tigellinus, who, as often as cruelty was in agitation, formed the cabinet-council. In their presence the messenger reported his answer. Nero asked, "Does Seneca prepare to end his days by "a voluntary death?" "He showed," said the tribune, "no symptom of fear, no token of sorrow, no "dejected passion: his words and looks bespoke a "mind serene, erect, and firm." "Return," said Nero, "and tell him he must resolve to die." Silvanus, according to the account of Fabius Rusticus, chose to go back by a different road. He went through a private way to Fenius Rufus, to advise with that officer, whether he should execute the emperor's orders. Rufus told him that he must obey. Such was the degenerate spirit of the times. A general panic took possession of every mind. This very Silvanus was one of the conspirators, and yet was base enough to be an instrument of the cruelty which he had combined to revenge. He had, however, the decency to avoid the shock of seeing Seneca, and of delivering in person the fatal message. He sent a centurion to perform that office for him.

LXII. Seneca heard the message with calm composure. He called for his will, and being deprived of that right of a Roman citizen, by the centurion, he turned to his friends, and "You see," he said, "that I "am not at liberty to requite your services with the "last marks of my esteem. One thing, however, still "remains. I leave you the example of my life, the "best and most precious legacy now in my power. "Cherish it in your memory, and you will gain at once "the applause due to virtue, and the fame of a sin"cere and generous friendship." All who were present melted into tears. He endeavoured to assuage their sorrows; he offered his advice with mild persuasion; he used the tone of authority. "Where," he said, "are the precepts of philosophy, and where "the words of wisdom, which for years have taught "us to meet the calamities of life with firmness and a "well prepared spirit? Was the cruelty of Nero un-

"known to any of us? He murdered his mother; he "destroyed his brother; and, after those deeds of "horror, what remains to fill the measure of his guilt "but the death of his guardian and his tutor?"

LXIII. Having delivered himself in these pathetic terms, he directed his attention to his wife. He clasped her in his arms, and in that fond embrace yielded for a while to the tenderness of his nature. Recovering his resolution, he entreated her to appease her grief, and bear in mind that his life was spent in a constant course of honour and of virtue. That consideration would serve to heal affliction, and sweeten all her sorrows. Paulina was still inconsolable. She was determined to die with her husband; she invoked the aid of the executioners, and begged to end her wretched being. Seneca saw that she was animated by the love of glory, and that generous principle he thought ought not to be restrained. The idea of leaving a beloved object exposed to the insults of the world, and the malice of her enemies, pierced him to the quick. "It has been my care," he said, "to instruct you in that best philosophy, the "art of mitigating the ills of life; but you prefer an "honourable death. I will not envy you the vast re- "nown that must attend your fall. Since you will "have it so, we will die together. We will leave be- "hind us an example of equal constancy; but the "glory will be all your own."

These words were no sooner uttered, than the veins of both their arms were opened. At Seneca's time of life the blood was slow and languid. The decay of nature, and the impoverishing diet to which he had used himself, left him in a feeble condition. He ordered the vessels of his legs and joints to be punctured. After that operation, he began to labour with excruciating pains. Lest his sufferings should overpower the constancy of his wife, or the sight of her afflictions prove too much for his own sensibility, he persuaded her to retire into another room. His eloquence still continued to flow with its usual purity. He called for his secretaries, and dictated while life was ebbing away, that farewell discourse, which has

been published, and is in every body's hands. I will not injure his last words by giving the substance in another form.

LXIV. Nero had conceived no antipathy to Paulina. If she perished with her husband, he began to dread the public execration. That he might not multiply the horrors of his present cruelty, he sent orders to exempt Paulina from the stroke of death. The slaves and freedmen, by the direction of the soldiers, bound up her arm, and stopped the effusion of blood. This, it is said, was done without her knowledge, as she lay in a state of languor. The fact, however, cannot be known with certainty. Vulgar malignity, which is ever ready to detract from exalted virtue, spread a report, that, as long as she had reason to think that the rage of Nero was implacable, she had the ambition to share the glory of her husband's fate; but a milder prospect being unexpectedly presented, the charms of life gained admission to her heart, and triumphed over her constancy. She lived a few years longer, in fond regret, to the end of her days revering the memory of her husband. The weakness of her whole frame, and the sickly languor of her countenance, plainly showed that she had been reduced to the last extremity.

Seneca lingered in pain. The approach of death was slow, and he wished for his dissolution. Fatigued with pain, worn out and exhausted, he requested his friend, Statius Annæus, whose fidelity and medical skill he had often experienced, to administer a draught of that swift speeding poison, usually given at Athens to the criminals adjudged to death. He swallowed the potion, but without any immediate effect. His limbs were chilled: the vessels of his body were closed, and the ingredients, though keen and subtle, could not arrest the principles of life. He desired to be placed in a warm bath. Being conveyed according to his desire, he sprinkled his slaves with the water, and "Thus," he said, "I MAKE LIBATION TO "JUPITER THE DELIVERER." The vapour soon overpowered him, and he breathed his last. His body, without any funeral pomp, was committed to the

flames. He had given directions for that purpose in his last will, made at a time when he was in the zenith of power, and even then looked forward to the close of his days.

LXV. A report was at that time current at Rome, that Subrius Flavius and several centurions held a private meeting, with the knowledge and consent of Seneca, and there resolved to open a new and unexpected scene. The blow for liberty was to be struck in the name of Piso, and as soon as the world was freed from the tyranny of Nero, Piso was to be the next victim, in order to make way for Seneca, who, for his virtues, was to be raised to the highest elevation, with an air of innocence, and of a man unconscious of the plot. The very words of Flavius were reported among the people. He is supposed to have said, "What good end will it answer to depose a "MINSTREL, if we place a TRAGEDIAN in his room?" The fact was, Nero played on his guitar, and Piso trod the stage in the buskin of tragedy.

LXVI. The part, which the military men had taken in the conspiracy, did not long remain a secret. The double game played by Fenius Rufus, at first a confederate in the plot, and then a judge pronouncing sentence on his accomplices, provoked the indignation of all. In the examination of Scevinus that officer pressed his interrogatories with over-acted zeal, and by menaces endeavoured to extort a confession. Scevinus answered with a smile, "No man knows the "particulars better than yourself. You now may "show your gratitude to so good a prince." Rufus was covered with confusion. To speak was not in his power, and to remain silent was dangerous. He trembled, faltered, and hesitated an answer. His embarrassment betrayed his guilt. The rest of the conspirators, with Cervarius Proculus, a Roman knight, at their head, were eager to depose against him. At length a soldier of the name of Cassius, remarkable for his robust stature, and for that reason ordered to attend, laid hold of Rufus by the emperor's order, and loaded him with irons.

LXVII. The same witnesses gave evidence against

Subrius Flavius. In answer to the charge, he relied much on his course of life, and the dissimilitude of manners between himself and his accusers. "Was it "probable that a soldier, inured to the profession of "arms, would associate with an effeminate set of men, "strangers to danger and to manly enterprise!" Finding himself pressed by the weight of evidence, he changed his tone, and with heroic fortitude avowed the part he had acted. Being asked by Nero, what could induce him to forget the solemn obligation of his oath? "Because," he said, "I hated, I detested you. "There was a time when no soldier in your army was "more devoted to your service, and that was as long "as you deserved the esteem of mankind. I began to "hate you when you were guilty of matricide; when "you murdered your mother and destroyed your wife; "when you became a coachman, a comedian, and an "incendiary." I have given the very words of this intrepid conspirator, because they were not, like those of Seneca, published to the world; and the rough sentiments of a soldier, in his own plain, but vigorous language, merit the attention of posterity.

In the whole discovery of the plot nothing made so deep an impression on the mind of Nero. Though his heart never knew remorse for the worst of crimes, his ear, unaccustomed to the voice of truth, shrunk from the sound of freedom, and startled at reproach. Flavius was ordered for execution. Veianius Niger, one of the tribunes, led him to the next field, and there directed a trench to be opened. The prisoner surveyed the spot, and, finding it neither wide nor deep enough, turned with a smile to the soldiers, and "This," he said, "shows no military skill." Niger desired him to extend his neck with courage: "Strike," said Flavius, "and prove your courage equal to mine." The tribune was seized with a tremour in every joint. He severed the head at two blows, and made a merit of it with Nero, giving the name of cruelty to his want of firmness. He made it his boast, that, by repeating the stroke, he made him die twice.

LXVIII. Sulpicius Asper, the centurion, gave the next example of magnanimity. Being asked by Nero,

why he conspired against his life? he answered shortly, "I knew no other relief from your flagitious "deeds." He was instantly put to death. The rest of the centurions underwent their fate, and all died worthy of their characters. Fenius Rufus had not equal constancy. He betrayed an abject spirit, and even in his will was weak enough to bewail his unhappy fate. Nero lived in hopes of seeing Vestinus, the consul, charged as a criminal. He knew the character of the man; an intrepid daring spirit, ambitious, and suspected of disaffection. The conspirators, however, had no communication of counsels with that active magistrate. Some declined him on account of former animosities, and others, because they thought him rash and impetuous. Nero's rancour grew out of a close and intimate friendship. In that familiar intercourse Vestinus saw into the very heart of the prince, and despised him for his vices. Nero shrunk from a man, who had the spirit to speak his mind with freedom, and, in his sarcastic vein, had often made the prince the subject of his raillery; and raillery, when seasoned with truth, never fails to leave a sting that festers in the memory. A recent incident gave an edge to Nero's resentment. Vestinus married Statilia Messalina, though he knew that the prince was one of her lovers.

LXIX. No witness appeared against Vestinus; no crime was laid to his charge, and by consequence, no proceeding could be had in due form of law. But the will of the tyrant still remained. He sent Gerelanus, one of the tribunes, at the head of a cohort, with orders so to take his measures, that the consul might not be able to stand on the defensive, and, for that purpose, to invest his house, which, like a proud citadel, overlooked the forum, and contained a numerous train of young and hardy slaves, in the nature of a garrison. Vestinus had that very day discharged all the functions of his consular office. He was at table with his friends, free from apprehension, or it may be, affecting an air of gaiety, when the soldiers entered, and informed him that the tribune had important business with him. He rose and left the room. The

scene of death was instantly laid. He was shut up in a chamber; a physician attended; his veins were opened; he was conducted to a warm bath, and, being put into the water, expired without a complaint, and without a groan. His guests, in the mean time, remained in the banqueting room, imprisoned by the guards. It was late at night before they were released. Nero heard the account with pleasure. He saw in the sport of his imagination, a set of men assembled at a convivial party, and every moment expecting their final doom. He laughed at their distress, and said facetiously, "They have paid for their consular sup-"per."

LXX. Lucan, the famous poet, was the next sacrifice to the vengeance of Nero. His blood flowed freely from him, and being soon well nigh exhausted, he perceived that the vital heat had left the extremities of his limbs. His hands and feet were chilled, but the warmth retiring to his heart, he still retained his senses and the vigour of his mind. The lines in his poem, which described a soldier dying in the same condition, occurred to his memory. He repeated the passage, and expired. His own verses were the last words he uttered. Senecio, Quinctianus, and Scevinus, suffered in a short time after. The dissolute softness of their lives did not disgrace them in their end. They met their fate with resolution. The rest of the conspirators were led to execution. In their deaths there was nothing that merits particular notice.

LXXI. While the city presented a scene of blood, and funerals darkened all the streets, the altars of the capitol smoked with victims slaughtered on the occasion. One had lost a son; another was deprived of his brother, his friend, or his near relation; and yet stifling every sentiment of the heart, all concurred in offering thanks to the gods; they adorned the prince's house with laurel; they fell at the tyrant's feet; they clasped his knees, and printed kisses on his hand. Nero received this vile adulation as the token of real joy. In order to make sure of the people, he showed his clemency to Antonius Natalis and Cervarius Proculus, whose merit consisted alto-

gether in their treachery to their friends. To Milichus he granted a rich and ample recompense, and moreover added the honourable appellation of a Greek name, importing the CONSERVATOR. Granius Silvanus, one of the tribunes engaged in the conspiracy, received a free pardon; but, disdaining to enjoy it, he died by his own hand. Statius Proximus had the vanity to follow his example. Pompeius, Cornelius Martialis, Flavius Nepos, and Statius Domitius were all degraded from their tribunitian rank, not as men condemned, but suspected of disaffection. Novius Priscus, Glitius Gallus, and Annius Pollio were ordered into exile; the first on account of his known intimacy with Seneca; and the two last, to disgrace them, though not convicted of any crime. Antonia Flaccilla, the wife of Novius Priscus, followed her husband into banishment. Egnatia Maximilla, at that time possessed of great wealth, had the spirit, in like manner, to adhere to Glitius Gallus. Her fortune was soon after taken from her by the hand of power. Her conduct, both in affluence and poverty, did honour to her character.

Rufus Crispinus was likewise banished: the conspiracy furnished a pretext, but his having been married to Poppæa was the crime that brought on his ruin. Verginius and Musonius Rufus owed their banishment to the celebrity of their names: the former trained the Roman youth to eloquence, and the latter formed their minds by his lectures on wisdom and philosophy. At one sweep, Cluvidienus Quietus, Julius Agrippa, Blitius Catulinus, Petronius Priscus, and Julius Altinus, like a colony of criminals, were sent to islands, in the Ægean sea. Cadicia, the wife of Scevinus, and Cæsonius Maximus were ordered out of Italy, without being heard in their defence. The sentence of condemnation was the first notice of any crime alleged against them. Acilla, the mother of Lucan, was neither pardoned, nor condemned. She was suffered to live in silent obscurity.

LXXII. Having performed these dreadful exploits, Nero called an assembly of the soldiers, and, after a

specious harangue, ordered a largess of a thousand sesterces to be paid to each man, and the corn, which they had been used to purchase at the market-price, to be distributed as the bounty of the prince. He then ordered the senate to be convened with as much importance as if the events of war and splendid victories occasioned the meeting. He granted triumphal ornaments to Petronius Turpilianus, of consular rank, to Cocceius Nerva, prætor elect, and Tigellinus, commander of the prætorian guards. The two last were mentioned by him in strains of the highest commendation. Not content with erecting their statues in the forum, adorned with triumphal decorations, he placed them also in the imperial palace. Nymphidius was honoured with the ensigns of consular dignity. Of this man, who now occurs for the first time, since he is to figure hereafter on the stage of public business, it may be proper in this place to say a few words.

He was the son of an enfranchised female slave, distinguished by her beauty, and the ease with which she granted her favours to the slaves as well as the freedmen about the court. Nymphidius, however, pretended to be of higher origin. He called himself the son of Caligula. His large stature, and the stern cast of his countenance, bore some resemblance to that emperor; and, in fact, as Caligula was never delicate in the choice of his mistresses, but was known to share the embraces of common harlots, it is possible that he might, on some occasion, indulge his passion with the mother of Nymphidius.

LXXIII. The senate being assembled, Nero delivered a speech on the subject of the late transactions, and for the information of the people, issued a proclamation, with a statement of the evidence against the conspirators, and their own confession. The clamours of the public made this expedient necessary. While the executions were going on, the public voice was loud and violent against Nero, the insatiate tyrant, who was daily sacrificing to his cruelty or his fears, the lives of innocent and illustrious men. That

a plot was actually formed; that it was conducted with resolution, and in the end was totally defeated, no man, who made it his business to investigate the truth, entertained a doubt at the time; and since the death of Nero, the acknowledgment of all, who returned from banishment, established the fact beyond a controversy. Nero was received by the senate with the basest flattery. In that assembly, the men, who had the greatest reason to be overwhelmed with grief, were the most forward to offer incense to the emperor. Junius Gallio, the brother of Seneca, was, by the loss of that excellent man, so struck with terror, that to save his own life he descended to humble supplications. Salienus Clemens rose to oppose him, as a parricide and an enemy to the state. He continued his invective till the fathers checked his violence. It was not now, they said, a time to gratify personal animosity, under an appearance of zeal for the public good; nor would it become any man to open again the wounds which the clemency of the prince had closed forever.

LXXIV. Oblations and public thanksgivings were decreed to all the gods, and particularly to the Sun, in whose temple, situated in the forum, the murder was to have been perpetrated, if that god had not dispelled the clouds that hung over the machinations of evil minded men, and brought their dark proceedings into open day-light. It was further ordered, that the sports of the circus, in honour of Ceres, should be celebrated with an additional number of chariot-races; that the month of April should be styled after the name of Nero; and that, on the spot, where Scevinus furnished himself with a dagger, a temple should be erected to the GODDESS OF SAFETY. The dagger itself was dedicated in the capitol, with an inscription to the avenging god, called JUPITER VINDEX. The inscription, at that time, had no equivocal meaning; but soon after, when JULIUS VINDEX excited a revolt in Gaul, it was considered as an omen of impending vengeance.

In the journals of the senate I find an entry, by

which it appears, that Cerealis Anicius, consul elect, moved in his place, that a temple should be raised, at the public expense, to the DEIFIED NERO, who, in his opinion, had risen above the condition of human nature, and was, therefore, entitled to religious worship. This motion was afterwards understood to portend nothing less than the death of Nero; since it was a settled rule, that divine honours should never be paid to the emperor till he ceased to be mortal.

THE

ANNALS OF TACITUS.

BOOK XVI.

I. Nero, in consequence of his own credulity, became in a short time afterwards the sport of fortune, and a subject of public derision. He believed the visionary schemes of Cesellius Bassus, a native of Carthage, of a crazed imagination, who relied on whatever occurred to him in his distempered dreams. This man arrived at Rome, and, by the influence of money well applied, gained admission to the presence of the emperor. The secret, which he had to communicate, was, that on his own estate he had found a cavern of astonishing depth, in which were contained immense stores of gold, not wrought into the form of coin, but in rude and shapeless ingots, such as were in use in the early ages of the world. In one part of the cave were to be seen vast massy heaps, and in other places columns of gold towering to a prodigious height; the whole an immense treasure, reserved in obscurity to add to the splendour of Nero's reign. To give probability to his story, he pretended that Dido, the Phœnician, when she fled from Tyre, and founded the city of Carthage, deposited her whole stock in the bowels of the earth, that so much wealth might neither prove the bane of a new colony, nor excite the avarice of the Numidian princes, of themselves already hostile to her infant state.

II. Nero neither weighed the character of the man, nor the circumstances of so wild a report. He had not even the precaution to send commissioners to inform themselves on the spot. He helped to spread the report; he began to count his riches, and de-

spatched his agents to transport the treasure to Rome. The light galleys were equipped with expedition, and a chosen band of mariners sent on board. Rome, in the mean time, was distracted with hope and fear, with doubt and expectation. No other subject was talked of. The common people, with their usual facility, believed every thing; while men of reflection argued in a different manner. It happened that the quinquennial games were to close the second lustre of five years. During that festival, the expected treasure was the subject on which the orators expatiated, and the poets exhausted their invention. In their flights of fancy, the earth was no longer content with pouring forth fruit and grain, and producing metals intermixed with veins of precious ore; the present fecundity showed that the gods were working miracles to bless the reign of Nero. These were the bright conceits, which flattery displayed with rapture, and eloquence adorned with her richest colouring. While the passions of Nero stood ready to receive every new device, fiction passed for truth, and nothing was too hyperbolical for the credulity of the prince.

