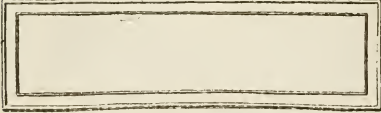
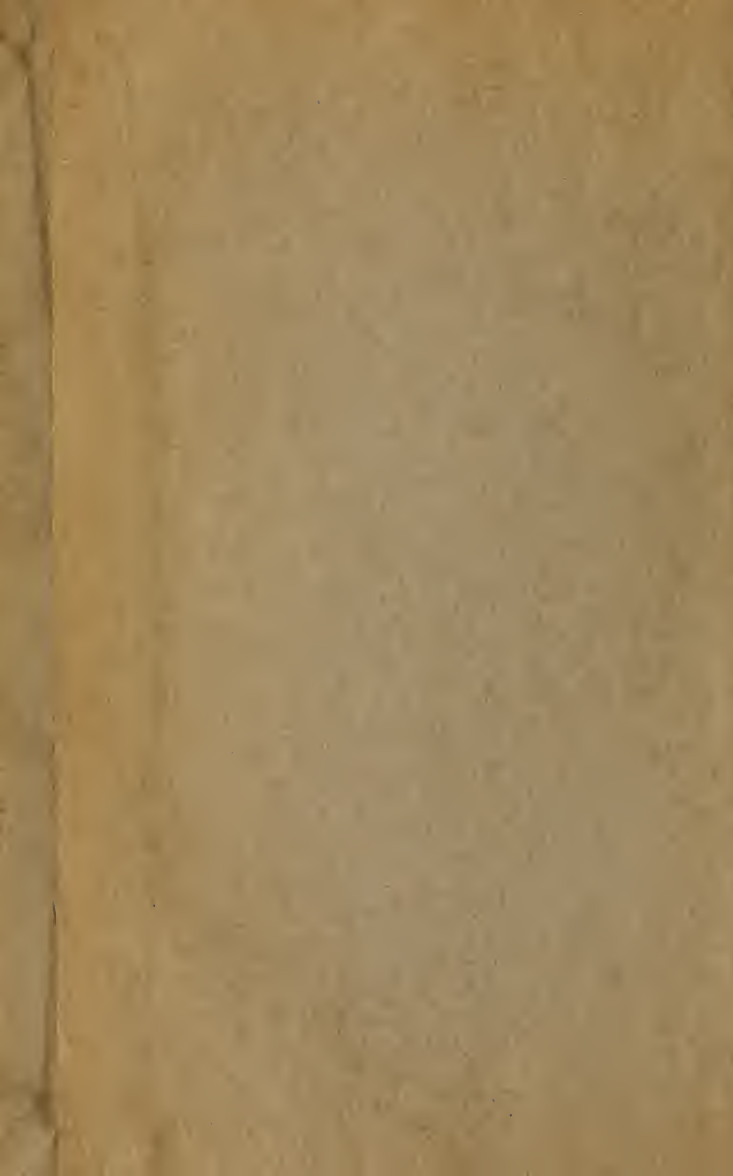


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THE ANNALS OF TACITUS



70 183
 ANNO 183

Londini, Hertzogii et de Bary imp.

Agrippina the Younger

Claudius.

Auro

Poppaea.

THE ANNALS OF TACITUS

BOOKS XI—XVI.

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND MAPS

By GEORGE GILBERT RAMSAY

M.A. (OXON.), LITT.D. (DUBLIN), LL.D. (EDINBURGH, ABERDEEN, AND GLASGOW)

LATE PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

EDITOR OF 'SELECTIONS FROM TIBULLUS AND PROPERTIUS,' 'LATIN PROSE COMPOSITION,'
'LATIN VERSIONS,' ETC.

*O heart! lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.*

HAMLET.

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1909

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CALIFORNIA

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TO
MY FORMER STUDENTS
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
1863-1906

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PREFACE.

THE reception given to my translation of the first six books of the Annals made it impossible for me not to continue the work; and I have now the satisfaction of completing what I hope may be regarded as a faithful version—true to the spirit, and as true as may be to the letter—of what remains to us of the greatest work of the great Roman historian.

The intrinsic difficulties which beset a translator of Tacitus can only be appreciated by those who have attempted the task; but, at least, I have not taken it lightly. The translation given in this volume has been many times re-written and revised; and I have given to it all the time that indifferent health has allowed me for serious work during the past five years.

The notes, as in the first volume, are intended to put the English reader in possession of all the information needed for the understanding and appreciation of the history; and also to justify to the scholar, where necessary, the interpretation given, or the reading followed, in the translation.

My surest guide throughout has been the great edition of Mr. Furneaux, whose sane and cautious judgment I have learnt more and more to respect;

and I have had the special advantage for these books of using the second edition (published in 1907, and referred to in the notes as F.²) revised and supplemented on its historical side by the late Professor Pelham, on its critical side by Mr. C. D. Fisher, who has prepared for the Clarendon Press what is probably the best text of the Annals that has yet been given to the world.

The text of Annals XI to XVI has been hitherto in a less satisfactory condition than that of Books I to VI, in consequence mainly, if not entirely, of the difficulty in deciphering the Medicean MS. B—styled *Med.* in the notes to this volume. In the text of Orelli—followed in the Oxford edition of Messrs. Parker—Books XI to XVI, as compared with Books I to VI, contain more than twice the number of passages obelised as corrupt. It is generally admitted that the Medicean MS. B is ultimately our sole authority for the later books, as Medicean A is for the earlier; but in consequence of the comparative illegibility of B (to which I can myself testify), the printers of earlier editions preferred apparently to follow some copy of that MS., rather than the MS. itself. Hence the greater diversity of readings, and the greater number of critical notes in the present volume. Mr. Fisher has done good service by clinging tenaciously to the readings of *Med.* wherever possible. He might perhaps have gone even further in this direction; for whenever the reading of *Med.* can be deciphered, and presents a construction not impossible, it is safer to assume that Tacitus may have used an unusual or unknown construction than to pronounce that MS. corrupt. I have myself ventured, for reasons given in the notes, to accept

the readings of *Med.* rather than those adopted by F.² and others in the following passages :—xi. 37, 1 ; xii. 2, 3 and 17, 4 ; xiii. 20, 5 and 55, 3 ; xiv. 7, 2 and 43, 4 ; xv. 12, 5 and 62, 1. Less important instances are those which are noted in xiii. 9, 3 and 30, 4 ; xiii. 57, 3 ; xiv. 7, 2 (*ignaros*) ; xvi. 1, 3 and 2, 1.

Besides the editions, translations, and works connected with Roman history and antiquities which I consulted for Vol. I, I have had the special advantage for this volume of the publication by Mr. Bernard W. Henderson of his delightful and exhaustive book, "The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero," my frequent obligations to which are duly recognized in the notes. I am also indebted to Professor Holbrooke's edition of the *Annals* ; and I have found much useful matter for Tacitus generally in the editions of the *Histories* by Mr. A. D. Godley and Mr. Spooner. Nipperdey and Orelli and the *Tacitean Lexicon* of Gerber and Greer have been of the greatest service.

I have gratefully to acknowledge help and encouragement received from many quarters. Mr. R. G. Nisbet, Lecturer on Latin in Glasgow University, has corrected the proof-sheets and prepared the excellent index. I have received many fruitful suggestions from that enthusiastic classic, Professor Harrower of Aberdeen, who has done so much to keep up the high level of classical scholarship in that University. And I am under the greatest obligation to my old friend, the late Archdeacon A. S. Aglen, well known as an accurate scholar, and for his exquisite taste in English. During the last months of his life, when the state of his eyesight made reading a matter of great difficulty, he read through

and criticized in the most interesting manner the whole of this translation. And I am bound to add that I have again derived great benefit from the criticisms of one whose sense of what is clear and idiomatic in English is not overborne by any knowledge of the language of the original.

G. G. RAMSAY.

BRIDGE OF ALLAN,

March 1, 1909.

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INTRODUCTION.

BOOKS XI to XVI of the Annals contain some of the most famous passages of Roman, and indeed of ancient, history. They display the style of Tacitus in its best and maturest form; they surpass all his other writings in the human interest of the scenes and incidents which they record; and those incidents are related with a dramatic power which makes the reader think that he has before him the elements of a sensational romance rather than the pages of sober history.

These Books, unhappily, like I to VI, are incomplete; and a great gap separates the earlier from the later books. The kindly fate which preserved for us, in a single copy, for more than thirteen centuries, one of the priceless literary treasures of the ancient world, could hardly have been expected to hand it down unimpaired: like the famous prophetess of old who offered the Sibylline books to Tarquin, she punished indifference to her gift by destroying half the sacred leaves, thus doubling for us the value of the remainder.

The reigns of 'the stupid and feeble Claudius,' and of 'the cruel and profligate Nero,' have been accepted by the popular opinion of succeeding ages as the typical period of Imperial Rome; and it is

the genius of Tacitus, and the fascination of his style, that have stamped the events of those reigns so deeply upon the imagination of mankind. It is mainly through the record of Tacitus, directly or indirectly, that the facts of that period have been made familiar to modern times; the colour that has been thrown over them by succeeding generations is wholly his. And the most remarkable testimony to the qualities of his style is this: that whereas historians of every country have gone to Tacitus for their materials, not one of them has been able to reproduce his narratives with a power equal to his own. It is little matter for wonder, therefore, that each generation in turn has demanded to have his story reproduced for them, as far as possible, in his own words, and that such a profusion of translations, in every civilized tongue, should have been poured out upon the world.¹

These later books of the Annals take up the history of Rome at a very critical period: at a moment when the personal magic of the Caesarian legend still exercised its influence over men's minds, and when the Julian line had not yet run out that career of incapacity and crime which was so soon to bring it to an ignominious end; when discontent among the dispossessed classes still cherished the vain hope of restoring the Republic; and when the discovery had not yet been made that Emperors might be created elsewhere than at Rome.

These books admit us to the private councils of Emperors, to the intrigues of the Palace, to the proceedings of the Senate, and to the state secrets of the time; they show us how luxuriously the great

¹ See Introd. to vol. i. p. xxviii.

Roman nobles lived in their lordly mansions, amid hordes of slaves and freedmen gathered from every nation under heaven, and how meekly and ingloriously, on receiving a message from their Imperial master—it might be at the family dinner-table, or at an entertainment of friends, or perhaps in some distant province—they were content to die. They paint the vice, public and private, of that most vicious of capitals with all the realism, but without the coarseness, of Juvenal; they describe the great fire of Rome with a pen not less vivid, though more rapid, than that with which Defoe tells of the fire of London; they make the first mention in secular history of the name of Christ, and of his execution by Pontius Pilate; they describe the horrors of the first Christian persecution: while in the foreground of this varied drama there passes a succession of the most beautiful and the most wicked women that ever dominated a Court, or contaminated the springs of government.

These events make up a history of thrilling interest: but they owe half that interest to the skill with which they are related. The same facts as recorded by Dio or Suetonius leave us dull and unmoved; we feel surfeited by their catalogues of atrocities and immoralities, unenlivened by the play of human character and motive, unredeemed by the noble censoriousness, which add life and moral greatness to the narratives of Tacitus. For great as Tacitus is in epigram, great in the pronouncement of moral judgments, and in the analysis of character, he is perhaps greatest of all in narrative. His mode of narration, like the best kind of poetry,¹ is

¹ Bagehot's 'Literary Studies,' vol. ii. p. 352.

'emphatic, memorable, and intense'; he 'visualises' everything that he describes; he omits nothing essential to the realising of the pictures he calls up: as was said of the late Phil May the artist, he had by supreme labour acquired the art of conveying a world of meaning by what seem to be a few strokes of his pen. And never did a master of that rare literary art have a more fruitful field for the employment of dramatic genius than that afforded by the personages and the situations brought before us in the concluding books of the Annals.

Yet amid the crimes of the palace, the corruption of private life, and the obsequious flatteries of the Senate, the work of consolidating the Empire and improving the administration went steadily forward. A new and improved class of Civil Servants, consisting of knights and freedmen, was called into being; defects in the administrative machinery were repaired; abuses in the collection of the revenue were removed; the franchise was carefully and wisely extended; misgoverning Governors were brought to justice; suffering communities were relieved of taxation, or granted subsidies, to help them in their calamities; while by the steady diffusion of law and order, upon the twin principle of '*Imperium et Libertas*,' the empire was being gradually prepared for 'that period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous.'¹

To the reader of Tacitus it seems matter for wonder that the disorders of the capital, and the personal character of Emperors, interfered so little with the peaceful development of the provinces. But

¹ Gibbon, vol. i, p. 126.

²⁰ unfortunately Tacitus tells us nothing of ordinary provincial life; nothing of the methods by which the subjects of that heterogeneous Empire were being coerced or lured into adopting Roman manners and acquiescing in Roman law; little or nothing of that system of administration the building up of which was the greatest of all the achievements of Rome during this period. His own chief interest lay in the capital, in the proceedings of the palace or of the Senate, in the fortunes of the great noble houses. When he leaves Rome, it is for a military purpose: to tell us how the frontiers were guarded; what policy was pursued towards the turbulent tribes that lined the long northern frontier of the Empire; or to relate in detail the two great wars which distinguished the reigns of Claudius and Nero, the one waged in Britain, the other in Armenia.

The campaigns of Corbulo in Armenia give us the picture of a Proconsul in the plenitude of his power: statesman as well as soldier, at the head of great armies, treating as a Viceroy on equal terms with foreign kings and princes. They show us by what stern methods a Roman general might build up the discipline of legions enervated by long peace, until they were fit to take the field once more, and be led forth to new campaigns of conquest and adventure; and with what tenacity of purpose, against overwhelming odds, he might repair the consequences of seemingly irreparable disaster.

In Britain, we see the foundations being laid of our own history and civilization. The accounts of Tacitus still supply the most trustworthy record of the progress of the Roman armies in our country during the course of the first century. They show that

in Britain, as elsewhere, Rome made her way by the power of her law no less than by that of her arms; and to this day the interpretation of the various remains of the Roman period which archæology is constantly bringing to light has to go hand in hand with that of the text of Tacitus.

From a military point of view, however, the accounts of Tacitus leave much to be desired; Mommsen has dubbed him the worst military historian in the world. He pays little attention to strategy or tactics; his topographical notices are scanty and incomplete;¹ he tells us nothing of the general scheme of a campaign. His interest concentrates itself upon the battles: upon the character of the opposing generals, on their harangues to their armies, on the clash of arms and the shouts of victory.²

It seems strange that, with the single exception of Caesar, the greatest military nation of antiquity should have produced no military historian; and that Tacitus himself, who places the military art above all other arts,³ should have taken so little pains to make his campaigns intelligible. Perhaps he knew his public too well; for though the Roman people appreciated the fruits of victory, they would probably take but little intellectual interest in the methods by which victory had been made possible. They might scream themselves hoarse on the occasion of a triumph, and feast their eyes on the gorgeous pageant as it swept along; but they would take little pains to study the details of a past campaign, or to learn the lessons which those campaigns might have taught them. It is vain to wander over one of

¹ See n. on xii. 31, 1.

² See iv. 32, 1-3.

³ See n. on xii. 12, 1.

Livy's battlefields with a Livy in the pocket; his account of the passage of the Alps by Hannibal, though professing to give details, mixes hopelessly up two, possibly three, contending routes. Even Caesar leaves us in great measure to guess, rather than understand, the movements by which his great victories were gained. Similarly Tacitus gives us no good idea of the great march of Suetonius Paulinus from Anglesea to London; and it is still a matter of dispute whether he marched on towards Colchester after reaching London, or began his retreat at once.¹

The witty and sprightly Terence complains that if the greater attractions of a boxer or a rope-dancer presented themselves, his play might have to be performed to empty benches; and Tacitus may have felt that the Roman listener or reader would be bored by any detailed account of the strategy of a campaign. How different the case with Thucydides! Thucydides has been the teacher of soldiers as well as statesmen; his accounts of battles by land or sea, and of the operations which led to them, present many a problem full of interest to this day. If the man who has read his Thucydides posts himself upon the heights of Epipolæ, or takes his stand at the edge of the great harbour of Syracuse, he can follow every move in that fateful siege, or watch the manœuvres of the combatants as the fortune of war swayed now this way and now that, in that most pathetic of sea battles.

But however important, for the student of history, the condition of the provinces and the results of frontier wars, it is upon the events which occurred in

¹ See n. on xiv. 33, 2-3.

Rome that the reader of Tacitus finds his attention riveted. The last six books of the *Annals* have all the character of an Epic poem, through which we are made to trace, side by side with the development of the Empire, the degradation and downfall of the family whose genius had created it. A doom is felt to hang over the house of Caesar not less fatal than that which dogged the house of Atreus. The failure of natural heirs which crippled it from the beginning—the very means taken to repair that want by the artificial system of adoption—the violation of every natural family tie which thence resulted—the recklessness and contempt for morality which the possession of supreme power engenders in the minds of men who have not won it for themselves—all these things gradually paved the way for the humiliation and extinction of the race. Each book carries this story of inevitable ruin one stage further; each has a theme and a tragedy of its own.

Book XI, as we have it—for the first half is lost—tells the story of the dominance and fall of Messalina. That fascinating and abandoned woman is at the pinnacle of her fortunes. In league with the all-powerful freedmen, playing at will upon her facile husband Claudius, she has the courtiers and the accusers at her beck and call. The lives and fortunes of the noblest Romans are at her disposal; no obstacle is permitted to interrupt her mad career of cupidity and cruelty. One hated rival, Agrippina, daughter of Germanicus—with a son in whose veins runs the blood of the Caesars—still stands in her way; and she is on the point of brushing that obstacle aside when she is possessed by a new and fatal passion, which takes such a hold of her that she

sacrifices everything to its gratification. Meanwhile the eyes of the dull and well-meaning Claudius are shut to the scandals going on in his own house: he is glorying in his office of Censor, and preparing pedantic measures for the purification of the Senate, the revival of religious observances, the addition of new letters to the alphabet.