III. With such immoderate riches in view, no wonder that Nero launched out into greater profusion than ever. Deluded by his hopes, and sure of a supply for years to come, he exhausted his treasury, and began to anticipate his imaginary funds. He made assignments on the property, and granted with generosity what was not in his possession. The expectation of enormous wealth made him the bubble of a madman, and impoverished the public. In the mean time Bassus, the grand projector, arrived at Carthage. In the presence of a number of soldiers, and a large body of peasants employed as labourers, he dug up his grounds, and made his experiment in the adjacent fields, disappointed in one place, sure of success in another, still confident, and still miscarrying; till at length, finding no subterraneous cave, and weary of the fruitless search, he abandoned his chimerical hopes, coming gradually to his senses, yet wondering, that, of all his dreams, the last should be the only one that deceived him. Covered with shame, and dread-

ing the resentment of the emperor, he delivered himself from all his troubles by a voluntary death. According to some writers, he was instantly seized, and loaded with irons, till Nero ordered him to be released, but seized his effects, determined to enjoy the fortunes of a wild adventurer, since he could not obtain the wealth of Dido.

IV. The time of contending for the prizes in the quinquennial games being near at hand, the senate, with intent to ward off from the emperor the disgrace of being a candidate, offered to adjudge, in his favour, the victory in song and the crown of eloquence. The fathers hoped, that honours freely granted would satisfy the prince, and prevent a ridiculous display of theatrical talents. Nero returned for answer, that he stood in no need of favour or protection. He depended on himself alone, and would fairly enter the lists with his competitors. The equity of the judges was to decide, and by that test he was willing to stand or fall. With that spirit he entered the scene, and recited a poem of his own composition. The people, with earnest entreaty, prayed that he would let them taste the supreme delight of hearing and enjoying all his divine accomplishments. Such was the language of the populace. In compliance with their wishes, he mounted the public stage, conforming in all things to the rules of the orchestra, where no performer was to sit down, nor to wipe the sweat from his face with any thing but his own garment, and never to spit or clear his nostrils in sight of the audience. Having exhibited his skill, he went down on his knee, and stretching forth his hands with pretended agitations of hope and fear, waited in that humble posture for the decision of the judges. The populace, accustomed to applaud the notes and gesticulations of the common players, paid their tribute of admiration to the prince, with measured cadence, in one regular chorus of applause. You would have thought their joy sincere, and perhaps, it was so in fact: the rabble wished to be diverted at any rate, and for the disgrace that befell the state vulgar minds felt no concern.

V. Thinking men were affected in a very different

manner. All who came from the municipal towns or the more remote parts of Italy, where some tincture of ancient manners still remained; and a considerable number, besides, who arrived from the provinces on public business, or their own private affairs, as yet strangers to vice, and undebauched by luxury, beheld the scene with heaviness of heart. A spectacle, in which the prince exposed his frivolous talents, gave them the highest disgust. They thought the applause dishonest, but they were obliged to concur with the rest. They acted their part with warm, but awkward zeal. Their unpractised hands were easily tired; they were not able to keep time in the grand concert, and, exerting themselves without skill, they disturbed the general harmony. For every blunder they were chastised by the soldiers, who were stationed at their posts, with orders to take care, that the applause should be kept up with spirit, without an interval of rest, or silence. It is a certain fact, that several Roman knights, endeavouring to make their way through the crowd, were crushed to death in the narrow passes; and that others, who kept their seats in the theatre day and night, fell dangerously ill. The dread of being absent from such a performance was more alarming than the worst sickness that could happen. Besides the soldiers stationed in the theatre to superintend the audience, it is well known that a number of spies lay in ambush, to take down the names of the spectators, to watch their countenances, and note every symptom of disgust or pleasure. Offenders of mean condition were punished on the spot. Men of distinction were overlooked with an air of calm neglect, but resentment was only smothered for a time, to break out afterwards with deadly hate. We are told, that Vespasian, for the crime of being ready to fall asleep, was obliged to endure the insulting language of one Phœbus, an imperial freedman, and was saved from harsher treatment by the intercession of men of rank and influence. The offence, however, was not entirely forgotten; it remained in store for future vengeance; but Vespasian was reserved, by his superior destiny, for the highest elevation.

VI. The public games were followed by the death of Poppæa. She died of a kick on her womb, which Nero gave her in a sudden passion, though she was then advanced in her pregnancy. Some writers will have it that she was carried off by a dose of poison; but they assert it with more spleen than truth. Nero was desirous of having issue, and he loved his wife with sincere affection. Her body was not, according to the Roman custom, committed to the funeral pile, but after the manner of the eastern kings, embalmed with precious spices, and deposited in the monument of the Julian family. The ceremony was performed with great pomp, and Nero pronounced the funeral oration. He was lavish in praise of her beauty; and the peculiar happiness of being the mother of an infant enrolled among the gods, was a topic on which he dwelt with pleasure. By enlarging on that and other accidental circumstances, he made a panegyric, in which not one virtue could find a place.

VII. The death of Poppæa occasioned a general face of mourning, but no real grief. Men remembered her loose incontinence, and having felt her cruelty, rejoiced in secret at an event that freed the world from a woman of detested character. Nero laboured under a load of reproach, and the public resentment rose still higher, when it was known that, by his orders, Cassius did not attend the funeral. That illustrious Roman understood the imperial mandate as the signal of his approaching ruin. In fact, his doom was fixed in a short time after, and Silanus was devoted with him. The crime of Cassius was the splendid fortune which he inherited from his ancestors, and the austerity of his manners. Silanus offended by the nobility of his birth, and his modest merit. Nero sent a letter to the senate, stating in strong terms the necessity of removing them both from all civil offices. To Cassius he objected, that, among the images of his ancestors he preserved, with veneration, the picture of the famous Caius Cassius, with this inscription: THE LEADER OF THE PARTY. That circumstance plainly showed the sullen spirit of a man brooding mischief; a fierce republican, who

meditated another civil war, and a revolt from the house of Cæsar. But to revive the name of a daring factious chief was not sufficient for the purposes of a turbulent incendiary: he was charged with seducing Lucius Silanus, a youth descended from an illustrious line, bold, ambitious, enterprising, and in the hands of ill designing men a fit tool to spread the flame of rebellion.

VIII. Silanus was no less an object of Nero's hatred. It was urged against him, as had been formerly done in the case of his uncle Torquatus, that he affected the stile of imperial dignity, and had in his household train his mock-treasurers, his auditors of accounts, and his secretaries of state. Nothing could be more destitute of all foundation. Silanus saw the tyranny of those disastrous times, and from the fate of his uncle received a lesson of prudence. Lepida, the wife of Cassius, and aunt of Silanus, was also doomed to fall a sacrifice to the unrelenting fury of the prince. Informers were suborned to accuse her of incest with her nephew; and, to swell the charge, they imputed to her impious sacrifices, magic rites, and horrible incantations. Vulcatius, Tullinus, and Marcellus Cornelius, of senatorian rank, with Calpurnius Fabatus, a Roman knight, were involved in the prosecution. They appealed to the tribunal of the emperor, and, by removing the cause, prevented a final sentence. Nero was at that time, brooding over crimes of the deepest dye, and having nobler game in view, he disdained to stoop to an inferior quarry. The three last were saved by their want of importance.

IX. Cassius and Silanus were banished by a decree of the senate. The case of Lepida was referred to the prince. Cassius, in a short time after, was transported to the island of Sardinia, where Nero was content to leave him to old age and the decay of nature. Silanus was conveyed to Ostia, there, as was pretended, to embark for the isle of Naxos. He never reached that place. Barium, a municipal city of Apulia, was the last stage of his journey. He there supported life with a temper that gave dignity

to undeserved misfortune, till a centurion, employed to commit the murder, rushed upon him abruptly. That officer advised him to open his veins, "Death," said Silanus, "has been familiar to my thoughts, "but the honour of prescribing to me I shall not allow "to a ruffian and a murderer." The centurion, seeing that he had to do with a man, unarmed, indeed, but robust and vigorous, not a symptom of fear in his countenance, but, on the contrary, an eye that sparkled with indignation, gave orders to his soldiers to seize their prisoner. Silanus stood on the defensive: what man could do without a weapon he bravely dared, struggling, and dealing his blows about him, till he fell by the sword of the centurion, like a gallant officer, receiving honourable wounds, and facing his enemy to the last.

X. Lucius Vetus, and Sextia his mother-in-law, with Pollutia his daughter, died with equal fortitude. Nero thought them a living reproach to himself for the murder of Rubellius Plautus, the son-in-law of Lucius Vetus. The root of bitterness rankled in Nero's heart, till Fortunatus, one of the manumitted slaves of Vetus, gave him an opportunity to wreak his vengeance on the whole family. The freedman had been employed by Vetus in the management of his affairs, and having defrauded his master, he thought it time to add treachery to peculation, and give evidence against his patron. In this black design he associated with himself one Claudius Demianus, a fellow of an abandoned character, who had been charged in Asia, while Vetus was proconsul of the province, with various crimes, and sent to Rome in fetters. To forward the prosecution, Nero set him at liberty.

Vetus heard, with indignation, that the evidence of a freedman was received against the life of his patron, and retired to his country-seat in the neighbourhood of Formiæ. A band of soldiers followed him and beset his house. His daughter was then with him. A sense of former injuries was still fresh in her mind. She had seen her husband, Rubellius Plautus, massacred by a band of ruffians. Upon that occasion she

opposed her person to the assassin's stroke: she clung to her husband's bleeding neck, and preserved the garment stained with his blood. From that time nothing could assuage her sorrows: she remained a widow, a prey to grief, inconsolable, loathing all food, except what was necessary for the support of nature. In the present distress, by her father's advice, she set off for Naples, where Nero then resided. Not being admitted to his presence, she watched the palace-gates, and, as soon as he came forth, she cried aloud, "Hear my "father, hear an innocent man; he was your col- "league in the consulship; extend your mercy, nor "let him fall a sacrifice to the pernicious arts of a vile "abandoned slave." She persisted, as often as Nero passed, to renew her application, sometimes in tears and misery of heart; often in a tone of vehemence, roused by her sufferings above the weakness of her sex. But neither tears nor reproaches had any effect on the cruelty of Nero: insensible to both, and heedless of the popular hatred, he remained obdurate and implacable.

XI. Pollutia returned to her father, and, since not a ray of hope was left, exhorted him to meet his fate with a becoming spirit. Intelligence arrived at the same time, that preparations for the trial were going on with rapidity, and that the senate showed a disposition to pronounce the severest sentence. Among the friends of Cassius some were of opinion, that the surest way to secure part of his fortune for his grandchildren, would be by making the emperor heir in chief. He rejected that advice as unworthy of his character. Having lived his days with a spirit of independence, he resolved to die with honour. He distributed the money then in his possession among his slaves, and ordered them to remove for their own use all the effects that could be carried off, with an exception of three couches, to serve as funeral beds for himself and his family.

They retired to die together. In the same chamber, and with the same instrument, the father, the mother-in-law, and the daughter opened their veins, and without any other covering, than such as decency

required, were conducted to a warm bath; the father with his eyes fixed upon his daughter; the grandmother gazing on the same object; and she, in return, looking with tender affection on both her parents; each of them wishing to avoid the pain of seeing the others in the pangs of death, and praying to be released. Nature pursued her own course. They died in the order of their respective ages, the oldest first. After their decease, a prosecution was carried on in due form of law, and all three were adjudged to capital punishment. Nero so far opposed the sentence, as to give them the liberty of choosing their mode of dying. When the tragedy was already performed, such was the farce that followed.

XII. Publius Gallus, a Roman knight, for no other crime than his intimacy with Fenius Rufus, and some connexion with Vetus, was interdicted from fire and water. The freedman of Vetus, who betrayed his master, and the accuser who undertook the conduct of the prosecution, obtained, to reward their villany, a seat in the theatre among the officers who follow in the train of the tribunes. The month of April was already styled by the name of Nero, and, in like manner, May was changed to that of Claudius, and June to Germanicus. Cornelius Orfitus was the author of this innovation. His reason for the last was, because the two Torquati suffered in the month of June, and that inauspicious name ought, therefore, to be abolished from the calendar.

XIII. To the blood and horror that made this year forever memorable, we may add the vengeance of Heaven, declared in storms and tempests, and epidemic disorders. A violent hurricane made the country of Campania a scene of desolation; whole villages were overthrown; plantations were torn up by the roots, and the hopes of the year destroyed. The fury of the storm was felt in the neighbourhood of Rome, where, without any apparent cause in the atmosphere, a contagious distemper broke out, and swept away a vast number of the inhabitants. The houses were filled with dead bodies, and the streets with funeral processions. Neither sex nor age escaped. Slaves

and men of ingenuous birth were carried off, without distinction, amidst the shrieks and lamentations of their wives and children. Numbers, while they assisted their expiring friends, or bewailed their loss, were suddenly seized, and burnt on the same funeral pile. The Roman knights and senators suffered the common lot of mortality; but death delivered them from the power of the tyrant, and, for that reason, they were not regretted.

In the course of the year new levies were made in Narbon Gaul, and likewise in Asia and Africa, in order to recruit the legions in Illyricum, at that time much reduced by the discharge of such as by age or infirmity were rendered unfit for service. The city of Lyons, having before this time suffered a dreadful disaster, Nero, to relieve the inhabitants, ordered a remittance of forty thousand sesterces, being the amount of what that city granted to the treasury of Rome in a period of distraction and public distress.

XIV. Caius Suetonius, and Lucius Telesinus entered on the consulship. During their administration, Antistius Sosianus, formerly banished, as has been mentioned for a satirical poem against Nero, began to think of regaining his liberty. He heard of the high estimation in which informers were held at Rome, and the bias of Nero's nature to acts of cruelty. A bold and restless spirit like his was ready for any project, and he possessed a promptitude of mind that quickly saw how to seize his opportunity. There was, at that time, an exile in the same place, famous for his skill in the arts of Chaldean astrology, and, on that account, intimate with several families. His name was Pammenes. Antistius entered into a league of friendship with him. Their mutual sufferings endeared them to each other. The astrologer had frequent consultations, and messengers were every day crowding to his house. Antistius judged that such a concourse could not be without reasons of important consequence. He found that Pammenes received an annual pension from Anteius; a man, on account of his attachment to Agrippina, obnoxious to the emperor, and by his riches likely to tempt the avarice of a prince, who had

already cut off some of the most opulent and illustrious men in Rome.

Antistius kept a watchful eye upon his new friend. He intercepted letters from Anteius, and gained access to other secret papers, in which was contained a calculation of the nativity of Anteius, with many particulars relating to the birth and future fortune of Ostorius Scapula. Armed with these materials, he represented, by letters to Nero, that he had discoveries of the first importance, involving even the safety of the prince, and, if he might revisit Rome for a few days, the whole should be brought to light, with all the machinations of Anteius and Ostorius Scapula, who, beyond all doubt, were engaged in a treasonable design, and had been prying into their own destiny, and that of the imperial house. In consequence of these letters a light galley was despatched, and Antistius was conveyed to Rome. His arrival, and the business on which he came, were no sooner known, than Anteius and Ostorius were considered as devoted victims, insomuch that the former could not find a friend bold enough to be a witness to his will till Tigellinus advised him to settle his affairs without loss of time. Anteius swallowed a dose of poison; but finding the operation slow and tedious, he opened his veins, and put a period to his existence.

XV. Ostorius, at this time, was at a distance from Rome, amusing himself on his own estate near the confines of Liguria. A centurion was sent with orders to despatch him. Nero had his reasons for desiring this business to be done with expedition. He knew the military character of Ostorius, and the high reputation with which he had gained the civic crown in Britain. He dreaded a man renowned in arms, remarkable for his bodily vigour and a thorough master of the art of war. From a general of his experience he lived in fear of a sudden attack, and the late conspiracy kept him in a constant alarm. The centurion obeyed his orders, and having first secured all the avenues round the house, communicated the emperor's orders. Ostorius turned against himself that courage which had often made the enemy fly before him.

He opened his veins, but though the incision was large, the blood flowed with langour. He called a slave to his assistance, and having directed him to hold a poniard with a firm and steady hand, he laid hold of the man's arm, and applying his throat to the point, rushed on certain death.

XVI. If the narrative, in which I am engaged, presented a detail of foreign wars, and a register of men who died with honour in the service of their country, even in that case, a continued train of disasters, crowding fast upon one another, would fatigue the writer, and make the reader turn, with disgust, from so many tragic issues, honourable indeed, but dark, melancholy, and too much of a colour. How much more must the uniformity of the present subject be found irksome, and even repulsive! We have nothing before us but tame servility, and a deluge of blood spilt by a tyrant in the hour of peace. The heart recoils from the dismal story. But let it be remembered by those, who may hereafter think these events worthy of their notice, that I have discharged the duty of an historian, and if, in relating the fate of so many eminent citizens, who resigned their lives to the will of one man, I mingle tears with indignation, let me be allowed to feel for the unhappy. The truth is, the wrath of Heaven was bent against the Roman state. The calamities that followed cannot, like the slaughter of an army, or the sacking of a city, be painted forth in one general draught. Repeated murders must be given in succession; and, if the remains of illustrious men are distinguished by their funeral obsequies from the mass of the people, may it not be considered as a tribute due to their memory, that, in like manner, their deaths should be snatched from oblivion, and that history, in describing the last act of their lives, should give to each his distinct and proper character, for the information of posterity?

XVII. I proceed to add to the list of murdered citizens Annæus Mela, Cerealis Anicius, Rufius Crispinus, and Petronius. In the compass of a few days they were all cut off, as it were at one blow. Mela and Crispinus were no higher than Roman knights;

but in fame and dignity of character equal to the most distinguished senators. Crispinus, at one time, commanded the prætorian bands; he was afterwards invested with the consular ornaments, but lately charged as an accomplice in the conspiracy, and banished to the island of Sardinia. At that place he received the emperor's mandate, and died by his own hand. Mela was brother to Seneca and Gallio. He abstained through life from the pursuit of civil honours, vainly flattering himself, that a simple knight could rise to the highest splendour, and tower above the consular dignity. By remaining in his rank, he was qualified to act in the administration of the imperial revenue, and that employment he thought the shortest road to immoderate riches. He was the father of Lucan the poet, and from such a son derived additional lustre. When Lucan was no more, Mela endeavoured to recover the whole of his property; but proceeding with too much eagerness, he provoked the enmity of Fabius Romanus, one of the poet's intimate friends. This man framed a charge against the father. He accused him of being engaged with his son in the late conspiracy, and, for that purpose forged several letters in the name of Lucan.

Nero was eager to seize his prey: he panted for his riches, and with that view sent the letters as evidence of his guilt. Mela had recourse to the mode of death, at that time deemed the easiest, and, for that reason, most in vogue. He opened his veins, and expired. By his will he bequeathed a large sum to Tigellinus, and to his son-in-law, Cossutianus Capito, hoping by that bequest to secure the remainder for his family. A clause, it has been said, was added to the will, asserting the innocence of the deceased, and the flagrant injustice of cutting him off while such men as Rufius Crispinus and Anicius Cerealis were suffered to live in security, though they were both envenomed enemies of the prince. The clause, however, was thought to be fabricated with a view to justify the murder of Crispinus, which was already perpetrated, and to hasten the sentence then in agitation against Cerealis, who, in a few days afterwards, despatched himself.

He fell unlamented. The public remembered that he formerly discovered a conspiracy to Caligula, and, for that reason, no man regretted him in his end.

XVIII. With regard to Caius Petronius, his character, his course of life, and the singularity of his manners seem to merit particular attention. He passed his days in sleep, and his nights in business, or in joy and revelry. Indolence was at once his passion and his road to fame. What others did by vigour and industry, he accomplished by his love of pleasure and luxurious ease. Unlike the men who profess to understand social enjoyment, and ruin their fortunes, he led a life of expense, without profusion; an epicure, yet not a prodigal; addicted to his appetites, but with taste and judgment; a refined and elegant voluptuary. Gay and airy in his conversation, he charmed by a certain graceful negligence, the more engaging as it flowed from the natural frankness of his disposition. With all this delicacy, and careless ease, he showed, when he was governor of Bithynia, and afterwards, in the year of his consulship, that vigour of mind and softness of manners may well unite in the same person. With his love of sensuality he possessed talents for business. From his public station he returned to his usual gratifications, fond of vice, or of pleasures that bordered upon it, his gaiety recommended him to the notice of the prince. Being in favour at court, and cherished as the companion of Nero in all his select parties, he was allowed to be the arbiter of taste and elegance. Without the sanction of Petronius nothing was exquisite, nothing rare or delicious.

Hence the jealousy of Tigellinus, who dreaded a rival in the good graces of the emperor almost his equal; in the science of luxury his superior. Tigellinus determined to work his downfall; and, accordingly addressed himself to the cruelty of the prince; that master-passion, to which all other affections and every motive were sure to give way. He charged Petronius with having lived in close intimacy with Scevinus, the conspirator; and to give colour to that assertion, he bribed a slave to turn informer against his master, the rest of the domestics were loaded with

irons. Nor was Petronius suffered to make his defence.

XIX. Nero, at that time, happened to be on one of his excursions into Campania. Petronius had followed him as far as Cuma, but was not allowed to proceed further than that place. He scorned to linger in doubt and fear, and yet was not in a hurry to leave a world which he loved. He opened his veins, and closed them again, at intervals losing a small quantity of blood, then binding up the orifice, as his own inclination prompted. He conversed during the whole time with his usual gaiety, never changing his habitual manner, nor talking sentences to show his contempt of death. He listened to his friends, who endeavoured to entertain him, not with grave discourses on the immortality of the soul, or the moral wisdom of philosophers, but with strains of poetry, and verses of a gay and natural turn. He distributed presents to some of his servants, and ordered others to be chastised. He walked out for his amusement, and even lay down to sleep. In this last scene of his life he acted with such calm tranquillity, that his death, though an act of necessity, seemed no more than the decline of nature. In his will he scorned to follow the example of others, who, like himself, died under the tyrant's stroke: he neither flattered the emperor, nor Tigellinus, nor any of the creatures of the court; but having written, under the fictitious names of profligate men and women, a narrative of Nero's debauchery, and his new modes of vice, he had the spirit to send to the emperor that satirical romance, sealed with his own seal, which he took care to break, that, after his death, it might not be used for the destruction of any person whatever.

XX. Nero saw, with surprise, his clandestine passions, and the secrets of his midnight revels, laid open to the world. To whom the discovery was to be imputed still remained a doubt. Amidst his conjectures, Silia, who by her marriage with a senator had risen in notice, occurred to his memory. This woman had often procured for the libidinous pleasures of the prince, and lived, besides, in close inti-

macy with Petronius. Nero concluded that she had betrayed him, and for that offence ordered her into banishment. Having made that sacrifice to his own resentment, he gave another victim to glut the rage of Tigellinus, namely, Numicius Thermus, a man of prætorian rank. An accusation preferred against the favourite, by a slave enfranchised by Thermus, was the cause that provoked the vengeance of Tigellinus. For that daring attempt against a man in power the informer suffered on the rack, and his patron, who had no concern in the business, was put to death.

XXI. Nero had not yet satiated his vindictive fury. He had spilt the best blood in Rome, and now, in the persons of Pætus Thrasea and Bareas Soranus, he hoped to destroy virtue itself. His rancour to those two illustrious citizens had been long working in his heart. Thrasea, in particular, was the devoted object, and various motives conspired against him. When the business of Agrippina was brought before the senate, it will be in the memory of the reader, that Thrasea, withdrew from the debate. Afterwards, in the youthful sports, called JUVENALES, he seldom attended, and never with the alacrity which was expected. This cold indifference was the more grating to the prince, as Thrasea, at Padua, his native city, not only assisted at the games of the CESTUS, originally instituted by Antenor, the fugitive from Troy, but also performed in the habit of a tragedian. It was further remembered, that, when Antistius, the prætor, was in danger of being capitally condemned for his verses levelled at Nero, Thrasea was the author of a milder sentence. There was still another circumstance: when divine honours were decreed to Poppæa, he wilfully absented himself, nor did he afterwards attend her funeral. These offences were not suffered to sink into oblivion. The whole was treasured up by Cossutianus Capito, a man, who to a bad heart and talents for every species of iniquity united motives of personal ill-will to Thrasea, which he nourished in secret, ever since the victory obtained over him in a charge of extortion conducted by the

deputies from Cilicia, and supported with all the credit and eloquence of Thrasea.

XXII. The fertile genius of the prosecutor was not at a loss for new allegations. The heads of his charge were, "That Thrasea made it a point to "avoid renewing the oath of fidelity usual at the "beginning of the year, and, though a member of the "quindecemviral college, he never assisted at the "ceremony of offering vows for the safety of the "prince, and the preservation of that melodious voice. "A magistrate formerly of unremitting assiduity, he "took a part in every debate, supporting or opposing "the most trifling motions; and now what is his con-"duct? For three years together he has not so much "as entered the senate. Even on a late occasion, "when the business relating to Silanus and Vetus "drew the fathers to a crowded meeting, Thrasea "was not at leisure; the affairs of his clients engrossed "his attention, and the patriot was detained from "the senate by his own petty concerns. What is "this but a public secession! He is at the head of a "faction, and if his partisans take fire from his ex-"ample, a civil war must be the consequence. Cæsar "and Cato were the names that formerly kept the "world awake; at present, in a city ever rent by dis-"cord, Nero and Thrasea engage the public mind.

"The popular demagogue has his sectaries and his "followers; a set of men not yet, like their master, "ambitiously sententious, but, in imitation of his "mien and manners, sullen, gloomy, and discontented. "By the formalities of their rigid discipline they "hope to throw disgrace on the gay and elegant man-"ners of their sovereign. Your preservation, Nero, "is of no moment to Thrasea: he disregards your "safety: he despises your accomplishments. Are "your affairs in a train of prosperity, he is still de-"jected. Has any untoward event disturbed your "peace of mind? he enjoys your distress, and in se-"cret pampers himself with your affliction. The "same spirit that refused to swear on the acts of "Julius Cæsar and Augustus, denies the divinity of "Poppæa. He turns religion to a jest, and sets the

"laws at defiance. The journals of the Roman people were never read by the provinces and the "armies with so much avidity, as in the present juncture; and the reason is, the history of the times is "the history of Thrasea's contumacy.

"If the system of this wise philosopher and profound politician merits attention, let us, at once, "embrace his doctrine; if otherwise, let us take from "the friends of innovation their leader and their oracle. The sect, whose precepts he affects to admire, has ever been proud and dogmatical, busy, "bold, and turbulent. It was that stoic school that "formed the Tuberos and the Favonii; names detested even by the old republic. And what is now "the principle of the whole faction? To subvert the "fabric of a great empire, they hold forth the name "of liberty; if they succeed, they will destroy even "liberty itself. Of what use can it be to Nero, that he "has banished a Cassius, if the followers of Brutus "are still allowed to flourish and multiply their numbers? Upon the whole, you have no occasion, Cæsar, to write to the senate; you need not mention "Thrasea to that assembly: leave him to our management, and the judgment of the fathers." Nero praised the zeal of Cossutianus, and added fury to a mind already bent on mischief. To forward his villany, he gave him for a coadjutor Eprius Marcellus, an orator of a turbulent spirit, and overbearing eloquence.

XXIII. The prosecution against Bareas Soranus was already in the hands of Ostorius Sabinus, a Roman knight. Soranus was returned from his proconsular government of Asia. His conduct in the province stood distinguished by justice and the rectitude of his measures; but by the jealousy of Nero the virtues of the minister were converted into crimes. He had opened the port of Ephesus, and left unpunished the obstinate resistance of the people of Pergamus, who refused to let Acratus, one of the emperor's freedmen, carry off the statues and pictures that adorned their city. This meritorious conduct was an offence not to be forgiven; but constructive crimes were to be

held forth to the public. The heads of the accusation were, that Soranus had contracted a close and intimate friendship with Plautus, and had endeavoured by popular arts to incite the eastern provinces to a revolt. To decide the fate of two upright citizens, Nero chose a juncture favourable to his dark design. Tiridates was on his way to Rome, to receive the diadem of Armenia from the hands of the emperor. He thought it probable, that, in the splendour of that magnificent scene, the horrors of domestic cruelty would be lost; perhaps, it seemed a fair opportunity to display to a foreign prince the grandeur of a Roman emperor, and convince him, by the murder of two eminent citizens, that the imperial power was nothing short of oriental despotism.

XXIV. The city went forth in crowds to meet the emperor, and gaze at the eastern monarch. Thrasea received orders not to appear on the occasion. A mind like his was not to be disconcerted. With his usual fortitude he sent a memorial to the prince, requesting to know by what act of his life he had deserved such a mark of displeasure. He pledged himself, if a fair hearing were granted, to confute his enemies, and place his innocence in the clearest light. Nero received the memorial with eager curiosity, expecting to find that Thrasea, under the operation of fear, had descended to the language of flattery, and tarnished his own honour by magnifying the glory of the prince. Stung by disappointment, he refused to grant an audience. The sight of that illustrious citizen, the countenance, the spirit, and the virtue of the man, were too much to encounter. He ordered the senate to be convened. Thrasea, in the mean time, consulted with his friends, which would be most advisable, to enter at large into his defence, or to behave with silent indignation. They were divided in their opinions.

XXV. Some advised him to enter the senate, and confront his enemies in the presence of that assembly. "Of his constancy no doubt could be entertained; "they knew that nothing could fall from him unwor- "thy of himself. Every word from his lips would

"tend to augment his glory. When danger threat-
"ened, to take shelter in the shade of obscurity, were
"the act of a degenerate spirit. For him, he ought
"to have the people round him to behold the scene;
"a great man advancing bravely to meet his fate,
"would be a spectacle worthy of their applause. The
"senate would hear with astonishment the energy of
"truth, and the sublime of virtue. Every sentiment
"from the mouth of Thrasea would rise superior to
"humanity, and sound to the fathers as if some god
"addressed them. Even the heart of Nero might for
"once relent. Should it happen otherwise; should
"his obdurate nature still persist; posterity would
"crown with immortal glory the undaunted citizen,
"who distinguished himself from those unhappy vic-
"tims, who bowed their necks to the tyrant's stroke,
"and crept in silence to their graves."

XXVI. Others were of a different opinion, convinced that his best plan would be to wait the issue at his own house. They spoke of Thrasea himself and the dignity of his character in the highest terms, but they dreaded that his adversaries would pour forth a torrent of insolence and opprobrious language. "They desired that he would not suffer his ear to be "wounded with scurrility and vile abuse. Cossutianus "and Eprius Marcellus were not the only enemies of "virtue: there were others, whose brutal rage might "incite them to outrage, and even violence to his "person. The cruelty of Nero left none at liberty. "In a general panic good men might follow the worst "example. It would become the character of Thra-"sea to rescue from infamy that august assembly, "which his presence had so long adorned. If he did "not attend the meeting, the part, which, after hear-"ing Thrasea in his own defence, the fathers might "have acted, will remain problematical; and by that "uncertainty the honour of the senate may be saved. "To hope that Nero would blush for his crimes, were "to misunderstand his character. His unrelenting "cruelty would most probably fall on Thrasea's wife, "on his whole family, and all that were dear to him. "For these reasons, an eminent citizen, who had ever

"supported the honour of his name, and still flou-
"rished with unblemished integrity, would do well
"to remember who were the teachers of wisdom, that
"furnished the principles and the model of his con-
"duct. Since he had crowded into his life all their
"virtues, it would become him to emulate their glory
"in his fall."

Arulenus Rusticus assisted at this consultation. He was, at that time, a tribune of the people; a young man of sentiment, eager to be in action, and warm with the love of glory. He offered to interpose, by his tribunitian authority, to prevent a decree of the senate. "Forbear," said Thrasea, "and learn, young
"man, to restrain this impetuous ardour. By a rash
"opposition you cannot save your friend, and you may
"bring down ruin on yourself. For me, I have lived
"my days; my course is well nigh finished; it now
"remains, that I reach the goal with undiminished
"honour. As to you, my friend, you have but lately
"entered the career of civil dignities. Life is before
"you, and you have not as yet pledged yourself to the
"public. Ere you take a decided part, it will behove
"you to consider well the times upon which you are
"fallen, and the principles which you mean to avow."
Having thus declared his sentiments, he gave no opinion concerning the propriety of appearing in the senate, but reserved the question for his own private meditation.

XXVII. On the following day two prætorian cohorts, under arms, surrounded the temple of Venus. A body of citizens, with swords ill concealed beneath their gowns, invested all the avenues. In the forum, the open squares, and round the adjoining temples, bands of soldiers took their station, and through that military array the senators were obliged to pass, surrounded by soldiers and prætorian guards. The assembly was opened by Nero's quæstor, with a speech in the name of the prince, complaining, "That the
"fathers" (no particular name was mentioned) "de-
"serted the public interest, and by their example
"taught the Roman knights to loiter away their time
"in sloth, and inattention to the welfare of the state.

"Nor could it be matter of wonder, that the senators "from the distant provinces no longer attended their "duty, when men of consular rank, and even of sa- "cerdotal dignity, thought of nothing but the embel- "lishment of their villas, and the beauty of their gar- "dens and pleasure-grounds." This message was intended to be a weapon in the hands of the accusers, and their malice knew how to use it.

XXVIII. Cossutianus took the lead. Eprius Marcellus followed him, with more force and acrimony. "The commonwealth," he said, "is on the brink of "ruin. Certain turbulent spirits rear their crest so "high, that no room is left for the milder virtues of "the prince. The senate for some time past has been "negligent, tame, and passive. Your lenity, conscript "fathers, your lenity has given encouragement to se- "dition. It is in consequence of your indulgence, that "Thrasea presumes to trample on the laws; that his "son-in-law, Helvidius Priscus, adopts the same per- "nicious principles; that Paconius Agrippinus, with "the inveterate hatred towards the house of Cæsar, "which he inherits from his father, declares open hos- "tility; and that Curtius Montanus, in seditious "verses, spreads abroad the venom of his pen. Where "is Thrasea now? I want to see the man of consular "rank in his place; I want to see the sacerdotal dig- "nitary offering up vows for the emperor; I want to "see the citizen taking the oaths of fidelity. Perhaps "that haughty spirit towers above the laws and the "religion of our ancestors; perhaps he means to throw "off the mask, and own himself a traitor and an ene- "my to his country. Let him appear in this assembly; "let the patriot come; let the leader of faction show "himself; the man who so often played the orator "in this assembly, and took under his patronage the "inveterate enemies of the prince. Let us hear his "plan of government: what does he wish to change? "What abuses does he mean to reform? If he came "every day with objections, the cavilling spirit of the "man might tease, perplex, and embarrass us; but "now his sullen silence is worse; it condemns every "thing in the gross. And why all this discontent?

"A settled peace prevails in every quarter of the em-
"pire: does that afflict him? Our armies, without the
"effusion of Roman blood, have been victorious: is
"that the cause of his disaffection? He sickens in the
"midst of prosperity; he repines at the flourishing
"state of his country: he deserts the forum; he avoids
"the theatre, and the temples of the city; he threatens
"to abjure his country, and retire into voluntary
"banishment; he acknowledges none of your laws;
"your decrees are to him no better than mockery; he
"owns no magistrates, and Rome to him is no longer
"Rome. Let him therefore be cut off at once from a
"city, where he has long lived an alien; the love of
"his country banished from his heart, and the people
"odious to his sight."

XXIX. Marcellus delivered this invective in a strain of vehemence, that gave additional terror to the natural ferocity of a stern and savage countenance. His voice grew louder, his features more enlarged, and his eyes flashed with fire. The senate heard him, but with emotions unfelt before: the settled melancholy, which that black period made habitual, gave way to stronger feelings. They saw a band of soldiers round them, and they debated in the midst of swords and javelins. Thrasea was absent, but the venerable figure of the man presented itself to every imagination. They felt for Helvidius Priscus, who was doomed to suffer, not for imputed guilt, but because he was allied to an innocent and virtuous citizen. What was the crime of Agrippinus? The misfortunes of his father, cut off by the cruelty of Tiberius, rose in judgment against the son. The case of Montanus was thought hard and oppressive. His poetry was a proof of genius, not of malice; and yet, for a pretended libel on the prince, a youth of expectation was to be driven from his country.

XXX. Amidst the tumult and distraction which this business excited, Ostorius Sabinus, the accuser of Bareas Soranus, entered the senate. He opened at once, and charged as a crime, the friendship that subsisted between Soranus and Rubellius Plautus. He added, that the whole tenour of his administration in

Asia was directed, not for the public good, but to promote his own popularity, and to spread a spirit of sedition through the provinces. These accusations had been long since fabricated, and were then grown threadbare; but the prosecutor was ready with a new allegation, which involved Servilia the daughter of Soranus, in her father's danger. The charge against her was, that she had distributed sums of money among men skilled in judicial astrology. The fact was, Servilia, with no other motives than those of filial piety, had the imprudence, natural at her time of life, to apply to a set of fortune-tellers, in order to satisfy her mind about the fate of her family, and to learn whether Nero's resentment was by any possibility to be appeased, and what would be the issue of the business in the senate.