But at last, in her mad folly, Messalina oversteps all bounds, and in a fit of inexplicable recklessness goes through the form of marriage with her lover. The bewilderment of the freedmen; the terror and helplessness of Claudius when the news is broken to him; the frantic efforts of the wife to get at her husband; the audacity and resourcefulness of the freedman Narcissus to prevent their meeting; the last agonised moments of Messalina; the lethargic acquiescence of Claudius in a death which he has not ordered—all these things can be appreciated only if read in the words of Tacitus himself. And the book ends with the foreboding of greater evils yet to come.

As Messalina is the dominant figure of Book XI, so is Agrippina of Book XII. Her fierce temper and remorseless diplomacy carry everything before them. Backed by the courtier Vitellius, and the great freedman Pallas, whose support she condescends to purchase by the sacrifice of her honour, she carries the day among the candidates for the place of Empress, and procures the approbation of the Senate for that ill-omened marriage; she drives the betrothed of Octavia to suicide, to make way for her own son; she hurries home Seneca from exile to become his tutor, and to help on her schemes for securing him in the succession. With fatal precision, one step

follows another. Nero is adopted, and Britannicus put aside; as soon as age permits, Nero is married to Octavia; Agrippina becomes ruler of the Empire in everything but in name; her image appears on coins beside that of Claudius. But even this is not enough: with a mixture of savage maternal instinct and insatiate personal ambition unexampled in history, Agrippina can be content with nothing less than becoming sole governor of the Empire in name of a son in tutelage. She must seize power before her son is old enough to wield it himself, before Britannicus has reached manhood to assert his claim; she must rule in a court where there shall be no divided interests, no Narcissus to thwart or rail at her, no dotard husband to befool. And so the learned, dull-witted, sensuous Claudius is disposed of by that historic dish of mushrooms.

Never did great crime fail more signally in its object. Book XIII tells how soon, how utterly, Agrippina's *impotentia muliebris* was defeated. The lad in tutelage was her own son: he wrenched the sceptre out of her hand almost before she had grasped it. On the first occasion when she attempted to resist his wishes, and exercise her parental authority, he cast filial piety to the winds; unmoved by threats or blandishments, and supported by the special instruments which she had chosen to control him, he repressed the pretensions of his imperious mother, and one by one divested her of her privileges. The struggle for mastery was short and sharp; the cruel murder of Britannicus was a presage of what she might expect for herself. But untamed and incorrigible, Agrippina plunged into furious and frantic opposition, and so paved the way

for the most monstrous and cold-blooded crime which disfigures the pages of Roman history.

Book XIV brings us to the climax of Nero's iniquities: the long-meditated, treacherously planned, murder of his mother. Nowhere does Tacitus show such power as in the telling of this story. Not a point is omitted that could add to the horror of the tale; not an unnecessary touch is inserted, not a word of comment added. The taunts of Poppaea; the treacherous invitation and false caresses of Nero; the fiasco of the supposed shipwreck; the hardihood of Agrippina; the agitated scene upon the shore; the terrified consultation between Nero and his counselors, and the last brutal act of violence—all stand out, in their grim reality, just as they occurred, and stamp themselves on the reader's mind as if he had been a witness of the whole.

From this point onwards Nero's career runs rapidly downward. Every restraint shaken off, he plunges into vile excesses; he exhibits himself as a charioteer. Burrus dies; Seneca's presence becomes burdensome; and Tigellinus is installed as chief favourite. The law of *Maiestas* is revived; illustrious Romans are brutally murdered in the provinces; the poor innocent wife Octavia is driven out, divorced, and done to death, and Poppaea reigns triumphant in her stead.

Book XV carries on the downward tale. Nero appears upon the public stage. He descends to the lowest depths of profligacy. And then, in immediate and dramatic contrast with the enumeration of Nero's vices, comes the magnificent description of the Great Fire; a calamity which Tacitus may well have considered a sign of divine wrath, and which

Merivale has well likened to the disaster which fell upon the Cities of the Plain.

Three points involved in the story of that calamity have aroused keen controversy among historians: (1) Was Nero guilty of setting fire to the city? (2) Did he 'fiddle' while Rome burned, according to the universal belief of posterity? And (3) Was there any truth in the accusation which he brought against the Christians?

On the first point, Mr. Henderson has marshalled all the evidence, with the opinions of authorities ancient and modern; and he pronounces Nero 'not guilty.' On the second point he is inclined to believe in the current tradition. But the two things really hang together, and support each other. There is as little solid evidence for the one as for the other; and if, as in duty bound, we give most weight to the testimony of Tacitus, and regard the probabilities of the case, we may with some confidence acquit Nero of both offences.

In the first place, Nero was at Antium when the fire broke out; he did not return to Rome until his own Palace, the *domus transitoria* connecting the Palatine with the Esquiline, was in flames. This may be taken as a sign of his callous indifference to the misfortune of the city; but at least it disposes of the idea that he fired it to enjoy the wanton pleasure of seeing a big blaze. Fires were a matter of constant recurrence in Rome; we hear of most of the temples and greater buildings of the city having been burnt in their turn, and again rebuilt; Juvenal speaks of fire as one of the perpetual dangers of the town. What was unexampled in this case was the rapidity with which the fire spread, aided by a propitious wind, and the

vast extent of its ravages. What was unexampled became a portent; natural causes were not enough to account for it; and as Tacitus himself remarks in another place (iv. 64, 1), the vulgar must find some one to blame for every chance disaster. Twice during the reign of Tiberius calamitous fires had occurred. In A.D. 27 the whole Caelian hill had been ravaged; in A.D. 37 a part of the Circus, and the Aventine itself, had been burnt down: on both occasions Tiberius only averted obloquy from himself by giving immediate and generous relief to the sufferers (iv. 64, 1 and 2; vi. 45, 1 and 3). History is full of examples of the suspicions which may seize a populace on the occurrence of any great and strange calamity, and of the terrible manner in which effect may be given to their suspicions. Readers of *I promessi sposi* will remember what ghastly and universal suspicions laid hold of the popular mind at the time of the great plague in Milan; the Duke of York, as Mr. Henderson reminds us, was suspected of having caused the London fire by the very activity he showed in combating it. The judicial and other murders caused by the informations of Titus Oates are a blot on English history; and in 1832 persons were torn to pieces in the streets of Paris on the suspicion of having caused the cholera.¹ Mr. Henderson well quotes Gibbon, chap. 16: 'The most incredible stories are the best adapted to the genius of an enraged people.'

In such a case as the fire of Rome, it was inevitable that suspicions should be excited; and on whom could they fall but on Nero? He was at the height of his evil doings; the populace

¹ Mme de Boigne's Memoirs, vol. iv. pp. 24-5.

interpreted every prodigy that occurred as pointing to Nero; how philosophers regarded him we may learn from Tacitus. The Senate was writhing under a sense of its impotence, the nobles under his tyranny, and still more at their exclusion from important offices; the conspiracy of Piso had probably begun to form itself. Every class was ready to make Nero the scapegoat of the general indignation, and to believe that there was nothing of which the murderer of a brother and a mother was not capable.

No motive for such a fiendish crime has ever been suggested; except the preposterous one, prompted by the admirable manner in which Nero provided for the rebuilding of the new city, that he had the ambition to build a new Rome to be called after his own name. But so far as we can judge, no act of reckless folly was ever committed by Nero or his government in the management of the city. That he was active in his attempts to check the flames, that he did his best to repair the effects of the disaster, and to relieve the homeless multitude, cannot be accepted as evidence against him; and as all the antecedent probabilities are in his favour, positive evidence must be produced before he can be condemned.

And of positive evidence there is none. All authorities vouch for the existence of the rumour, and take its truth for granted; but no shred of direct evidence to support the rumour is forthcoming. Perhaps none could be expected; but that at least adds nothing to its probability. Tacitus alone, to his eternal credit, declines to make himself responsible for its truth: 'Whether the fire came about by chance,' he says, 'or was caused by Nero, is uncertain; for it has been related in both ways

by the historians.' The only further piece of evidence furnished by Tacitus is that there were men who actively spread the flames, and threatened those who would quench them, saying that 'they had their orders;' but the appearance of such ruffians, intent on plunder, has been in all times a common feature in all similar disasters, down to the recent great fire at San Francisco and the still more recent calamity at Messina.

There is, however, one piece of negative evidence which is of value. If there were two men in Rome who must have known the truth, those men were Tigellinus and Petronius, Nero's two prime favourites, who were constantly about his person. Two years after the fire, in A.D. 66, Petronius fell from the imperial favour, and was ordered to make away with himself. Facing death with absolute coolness, he employed himself, during his dying moments, with writing out a scathing and minute account of Nero's personal vices; but not one word did he add about the incendiarism. Had Petronius believed in the charge it is impossible to doubt that he would have included it in his indictment; while his character as given by Tacitus leads us to believe that he would have abstained from making a charge which he knew to be false. His silence therefore may be taken as strong negative evidence in Nero's favour.