She was cited to appear in the senate before the tribunal of the consuls. On one side stood the aged father; on the other his daughter, in the bloom of life, not having yet completed her twentieth year, but even then in a state of destitution, still lamenting the fate of her husband, Annius Pollio, lately torn from her, and condemned to banishment. She stood in silent sorrow, not daring to lift her eyes to her father, whom by her imprudent zeal she had involved in new misfortunes.

XXXI. The accuser pressed her with questions. He desired to know, whether she had not sold her bridal ornaments, her jewels and her necklace, to supply herself with money for magic sacrifices? She fell prostrate on the ground, and wept in bitterness of heart. Her sorrows were too big for utterance. She embraced the altars, and rising suddenly, exclaimed with vehemence, "I have invoked no infernal gods; "I have used no unhallowed rites, no magic, no in-"cantations. My unhappy prayers asked no more "than that you, Cæsar, and you, conscript fathers, "would extend your protection to this best of men, "this most affectionate parent. For him I sold my "jewels; for him I disposed of my bridal ornaments, "and for him I gave up the garments suited to my "rank. In the same cause I was willing to sacrifice

"my life: the blood in my veins was at his service. "The men whom I consulted were all strangers to "me; I had no knowledge of them. They best can "tell who they are, and what they profess. The name "of the prince was never mentioned by me but with "that respect, which I pay to the gods. What I did "was my own act: that miserable man, my unhappy "father, knew nothing of it. If any crime has been "committed, he is innocent: I, and I alone am guilty."

XXXII. Soranus could no longer restrain himself. He interrupted his daughter, crying aloud, "She was "not with me in Asia; she is too young to have any "knowledge of Rubellius Plautus. In the accusation "against her husband she was not involved; her filial "piety is her only crime. Distinguish her case from "mine; respect the cause of innocence, and on my "head let your worst vengeance fall. I am ready "to meet my fate." With these words, he rushed to embrace his child; she advanced to meet him, but the lictors interposed to prevent the pathetic scene. The witnesses were called in. The fathers had hitherto listened to all that passed with emotions of pity; but pity was soon converted into a stronger passion. The appearance of Publius Egnatius, the client of Soranus, hired to give evidence against his patron and his friend, kindled a general indignation. This man professed himself a follower of the stoic sect. He had learned in that school to retail the maxims of virtue, and could teach his features to assume an air of simplicity, while fraud and perfidy, and avarice, lay lurking at his heart. The temptation of money drew forth his hidden character, and the hypocrite stood detected. His treachery gave a standing lesson to mankind, that in the commerce of the world, it is not sufficient to guard against open and avowed iniquity, since the professors of friendship can, under a counterfeit resemblance of virtue, nourish the worst of vices, and prove, in the end, the most pernicious enemies.

XXXIII. The same day produced a splendid example of truth and honour in the person of Cassius Asclepiodotus; a man distinguished by his wealth,

and ranked with the most eminent inhabitants of Bithynia. Having loved and followed Soranus in his prosperity, he did not desert him in the hour of distress. He still adhered to him with unaltered friendship, and for his constancy was deprived of his all, and sent into banishment; the gods, in their just dispensations, permitting an example of virtue, even in ruin, to stand in contrast to successful villany. Thrasea, Soranus, and Servilia, were allowed to choose their mode of dying. Helvidius Priscus and Paconius Agrippinus were banished out of Italy. Montanus owed his pardon to the influence of his father, but he was declared incapable of holding any public office. The prosecutors were amply rewarded. Eprius Marcellus and Cossutianus received each of them fifty thousand sesterces. Ostorius Sabinus obtained a grant of twelve thousand, with the ornaments of the quæstorship.

XXXIV. Towards the close of day, the consular quæstor was sent to Thrasea, who was then amusing himself in his garden, attended by a number of friends, the most illustrious of both sexes. Demetrius, a philosopher of the cynic school, was the person who chiefly engaged his attention. Their conversation, as was inferred from looks of earnest meaning, and from some expressions distinctly heard, turned upon the immortality of the soul, and its separation from the body. Thrasea had not heard of the decree that passed the senate, when his intimate friend, Domitius Cæcilianus, arrived with the unhappy tidings. The company melted into tears. Thrasea saw their generous sympathy; he heard their lamentations: but fearing that the interest, which they took in the lot of a man doomed to destruction, might involve them in future danger, he conjured them to retire. Arria, his wife, inspired by the memorable example of her mother, resolved to share her husband's fate. Thrasea entreated her to continue longer in life, and not deprive their daughter of the only comfort and support of her tender years.

XXXV. He then walked into his portico, and there received the consular quæstor. An air of satisfac-

tion was visible in his countenance. He had been informed that Helvidius, his son-in-law, had met with nothing harsher than a sentence of banishment out of Italy. The decree of the senate, drawn up in form, being delivered to him, he withdrew to his chamber, attended by Helvidius and Demetrius. He there presented both his arms; and the veins being opened, as soon as the blood began to flow, he desired the quæstor to draw nearer, and sprinkling the floor with his vital drops, "Thus," he said, "let us make liba-"tion to JUPITER THE DELIVERER! Behold, young "man, a mind undaunted and resigned: and may the "gods avert from you so severe a trial of your virtue! "But you are fallen on evil times, in which you will "find it expedient to fortify your soul by examples of "unshaken constancy." The approach of death was slow and lingering. As his pains increased, he raised his eyes, and turning to Demetrius * * * * *

THE REST OF THIS BOOK IS LOST.

APPENDIX

TO THE SIXTEENTH BOOK

OF THE

ANNALS.

I. It is not without regret that we lose the last words of a great man at the point of death. All we know is, that Thrasea fixed his eyes on his friend Demetrius, and there Tacitus fails us. What the philosopher said, cannot now be collected from any contemporary historian. It is probable that he expired in a short time after. Seeing the vices of the age, and the savage cruelty of the reigning prince, it cannot be matter of wonder, that a man of virtue, fortified by the doctrines of the stoic school, did not think it awful to die. He was often heard to say, that he had rather lay down his life to-day, than be to-morrow banished to an island. That sentiment was applauded by the philosophers of the age. With the same spirit he was used to declare his mind in conversation with his friends. If, he said, Nero intended to destroy no one but me, I could excuse his flatterers; but flattery will not save their lives. Since death is a debt that all must pay, it is better to die in freedom, than live an ignominious slave. All that Nero can do, is to shorten my days: my memory will subsist, and men will continue to talk of me. But for the tribe of abject sycophants, they will perish, and be mentioned no more. Thrasea was not more distinguished by his unshaken fortitude, than by the virtues of humanity. Pliny the consul celebrates him for an apothegm, which shows in the fairest light the amiable tenderness of his nature. An unforgiving disposition was in his eyes not only ungenerous, but immoral; it was,

therefore, his maxim, that he, who suffers himself to hate vice, will hate mankind. It were superfluous to add any further particulars of a man so truly eminent. Tacitus says, that by destroying him, Nero intended, by the same blow, to destroy virtue itself. All praise is summed up in that short encomium.

Soranus, and his daughter Servilia, died with equal virtue, and equal glory. Helvidius Priscus, as already mentioned, was condemned to exile. Paconius Agrippinus met with the same severity. Like his friend Helvidius, he was a man of distinguished virtue and undaunted resolution. Being informed that his trial, though he was not cited to appear, was actually depending before the senate, May the gods grant me their protection! said he; but it is now the fifth hour, and that is the time when I usually bathe. His cause was not long in suspense. Being informed that judgment was pronounced against him, he calmly asked, What is the sentence? Death or banishment? Being told that it was the latter, And what have they done with my effects? You are left in possession of them. Well then, said he, I can dine at Aricia. He accepted his life, and by his calm indifference, gained as much glory as others by the fortitude with which they met their fate. Demetrius, the friend of Thrasea, did not escape the notice of Nero. The tyrant threatened instant execution. You may command it, said Demetrius; you threaten me with death, and nature threatens you. The intrepid firmness of a poor philosopher, or perhaps the meanness of his condition, saved his life.

II. Cornutus, another philosopher, who professed the doctrines of the Platonic school, had the misfortune to be consulted on the subject of a poem, which Nero had projected. He spoke his mind with honest freedom, and for that offence was immediately banished. Nor was the cruelty of the prince appeased by the number that fell a sacrifice; he still thirsted for blood; but happily a scene of splendour, then ready to be displayed, engaged his attention, and gave the people some respite from the rage of an insatiate tyrant. Tiridates, who, with the consent of his brother

Vologeses, the Parthian king, had agreed with Corbulo to undertake a journey to Rome, in order there to receive the regal diadem from the hand of the emperor, was arrived in Italy. Nero was then at Naples, and, in that city, the eastern prince was admitted to his presence. The spectacle was magnificent. It served at once to gratify the pride of a Roman emperor, and for a time to sooth the affections of the people. Tiridates was attended by a long procession of officers and a military band appointed by Corbulo. He had, besides, not less than three thousand of the Parthian nobility in his train, with his wife, and the sons of Vologeses, of Pacorus, and Monobazus. His march through the provinces had no appearance of a prince subdued, and forced to submit to the will of a conqueror. Till he entered the city of Naples, all was grandeur and royal magnificence. The act of humiliation still remained. He was to pay homage to the emperor on his knees. Mortifying as that circumstance was to an oriental king, Tiridates submitted to prostrate himself at Nero's feet. Vologeses had stipulated with Corbulo, that his brother should not be compelled to deliver up his sword; and Tiridates called it an ignominious act, beneath the dignity of the Arsacidæ. Nothing could extort his sword. He is said to have nailed it to the scabbard. The magnanimity, with which he refused to comply, obtained the applause of all, who beheld a scene so new and magnificent.

The court set out for Rome. Nero thought proper to make some stay at Puteoli, in order to entertain his royal visitor with a show of gladiators. The spectacle was exhibited by Patrobius, one of the emperor's freedmen, with great expense and prodigious pomp. The genius of Nero could not lie still on such an occasion. In his opinion it was fit that a foreign prince, and his Parthian courtiers, should know how well the emperor of Rome could sing. Tiridates beheld the whole with mixed emotions of wonder, admiration and contempt. The example of Nero did not tempt him to exhibit his person as a show to the people. He scorned to descend into the arena, but did not think

it beneath his dignity to call for his bow and arrow, and from the throne, where he was seated, to give a specimen of his dexterity. He aimed at the wild beasts, and the spectators admired his address and the vigour of his arm. Historians relate as a fact, that two bulls were transfixed by one arrow, and died on the spot.

III. Nero proceeded, with a grand cavalcade, on his way to Rome, where the most splendid preparations were made for his reception. The whole city was illuminated, and the houses decorated with garlands and laurel wreaths. The people crowded together from all quarters, and rent the air with shouts and acclamations, while the emperor, with Tiridates and the Parthian nobility in his train, made his triumphal entry. A day was fixed for Tiridates to receive the diadem from the hands of Nero. Nothing could equal the pomp and splendour, with which that ceremony was performed. On the preceding evening, the city was again illuminated, and the streets adorned with flowers. At the dawn of day, an incredible multitude repaired to the forum; the tops of houses were crowded with spectators, and a splendid, but theatrical pomp was exhibited with lavish expense. The people, dressed in white robes, crowned with laurels, and ranked in their several tribes, walked in procession to their respective seats. The prætorian guards, with their standards ranged in order, and their colours flying, displayed their glittering arms. Nero entered the forum in his triumphal habit. The whole body of the senate followed in his train. He took his seat on a curule chair, amidst the standards and the eagles. In a short time after, Tiridates made his appearance. The soldiers opened their lines; he advanced through the ranks, with his eastern nobility in his train. He approached the rostrum, and on his knees offered homage to Nero. The people were not able to contain their joy. They saw the pride of an oriental king humbled at the feet of the emperor. The majesty of Rome filled every imagination. A shout burst forth from the enraptured multitude. Tiridates was astonished at the sound: he stood at gaze, and

his heart shrunk within him. Nero raised him from the ground, and, having clasped him in his arms, placed the diadem on his head, amidst the repeated shouts and acclamations of the people.

IV. The Parthian prince, not yet recovered from his surprise, in the hurry and agitation of his spirits, addressed himself to Nero, in substance as follows: "You see before you a prince descended from the "line of the Arsacidæ; you behold the brother of two "kings, Vologeses and Pacorus; and yet I own my- "self your slave. You, no less than *Mithra*, are to "me a god. I pay you the same veneration as I do "to the Sun. Without your protection, I have no "kingdom; my rights must flow from you. You are "the author of my fortune; and your will is fate." An ancient prætor undertook to be interpreter on the occasion. The people, well convinced that Nero, by his vices, had forfeited all kind of claim to such respectful language, received it as the homage of a king to the majesty of the Roman name. This speech was sufficiently mean and abject, but the arrogance and ferocity of Nero's answer exceeded every thing. "I "congratulate you on the wisdom, that brought you "thus far to enjoy the sunshine of my presence, and "my protection. The diadem which your father "could not leave you, nor your brothers confirm in "your hand, is the gift which I bestow. The king- "dom of Armenia is yours: I place you on the vacant "throne. From this day you and your brothers may "learn, that it is mine to raise or depose the monarchs "of the earth, as my wisdom shall direct."

Such was the haughty style, in which Nero spoke of himself; but he did not long support his grandeur. The coronation being over, he adjourned to Pompey's theatre, where the scene was prepared, at an enormous expense, with the most superb decorations. The stage, and the whole inside of that noble structure, were cased with gold. Such a profusion of wealth and magnificence had never been displayed to view. To screen the spectators from the rays of the sun, a purple canopy, inlaid with golden stars, was spread over their heads. In the centre was seen,

richly embroidered, the figure of Nero in the act of driving a curricle. To the exhibitions of the theatre the pleasures of the table succeeded. The banquet was the most sumptuous that taste and luxury could contrive. When the appetite of the guests was satisfied, the public diversions were once more resumed. Nero seized the opportunity to display his talents; and he, who a little before was master of the universe, appeared in the characters of charioteer, comedian, singer, and buffoon. He sung on the stage, and drove round the circus in his green livery. The king of Armenia saw the prince, who talked of dealing out crowns and sceptres, warbling a tune, and managing the reins for the entertainment of his subjects. Such despicable talents, he knew, could neither form a warrior nor a legislator. His glory, it now was evident, depended on the virtue and the genius of men very different from himself. How he found a people tame enough to obey, and general officers willing to command his armies, was matter of wonder to the Parthian prince. Struck with that idea, he could not refrain from saying to Nero, in the simplicity of his heart, "You have in Corbulo a "most valuable slave." The drift and good sense of the observation made no impression on a frivolous mind like that of Nero. An emperor, who placed his glory in being a scenic performer, paid no attention to the merit of Corbulo. If he understood the reflection of the eastern prince, he showed afterwards, that the only use he made of it was, to nourish a secret jealousy, and plan the ruin of an officer, whose fame in arms was too great for a tyrant to endure.

As soon as the diversions of the theatre and the circus ended, Nero thought fit to open a more important scene. He proceeded with a grand retinue to the capitol, where he entered with a branch of laurel in his hand; and, as if he had subdued Armenia, the charioteer and player of interludes was saluted IMPERATOR. His vanity was now amply gratified; but vanity was not the only spring of his actions. To be an adept in magic arts had been for some time

his predominant passion; and, as Tiridates brought with him in his train a number of the Parthian Magi, he thought the opportunity fair to learn all the secrets of an occult science, which he believed was not the mere illusion of mathematicians and pretended philosophers. Tiridates studied to ingratiate himself, and was proud to have the emperor of Rome for his pupil. By his desire, the Magi opened all their stores of knowledge, and Nero, with the anxiety of a guilty mind, was eager to pry into futurity. He was master of the Roman world, and, with the assistance of his oriental teachers, flattered himself that he should soon be able to control the ways of Providence, and give the law to the gods. With this view he passed his time in close conference with a set of Chaldean impostors; but Tiridates was not able, in return for the kingdom of Armenia, to teach his benefactor the art of holding commerce with evil spirits. Nero found the whole to be a system of fraud. Instead of being enabled to hold a council with infernal powers, he was left to the suggestions of his own heart, and the advice of a pernicious crew of abandoned men and women, who were the emperor's confidential ministers, and the instruments of every villany.

V. It is certain that Nero's passion for the guitar, and stage music, was not greater than his ambition to excel in magic incantations; but though his hopes were frustrated, he did not cease to entertain Tiridates with the most lavish profusion. An enormous sum was issued every day to the Armenian king, for the support of his own grandeur, and the courtiers in his train. At his departure a still larger sum was ordered, as a present from the emperor; and, that he might rebuild the city of Artaxata, which had been levelled to the ground, a number of artificers were added, at a vast expense, to the retinue of the Parthian prince, who also engaged a number of others to attend him, for stipulated wages, to his own country. The consequence of Nero's generosity was, that the fixing of a king on the throne of Armenia, was a heavier bur-

then to the Romans, than any of their most expensive wars.

There is reason to think, that the want of success in the attempt to make Nero believe in the religion of the *Magi*, served in some degree to open the eyes of Tiridates, and remove the errors of eastern superstition. In order to visit Rome he had taken a wide compass over an immense tract of country, and travelled all the way by land. The cause of this circuitous and laborious journey must be referred to the superstition of his native country. In the creed of the Parthian Magi, the sea was said to be a sacred element; and to spit in it, or defile the purity of the water by the superfluities of the human body, was held to be profane and impious. The design, probably, was, by that doctrine to prevent migration, and what at first was policy, received in time the sanction of religion. But Tiridates, during his stay at Rome, so far weeded out the prejudices of education, that he made no scruple to return by sea. He embarked at Brundusium, and, having crossed the Adriatic, arrived at the port of Dyrrachium. From that place he pursued his voyage along the coast of Asia, and, being safely landed, visited the Roman provinces, and the most splendid cities on the continent. Before he entered the confines of Armenia, Corbulo advanced to a meeting. In his interview with the Armenian monarch, he still maintained that superior character, which he had fairly earned by his talents and his virtues. Finding an extraordinary number of artificers in the prince's train, he resolved to act with due attention to the interest as well as the dignity of the Roman name; and with that view, having separated such as were hired, he suffered none but those who were a donation from Nero, to migrate to a foreign country. This behaviour gave no offence to Tiridates. He took leave of Corbulo with the highest esteem for his many virtues; and, though he entertained no kind of personal respect for Nero, he thought the regal diadem claimed a return of gratitude; and, upon that principle, as soon as the capital of Armenia was re-

built, instead of calling it *Artaxata*, he gave it the flattering name of *Neronia*.

VI. Rome having no war upon her hands, Nero, with airs of self-congratulation, as if his valour had subdued the nations, thought fit to shut the temple of Janus. But that pacific disposition did not last long. Intoxicated by the homage which he had received from Tiridates, he wanted to renew the same scene of splendour and vain glory, by the humiliation of Vologeses, the Parthian king. For that purpose, he endeavoured by pressing invitations, to induce that prince to undertake a journey to Rome. At length the eastern monarch gave a decisive answer: "You "can cross the sea which I hold to be a forbidden ele- "ment; come to Asia, and we will then settle the ce- "remony of our meeting. Fired with indignation by that peremptory refusal, and the tone of grandeur with which it was delivered, Nero was upon the point of declaring war, if other projects had not dazzled his imagination. He concerted his measures, and laid plans of vast ambition; but the caprice that dictated them yielded to the first novelty that occurred. He intended to open the temple of Janus for four wars at once. The first against the Jews, who felt themselves oppressed by the avarice and rapacity of Gessius Florus, the governor of the province, and were, at that time, in open revolt. The second enterprise was intended against the Æthiopians; the third against the Albanians on the borders of the Caspian sea; the fourth to revenge the insult offered to him by the haughty spirit of Vologeses. The love of fame, whatever he did, was the inspiring motive: whether he sent forth his armies, or drove a chariot, or sung a song, praise was still the ultimate end. If by his victorious arms the Æthiopians and Albanians could be reduced to subjection, the glory of enlarging the boundaries of the empire was to be the bright reward. His exertions were, therefore, made against the two last mentioned states. He sent detachments forward to survey the country; he formed flying camps in those distant regions; he began to collect the forces of the empire; and, not content with drawing from Britain,

from Germany, and Illyricum, the flower of his armies, he formed a new legion, composed of men six feet high, and this he called the phalanx of Alexander the Great.

Amidst this din of arms, and all this mighty tumult of warlike preparations, an incident occurred of more moment to Nero than the glory of the Roman name. A deputation arrived at Rome from the cities of Greece, where the theatre, and poetry, and music flourished, with orders to present to the emperor, from the several places, the victor's crown for minstrelsy and song. An opportunity so bright and unexpected was not to be neglected. Nero was transported with joy: he towered above himself and all competition. The deputies were admitted to his presence; they were caressed, invited to his table, and all other business, however important, gave way to the elegant arts. The Greeks were skilled in the trade of adulation. They beseeched the prince to honour them with a specimen of his talents. Nero sung to his guests; they heard, they applauded, they were thrown into ecstacies. He in his turn admired their taste; they were the only people who had music in their souls; they, and they only, had an ear for finer sound; the true masters of harmony; the judges who deserved to hear his exquisite powers. From that moment all his warlike projects vanished from his mind. He thought no more of humbling the Parthian king; the Æthiopians and Albanians might enjoy their independent state, and Vespasian might take the field against the Jews. The fame of a coachman, a minstrel, and a singer, was of greater moment. He resolved, without delay, to set out for Greece. How the administration was to be conducted during his absence, was the first consideration. That did not embarrass him long. The whole authority and all the functions of the prince were committed to Helius, one of his freedmen. That upstart minister, with Polycletus, his associate, had already enriched himself with the plunder of the public, and was now, with the whole power in his hands, to give a full display of his character. That point being settled, a weightier

care still remained. An imperial charioteer, and a comedian of illustrious rank, who was to be nobly covered with Olympic dust, and to bring back laurel crowns for his victories in song and pantomime, could not undertake such an expedition without the greatest pomp. Preparations were accordingly made. The emperor seemed to be going to an important war. Tigellinus put himself at the head of the companions of the Augustan order, in number not less than five thousand. To these were added an incredible multitude of abandoned harlots, and the most debauched young men of the time. The whole train went forth, not in warlike array, with swords, and pikes, and javelins, but with softer instruments; with the sock and buskin; with music, lutes and guitars. The retinue was suited to the dignity of the enterprise. An idea of the splendour and magnificence displayed on this occasion may be easily formed, when we are told that Nero never travelled with less than a thousand baggage-wagons; the mules all shod with silver, and the drivers drest in scarlet; his African slaves adorned with bracelets on their arms, and the horses decorated with the richest trappings.

VII. The consuls for this year were Fonteius Capito and Julius Rufus; but their authority was superseded by Helius, the freedman, who exercised all the powers of the imperial prerogative. This man broke loose at once, and was soon felt as a public calamity. Pride and insolence, avarice and cruelty, the never failing vices of those detestable miscreants, who from the dregs of the people rise above their fellow-citizens, marked the conduct of this favourite freedman, and debased the people, who submitted to so vile a master. All degrees and ranks of men, the senate, and the Roman knights, groaned under the iron rod of an ignoble tyrant, who confiscated their estates, sent them into banishment, or took away their lives at his will and pleasure. The people, who shuddered at the presence of the emperor, were obliged, in misery of heart, to lament his absence.

Nero, in the mean time, arrived at Cassiopœa in the style of Corcyra, and there, in the temple of Jupiter

Cassius, he tuned his harp, and sung in the presence of the people. From that place he set sail for Greece. Being safely landed, his first care was, like a great officer, before he marched further into the country, to settle the plan of his operations, in order not only to gain, but to secure his victory. With this view, he issued his public orders, requiring that all the games, which were celebrated throughout Greece at stated periods, and in different years, should be performed at their respective places, during his stay in the country; and not only so, but that each city should wait for his arrival. Nor was this all: the fame of such as had proved victorious, and were then no more, was to be obliterated from the memory of man, that all preceding merit might be eclipsed by the lustre of a new performer. The statues of the deceased were all demolished. The living artists were treated with less rigour. They were required to enter the lists with their imperial rival, and, upon that condition, their statues were exempted from the general destruction. Nero's love of fame was not a generous emulation; it was an impatience of a rival, that turned to envy, rancour, and malice. To be pronounced the first musician, and the best tragedian, was not enough for his vast ambition; he was likewise to be the most skilful driver of a curricle. With that bright object in view, he had for some years before meditated an expedition into Greece; and finding that the Olympic games were, in their regular course, to be celebrated in the summer, in the year of Rome eight hundred and sixteen, he even then had the precaution, by a positive command, to defer the exhibition of that great national spectacle till his arrival in Greece. The law, or which was equivalent, his will and pleasure, being announced, the people prepared for his reception. He began his tour through the country; he visited the several cities, and gave himself a spectacle on the public stage. Greece had been reduced to subjection by Flaminius, Mummius, Agrippa, and Augustus Cæsar: and now in her turn she triumphed over the conqueror. She saw the emperor of Rome running from place to place in the

character of a strolling player, a travelling musician, and a famous coachman. He did not, however, depend altogether on his merit, but practised the underhand arts, by which success is often ensured. He hired a numerous party to applaud, and distributed bribes among the judges who were to decide. Wherever he performed, a legion of Roman knights was stationed in the theatre, by their own example to excite and animate the admiration of the multitude, and teach the Greeks what was excellent in the arts, which they themselves had invented, and carried to perfection. By these and such like preconcerted measures, Nero secured his triumph in all quarters. Competition was invited, and at the same time intimidated. In one of the cities, a man well skilled in music, but a bad politician, experienced the danger of contending with a powerful rival. Zealous for the honour of his art, and proud of his own talent, he persisted to dispute the prize, till the lictors drove him to the wall, and there despatched him in the sight of the audience. Vespasian had found it necessary to pass from Syria into Greece, in order to appear among the band of courtiers, and pay his homage to the emperor. But, unfortunately, he either had no ear for music, or he did not reckon it amongst the accomplishments of a prince. He heard the divine voice in a sullen mood, or, as happened to him at Rome upon a former occasion, he fell asleep. For this offence, he was ordered to appear no more in the presence of the emperor. He retired to a small village, and there, in an obscure lurking-place, hoped to find a shelter from resentment. He remained for some time in that state of anxious suspense, when the fates called him forth to scenes of future glory. The Jews were in the field with a powerful army; they had defeated Cestius Gallus with great slaughter, and taken an eagle from one of the legions. The crisis was big with danger, and called for vigorous measures. But Nero did not think that Judæa was the field of glory. He gave the command to Vespasian, apprehending no danger from a man of obscure descent, and austere manners, whom he was no longer

willing to retain near his person. Vespasian departed to take upon him the command in Syria, and Nero continued his progress through Greece. He was received every where with public demonstrations of respect; but the people could scarce refrain from laughter, when they heard the sound of a voice neither loud nor clear, and saw the singer rising on his toes, in a vain endeavour to expand the notes, and straining his organs, till a face naturally red, was so inflamed as to vie with the deepest scarlet. Not content with the fame of an enchanting singer, he resolved to prove himself a great tragedian. The parts, in which he chose to distinguish himself, were HERCULES FURENS; ŒDIPUS, who murdered his father, and tore out his own eyes: ORESTES, poniarding his mother; and sometimes a RAVISHED SABINE, or a MATRON IN LABOUR, on the point of being delivered. When he arrived at Olympia, he found that the celebrated games of that place consisted altogether of chariot races, and athletic exercises, and by consequence that no theatre had been erected. Was his darling music to be excluded? Rather than suffer such an indignity, he ordered preparations to be made for interludes, and other dramatic performances. Not content with being blinded on the stage; with raving like a madman, and being brought to bed like a woman; he was still to figure on the race-ground, and astonish the multitude with his dexterity in whirling round the course. Determined to perform wonders, and surpass all ancient fame, he mounted a car drawn by six horses, but had the misfortune, in the heat of his career, to be thrown from his seat. He mounted again; but either hurt by his fall, or not able to bear the velocity of the motion, he was obliged to descend before he reached the goal. He was, notwithstanding, declared conqueror. He contended afterwards for the prizes at the Pythian, the Nemean, and all the other games of Greece, with equal success at every place. He was proclaimed victor in all trials of skill, and gained no less that eighteen hundred different crowns. The honour so obtained was always understood to reflect a lustre on the con-

queror's native country. With a view to that custom, the form of the proclamation in favour of Nero was as follows: "NERO CÆSAR IS VICTOR IN THE COMBAT (naming it), AND HAS WON THE CROWN FOR THE ROMAN PEOPLE, AND THE UNIVERSE, OF WHICH HE IS MASTER." Care was taken to transmit to Rome a regular account of all his victories. Such a career of rapid success made the people stand at gaze. The senate passed a vote of thanks to the gods for such signal events, and, by their decrees, so loaded the calendar, that the year could scarce find room for so many rejoicing days.

VIII. Nero now conceived that he had triumphed over the arts, and in the pride of his heart, resolved to make a progress through the conquered country. He took care, however, not to visit Athens or Lacedæmon. In the former, he dreaded to approach the temple of the Eumenidæ. A mind lashed and goaded by the whips and stings of a guilty conscience wished to avoid those avenging deities. He was deterred from Lacedæmon by the form of government, and the sanctity of the laws established by Lycurgus. The place where the Eleusinian mysteries were celebrated, was also forbidden ground. Murderers and parricides were excluded from those religious ceremonies. Nero was seized with a fit of remorse. Busy reflection brought to light the iniquities of his conduct; in the agitation of his spirits, he reviewed those deeds of horror, which forbore to goad him, while his mind was becalmed by vanity and pleasure. Conscience may grant a truce to the guilty, but never makes a lasting peace. Distracted by his fears, and sunk in the gloom of superstition, he resolved to consult the oracle at Delphi. The Pythian priestess warned him to beware of seventy-three years. He received the admonition as a certain promise of long life, not then thinking of Galba, who had reached his seventy-third year, and in a short time after succeeded to the imperial dignity. The oracle pleased him at first by agreeable bodings, but did not continue long in his good graces. The parricide, he was told, which he had committed, placed him in the same rank with

Alcmeon and Orestes, who had murdered their mothers. Nero kindled with indignation. He resolved that the gods should feel his resentment, and, in his fury disfranchised the territory of Cirrha, which had been appropriated to the temple, and was held to be consecrated ground. Nor did his frenzy end here. The oracle was to be silenced, or so profaned as to lose its credit. With this intent, he ordered a number of men to be massacred on the spot; and having poured libations of their blood into the opening of the ground, from which the exhalations issued, that were supposed to inspire the priestess with enthusiastic fury, he closed the orifice, and with pride and insolence left a place which had been revered for ages. After this exploit, he returned to his former luxury, and in the gratifications of vice hoped to find some respite from his anxious thoughts. But even vice required variety. Repetition might pall the sated appetite, and if he did not show an inventive genius, the flattery of the Greeks was in danger of being exhausted. He had made himself at Rome the wife of Pythagoras; but that was become an obsolete story, and no longer excited wonder. He was determined, therefore, to resume his sex, and marry Sporus, the eunuch. The ceremony was performed with great pomp and splendour. Calvia Crispinilla was appointed mistress of the wardrobe to the emperor's wife. She adorned the bride with all the decorations of female elegance; and Tigellinus, amidst the applause of the astonished Greeks, who, with arch sneers of ridicule, had still the address to pay their adulation, gave away Sporus in marriage to the emperor of Rome. It was said upon the occasion, that it would have been well for mankind, if Nero's father had been married to such a wife.

IX. Nero could not, in this unbounded manner, riot in vice and folly without vast expense, and a prodigious waste of the public treasure. To supply his prodigality, Helius, the freedman, who conducted the administration at Rome, laboured hard, by every iniquitous measure, by extortion and cruelty, to raise enormous sums of money. A tame and complying

senate was easily induced by the arts of the prime minister, to vote an immense annual sum to be remitted to the emperor during his absence from the capital. The rapacity of Helius was not to be appeased. The companions of the Augustan society had bound themselves by a vow to erect a statue to Nero, not less than a thousand pound weight. By that voluntary obligation they were said to have incurred a debt, and were compelled to advance an equivalent sum of money. No rank or station was safe from plunder and oppression. Roman knights and senators fell a sacrifice, and their estates were confiscated. Sulpicius Camerinus, a man descended from an illustrious family, was put to death for an extraordinary reason. The surname of Pythicus had been for ages annexed to his ancestors, and was, consequently, an hereditary honour. By the fertile invention of Helius this was construed into a crime. The name might imply a victor in the Pythian games; and when Nero, with the consenting voice of Greece, was declared universal conqueror, to usurp that title was a crime of violated majesty, and an impious sacrilege. Sulpicius and his son were put to death, and their effects were forfeited to the state. Wealth, in whatever rank, was sure to provoke the hand of rapacity, and Rome under the government of a presuming and arrogant freedman, was a scene of plunder, blood, and cruelty. And yet all that could be amassed by those iniquitous means, was not sufficient for the prodigality of Nero. The Greeks had flattered his vanity, and, in return, were doomed to feel the hand of oppression. The cities, which had revered him as a god, had reason in the end to execrate him as a tyrant. They saw their best and most distinguished citizens put to death, or sent into banishment, that the emperor might enjoy the spoils of their plundered property.

X. The fame of a divine voice, and an exquisite hand on the guitar, was not sufficient for the ambition of Nero. He wished to distinguish himself by some unheard of enterprise. The grand, the vast, and almost impossible fired his imagination. He arrived at Corinth, and was there surprised to see by what a

narrow isthmus the two seas were separated. Like the hero of Statius the poet, he heard the murmur of the billows on the Ionian and the Ægean shores; *in mediis audit duo litora campis.* The project of piercing through the land, and forming a navigable canal to communicate the two seas, and render it unnecessary for mariners to sail round the Peloponnesus, struck his fancy and fired him with ideas of immortal fame. The Greeks opposed the design, and endeavoured to dissuade him from undertaking it. The language of superstition was, that to attempt to join what had been severed for ages, would be an impious violation of the laws of nature. Nero was not to be deterred from his purpose; religious principles were urged in vain; to conquer nature were an imperial work, and what the gods ordained, might be new modelled by his superior judgment. He knew, besides, that the attempt had been made by Demetrius Policrates, an eastern king, by Julius Cæsar, and Caligula; and to accomplish an arduous work, which those three princes had undertaken without effect, appeared to him the height of human glory. He resolved, therefore, to begin the work without delay. Having harangued the prætorian soldiers, and urged every topic that could inflame their ardour, he provided himself with a golden pick-axe (for such hands were not to be sullied by baser metal), and, advancing on the shore, sung in melodious strains a hymn to Neptune, Amphitrite, and all the inferior gods and goddesses, who allay or heave the waters of the deep. After this ceremony, he struck the first stroke into the ground, and, with a basket of sand on his shoulder, marched away in triumph, proud of his Herculean labour. The natives of the country saw the frantic enterprise with mixed emotions of fear, astonishment, and religious horror. They observed to Nero, that of the three princes, who had conceived the same design, not one died a natural death. They told him further, that, in some places, as soon as the axe pierced the ground, a stream of blood gushed from the wound; hollow groans were heard from subterraneous caverns, and various spectres, emitting a feeble murmur, were seen

to glide along the coast. These remonstrances made no impression. Nero ordered his soldiers to exert their utmost vigour; money was levied in every quarter; cruelty and extortion went hand in hand. In order to procure a sufficient number of workmen, the jails in all parts of the empire were ransacked, and the armies in Syria and Palestine had it in command to send to Corinth all the prisoners taken in battle.

The conduct of the war against the Jewish nation had been, as mentioned above, committed to Vespasian, who had already carried his victorious arms through the province of Galilee. The enemy, as soon as they had intelligence that he was advancing at the head of a powerful army, endeavoured to surprise a Roman garrison in the city of Ascalon, but were repulsed with prodigious slaughter. Not less than eighteen thousand were put to the sword by the legions, who had orders to give no quarter. Vespasian found it necessary, against a fierce and obstinate race, at that time for their manifold crimes devoted to destruction, to forget the maxims of Roman clemency. It is certain that those merciful conquerors never spilled so much hostile blood in any of their wars from the first foundation of Rome. The city of Gadara was taken by storm, and reduced to ashes. The garrison and the whole body of the inhabitants perished in the flames. In the mean time, Trajan, whose son was afterwards emperor of Rome, was sent, at the head of the tenth legion, to spread terror and destruction through the country. He laid siege to the city of Japha, and, meeting with an obstinate resistance, carried the works by assault. All, who were capable of bearing arms, in number not less than fifteen thousand were put to the sword. The Samaritans, who had collected their forces on Mount Garizim, were treated with the same severity. Cerealis, who afterwards commanded against Civilis, the Batavian chieftain, and also in Britain, had orders to march with three thousand foot and six hundred horse to attack the fastnesses on the hills, and dislodge the enemy. He formed lines of circumvallation round the hill, and by a close blockade cut off all communication with the

adjacent country. The Samaritans were reduced by famine to the last distress; yet, even in that condition, held out to the last with determined obstinacy. Cerealis ordered his men to advance up the hill. The soldiers forced their way up the steep ascent, and with resistless valour soon gained the summit. A dreadful carnage followed. Twelve thousand of the Samaritans perished on the spot. The city of Gamala was taken by assault, and the garrison, with all the inhabitants, put to the sword.