Tacitus definitely states that such evidence as was accessible to him was conflicting evidence; among the authorities on whom he relied, therefore, there were some who absolved Nero from the charge. Nowhere else does Tacitus show any desire to shield Nero; nowhere does he extenuate his enormities; and if Tacitus, with all the mass of living and other

evidence open to him, pronounces a verdict of 'Not proven,' the historical jurymen of to-day, having regard to all the probabilities of the case, may fairly pronounce a verdict of 'Not guilty.'

(2) The story of Nero's theatrical performance while Troy was burning rests on much the same basis as that of the incendiarism; all that Tacitus says about it is that Nero's measures of relief, 'popular as they were, had no effect in propitiating the public mind, because a rumour had gained ground (*pervaserat rumor*) that while the city was burning he had mounted on to a stage in his own palace, and had sung the tale of the destruction of Troy.' Dio and Suetonius, as usual, give as a fact what Tacitus describes only as a rumour; and they add the picturesque point which has impressed itself upon posterity, that Nero put on his singer's garb and sang the song of burning Troy from the Tower of Maecenas upon the Esquiline, or from the top of his own palace (Suet. Nero, 38; Dio, lxii. 18, 1). There are no means of authenticating or discrediting such a story. Mr. Henderson points out that the probable site of the Tower of Maecenas must have exposed it to early destruction; the same imagination which made Nero the author of the fire would naturally depict him as revelling in the sight of it, and as naturally seek to connect that fiendish joy with his recent appearances upon the stage of Naples—a degradation which the severest of his critics regarded as something worse than crime. Such an idea had only to be started to spread as rapidly as the fire itself; and it may well have had its origin in some emotional outburst excited in Nero's neurotic, artistic temperament by one of those terrible and

magnificent spectacles which it is impossible for the stolidest of mankind to witness unmoved.

(3) The question of the possible guilt of the Christians may be more easily disposed of, so far as the evidence of Tacitus is concerned; though a different view of that evidence has been taken in an interesting article by Mr. Tarver in the *Nineteenth Century* of December, 1905. The words of Tacitus are, that 'when neither offerings to the Gods, nor his own munificence, could do away with the belief that Nero had caused the fire,' *abolendo rumori subdidit reos, et quaesitissimis poenis adfecit quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat*. The whole meaning of this passage depends upon that of the word *subdidit*. Now the verb *subdere* occurs fifteen times in Tacitus. In six of these passages it has its natural meaning of 'placing' one thing 'under' another. In the other passages it is used in an applied or metaphorical sense; in all of these it has the meaning of substituting something which is false for something which is true. Twice it is used in the sense of 'suborning'; twice of a false rumour purposely spread; once of forging a will; in the remaining passages, including the present, it is used either of charges that are false, or of innocent persons falsely accused. Hence the phrase *subdidit reos*, from the pen of Tacitus, necessarily means that the Christians were falsely substituted as scapegoats in place of the true criminals.

Nor does the language of Tacitus support the view, as some hold, that the Christians themselves pled guilty to the charge. After speaking of their religion as an *exitiabilis superstitio*, which 'like every foul thing from every quarter of the world was received and welcomed in Rome,' he goes on:—

Igitur primum correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens haud proinde in crimine incendiū quam odio humani generis convicti sunt (xv. 44, 5).

What was it that these unhappy men confessed? The context makes it clear that what they confessed was not acts of fire-raising, but that they belonged to the detested body called Christians, and that the information which they gave was of the names of brethren belonging to the same sect. The charge of incendiarism broke down; but the unhappy prisoners had to be convicted, and they were convicted on the charge which the Romans were ever ready to bring against the Jews, or of persons supposed to be Jews, that of 'hatred of the whole human race.' Thus the name of Tacitus may disappear from the list of witnesses who are against the Christians in the matter of the fire; and his evidence is all the more valuable that he looked upon the members of that body with loathing and contempt, and believed them capable of any wickedness.

The remainder of Book XV is taken up with a detailed history of the futile conspiracy of Piso: a conspiracy formed with no definite plan, inspired by no reasonable political motive, beyond that of making away with Nero, and restoring their lost privileges to the nobility; and ennobled only by the firmness with which the greater part of the conspirators, as well as others falsely implicated in the plot, met their end. It was thus that Seneca compensated in some sort for the errors and weaknesses of his life; while Lucan, by the betrayal of his own mother, as well as of his most intimate friends, loses all claim upon the respect of posterity.

Book XVI is a fragment, one half at least of its

contents having been lost. The reign of cruelty goes on under the guiding hand of Tigellinus. Illustrious persons are wantonly put to death, among them the famous *arbiter elegantiae*, Petronius; and at last, in the words of the historian, Nero 'desired to destroy Virtue herself' by ordering the prosecution and death of the two most eminent Stoic philosophers of the time—both prominent, like Tacitus himself, in public life—Paetus Thrasea and Barea Soranus. With this crowning iniquity, described by Tacitus with more than his usual pathos and indignation, his *Annals* come abruptly to a close; and if an unkindly fate had decreed that his work was not to descend to us entire, it could not have been broken off at a point more dramatically perfect, more illustrative of the whole tone and temper in which he conceived and wrote his history.

Thus these six books of the *Annals* have the unity of a great Epic; each book with its story of calamity and crime would furnish materials for a tragedy; the final catastrophe alone is wanting. And if 'the true historical genius is that which can see the nobler meaning of events near to him;' if 'the true poet is he who detects the divine in the casual,'¹ Tacitus may be held to partake of both characters. There is a ring of Greek feeling in the manner in which he shows the reader that crime begets crime, and brings calamity in its train; and there is true nobleness in all his views of human life and character. His outlook is gloomy and despairing; but he never altogether abandons a belief in the divine government of the world. He frets at the delays of providence; prodigies occur and seemingly are

¹ Lowell's 'Literary Essays,' vol. ii. p. 111.

wasted, for nothing comes of them. Nevertheless he has a full assurance that the calamities of the time 'came of the wrath of the Gods against Rome.'¹ Their decrees may be hard to read, and are generally slow of fulfilment; but the feeling left upon the reader's mind is that there is a mysterious controlling power which in some inscrutable fashion regulates the affairs of men, and ultimately will pass judgment on them.

Tacitus certainly does not fulfil the conditions of modern scientific history. The spirit of science has now invaded the domain of the historian; and his work, according to the latest lights, is to be dominated by the methods of the laboratory. It may be well, therefore, if the old picturesque and human style of history is soon to be a thing of the past, to give the English reader who is not a scholar an opportunity of making himself acquainted with one of the greatest of pictorial historians, before everything shall have given way to Dr. Dryasdust. Oxford herself is turning her back upon the old classical models; for did she not last summer invite over Dr. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff from Berlin to warn us off from the artistic in history, and to expound the true principles on which the study must be conducted in the future? In ancient Greece, he told us, 'Research in the modern meaning was unknown; it was the curse of ancient historical writing, that it neglected Dr. Dryasdust, while the writers of history rested content with the ancient material, producing, as Posidonius and Tacitus produced, complete pictures of events and men, as poets and artists, and not as scientific historians.'² It affords, however, some

¹ XVI. 16, 3.

² *Times*, June 6, 1908.

consolation to know that there are distinguished historians who still cling to the older view. In the third volume of his recent work on 'The Greatness and Decline of Rome,' Prof. Ferrero speaks of the official Annals of ancient Rome as being as dry and absurd a mode of narration as 'the critical and scientific historical methods which certain pedants would revive to-day.'

And if the attempt is to be made to bring home to the modern reader the brilliance of an historian thus condemned as 'a poet and an artist'—a task which has been pronounced impossible—it may be worth while to ask how this problem of translation has been faced at different periods; and to consider what kind of success is possible for the modern translator of so unique a work as that of Tacitus.

The art of translation has recently attracted much attention, though chiefly in the domain of poetry; and the Clarendon Press is doing good service by issuing versions of the Latin classics by scholars of high standing, of a style different from that of a class of translation which was produced in such numbers during the early Victorian period. Those translations owed their existence to no literary impulse; they met the needs of schoolboys and passmen, of examiners and examinations, and that demand for mere verbal accuracy in Latin and Greek scholarship which came in with the early part of last century. Classical scholarship had become largely a matter of verbalism, to the comparative neglect of the literature; books were read, not for their matter, but for their language only. That was the time when a minute knowledge of the niceties of Greek and Latin usage was regarded as the supreme mark of

intellectual eminence, guaranteeing even fitness for the episcopal office; whence came into existence what have been wittily described by Professor Ridgeway as 'the Greek-Particle Bishops.'

To meet this state of things was produced 'the crib;' a type of translation, often of great merit for its own purpose, but whose object was to explain the language to the student, not to create an interest in classical literature, or to throw any light upon the matter of the original.

In sharp contrast with these aims were those of the preceding century; and a fair sample of the ideas then prevalent on the subject may be found in the lively treatise by Alexander Fraser Tytler (afterwards a Lord of Session, under the title of Lord Woodhouselee) published in 1790, and entitled an 'Essay on the Principles of the Art of Translation.'¹ This Essay, which attracted a good deal of attention at the time, lays down three main rules or principles to be observed in what is called 'The Art of Translation':—

1. *That the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work;*
2. *That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original;*
3. *That the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.*

These rules, taken literally, lay down the highest possible ideal. If a translation can be made a complete transcript of the original; if it has all the ease of original composition; and if it preserves in style and manner the character of the original, nothing more can be desired. The

¹ Reprinted lately in 'Everyman's Library.'

phrase 'complete transcript' affords promise of the most perfect literal accuracy; for as the dictionaries define 'transcript' to mean 'a writing or composition consisting of the same words as the original,' the combined phrase 'complete transcript' suggests that the golden injunction 'omit nothing, insert nothing,' is to be literally obeyed; while nothing short of the highest literary excellence would satisfy the second and third conditions. But we soon discover that the greatest freedom is not only permitted, but enjoined, under the first head; and that the interpretation given to the second would by no means satisfy the scholarly critic of to-day.

It has to be noted, however, under the first rule, that the transcript is not to be of the words, but of 'the ideas'; a very important difference. It is the thought, not the language, which has to be put into an English dress; and when we come to the illustrations given, we find that this qualification permits the translator to omit phrases, and indeed ideas also, which he may consider inconsistent with the general standard of the author's writing, or his own; it enjoins him 'to retrench the ideas of the original; and even to correct what appears to him a careless or inaccurate expression of the original, where that inaccuracy seems materially to affect the sense.'

Starting thus from the idea that a translator should improve upon his original, our critic finds fault with Tacitus for making Tiberius discourse to the Senate *de sua modestia* (Ann. i. 11, 1): 'as Tacitus could not mean to say that he discoursed to the people about his own modesty;' and he chides him sharply for using the word *hercle* in i. 3, 5, since 'there was no occasion here for the historian swearing.' But his

main criticisms are reserved for Homer, whose mistakes or inelegancies, he tells us, have often been judiciously corrected or omitted by Pope. Thus in the famous parting scene between Hector and Andromache, Homer has the bad taste to introduce, and Pope the good taste to omit, 'a compliment to the nurse's waist' (ἐϋζώνοιο τιθήνης); for 'Homer's epithets are often nothing more than mere expletives, or additional designations of his persons. They are often applied by the poet in circumstances where their mention is quite preposterous. It would show very little judgment in a translator who should honour Patroclus with the epithet of *godlike*, while he is blowing the fire to roast an ox; or bestow on Agamemnon the designation of *King of many nations*, while he is helping Ajax to a large piece of the chine.'

But 'the complete transcript' not only permits the removal of improprieties; it should also aim at adding to and improving the ideas of the original, 'provided always that the superadded idea shall have the most necessary connection with his original thought, and actually increase its force;' . . . for 'an ordinary translator sinks under the energy of his original; the man of genius frequently rises above it.' So far, therefore, from sinking his individuality in that of his original, the translator is himself to become an original composer.

To illustrate this principle, our author refers to the passage Il. 345-8—

ὡς φάτο, Πάτροκλος δὲ φίλῳ ἐπεπέιθετ' ἑταίρω·
 ἐκ δ' ἄγαγε κλισίης Βρισηίδα καλλιπάρηον,
 δῶκε δ' ἄγειν τῷ δ' αὐτίς ἴτην παρὰ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν·
 ἢ δ' ἀέκουσ' ἅμα τοῖσι γυνὴ κίεν·

quoting with high approval Pope's rendering:—

*Patroclus now th' unwilling beauty brought;
She in soft sorrows and in pensive thought,
Past silent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back, slow moving o'er the strand.*

'The ideas contained in the three last lines,' he remarks, 'are not indeed expressed in the original, but they are implied in the word *ἀέκουσα*; for she who goes unwillingly, will *move slowly*, and *oft look back*. The amplification highly improves the effect of the picture.' Our critic fails to add that Pope omits almost the whole of the first three lines.

These criticisms give a good specimen of eighteenth-century views on the functions of a translator, and explain the phrase 'Art of Translation'; the neglect of which is deplored in the opening sentences of the Essay. They also show what an ascendancy had been gained over men's minds at that period by the school of Pope, and how that influence actually perverted the finer and more scholarly taste of preceding generations. 'It would be endless to point out,' says Fraser Tytler, 'all the instances in which Mr. Pope has improved both upon the thought and expression of his original. . . . Even the highest beauties of the original receive additional lustre from this admirable translator.'

The translators of the Elizabethan age show a far truer appreciation of the manner in which the classical writers should be handled, and of the respect which a translator should pay to his original. The eighteenth-century critic talks much of assimilating the style and manner of writing to that of the original; but it is in the Elizabethan translators, as we have seen in the case of Greenwey's Tacitus, that the true

virile touch of classical antiquity is to be found. They write indeed with undue garrulity; they are fond of conceits; but they go to the heart of the matter, and use a raciness of native idiom which is peculiarly their own.

It was not therefore for the want of better examples before them that the translators of a later century ran riot in amplifications and embellishments which destroy the nobleness and simplicity of their originals: they had the better example before them and they deliberately chose the worse. Thus Fraser Tytler pours contempt on Milton's beautiful translation of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha (*Quis multa gracilis*), which he regards as 'a whimsical experiment of the effect of a strict conformity in English both to the expression and measure of the Latin'; but the most notable instance of his failure to recognize the qualities which a modern scholar looks for in a translation is when he condemns as 'a literal and servile transcript of the robust and scholarly original' the admirable rendering by Ben Jonson of the well-known lines in the *Ars Poetica* of Horace:—

*Mortalia facta peribunt,
Nedum sermonum stet honos et gratia vivax.
Multa renascentur quae iam cecidere, cadentque
Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus
Quem penes arbitrium est et ius et norma loquendi.*

A. P. 68-72.

Ben Jonson's version is as follows:—

*All mortal deeds
Shall perish; so far off it is the state
Or grace of speech should hope a lasting date.
Much phrase that now is dead shall be revived,
And much shall die which now is nobly lived,
If custom please, at whose disposing will,
The power and rule of speaking resteth still.*

The eighteenth-century critic was not content with faithful and vigorous versions like the above. 'I conceive it to be the duty of a poetical translator, never to suffer his original to fall. . . . When he sees a drooping wing, he must raise him on his own pinions.' So says Fraser Tytler,¹ and he quotes with approval the remark of M. Delille, a translator of the *Georgics*: 'Il faut être quelquefois supérieur à son original, précisément parce qu'on lui est très-inférieur.'

Even Dryden thought that it was the main business of a translator to produce a charming book; but he had the literary instinct to perceive that besides producing a charming poem, the translator ought to preserve the general character of the poem that he translated:—'For after all a translator is to make his author appear as charming as he possibly can, provided he maintains the character and makes him not unlike himself.'² Thus while literal accuracy may have to be departed from, the character and spirit of the original must be preserved.

This brings us back to the second of Fraser Tytler's principles, to which he pays such scant attention:—'That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character as that of the original'; and we have to ask ourselves with regard to Tacitus, How far is it possible to reproduce in an English version the peculiar Tacitean manner consistently with what must be regarded as the two fundamental conditions of such a translation: (1) that it shall be absolutely faithful to the original; (2) that the dull flavour of a translation shall disappear, and

¹ P. 46.

² Preface to the 'Second Miscellany,' p. 2.

that the English shall be such as might be used by a writer of the present day?

Mr. Matthew Arnold, indeed, denies that any version can fulfil the fundamental condition of fidelity unless the manner of the original is given, as well as its matter. But this is putting the demand for fidelity rather high; for if so exacting a standard be adopted, it may fairly be asked, Has it ever been reached in the translation of any great Greek or Latin author? Homer is a great, but a very simple writer; he deals with simple ideas, intelligible to all mankind, and he has an easy flowing style: yet Matthew Arnold himself, and the late Mr. Headlam more recently, have pronounced that no really satisfactory version of Homer has yet been produced. The latter gives as the reason for this want, that 'there is no native Homer in our tongue, no corresponding model which embraces all the necessary qualities;' and if this be accepted as a valid reason in the case of Homer, we shall see that the same reason applies in a still more marked degree to Tacitus.