Vespasian, during these operations, carried on the siege of Jotapata, the strongest place in Galilee. Josephus, the historian, had been appointed governor of the province, and he now commanded the garrison, determined to make a vigorous defence, and hold out to the last extremity. The particulars of the siege are related by himself, and therefore need not to be here repeated. It will be sufficient to say that he discharged all the duties of an able officer, by his own example, no less than by his spirited exhortations, animating the soldiers, and in every part of the works exciting them to deeds of valour. The siege lasted seven-and-forty days. In one of the approaches to the walls, Vespasian was wounded by a lance aimed at him from the works; but he bore the pain with such silent fortitude that no ill consequence followed. On the forty-seventh day of the siege, the inhabitants still refusing to capitulate, the signal was given for a general assault. Titus, at the head of a chosen band, scaled the walls, and was the first that entered the town. In that dreadful crisis it does not appear that Josephus either faced the danger, or discharged the functions of a general officer. Except the women and children, and about twelve hundred prisoners, all who were found in the town died in one general carnage. Josephus was afterwards found concealed in a cave. Vespasian spared his life, and the historian survived to write an account of the siege, intermixed, indeed, with some romantic circumstances, but containing various matter for the information of posterity. The city of Tarichæa, which had been the receptacle of a turbulent and seditious rabble from all sides of the

country, was compelled, after an obstinate resistance, to open her gates to Titus. Vespasian ordered twelve hundred of the most fierce incendiaries to be put to death, as a public example, and in compliance with Nero's letters, sent six thousand prisoners to work at the isthmus of Corinth.

XI. While Vespasian pursued his conquest, and, in one campaign, overran the province of Galilee, Rome was a scene of tumult and distraction. Helius reigned like a second emperor: the people called him the worst of the two. Each day produced new proofs of avarice, cruelty, and all the vices of an upstart slave. The senators began to wake from their lethargy; the clamours of the populace were loud and fierce; rage and indignation glowed in every breast; and the flame was ready to mount into a blaze. The freedman saw his danger. He despatched letters to inform the emperor that the urgency of affairs required his presence at Rome. But Nero's vast designs were of too much importance. His answer to the favourite was, "You "advise me to return to Rome, but whatever your "reasons are, you ought rather to recommend a "longer absence; that I may finish my grand under- "taking, and then revisit the capital, crowned with "immortal glory." He saw the number of labourers sent by Vespasian, and, in consideration of that timely succour, forgave the merit of that victorious general. Corbulo had not the good fortune to be remembered with equal moderation. Tiridates had mentioned him with the praise due to his virtue, and his fame in arms. That commendation was sufficient to provoke the ingratitude of a tyrant, who beheld distinguished talents with a jealous eye, and suffered no man to be great and virtuous with impunity. Being at length determined to execute the bloody purpose, which he had for some time harboured in secret, he wrote to Corbulo in terms of great esteem and kindness, calling him his friend and benefactor, and expressing his ardent wish to have an interview with a general who had rendered such signal services to the empire. Having sent that insidious invitation, he held a private correspondence with Arrius Varus, who served in Asia;

a young man of a daring spirit, in haste to rise by his crimes. To fabricate a charge against his commanding officer he knew would be the way to ingratiate himself with Nero. He sent a formal accusation, loaded with every crime that calumny could suggest. Corbulo fell into the snare. A mind like his, impregnated with honour and heroic fortitude, could admit no suspicion of intended treachery. He embarked without any retinue, and landed at Cenchreæ, a Corinthian harbour in the Ægean sea. Nero was there at the time, dressed in his pantomime garb, and ready to mount the stage, when the arrival of his general officer was announced. He felt the indecency of giving an audience in his comedian's dress to a man, whom he respected, while he hated him. To free himself from all embarrassment, he took the shortest way, and sent a death warrant. Corbulo saw too late that honesty is too often the dupe of the ignoble mind. He scorned to expostulate. "I have deserved this," he said, and fell upon his sword.

The blood of one great man could not appease the cruelty of Nero. Whoever was eminent for talents, riches, or nobility of birth, was considered as a state-criminal. In that number were the two Scribonii, Rufus and Proculus, who had lived in perfect harmony, with mutual esteem, and true brotherly affection. Their fortunes were a joint stock. They assisted each other in their road to honours, and both together rose to stations of high authority; one on the Upper, and the other on the Lower Rhine. While they discharged their respective duties with integrity, and unwearied zeal for the public service, Pactius Africanus was their secret enemy. This man had the ear of Nero, and knew how to transfuse his own malignity into the heart of a prince too fatally prone to evil deeds. The virtues of the Scribonii were, by his artful misrepresentation, converted into crimes; the happy concord in which they lived, was a conspiracy against the state; and their fame and credit in the German armies were the means of two ambitious politicians, not the end of their actions. By conciliating the good-will of the soldiers, they hoped to overturn

the government. Nero took the alarm, and under a specious pretence of doing honour to the two brothers, invited them to his court. They obeyed his orders. As soon as they arrived in Greece, a new scene was opened. An audience was refused; they were forbid to appear in the emperor's presence; suborned accusations were presented in form; and the unhappy brothers found themselves in the sad condition of state-criminals. They desired to be heard in their defence. That act of justice was denied. They knew, that, under a despotic prince, the interval between the opening of an accusation and the catastrophe is always short. They resolved not to wait the tyrant's pleasure, but to deliver themselves with Roman fortitude from an ignominious death. They opened their veins, and expired together.

The fate of Crassus, who derived an illustrious lineage from Pompey the Great, and Crassus the triumvir, may be mentioned in this place. Historians have not fixed the time of his death with precision; but it is certain that he fell a victim to the cruelty of Nero. Crassus, his father, with Scribonia, his mother, and a brother, who was named Cneius Pompeius Magnus, had been cut off by the emperor Claudius. But the family, in the opinion of Aquileius Regulus, had not shed blood enough. That pernicious informer knew that to be accused was to be condemned. He invented a charge of an atrocious nature, and Crassus shared the fate of his murdered family. He left two brothers; the eldest, Crassus Scribonianus; the youngest, the unfortunate Piso, at that time a banished man, but afterwards adopted by Galba, too soon to fall from that dangerous eminence.

During these bloody tragedies, the great business of piercing the isthmus was not neglected. The work began at a place called Lechæm, a seaport on the Ionian sea. It went on with strenuous exertion for a number of days. A trench was dug four stadia in length, which was computed to be a tenth part of the isthmus. But the flame of discord was lighted up at Rome. A storm was gathering in Gaul, and commotions shook every part of the empire. In that

alarming conjuncture, Helius thought fit to leave his associate Polycletus, as his vicegerent at Rome, and he himself passed over into Greece. He met Nero at Corinth, and, by giving him in striking colours, a dreadful picture of the state of affairs, enforced the necessity of returning to the capital. The grand enterprise was abandoned, and the Ionian and Ægean Seas were left to flow in the directions in which nature had appointed. But still there was an object that attracted Nero's fond regard. The time of celebrating the Isthmian games was near at hand. His favourite passion hurried him to the place. The pugilist and the charioteer banished from his mind all fear of plots and insurrections. He thought of the crowns of victory which he had obtained in every quarter. His heart expanded with joy, with self congratulation, and gratitude towards a people, who had declared him matchless and unrivalled in all the games and exercises throughout the country. It behoved so great a conqueror to leave a lasting monument of munificence and imperial grandeur. Elate with pride, and touched with generous sentiments, he resolved to give Greece her liberty. With that design he repaired to the forum. Nor did he suffer his gracious intention to be uttered by the public crier. Such a gift required the accents of his own heavenly voice. He ascended the tribunal of harangues, and having declared Greece a free country, set sail for Italy.

XII. The consuls next in office were Galerius Trachalus and Silius Italicus. They were both men of genius; both addicted to study, and distinguished by their extensive literature. Trachalus was an orator in great celebrity, always copious, and often sublime. Silius Italicus had also distinguished himself at the bar, but not with unblemished reputation. He knew that under Nero, to be the accuser of innocence was the road to preferment; but he returned to the paths of virtue, and by his poetry, which he published afterwards, transmitted his name to posterity. During his consulship, Nero returned from Greece, to close the scene of vice and folly. After a

tempestuous voyage, he arrived at Naples, where the first displays of his genius had been seen in their dawn. His fame was now in its meridian lustre. The conqueror in the Olympic, the Pythian, and the Isthmian games was to enter the city in triumph; and for this purpose the usual avenues were not sufficient. The occasion required something new and extraordinary. The custom in Greece was to throw down part of the city wall, that the conqueror in the sacred games might enter through the breach. Nero ordered an opening to be made for himself, and entered the city in a triumphal car, drawn by six milk-white horses. The splendour of the day exceeded the triumph of Flaminius or Mummius. They had obtained victories, and subdued a nation: but what Roman triumphed over the arts of Greece? Who, before Nero, was declared the best charioteer, and the finest player on the guitar? From Naples he went to Antium, his native city, and there displayed the same pomp and ceremony. But Rome was the place where his pride was to appear in all its grandeur. A long procession led the way. His crowns of victory in the various games glittered to the eye, and inscriptions, in glaring letters blazoned forth the fame of Nero, the first Roman who gained the prize of theatrical talents. Festive songs, and thanksgiving hymns were sung, not to Jupiter, the guardian god of Rome, but to Apollo, the deity of singers and harpers. The triumphal car in which Augustus had been seen, was brought forth on the occasion. That emperor, after all his victories, entered the city in triumph: Nero sat in the same carriage, a coachman, and a player. Augustus was attended by Agrippa; Nero had by his side Diodorus, the musician. The streets resounded with acclamations: Io! Victory! Victory in the Olympic, the Pythian, and the Isthmian games! Io! the conqueror of Greece! Happy the people that heard that melodious voice! Victims were slain, incense rose to heaven, and flowers covered all the way.

Nero returned to his palace. Pomp and splendour were at an end; the scenes of vanity passed away, and

he was left at leisure to think and to be wretched. Helius had told him that the conjuncture was big with danger. Plots, insurrections, and conspiracies filled his mind with dreadful apprehensions. A conspiracy, beyond all question, was actually formed, and ready to break out, had it not been discovered by a trifling accident. It happened that one of the conspirators, towards the close of day, passed by the theatre, he saw in one of the porticos, a man loaded with fetters, and in bitterness of heart bewailing his unhappy lot. Upon inquiry it was found, that he was to be led into the presence of Nero, which he considered as sure destruction. The conspirator was touched with compassion. He drew nearer to the prisoner, and to assuage his fears, whispered in his ear, "Have a good heart; live till to-morrow, and "you will have reason to thank me as your deli- "verer." These were words of comfort to a wretch, who expected instant death. His hopes revived; such welcome tidings filled him with delight and wonder; but wonder was the strongest emotion. The novelty of an incident so unexpected fixed his attention. By what means was he to be delivered from impending ruin? Nothing but a dark conspiracy could bring about such an event. He resolved to reveal all he knew. The merit of a discovery, made in time, would not only secure his life, but lead on to fortune. He desired to be conducted to the prince. The conspirator was immediately seized and put to the torture. His courage was for some time undaunted, unsubdued. He denied the whole of the charge. But protracted misery was too much to bear. His resolution failed. The names of his accomplices were extorted by the violence of pain, and all were condemned to suffer. A scene of blood was laid, and Nero's superstition ascribed the discovery of the plot to the miraculous interposition of the gods.

Having conquered his enemies, and secured the future tranquillity of his reign, he thought it time to give a loose to his libidinous passions, and pursue his theatrical amusements. For this purpose he removed to Naples, the place of perfect security, and the seat

of pleasure. His halcyon days were soon interrupted. A storm had been for some time gathering in Gaul, and threatened at length to shake the empire to its foundation. There was in that part of the empire, a native of the country, descended from the kings of Aquitain, by name Julius Vindex. His father had been raised by Claudius to the dignity of a senator, and the son was made governor of a province with the rank and powers of a Roman proprætor. This man, without an army under his command, and without any resources, except what he found in his own personal courage, and the generous ardour of an independent spirit, undertook to free the world from bondage. He knew that an enterprise so bold and daring required the co-operation of the provinces of Gaul and the Roman legions. With that view, he sent despatches to Galba, at that time governor of the nethermost Spain, and made him a tender of the imperial dignity. Galba deduced his pedigree from the ancient family of the Sulpicii: his mother, by her paternal line, was descended from Mummius, the conqueror of Corinth, and by her mother's side, from Quintus Catulus, the pride and ornament of the old republic. He was consul under Tiberius, in the year of Rome seven hundred and eighty. He commanded in Germany in the reign of Caligula, and, afterwards, under Claudius was proconsul of Africa. His illustrious birth, his military fame, and high credit with the legions in every army, pointed him out as the proper person to depose a prince, whose cruelty made him detestable, and whose folly rendered even tyranny itself ridiculous. Galba received the despatches sent by Vindex with the frigid caution of a man far advanced in life. He was more than seventy years old, and that age is not the season of ambition. To slide in quiet through the remainder of his days, seemed to be all that he desired from fortune; but, under that outward calm, the sparks of a dying passion were rekindled. And yet the enterprise proposed to him was big with danger, and the issue doubtful. Prudence conspired with indolence, and he remained silent and inactive. The governors of all the other

provinces had been, in like manner, solicited to enter into the Gallic league; they hated Nero; but instead of declaring open hostility, they thought it more advisable to provide for their own safety, by sending to Rome the letters which they had received from Vindex. Galba suppressed his in silence. Nero received the news with joy and exultation. His finances, he said, were well nigh exhausted, and the forfeited estates of the insurgents, would be ways and means, by which he intended to fill his treasury. He considered Galba's silence as a proof of guilt. Without further inquiry, he confiscated all his property at Rome, and despatched assassins, with orders to put him to death.

Vindex, in the meantime, exerted himself with unremitting vigour to rouse the people of Gaul. He went to the various cities, and lighted up the flame of war in every quarter. He called a public convention of the states, and harangued the assembly in substance as follows: "We live, he said, not under laws, and civil go-"vernment, but under the will of a single tyrant. Vice "and cruelty lord it over mankind. The provinces groan "under the yoke of oppression; our houses are pil-"laged; our wives and daughters are violated, and our "relations basely murdered. Of all our misery Nero is "the author. What crime so great that he has not "dared to perpetrate? His mother died by his murder-"ous hand. That horrible parricide makes the heart "recoil; but Agrippina deserved her fate. She brought "a monster into the world. At length the measure "of his guilt is full. The east is up in arms; Britain "in commotion; and the legions in Spain and Ger-"many are on the eve of a revolt; and shall the na-"tions of Gaul stand lingering in suspense? What "consideration is there to restrain your ardour? "Shall the titles of Cæsar, of Augustus, of Prince, "and Imperator, throw a false lustre round a man, "who has disgraced his rank, and made majesty "ridiculous? These eyes, my friends, these eyes "have seen him a fiddler, a mountebank, and a pan-"tomime actor. Instead of his imperial titles, call "him Thyestes, Œdipus, Alcæon, and Orestes

"Those names are suited to his crimes. How long "are we to submit to such a master? Our forefathers "took the city of Rome by storm: and what was their "motive? In those days the love of plunder was "sufficient to provoke a war. We have a nobler "cause; the cause of public liberty. It is that, my "friends, it is that glorious cause that now invites us. "Let us obey the call, and draw the avenging sword. "The nations round us, fired with indignation, are "ready to assert their rights. Let them not be the "first to prove themselves men. The enterprise has "; 'l that is dear to man, all that is great in hu- nature; and shall we not be the first to seize torious opportunity? Let us go forth at once, e the deliverers of the world."

s speech was received with shouts of applause. T deputies, inflamed with ardour in the cause of li erty, returned to their respective cities; a warlike spirit was kindled in the mass of the people; a league was formed, and the din of arms was heard in every part of the country. Galba was informed of all that passed. He also knew that he was proscribed by Nero, and that his effects were sold by public auction. The tide of affairs rushed on with a swell that overpowered a mind by nature indolent, and enfeebled by age. In the number of Galba's friends, Titus Vinius was the only person that endeavoured to rouse his drooping spirit. To hesitate in such a juncture appeared to him a privation of mind nothing short of madness. The only question, he said, was, which was most eligible, to act in conjunction with Vindex, or to wage war against him? against a man who wished to depose a tyrant, and call to the succession a prince who possessed the virtues of humanity? Galba saw the necessity of taking a decided part, but his natural irresolution was not easily conquered. He wished to sound the inclinations of the people, and, for that purpose, summoned a grand council to meet at New Carthage, in order, as he pretended, to settle the manumission of slaves. His friends knew that greater matters were in agitation, and, accordingly, spread a general alarm. On the day appointed, an incredible

multitude assembled from all parts of the country Galba ascended the tribunal, prepared by a well-imagined artifice to speak at once to the eye and the ear. The images of the most illustrious of both sexes, who had fallen a sacrifice to Nero's cruelty, were ranged in regular order round the council-chamber. The silent eloquence of that pathetic scene he knew would assist the orator, and inflame the passions of his audience. He began his harangue without the usual approaches of a studied introduction. The business was of the first importance, and he rushed into it at once with warmth and vehemence. He painted forth the horrors of Nero's reign, the acts of oppression that laid waste the provinces, and the murders that thinned the noblest families. If proofs were necessary, he looked round the hall, and behold, he said, "behold there in glaring colours the evidence of "the worst iniquity. Judge not of Nero by my words; "view him with your own eyes. Those images in- "form against him. Lo! there the ghastly features "of the murdered Cæsars! You see Nero's mother, "brother, and sister! his wife, his aunt, his nearest "relations! his wretched friends! all butchered, all "destroyed, by the sword, by famine, by poison, by "every villany! Direct your eyes to yonder wall: you "there behold Burrhus, Lateranus, Vestinus, Cassius, "and Lucius Vetus, with a long train of the first men "in Rome! They suffered for their talents and their "virtues. Nor is this all: think of your own native "genius; call to mind the men, born in Spain, who "were the ornaments of Roman literature, and an "honour to their country. There lies Seneca, the "enlightened philosopher: he bleeds in a bath, and "with his last breath teaches the precepts of wisdom! "Your great poet, Lucan, whose bosom glowed with "the love of freedom, repeats his own immortal "verses, and expires; his father, Annæus Mela, falls "a victim, because he was the brother of your great "philosopher, and the father of such a son. Survey "that group; you have there Pætus Thrasea, and "Bareas Soranus, who were virtue itself. See that "train of illustrious women: Sextia, Pollutia, and

"Servilia, all led to execution. That boy is Rufinus "Crispinus, the son of Poppæa by her first husband; "and notwithstanding his tender age and innocence, "they dash him from a rock into the sea. Behold "this youth, whom I have brought before you from "one of the Balearic islands, where he was condemned "to live in exile. He is too young to know the na- "ture of a crime, or his own wretched lot. Not yet a "citizen, and, behold! he is banished from his country. "These are the exploits of Nero. Vindex has under- "taken to be the deliverer of his country. For you, "and all Spain, I am willing to brave every danger. "My commission is from the senate, and the Roman "people. I disclaim the authority of Nero: to me he "is no longer emperor. I know that by him I am "adjudged to death; but, if you resolve to assert your "rights; if you make a common cause with me in that "glorious struggle, I am willing to close my days in "your service." This speech inflamed the multitude with uncommon ardour. The place resounded with acclamations, and Galba was saluted Emperor of Rome. His modesty, or his prudence, made him decline that title. He desired to be called the general of the senate and the Roman people.