Meantime, as a test of fidelity, we may be satisfied with the definition laid down by the late Sir Richard Jebb in the Preface to his prose translation of the *Œdipus Tyrannus*: 'The translation to be aimed at is one the principle of which shall be absolute fidelity to the original; not to the letter of the original at the cost of the spirit, but of the spirit as expressed in the letter;' and then as a warning against the idea that a translation cannot be accurate unless it is literal, he adds: 'There are places where a translation, although in prose, cannot combine literal with essential accuracy; and a version which subordinates the letter to the spirit will sometimes involve

processes of thought of which the result leaves no visible trace.¹

These words are as true of translations of prose authors as of poets. Fidelity to the thought must be the first and paramount aim of the translator; that attained, he may consider how far it is possible to reproduce the manner and style of the original. That every translation should bear some trace of the original author's manner, is a commonplace of criticism; but the extent to which this is possible will vary greatly in different cases. It will be comparatively easy in translating from one modern language into another; it will be more easy, as a rule, in translating from the Greek than from the Latin. But there is nothing so hard to analyse, or to imitate without parody, nothing so hard even to describe, as the peculiarities of a great style. Style goes deep down into the personality of the man; and just as no description of any great and strong character that has exercised an influence on men's lives can ever appear adequate to those who knew the man, or convey a just impression of that influence to others, so is it with style. Style is part and parcel of a man's being; it clings to the words which come from his mouth or flow from his pen, and its finer qualities evaporate in their passage through a foreign mind into a foreign tongue. This may be seen in the simplest example. In *Hist. iii. 50*, occurs the Tacitean phrase *dies rerum*. Mr. Godley translates it 'the time for action.' This is not only excellent English, but also a perfect translation of the Latin. But it is distinctly English in manner, and is not in the style of Tacitus.

¹ Jebb, *Œdipus Tyrannus*, Preface, pp. v. and vi.

How difficult it is even to describe a style adequately may be judged by this. No two styles could be more unlike than those of Homer and Tacitus, corresponding to utterly different conditions of age, life, and civilization; yet when Matthew Arnold declares the style of Homer to be characterised by four main features, he is mentioning two qualities, and to a large extent a third also, which are distinctly characteristic of Tacitus. For Tacitus is 'eminently rapid;' he is 'eminently noble;' and though he is the very opposite of being 'plain and direct in the expression of his thought, that is in his syntax and in his words,' yet he is often extraordinarily 'direct,' and even 'plain, in the substance of his thought;' and his great narratives are a model of direct and swift expression. Like Homer, he writes with his eye upon the scene; he 'visualises' what he describes.

Dryden again gives a description of Virgil's style, every point of which is applicable to Tacitus:—'I looked on Virgil,' he tells us, 'as a succinct, grave and majestic writer; one who weighed, not only every thought, but every word and syllable; who was still aiming to crowd his sense into as narrow a compass as possibly he could . . . he requires (I may almost say) a grammar apart to construe him . . . he maintains majesty in the midst of plainness; he shines but glares not, he is stately without ambition. . . . To make him copious is to alter his character; and to translate him line for line is impossible. . . . In short, they who have called him the torture of grammarians, might also have called him the plague of translators; for he seems to have studied not to be translated.'¹ Every word of this description

¹ Pref. to the 'Second Miscellany,' p. 4.

applies to Tacitus. The extraordinary 'density' of the style of Tacitus¹—his power of packing ideas closely together with scarcely any intervening medium—can be illustrated by many a passage from Virgil. The following shows how he exhibits the genius of Latin in placing his ideas in immediate juxtaposition to each other, just as a wall may be built solidly up of closely jointed masonry, without rubble or even mortar between the joints:—

*Scilicet et tempus veniet cum finibus illis
Agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro
Exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,
Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes,
Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.*

Geo. i. 493-7.

Here we have five whole hexameters, complete in grammar and in sense, with no small words intervening between the ideas except the four essential connecting words *et*, *cum*, *aut*, and *que*. Every other word represents an idea. No passage could better demonstrate the hopelessness of attempting to force an uninflected language like our own to rival the brevity of Latin; or of trying to equal in terseness the only Latin author who knew how to exhaust the capacity for compression inherent in the tersest of all languages.

Now of all the features of the style of Tacitus the most conspicuous is its brevity; if therefore all attempt to rival him in brevity must be abandoned, it is vain to speak of reproducing in English a style that shall be really like his own. The translator will make it a point to be as condensed and compact as good English idiom permits. He can give a

¹ See Introd. vol. i. p. xxxiii.

sense of comparative brevity, in a language which is becoming, as used in public and political life, the most prolix of all languages; but he must make it his first business to bring out the whole meaning of his author, even at the expense of shortness.

Another feature in the style of Tacitus which cannot be reproduced is its literary and poetical colouring. He is full of semi-quotations, and veiled reminiscences of passages of poetry familiar to his contemporaries; he has a love for the archaic in his words and in his constructions; he affects the novelty that consists in reviving some ancient word or usage; he uses many words that are not found, many constructions that cannot be paralleled, in any other author. These things constitute another important feature in his style and they cannot be reproduced (vol. i. *Intro.* p. liii.).

The variety of his language may more easily be followed. Nothing is more wearisome in modern writing or speaking than the perpetual repetition of the same phrases, often tags of hackneyed expressions that have done good service in their time, but from which life and freshness have departed from their having been applied without discrimination to all sorts of circumstances more or less like each other. Tacitus has no such stock phrases. Every expression comes fresh off his pen, as if specially constructed to suit the circumstance of the case. Now the English language has a marvellous wealth of words and pointed idioms at its command; and the translator will do much to brighten and relieve his narrative by drawing on that wealth to the utmost, both in his diction and in his forms of speech. A careful study of the style of Tacitus

and of other classical models in such points as these might do much to correct the tendency to repetition, the prolixity, the dulness and the commonplaceness, which characterise so much of the writing of English in this its Silver Age. Happily there are men among us in high places on whom the study of classical models has not been thrown away. We have a John Morley, an A. J. Balfour, a Frederick Harrison, among our statesmen and men of letters; and every Englishman of to-day may be proud of the pure and pointed English that may be found in the judgments of our great Judges, or in the state papers written by such statesmen as Lord Cromer or the late Lord Salisbury.

Thus far only general points of style have been considered; but when we come to analyse the language of Tacitus, and dissect his grammar and his syntax, we find that his usages differ almost as much from those of ordinary classical Latin as these do from those of English. Whole volumes like that of Dr. Draeger have been written upon the peculiarities of his constructions; a short analysis of these takes up thirty-six pages of Mr. Furneaux' Introduction. There is hardly a Case or a Tense, there is not a part of speech, which Tacitus does not use at times in some peculiar way, either without example, or only to be explained by some analogy, or by an expansion of the rules laid down in ordinary grammars. Logical or rhetorical reasons can always be found for these usages; but they do not conform to the orthodox rules of grammar. The sacred rules of *Oratio Obliqua* are constantly departed from; those for the consecution of tenses are not observed; Adjectives and Participles do duty as Nouns; Intransitive Verbs are used as

Transitive, Transitive as Intransitive: the whole language is handled on principles fundamentally different from those observed by what are regarded as the best models of classical Latin. The Latin of Tacitus would have appeared uncouth and barbarous to Cicero; and it is certain that if no copy of his works had been preserved to modern times, any candidate for a University scholarship presenting a piece of Tacitean Latin Prose would have been ruled out of the competition. All these peculiarities form not only a part, but an essential part, of the manner of Tacitus; they present great difficulties to the translator; and yet not one of them can be reproduced, or even hinted at, in his translation.

It is further to be noted that these characteristic usages of Tacitus do not bring his Latin nearer to modern languages in general form and structure; on the contrary, they introduce new elements of difference and strangeness. They do not represent a breaking down of the ancient classical forms, such as that which paved the way for our modern languages: on the contrary, they represent a revolt against those smoother and more flowing forms of speech which Cicero had introduced into Latin, and which ultimately became the model upon which our own literary English prose was developed in its Augustan days.

Thus it happens that the general style of Cicero's language is less remote from English than that of Tacitus. The style of Tacitus was toilfully elaborated as a protest and a revolt against the facile and empty smoothness which dominated the rhetorical schools in his youth. That style professed to be founded on, and to be developed from, that of Cicero: but it

was the style of an emasculated Cicero, from which the virility which came from contact with the great issues of free public life had departed. Cicero's style was smooth and finished, often laboured and lengthy; in his moulding hands the stiff tongue of Rome had acquired much of the richness and flexibility and versatility of Greek; but whenever he had to battle for great causes, or to guide great events, the iron hand was there under the velvet glove, and he could speak with a force and a fire which have hardly their match in oratory.

But the style of Cicero, as developed by declamation, and suited to the ears of a public which had ceased to have any serious interests, lost all its force and fibre, and became a smooth, verbose and vapid imitation of the original. Tacitus speaks with contempt of the style of Seneca, which he terms 'a pleasing style, well fitted to the hearers of those days.' For oratory had suffered the same sort of decline as that by which the beauty and power of Virgil had descended into the smoothness and prettiness of Statius; and we can imagine how heartily Tacitus would have endorsed the criticisms of his fore-runner Persius upon the mawkish poetic foppiness of his day, and with what wrathful scorn he might have echoed the words:

*Haec fierent, si testiculi vena alla paterni
Viveret in nobis?*

Pers. I, 103.