During these transactions, Nero remained at Naples, still addicted to his favourite amusements, enchanting himself and the public with his harp, and chiefly intent on bringing to perfection an hydraulic organ, on a new construction, which he promised to produce on the stage. But that gay serenity was soon overcast. Advices arrived from Spain and Gaul. In the former, Galba had thrown off the mask; in the latter, Vindex was at the head of a powerful army. Nero shuddered at the news; indignation soon succeeded; he threatened to punish the rebels with death; his frivolous passions took their turn; he went to see the athletic exercises, and tuned his guitar. In that manner he passed eight or ten days; no orders given; no letter to the senate; not a word escaped from him; he smothered all in sullen silence. Fresh tidings arrived from Gaul; the proclamations, which Vindex published in every quarter, were delivered to him; he found

himself called, in a style of contempt, *Oenobarbus, and a vile comedian.* Enraged at the indignity offered to his talents, he started up in a sudden fury, overturned the banqueting-table, wrote to the senate to exert the strength of the empire, and, to fire them with indignation, added in pathetic terms, "Judge yourselves, "conscript fathers, judge of the insolence of Vindex; "in his own words see the malignity of that auda- "cious rebel. He has dared impiously to say that I "have a bad voice, and play ill on the guitar." A complaint of that importance could not fail to make an impression on the fathers. They passed a decree, declaring Galba a public enemy, and promising a reward of ten millions of sesterces for the head of Vindex. The Gaul, with superior magnanimity, offered his own head to whoever should bring him that of Nero. If he freed the world from a monster, he set no value on his own life; he then would die content.

Virginius Rufus, who, at that time, commanded on the Upper Rhine, had received orders to take the field against the rebels in Gaul. Whether that officer aspired to the imperial dignity, seems to be a problem not solved by any of the historians. It is certain that the legions, seeing the miseries occasioned by Nero's tyranny, and at length disgusted by the contemptible frolics of an emperor, who rendered it ridiculous to obey him, made a tender of the empire to their own general, whom they respected for his military talents, and the virtues of moderation. Virginius declined the offer. If he nourished ambition in his heart, he thought it best to suppress it in that juncture, and wait for future events. It belonged, he said, to the senate, and the senate only, not to the legions, to dispose of the sovereignty. Whatever were his views, he still retained a true Roman spirit, and, with indignation, saw a rebel chieftain and his conquered countrymen joined in a league to give an emperor to the mistress of the world. He resolved to collect his forces, and march in quest of the enemy. Gaul was far from acting with a spirit of union. Internal dissensions divided the states into contending factions. The Sequani, the Ædui, and Arverni followed the

banners of Vindex. The Lingones, and the people of Rheims, accustomed to slavery, and hating the opposite party, declared for Nero. The cities of Vienne and Lyons, which lay contiguous, renewed their ancient animosity; the former listing on the side of Vindex; the latter, with a pretended regard for their oath of fidelity, espousing the cause of Nero. In that disposition of the public mind, Virginius entered Gaul at the head of his legions, with a strong reinforcement of Belgic auxiliaries, and the Batavian cohorts. He proceeded by rapid marches to Vesontium, a city in league with Vindex. The inhabitants refused to open their gates. Virginius pitched his camp, determined to lay siege to the place. Vindex advanced to the relief of his confederates. The two armies were in sight of each other. The Gallic chieftain, little doubting that the Roman general's opinion of Nero coincided with his own, thought it prudent, before he tried the issue of a battle, to negotiate by his deputies. He accordingly made his overtures. Various messengers passed between the two commanders, and an interview at last took place. The result was an agreement of some kind, but what were the terms it is fruitless now to inquire. History has left us in the dark. All that can be related with certainty is, that Virginius began to withdraw his forces, and Vindex with his army made his approach to the walls of the town. The legions saw the motions of the enemy, and imagining that they meant to offer battle, resolved to begin the attack. The armies of the Upper and Lower Rhine were not inured to discipline. Fierce, and disdaining all control, they wanted no orders from their general. A desperate engagement followed. The Gauls were unprepared, but their courage braved every danger. Both sides fought with impetuous fury; the Gauls resenting the treachery of their enemies; the Romans stimulated by their inveterate animosity. Blood and carnage covered all the plain. The legions cut their way with dreadful slaughter, till the Gauls, having lost no less than twenty thousand of their bravest troops, and seeing inevitable destruction on every side, betook themselves to flight. Vin-

dex exerted himself in every quarter of the field to prevent the massacre: but his efforts were in vain. He saw the slaughter of his people, and concluded that Virginius had betrayed him, and the cause of liberty. His enterprise defeated, and no hopes of conquest left, he resolved not to survive a calamity so unexpected. He fell upon his sword, and died on the field of battle.

Meanwhile, all Spain was in commotion. Galba was employed in schemes of future grandeur. He raised a new legion, mustered forces in all quarters, and with his utmost art and industry, allured the different states to his interest. Cornelius Fascus a young man of illustrious birth, went over to Galba, and drew with him the province of which he was governor. But the great accession of strength was from Lusitania. Otho, who had been the favourite of Nero, and his constant companion in all his scenes of riot and debauchery, had been for some years at the head of that province. He was appointed to that station, as the reader may remember, under colour of doing him honour; but, in fact, to remove a rival, whom Nero dreaded, and to leave him at a distance from Rome, in a state of honourable banishment. Otho considered himself as no better than a state prisoner, in a remote part of the empire. Resentment prompted him to revenge; and ambition like his was eager to come forth from obscurity, and act a principal part on the great stage of public business. He melted down all his massy gold and silver; and, having converted it into coin, went with his whole treasure, and the forces of his province, to support the enterprise of an old man, who he knew in the course of nature, could not long enjoy the supreme authority. The other governors and proprætors followed his example. The Roman empire seemed to be transferred to Spain. Nero was at last sensible of his danger. He ordered the legions in Illyricum to advance by rapid marches into Italy; he recalled the troops that had been sent against the Albanians to the borders of the Caspian Sea; and he directed the fourteenth legion, then in Britain, to come without

loss of time to his assistance. Distracted by the news that filled all Italy, he forgot his hydraulic organ, and returned to Rome, covered with consternation. His fears were soon dispersed. Letters from Virginius Rufus arrived at Rome. The death of Vindex and the total overthrow of his army, transported Nero beyond all bounds of joy. He called for his musical instruments; he tuned his harp, and warbled songs of triumph.

In Spain, the minds of men were affected in a very different manner. Galba saw an unexpected reverse of fortune. He blamed his own imprudence, and accused the folly of an old man, who, at the close of life was weak enough to listen to the call of ambition. To try, if possible, to retrieve his affairs, he sent despatches to Virginius Rufus, inviting him to a participation of councils and of future grandeur. The offer was rejected. It was a maxim with Rufus, that the senate and the people had the sole right of creating an emperor. The civil power, he said, in every well constituted government, ought to be supreme; to obey is the virtue of a soldier. Galba had no resource left. Half his cavalry showed themselves alienated from his service, and were retained with difficulty. Dejected, hopeless, and expecting certain destruction from the assassins employed by Nero, he retired to the city of Clunia, and there relapsed into his former indolence.

XIII. Nero was now at the summit of his wishes. He triumphed in the pride of his imagination over all his enemies. He had seen on his way from Naples a monumental sculpture, representing a Gaul overcome by a Roman soldier, and dragged along the ground by the hair of his head. The gods, he said, presented that object to him as an omen of victory, and their decree was happily fulfilled. Amidst all his frantic joy, his worst enemies were in his own breast. His vices were undermining him with the army as well as the people. He raised immoderate supplies of money, and squandered the whole with wild profusion. An occurrence happened, by which the city was thrown into a violent ferment. A ship

arrived from Alexandria, supposed to be loaded with corn, and, therefore, matter of joy to the populace, who dreaded a dearth of provisions. It may be easily imagined what a turn their passions took, when it was known that the vessel brought a freight of sand from the banks of the Nile, to smooth the arena for wrestlers and gladiators. The disappointment excited, at first, a laugh of scorn and indignation; vulgar wit and scurrilous jests made Nero an object of contempt; and from contempt the transition to hatred, rage and fury is always sure, and often instantaneous. The public clamour was loud and violent: the people, with one voice, wished to be delivered from a monster; they lamented the loss of Vindex; and the prætorian guards, who had been the support of a pernicious reign, began to murmur discontent, and to show manifest symptoms of disaffection.

Nymphidius and Tigellinus, who had often figured in scenes of public iniquity, were joint præfects of the prætorian camp. The former, as has been mentioned, was the son of a woman who prostituted her person to the slaves and freedmen of the emperor Claudius. Having recommended himself by his vices to the favour of Nero, he had the ambition to be thought the issue of an intrigue between his mother, Nymphidia, and Caligula. Nymphidius and his colleague Tigellinus acted in concert, and jointly exerted their pernicious talents. They saw the disposition of the soldiers, and with the ingratitude of men who had raised themselves by their crimes, thought the opportunity fair to strike a stroke of perfidy. They began by bribes to insinuate themselves into the affections of the prætorian guards, and, when they had sufficiently prepared them for a revolt, whispered to the senate, that Nero was deserted on every side; that he had not a friend left; and that, by consequence, the whole legislative authority was in the hands of the fathers. That assembly remained for some time in suspense; timid, wavering, and irresolute. The conjuncture was dark and gloomy. Nero was alarmed; he paused from his pleasures, and saw that some deep design was in agitation. To prevent it by one bold effort, he

formed a resolution to massacre the senate, and, after setting fire to the city a second time, to let loose his whole collection of wild beasts, to devour the people in the general consternation, and save himself by flying into Egypt. This horrible scheme was no sooner conceived than brought to light by one of his favourite eunuchs. This miscreant had been, for some time, subservient to the vices of his master, and lived with him in the dearest intimacy. From a person so beloved nothing was concealed. He was the confidential friend of the emperor, not only in scenes of riot, but also in the most important councils. But the jealousy of an upstart, raised above his base condition, is easily alarmed. The favourite thought himself slighted. His pride was roused, and, to revenge the injury, he discovered the particulars of the intended massacre.

A design so black and horrible raised the general indignation. The fathers trembled for themselves, but the habit of slavery had debased their faculties. They saw that no time was to be lost, and yet could not resolve to act with vigour. Nymphidius tried by every means to inspire them with zeal and courage. He had seduced the prætorian guards, and to secure their affections, promised in Galba's name, but without his authority, a reward of thirty thousand sesterces to each prætorian, and five thousand to each legionary soldier throughout the armies of the empire; a sum so prodigious, that, as Plutarch observes, it could not be raised without worse tyranny and more violent rapine, than had been felt during the whole reign of Nero. The promise proved, afterwards, fatal to Galba, but served the purposes of a man who was bent on the ruin of Nero, and, by raising the military above the civil authority, intended to introduce into the political system, two pernicious maxims; the first, that emperors were to be created in the camp, not in the senate; and, secondly, that the imperial dignity was venal, to be for the future set up to sale, and disposed of by the soldiers to the highest bidder.

Having settled his measures, and laid the plan of a revolution, he did not as yet think it time to throw

off the mask, but to complete his work, chose to proceed by fraud and dissimulation. He went with Tigellinus to the palace, and, with an air of deep affliction, informed Nero of his danger. "All," he said, "is "lost; the people, assembled in seditious tumults, call "aloud for vengeance; the prætorian guards abandon "your cause; and the senate is ready to pronounce a "dreadful judgment. You have only one expedient "left, and that is, to make your escape, and seek a "retreat in Egypt." In this manner the two men, who had been raised from the dregs of the people, left their benefactor. In all his scenes of vice and cruelty they had been his chief abettors, and they now abandoned him at his utmost need.

Nero saw the sad reverse of his affairs. From his armies he could expect no support. The troops on their march towards the Caspian sea had been recalled, but a long repose was necessary to revive the spirits of men well nigh exhausted by incessant fatigue. The legions from Illyricum returned with alienated minds. Scorning to disguise their sentiments, they sent a deputation to Virginius on the Upper Rhine, expressing their ardent desire, that he would yield to the request of the legions under his command, and accept the imperial dignity. Eight Batavian cohorts had shown a spirit of disaffection, and the prætorian guards were under the influence of Nymphidius. In this desperate situation Nero looked round for assistance, but he looked in vain. He wandered through the apartments of his palace, and all was solitude. He, who but a few days before was the god of the senate and the people, was now in dread of being their victim. Conscience began to exercise her rights. Her voice was heard; Nero reviewed his crimes, and shuddered with horror and remorse. He repeated in despair and anguish of heart, a line, which, when personating Œdipus, he had often declaimed on the public stage; "My wife, "my father, and my mother doom me dead." Of all his courtier-fry, and all his instruments of guilt, not one adhered to him in the hour of distress except Sporus, the eunuch; Phaon, an enfranchised slave

and Epaphroditus, his secretary. He gave orders to the soldiers on duty, to proceed with all expedition to Ostia, and prepare a ship, that he might embark for Egypt. The men were not willing to obey. One of them asked him in half a line from Virgil, "Is it "then so wretched a thing to die?" He went to the Servilian gardens, carrying with him a vial of swift-speeding poison, which had been prepared by the well-known Locusta; but his resolution failed. He returned to his chamber, and threw himself on his bed. The agitations of his mind allowed no rest. He started up, and called for some friendly hand to end his wretched being. That office no one was willing to perform, and he himself wanted fortitude. Driven to the last despair, and frantic with remorse and fear, he cried out in doleful accents, "My friends "desert me, and I cannot find an enemy." He rushed forth from his palace, as if with intention to throw himself into the Tiber. He changed his mind, and thought of flying into Spain, there to surrender at discretion to the mercy of Galba. But no ship was ready at Ostia. Various projects presented themselves to his mind, in quick succession, increasing the tumult of his passions, and serving only to distract him more. To try his powers of eloquence was another expedient that occurred to him. For that purpose he proposed to go forth in a mourning garb to the forum, and there by a pathetic speech, obtain his pardon from the people. Should their obdurate hearts remain impenetrable to the soft influence of persuasive oratory, and refuse to reinstate their emperor in the full enjoyment of his prerogative, he had no doubt but he could, at the worst, wring from them the government of Egypt, where in the character of præfect, he might give free scope to his inordinate passions. This project seemed to promise success; but a ray of reflection struck him with sudden horror. The populace, without waiting to hear the divine accents of that harmonious voice, might break out into open sedition, and in their fury tear their prince limb from limb. What course could he pursue? Where could he hide himself? He looked round in

wild despair, and asked his remaining companions, Is there no lurking place? no safe recess, where I may have time to consider what is to be done? Phaon, his freedman proposed to conduct him to an obscure villa, which he held in his possession, at the distance of about four miles from Rome.

Nero embraced the offer. There was no time to be lost. He went forth in all his wretchedness; without a shoe to his feet; nothing on him but his close tunic; no outside garment; and no imperial robe. In order to disguise himself, he snatched an old rusty cloak, and, throwing it over his shoulders, covered his head, and held a handkerchief before his face. In that condition he mounted his horse, submitting with a dastard spirit to an ignominious flight, without any attendants except Phaon, the freedman; Epaphroditus, the secretary; and Sporus, the eunuch, with another, whose name Arelius Victor says was Neophytus. In this manner Nero passed the last of his nights. At the dawn of day, the prætorian guards deserted their station at the palace, and joined their comrades in the camp, where, by the influence and direction of Nymphidius, Galba was proclaimed emperor. The senate met, and, after a short debate, confirmed the nomination of the prætorian guards. The time was at length arrived, when that assembly could act with authority. They resolved to mark the day by a decree worthy of a Roman senate. With one voice they declared the tyrant, who had trampled on all laws, human and divine, a public enemy, and by their sentence condemned him to suffer death, according to the rigour of ancient laws, and the practice of the old republic.

XIV. Nero, in the mean time, made the best of his way towards the freedman's villa. He heard the prætorian camp ring with acclamations, and the name of Galba sounded in his ear. A man at work in a field adjoining to the road, started up at the sound of horsemen pressing forward with expedition, and behold! he said, "Those people are hot in pursuit of "Nero." Another asked, "What do they say of "Nero in the city?" As they drew near to Phaon's

house, Nero was alarmed by a sudden accident. His horse started at a dead carcass that lay on the side of the road; and the veil, in consequence of the violent motion, falling from his face, a veteran who had been dismissed from the service, knew his master, and saluted him by his name. The fear of being detected made the fugitive prince and his followers push forward with their utmost speed. Being arrived at a small distance from the house, they did not think it safe to enter it in a public manner. Nero dismounted, and crossed a field overgrown with reeds. Phaon advised him to lie concealed in a sand-pit, till he prepared a subterraneous passage into the house. That, said Nero, were to bury himself alive. He scooped up some water out of a muddy ditch, and having allayed his thirst, asked in a doleful tone, "Is that the "beverage to which Nero has been used?" An opening was made in the wall on one side of the mansion, and Nero crept through it. He was conducted to a chamber, where he saw nothing but wretchedness. In that mean room he threw himself on a meaner bed, and asked for some nourishment. They offered him bread; but it was so black, that his stomach sickened at the sight. The water was foul, but thirst obliged him to swallow the nauseous draught. His friends saw that no hope was left; they dreaded his impending ruin, and advised him to rescue himself by one manly deed from an ignominious death. Nero signified his assent; but he studied delay, fond to linger still in life. Preparations for his funeral were necessary. He ordered a trench to be dug, suited to the dimensions of his body; a quantity of wood to be collected for the funeral pile; and pieces of marble to be brought to form a decent covering for his grave. He bewailed his unhappy lot; tears gushed at intervals; he heaved a piteous sigh, and said to his friends, "What a mu-"sician the world will lose!"