The whole argument of the *Dialogue* of Tacitus turns upon the degradation which had fallen on oratory in consequence of its divorce from the necessities of real life. The treatise itself is written in excellent Ciceronian style; but the whole trend of

the argument is that of one who would fain create a new style for himself; a style which should be distinguished by the grasp of its ideas, rather than by the flow of its periods; in which vigour of words, and virile abruptness of phrase, should be substituted for the cloying smoothness, the fatiguing amplitude, and the monotonous impeccability of the full-dress Ciceronian style. The style of Tacitus is that of a man of severe and masculine mind striking out for himself new paths of speech, into which no successor had the genius to follow him.

Mr. Jowett explains the peculiarities of Thucydides by the fact that he wrote at a time 'when the uses of words and constructions were not yet fixed; at a time when a new intellectual world had broken upon the Greek mind, and the forms of speech were being slowly adjusted to the mental movement of the age. . . . The grammatical construction and the logical connection of clauses and sentences were still clumsy and irregular . . . Thucydides was a great genius, writing in an ante-grammatical age, when logic was just beginning to be cultivated, who had thoughts far beyond his contemporaries . . . As centuries went on "the individual withered;" there was no force of mind to struggle against the conventionalities imposed upon it; the daily practice of oratory, the precepts of a thousand grammarians, reduced the mighty genius of Hellas to the level of a later generation.'

If Thucydides was a great genius living in an ante-grammatical age, the converse may be predicated of Tacitus. He may be described as a great genius writing in a post-grammatical, or at least an ultra-grammatical, age, when thought had become

overlaid by a multitude of rules and formulas, and perfection in the cultivation of form was going hand in hand with barrenness in idea; and it is curious to note that many of those grammatical shortcomings which have been the despair of commentators in Thucydides are to be found reappearing in Tacitus. It has been constantly so with original writers—more especially with poets who have new ideas or high-strung feelings to express. Minds like those of a Shakespeare or a Browning are not to be bound down by the shackles of grammatical correctness. In like manner, Tacitus broke with the conventional rules and pedantic artificialities which were admired in his day; he developed for himself a new style, often ungainly and almost uncouth, but as remarkable for its massive force as for its defiance of the ordinary rules of composition.

Thus the use which Tacitus makes of the Ablative and Genitive Cases is loose, and almost lawless, from the point of view of the strict grammarian; but he adds thereby a rare power to his descriptions. Editors in vain attempt to bring his employment of those cases under the ordinary rules: in order to do so they have had to invent the 'Genitive of the Subject Indicated,' the 'Ablative of Attendant Circumstances'—comprehensive terms which, like the rubbish-heap in games of 'Patience,' are admirably adapted to denote meanings for which no proper place can be found in the classifications of grammarians. Let the following passage be considered:—

Ceterum urbis quae domui supererant, non, ut post Gallica incendia, nulla distinctione nec passim erecta; sed dimensis vicorum ordinibus et latis viarum spatiis cohibitaque aedificiorum altitudine ac patefactis areis,

additisque porticibus quae frontem insularum protegerent (xv. 43, 1).

Nothing could be more ungainly, in point of style, than the manner in which the ablatives are piled one upon another in this passage; but if we look at the ideas, regardless of the composition, what a splendid picture do these clauses put before the mind's eye of the orderly way in which Rome was rebuilt!

Again, what a jumble of ablatives, but what a vivid description, is contained in the following, each point being stated in the order of its occurrence:—

Simulque cuncta prospere acta, caecis populatoribus, et dissensione orta apud obsidentes, regisque opportuna eruptione, et adventu legionis (iii. 39, 3).

Similar instances abound. Single Ablatives also frequently occur with no vestige of a proper construction, such as *gestamine sellae* (xiv. 4, 6, and xv. 57, 3); *eorum gloria* (xvi. 26, 5); *explenda simulatione* (xiv. 4, 8). At other times, strings of nouns, barely connected with some distant Verb, are huddled together with admirable effect, as in xiv. 38, 5:—

Ad hoc lamenta parentium feminarum fessa aetate aut rudis pueritiae aetas, quique sibi quique aliis consulebant, dum trahunt invalidos aut opperiantur, pars mora, pars festinans, cuncta impediabant.

And again in xiv. 13, 2:—

Et promptiora quam promiserant inveniunt, obvias tribus, festo cultu senatum, coniugum ac liberorum agmina per sexum et aetatem disposita, extractos, qua incederet, spectaculorum gradus, quo modo triumphis visuntur.

One of the most prominent peculiarities of Tacitus—a peculiarity in which English cannot follow him—is his treatment of the Verb. His indifference to

those finer shades of verbal meaning which are expressed so subtly and so faultlessly in Greek, with its profusion of tenses, moods, and particles, has already been pointed out in the Introduction to Vol. I of this translation (p. lvii) as throwing constant difficulty in the way of literal translation. He continually violates the ordinary rules for the consecution of tenses; he mixes up moods and tenses with a view to variety or graphic effect; and he pays little attention to modal distinctions, constantly using the plain verb, especially in the Infinitive, where the sense and the necessities of English require us to introduce some such word as 'can,' 'may,' 'might,' 'would,' or 'should,' according to the context. Thus we have *suscipi bellum* in xii. 20, 2, where we would say 'a war would have to be undertaken'; in xiii. 9, 7 Nero announces *laurum fascibus addi* 'is to be added'; *adlevabant* in xiv. 63, 3 'were able to relieve'; in xiii. 39, 8 *sub ictum dabantur* 'would have been exposed to'; xv. 66, 1 *ultra fefellit* 'could be concealed no longer.'

But what is still more notable is our author's parsimony in the use of verbs. Readers of the *Oxford Magazine* may remember an amusing skit upon the Tacitean Verb which appeared in that learned periodical upon April 20th, 1884:—

After all, however, the best account of the style of Tacitus is that of another Oxford scholar—an alderman we believe of the city—who after a prolonged acquaintance with the Classics, originating in what is technically called 'reading,' delivered himself thus as to the merits of the great Latin stylists. 'First,' said the scholar, 'here's Cicero: I like Cicero, he's all right. You looks for the nominative, and you looks for the verb, and finds them both in their places. Then there's Livy: one looks for the nominative and you finds that, and then you

looks for the verb, and perhaps you don't find that at first, but it's there somewhere, and you finds it at last: but as for that beggar Tacitus, why I'm blest if very often he ain't got no verb at all!'

Oxford knows its Tacitus; and this criticism is just. He seems to have a positive contempt for the verb, especially the Finite verb; and he has no patience with the subtle intricacies of verbal meanings, and the somewhat cumbrous forms of the Latin compound tenses, in which Cicero takes such delight. The instruments with which Tacitus produces his effects are the noun, the adjective, and the participle; he constantly omits the verb altogether in places where its omission would not be possible in English; and in some of his most striking passages there is hardly verb enough to keep his sentences together. The Substantive verb he treats with the utmost disdain, scarcely acknowledging its existence. Take such a passage as Hist. i. 2:—

Iam vero Italia novis cladibus vel post longam saeculorum seriem repetitis afflictata: haustae aut obrutae urbes, fecundissima Campaniae ora; et urbs incendiis vastata, consumptis antiquissimis delubris, ipso Capitolio civium manibus incenso. Pollutae caerimoniae, magna adulteria. Plenum exiliis mare, infecti caedibus scopuli. Atrocius in urbe saevitum: nobilitas, opes, omissi gestique honores pro crimine et ob virtutes certissimum exitium.

Or again in chap. 4:—

Sed patres laeti, usurpata statim libertate licentius ut erga principem novum et absentem; primores equitum proximi gaudio patrum; pars populi integra et magnis domibus adnexa, clientes libertique damnatorum et exulum in spem erecti: plebs sordida et circo ac theatris sucta, simul deterrimi servorum, aut qui adesis bonis per dedecus Neronis alebantur, maesti et rumorum avidi.

In numberless other cases it is left to the imagination, or rather the intelligence, of the reader to supply the principal verb of the sentence for himself. The mood he rejoices in most is the Infinitive, no doubt because it is so substantival in its character; the number of Finite verbs which he employs in a sentence is out of all proportion to the number of ideas which it contains. He has many sentences like the following, in which no Finite verb appears except in subordinate clauses:—

Haec in commune: ceterum timore occulto ne L. Silanus eximia nobilitate disciplinaque C. Cassii, apud quem educatus erat, ad omnem claritudinem sublatus imperium invaderet (xv. 52, 3).

Other striking instances of sentences in which the least possible room is found for Finite verbs are the following:—

Neque enim capere aut venundare, aliudve quod belli commercium, sed caedes, patibula, ignes, cruces, tamquam reddituri supplicium ac praerepta interim ultione, festinabant (xiv. 33, 6).

In the pathetic passage which describes the pitiable fate of Octavia, all the ideas are conveyed by nouns and participles. There is but one principal verb (*fuit*); the end of the sentence is a painting in words with no construction at all:—

Huic primum nuptiarum dies loco funeris fuit deductae in domum in qua nihil nisi luctuosum haberet, erepto per venenum patre et statim fratre; tum ancilla domina validior, et Poppaea nonnisi in perniciem uxoris nupta, postremo crimen omni exitio gravius (xiv. 63, 4).

So in xv. 42, 3:—

Cetera abrupta aut arentia; ac si perumpi possent, intolerandus labor, nec satis causae.