During this scene of delay and cowardice, a messenger, according to Phaon's orders, arrived with papers from Rome. Nero seized the packet. He read with eagerness, and found himself, not only declared a public enemy, but condemned to suffer death,

with the rigour of ancient usage. He asked, What kind of death is that? and what is ancient usage? He was told, that by the law of the old republic, every traitor, with his head fastened between two stakes, and his body entirely naked, suffered the pains of a slow death under the lictor's rod. The fear of that ignominious punishment inspired Nero with a short lived passion, which for the moment had the appearance of courage. He drew two daggers, which he had brought with him, and, as if meditating some prodigious deed, tried the points of both; then calmly replaced them in their scabbards, saying, "The fatal "moment is not yet come." He turned to Sporus, and requested him to begin the funeral lamentation. "Sing the melancholy dirge; and offer the last obse- "quies to your friend." He cast his eyes around him: And why, he said, why will not some one despatch himself, and teach me how to die? He paused for a moment, and shed a flood of tears. He started up, and cried out, in a tone of wild despair, "Nero, this "is infamy; you linger in disgrace; this is no time for "dejected passions; the moment calls for manly for- "titude."

Those words were no sooner uttered, than he heard the sound of horses advancing with speed towards the house. This he signified by repeating a line from Homer. The fact was, the senate had given orders, that he should be brought back to Rome to undergo the judgment which they had pronounced, and the officers charged with that commission were near at hand. Nero seized his dagger, and stabbed himself in the throat. The stroke was too feeble. Epaphroditus lent his assistance, and the next blow was a mortal wound. A centurion entered the room, and seeing Nero in a mangled condition, ran immediately to his assistance, pretending that he came with a friendly hand to bind the wound, and save the emperor's life. Nero had not breathed his last. He raised his languid eyes, and faintly said, "You come too late: is this "your fidelity?" He spoke and expired. The ferocity of his nature was still visible in his countenance. His eyes fixed and glaring, and every feature swelled

with warring passions, he looked more stern, more grim, and terrible than ever.

Nero died in the thirty-second year of his age, on the eleventh day of June, after a reign of thirteen years, seven months, and twenty-eight days. The news was received at Rome with all demonstrations of joy. The populace ran wild about the streets, with the cap of liberty on their heads. The forum sounded with acclamations. Icelus, a freedman, who managed Galba's affairs at Rome, had been thrown into prison by Nero; but on the sudden accession of his master, he was now become a man in power and high authority. He consented that Nero's body should be committed to the flames at the place where he died. The funeral rites were performed without delay, and without pomp. His remains were conveyed to the monumental vault of the Domitian family, his paternal ancestors. The urn was carried by two female servants, and Acté, the famous concubine. The secrecy, with which the obsequies was performed, was the cause of some untoward consequences, that afterwards disturbed the commonwealth. A doubt remained in the minds of many, whether Nero had not made his escape into Asia or Egypt. The men, who, under a corrupt and profligate reign, had led a life of pleasure, and were, by consequence, enamoured of Nero's vices, paid every mark of respect to his memory, willing, at the same time, to believe that he still survived. They raised a tomb, and, for several years, dressed it with the flowers of spring and summer. The Parthians honoured his memory, and, being afterwards deluded by an impostor, who assumed the name of Nero, were ready, with the strength of their nation, to espouse his cause. The race of Cæsars ended with Nero: he was the last, and perhaps the worst, of that illustrious house.

XV. In that age, when the public mind was overcast with gloomy apprehensions and religious fear, superstition saw portents and prodigies in the most common accidents, and no great event was suffered to pass without a train of awful prognostics. Rivers were said to have changed their course, and to have

flowed in a new direction to their fountain head; a tree, that had stood for ages, coeval with the foundation of Rome, fell suddenly to the ground; the laurel, planted by Livia, which had spread with such prodigious increase, that in every triumph it supplied the Cæsars with their victorious wreaths, withered at the root; the temple of the Cæsars being struck with lightning, the heads of all the statues tumbled down at once; and the marble sceptre fell from the hands of Augustus. By these and such like denunciations the will of the gods was supposed to be revealed, and the populace with frantic joy hailed the auspicious æra of returning liberty. But no public spirit remained; every virtue was extinguished. A people who had been taught to crouch under the yoke of bondage, thought no more of a free constitution. With the usual inconstancy of a fickle multitude, they relapsed into their habitual servitude, and in a strain of frantic rapture began to roar for a new master. The name of Galba echoed through the streets of Rome, and filled the prætorian camp with shouts of joy, and the warmest expressions of zeal and ardour for his service. The prætorian guards thought of nothing but the donative promised in his name; and Nymphidius, the author of that measure, had no doubt but the soldiers, in due time, would show themselves devoted to the man, who filled their minds with the dazzling prospect of reward so truly great and magnificent. The liberality was his, and the difficulty of carrying it into execution would fall on Galba.

Icelus, the favourite freedman of Galba, made it his business to see Nero's dead body, and, having enabled himself to be an eye-witness of the fact, set out for Clunia in Spain, to inform his master, that he was raised to the imperial seat by the voice of the prætorians, and the concurrent decree of the senate. Nymphidius seized the opportunity to figure as the principal actor on the theatre of public business. He had accomplished a great and sudden revolution, and, being high in favour with the prætorian guards, found it easy to overawe the senate, and make that tame and pliant assembly bend to his will and pleasure.

The consuls, without consulting the arrogant minister, sent their despatches to Galba, with the decree by which he was declared emperor. This was considered by this new man as a mark of disrespect, and it was with difficulty that the magistrates appeased his indignation. Flushed with success, and proud of his exploits, he began to enlarge his views, and preposterously to form schemes of vast ambition. Under an emperor at the age of seventy-three, worn out with cares, and weary of public business, he flattered himself that he should be able, under the appearance of being the second in the state, to wrest into his own hands the supreme authority; and, should Galba's infirmities sink under the fatigue of a long journey, he had the hardiness to aspire to the succession. Having conceived this mad project, he resolved to remove every obstacle, and with that view, compelled Tigellinus to resign his commission of prætorian præfect. A colleague, acting with himself in joint authority, might retard the execution of his designs. Men of consular rank, who had commanded armies and governed provinces, did not blush to pay their court to him. The senate acted with the same servile adulation. They crowded to his levee, and suffered him to prescribe the form and substance of every decree that passed. The populace broke out with licentious fury, and Nymphidius, effectually to seduce the vulgar mind, encouraged the madness of the times. The images and statues of Nero were dragged through the streets, and dashed to pieces. A crew of vile incendiaries spread consternation through the city; a scene of blood and massacre followed, and the innocent fell in one promiscuous carnage with the guilty. Mauricus beheld the frenzy of the multitude with such inward horror, that he could not help saying in the senate, "Let us take care that we have "not reason to regret the loss of Nero."

Nymphidius soon perceived that his hopes of being the only statesman in power, and of governing the Roman world in the emperor's name, could not be entertained with any prospect of success. He knew by certain intelligence that Vinius, Laco, and Icelus

were the men who stood highest in the esteem of Galba. The scheme of supplanting them was, therefore, abandoned; but it made way for a project of the most daring ambition. He was resolved to depose the emperor, whom he himself had created, and, by another revolution, to seize the imperial dignity. To forward this design, he sent despatches to Galba, stating the danger of entering the city at a time when the whole empire was in convulsions. Rome, he said, was in a ferment; Clodius Macer excited a rebellion in Africa; the German armies were disaffected, and the legions in Syria and Judæa prepared to dispute with the prætorian guards the right of creating an emperor. In the mean time a dark conspiracy was formed. Nymphidius planned his measures with despatch and vigour, determined to seize the supreme power. He drew into his league a number of both sexes, all of great consideration and extensive influence. Claudius Celsus was his intimate friend; but he saw the folly of the enterprise, and with freedom and sincerity advised Nymphidius to desist from a wild attempt, in which he could not expect the support of the people or the senate. There is not, he said, a single family in Rome, willing to give the name of Cæsar to the son of Nymphidia. That remonstrance had no effect on a mind inflamed with the fever of wild ambition. Nymphidius called a meeting of his party. All agreed that no time was to be lost. They resolved to strike the blow that very night, and to conduct Nymphidius to the prætorian camp, where they had no doubt but with one voice he would be declared emperor of Rome. On such an occasion it was necessary that the person raised to that elevation should be prepared to address the soldiers, in a suitable style. Cingonius Varro, a corrupt and venal orator, composed a speech for that purpose, and the illiterate emperor was to grace himself with borrowed eloquence.

The design of the conspirators was not so well concealed, but it reached the ear of Antonius Honoratus, a tribune in the camp, who had acquired a great military character, and was, besides, respected for his un-

blemished honour, and unshaken fidelity. Towards the close of day he called a meeting of the prætorians, and, after laying open, in detail, all the circumstances of the plot, delivered a speech in substance as follows: "How long, my fellow soldiers, shall our folly, our "madness, or our evil genius, hurry us on from one "treason to another? A few days only have elapsed, "since you deposed Nero. In that business you be- "haved like men, who felt for the public good. You "had every provocation, and the crimes of that flagi- "tious tyrant justified the act. You are recent from "that revolution, and wherefore do you want another? "You declared for Galba, and why now abandon him? "why with unheard of treachery betray the emperor, "whom you yourselves created? Has he been guilty "of parricide? Has he murdered his mother and de- "stroyed his wife? Has he exposed the imperial dig- "nity to contempt and ridicule? Has he tuned his "harp on the stage, or driven a curricle in the race? "And yet, notwithstanding all the flagitious deeds of "that hardened monster, in spite of all his vices, we "supported him, blushing indeed for his follies, and "smarting under his tyranny. We adhered to him "with fidelity; and if, in the end, we thought fit to "create another emperor, Nymphidius was the author "of that measure. By his artifices we were taught "to believe that Nero deserted us first, and fled to "Egypt. We concluded that he had abdicated, and, "by consequence, what we did was an act of neces- "sity. And what is our design at present? What do "we wish? What do we aim at? Must Galba fall a "sacrifice to appease the manes of Nero? Shall a de- "scendant from the family of the Servii; a relation of "Quintus Catulus, and by ties of affinity connected "with Livia, the wife of Augustus; say, my fellow "soldiers, shall such a man be deposed and murdered, "to make way for the son of Nymphidia? It was his "treachery, his base ingratitude that occasioned the "death of Nero: let him suffer the justice due to his "crime: and let us give proof of our fidelity. Let us "deserve the esteem of Galba, by delivering him "from a traitor."

This speech made an impression on the soldiers. One mind, one sentiment pervaded the whole camp; Galba was their emperor, and they would acknowledge no other. This was followed by a general shout. Nymphidius heard the sound, and proceeded to the camp. Whether he thought that the acclamations of the men were in his favour or that his presence was necessary to quell an insurrection, cannot now be known. He went attended by a numerous train, and a blaze of torches, with the speech composed for him by Cingonius Varro, ready in his hand to be read aloud to the soldiers. The gates of the camp were shut, and guards were stationed on the ramparts. Nymphidius desired to know, by whose order they were under arms? The men answered in one voice, We are armed in the cause of Galba, and we know no other emperor. Nymphidius had not the prudence to retire from the walls. Dissimulation he thought would cloak his design. He commended the zeal of the prætorians, and assured them that he, and his followers, were the avowed friends of Galba. The sentinels opened the gates. Nymphidius entered with some of his friends: the pass was immediately secured; and the soldiers attacked him sword in hand. He endeavoured to save himself in a tent, but was pursued, and massacred on the spot. His body, on the following day, was dragged through the camp, a spectacle for public view. Such was the end of a low-born base incendiary, who saw, that, in the general profligacy of the times, the weak were the willing dupes of the wicked. By forming a league with the most abandoned, he flattered himself, that the lowest of mankind, who in better times could not hope to be entrusted with the rank of a common centurion, might boldly aspire to make himself master of the Roman empire.

XVI. An account of all that passed was conveyed to Galba with incredible speed. By his order, all, who were suspected of taking a part in the mad projects of Nymphidius, were seized, and, without further inquiry, or any form of trial, put to death. Cingonius Varro, at that time consul elect, was in the number; and, what was very extraordinary, Mithridates, the

dethroned king of Pontus, who had surrendered to Claudius, and from that time lived at Rome, was hurried to execution, without being heard in his defence. Petronius Turpilianus was another unhappy victim. He had been chosen by Nero to command his armies; and, though he never went from Rome to execute his commission, the very appointment was deemed a sufficient crime. These bloody executions were inauspicious in the opening of a new reign. The cruelty of Nero seemed to be renewed, when the people expected a milder government, and a regular administration of law and justice. The fate of Turpilianus filled the city with murmurs of discontent. It was known that Tigellinus presided at the execution; and that a man of worth and honour should bleed under the eye of a detested miscreant, appeared to be a continuation of the late reign, and the triumph of vice over every virtue.

Galba set out from Spain, proceeding by slow marches, and still wearing the military robe of a general officer, with a dagger hanging from his neck down to his breast. Strong suspicion, a sense of injuries, and dark mistrust, with other passions unworthy of a prince, lay lurking in his heart. Before he began his journey, Obultronius Sabinus, and Cornelius Marcellus, two governors of provinces in Spain, who had shown no inclination to his party, were put to death by his order. Betuus Chilo met with the same fate in Gaul. Despatches were also sent to Garrucianus, in Africa, commanding the immediate execution of Clodius Macer, the proprætor of the province, who was known to have concerted measures for a revolt. It happened, however, that Calvia Crispinilla, the famous manager of Nero's pleasures, arrived in Africa, and insinuated herself into the secret councils of the governor. By her advice he formed a resolution to establish for himself a new province independent of Rome. Their scheme, for that purpose, was to lay an embargo on all ships loaded with corn, in order to afflict the city of Rome with all the miseries of famine. A legion was also raised, and Macer, at the head of a considerable army,

was on the eve of renouncing all subjection to Rome, when Papirius, a centurion sent by order of Galba, gained access to his presence, and stabbed him to the heart.

Fonteius Capito, who commanded the legions on the Lower Rhine, was put to death about the same time. It was this officer that sent Julius Civilis a prisoner to Rome, during the reign of Nero. The charge was without foundation, and, in time, was the fatal cause of the destructive war, in which Rome was involved by the fierce resentment of that warlike chief. Avarice was the vice of Capito. He was in haste to grow rich, and felt no scruple about the means. Ambition was laid to his charge, but an unguarded expression was the only evidence against him. It happened that he sat in judgment on a soldier accused for a capital crime, and condemned him to suffer death. "Know, said the prisoner, that I "appeal to Cæsar." Capito rose, and placing himself on a higher seat, told the man, "Now appeal to "Cæsar: make your defence in his presence." The soldier obeyed, and was sent to execution. This transaction was reported to Fabius Valens, who commanded a legion in Lower Germany; an officer of acknowledged ability, intrepid, active, and ambitious; eager in the pursuit of honours, and panting to signalize himself by some bold exploit. The opportunity now occurred, and he resolved to seize it. Crispinus, a centurion was devoted to his service. In that man he found a ready assassin, and Fonteius Capito fell a victim. The death of that commander Valens concluded would be considerable merit with the new emperor. He lost no time, but sent an express to inform Galba of what he had done, with zeal for the service of his sovereign. He added, in the same letter, that the legions on the Upper Rhine had made a tender of the empire to Virginius Rufus, who remained in suspense, and, with affected delays, hesitated about his final answer. Galba received the news of Capito's death with secret satisfaction, but he thought it more prudent to connive, than openly to approve. Virginius was still a dangerous rival.

In order to draw him away from the army, and free himself from all danger in that quarter, he invited him to an amicable interview, having secretly appointed Hordeonius Flaccus to succeed to the command of the legions. The stratagem succeeded. The conqueror of Vindex went to the meeting, and found himself the dupe of pretended friendship. He met with a cold reception, very different from what was due to the man who wished to establish the civil authority, and to place the legislative power of the state in the senate only. He lived to be a spectator of the distractions and calamities that followed; and, that he was not an actor in those scenes of blood and horror, was the recompense of uncommon virtue.

Galba had no further reason to be alarmed. He saw the armies of Rome willing to acquiesce, and peace in every part of the empire. He, therefore, changed his military robe for the Roman gown, and assumed the name of Cæsar. But even in that tide of his affairs, the simplicity of his manners suffered no alteration. The same frugality, the same contempt of pomp and luxury, and the same austerity still remained. Vinius covered his table with a profusion of luxury; and Otho, who attended the cavalcade into Italy, displayed all the magnificence of Nero's court. Galba still preserved his rules of ancient frugality, and condemned the vain parade with inflexible rigour. He showed himself ready to punish, and slow to reward. In his manners no affability, no engaging courtesy. During the whole of his march he never once endeavoured, by an act of condescension, to gain the affections of the people. The army in Italy consisted, at that time, of four different classes of men; namely, the legions, both foot and cavalry, composed chiefly of Roman citizens; the auxiliary forces, drafted from the states in alliance with Rome; the body of marines, levied in the tributary cities, and considered as slaves in the service of Rome; and fourthly, the gladiators, who were to shed their blood in battle, if the occasion required; or in the circus, for the diversion of the populace. The marines, classed, as above, in the third division, were called forth by

Nero, when he projected a war on the borders of the Caspian sea, to be formed into a new legion. The men collected upon that occasion amounted to a prodigious number, and all were quartered in the city. Being informed that Galba was near at hand, they rushed forth in a tumultuous body to the Milvian bridge, about three miles from Rome, where they beset the road, obstructed the emperor's train, and, with violent clamour, demanded a confirmation of their military rank, with an eagle to distinguish their legion, and an allotment of winter quarters. Their application, they were told, was out of season, but might be renewed at a more convenient time and place. The answer was deemed evasive, and nothing short of an absolute refusal. The men were fired with indignation; a mutiny ensued; they advanced sword in hand, determined to extort by force what they considered as a legal right. Galba was not of a temper to yield to sudden emergencies. He ordered his soldiers to disperse an insolent rabble. The cavalry rushed on to the charge with impetuous fury, and, meeting with feeble resistance, cut their way with dreadful slaughter. It is said that no less than seven thousand were put to the sword. The rest submitted at discretion, and were afterwards ordered to be decimated.

This tragic catastrophe spread a general consternation. Galba entered the city of Rome through a scene of blood, and men expected nothing less than a renewal of all the cruelties of Nero's reign. He carried with him many virtues, but he had in his train Titus Vinius, Cornelius Laco, and Icelus, his freedman; three pernicious ministers, who gained an entire ascendant over a venerable, but indolent, old man, and by their vices occasioned the dreadful calamities, which, in the following year, overwhelmed themselves, their master, and the public.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

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