It is to be noticed that in the speeches of Tacitus the verb receives much more consideration. The constructions are as a rule fully completed; omissions of verbs necessary to the sense (except of the Substantive verb) do not occur. They are splendid examples of concise and pointed rhetoric; but they contain hardly any of those strained epigrammatic phrases which mark the style of Tacitus elsewhere. In this he shows a true appreciation of the function of oratory. The orator has to address himself to the ordinary public; and he must suit his language to the audience he is addressing. He cannot trust too much to their intelligence; he must fully develop his meaning; and he must avoid those oracular brevities, and those bold violations of ordinary grammatical proprieties, which might delight the ears of a cultivated and esoteric audience. No better example of the literary skill of Tacitus can be found than in the manner in which he transforms the dull, ill-arranged speech of Claudius upon the admission of the Gauls to public office (the actual speech having been preserved on the Lyons tablets) into the brilliant pointed analysis of it as given in xi. 24.

Comparisons have often been made between Tacitus and Thucydides; it is curious what a contrast is presented by their speeches. 'The speeches of Thucydides,' says Mr. Jowett, 'everywhere exhibit the antitheses, the climaxes, the plays of words, the point which is no point, of the rhetorician; yet retain amid these defects of form a weight of thought to which succeeding historians can scarcely show the like.'¹ Every young scholar knows the difficulty of the Thucydidean speeches; it is in reading them that

¹ Preface to 'Thucydides,' p. xiv.

he makes his first attempts at unravelling the tortuous, alike in grammar and in thought. But in Tacitus it is the reverse; the speeches are the easiest, the most regular, the least Tacitean, parts of Tacitus. They were written by a statesman familiar with the oratory of the Roman Senate; and they read like the summaries of a brilliant Parliamentary reporter who knows how to put into most concise, and yet rhetorical, form all the main arguments actually employed on some great occasion. But they were written, as other Parliamentary reports are written, for the ordinary reader; grammatical and verbal surprises are avoided, and the verb holds its due and accustomed place.

Why then is it that elsewhere Tacitus treats the verb with such scant ceremony, and reduces the use of a principal verb to a minimum? A new and interesting suggestion on this point was offered by Professor Phillimore at the meeting of the Scottish Classical Association in November 1907, when he mentioned incidentally how Tacitus uses the Adjective 'to supply the poverty of the Latin Verb.' On being asked for further explanation, he wrote as follows:—

'The instance I had in my mind particularly was the famous *omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset* (Hist. i. 49), which in Greek would surely have been rendered by εἰ ἂν ἄρξεν δοκῶν. It is the awkwardness of the Latin Conditional which Low Latin mended by a new tense, formed of *habere*, that seems to me to cover many of Tacitus' instances of forcing an Adjective. Thus in xii. 2, 2: *si rursus adsumeretur . . . superbam*; why not *futuram*? I take it because of *adsumeretur*. He was fastidious of making *futuram* stand for *ἂν δούσαν* as well as *ἔσομένην*. From the same

book the following examples may be quoted: *ferox* (chap. 14, 3); *sacvum, arduum* (17, 1); *inopi* (20, 3); *clarus acceptusque* (29, 1); *vagi* (30, 1). All these are quasi-participial, some actually participles which have passed into adjectives.'

Such passages well illustrate the feature in the style of Tacitus which has been discussed above, his avoidance, where possible, of the verb; but they scarcely prove that it was the special weakness of the Latin verb which drove him to use adjectives or participles in its place. He certainly felt the cumbersome nature of those Latin conditional forms, precise and logical as they are, in which Cicero revels; after reading one page of Tacitus one might be sure that he would avoid such weak forms as *fore ut, fieri ut, futurum fuisse ut*, as pedantic and circumlocutory; but we may be sure also that he would have objected not less strongly to the more perfect and subtle refinements elaborated by the Greek verb. I cannot imagine that he would have liked to use such a phrase as *ἐν ἄν ἀρξείν δοκῶν*. He objects, on principle, to all those full-blooded forms of speech of which Cicero set the fashion. He makes his effects by short, sharp strokes with single words, whether substantives, adjectives or participles, curtailing his use of verbs to the barest minimum, and leaving it to the reader to supply for himself those distinctions of mood which could not be expressed without a sacrifice of that nervous brevity which was the essential object at which he aimed.

The two passages quoted by Professor Phillimore are excellent specimens of the Tacitean manner; but I explain them differently. In the passage xii. 3, 2, Tacitus probably omitted *futuram* because the sense

was clear without it; it is part of his manner to omit every unnecessary verbal form. In the famous phrase *omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset*, we have at once an example of our author's preferring substantives to verbs, and a specimen which shows why so many of his phrases are untranslatable. Translating literally, we get, 'In every one's opinion fit to rule had he not ruled'; or if we follow the exact order of the original, without heeding the construction, we get a good English sentence, 'Every one would have pronounced him capable of ruling had he not ruled.' But here part of the sense is omitted; for Tacitus meant to say that every one *did* think him fit to rule until he was tried; but instead of saying 'until he was tried,' he finishes the sentence with *nisi imperasset*, which implies a previous conditional. Thus the omitted conditional sense belongs rather to the substantive *consensu* than to the adjective *capax*, and the whole is an example of how Tacitus can put into one sentence the meaning of two—an art in which English declines to follow him.

The frequent use by Tacitus of the Historical Infinitive further illustrates his desire to escape at every opportunity from the trammels of mood and tense. The reason why the Historical Infinitive is so powerful an instrument of pictorial description is just the fact that it concentrates attention upon the action of the verb *simpliciter*, without any of the limitations of time, person, or mood which the Finite verb imposes. It will therefore be a favourite tense with an author who prefers rapidity of action and quickness of thought to elaboration and accuracy of detail; and who, in his love for brevity, is content to throw his main ideas bluntly and forcibly down, with just

enough indication in the context to enable the reader to add the necessary qualifications for himself. Not only therefore does Tacitus revel in the ordinary use of the Historical Infinitive—in the 38th chapter of the *Agricola* it occurs no less than nine times in a single period—but he also uses it in dependent clauses introduced by *cum, ubi, ut*, etc., with a freedom unknown to other writers (see ii. 31, 1; xiii. 57, 6; xi. 37, 3, etc.), and always with the same result of adding rapidity and vividness to the action.

And there is another reason. The very vagueness of the Historical Infinitive widens as it were the scope of its meaning, and by removing all special restrictions upon the action of the verb, makes a larger appeal to the imagination. For the same reason Tacitus often makes use of abstract nouns where in ordinary Latin the concrete would be expected—a use of which Cicero affords many fine examples. Thus he tells us that some people thought that old Rome as it existed before the fire was more healthy than the new city, *quoniam angustiae itinerum et altitudo tectorum non perinde solis vapore perurperentur: at nunc patulam latitudinem et nulla umbra defensam graviore aestu ardescere* (xv. 43, 5).

Participles also, which Mr. Jowett has described as ‘abstract nouns in the making,’ are often used in place of abstract nouns in such phrases as *occisus Caesar* (i. 8, 7), *rapta uxor* (i. 59, 2), though in these cases the abstract idea is expressed through a concrete form. In xii. 33, 1 we have a very singular use whereby two adjectives take the place of two abstract nouns, standing as Subjects to the verb: *Nihil nisi atrox et pugnatoribus frequens terrebat*: i.e. (the fact that there was) ‘nothing not formidable and bristling

with defenders terrified them.' Such a phrase is parallel to the use of the neuter participle by Thucydides, as in i. 36, l. 3: Τὸ μὲν βουλόμενον καὶ ὑποπτον τῆς γνώμης οὐ δηλοῦντες.

None of these usages have their counterparts in English; and the more closely we examine the language of Tacitus, the more clearly do we see that not in special usages only, but in the whole structure of its sentences and its periods, it differs fundamentally, not from English only, but also from ordinary Latin. It abounds in anomalies, solecisms, roughnesses and omissions which would be considered blots in any other language: and yet these are the very elements which, in his hands, give interest to his style. Some of these violate the very principles for which Latin has been held up as a model of logical exactness. No principle is dearer to Latin than that which enjoins the writer to avoid an unnecessary change of Subject; but Tacitus at times changes his Subject in the most violent manner, sometimes without giving a hint that he has done so. In xii. 4, 5 we have three Subjects in a sentence of less than three lines; in xiv. 31, 3 we have two plural verbs close together with different Subjects: *Præcipui quique Icenorum, quasi cunctam regionem muneri accepissent* (i.e. Romani), *avitis bonis exiuntur* (i.e. præcipui Icenorum); while in xvi. 15, 4 two verbs in the singular standing next to each other have different Subjects: *hactenus manu servi usus ut immotum pugionem extolleret* (i.e. servus) *adpressit* (i.e. Ostorius) *dextram eius* (i.e. servi) *iuguloque occurrit*. So in *fruerentur sane vocabulo civitatis: insignia patrum, decora magistratuum ne vulgarent* (xi. 23, 7), *Galli* is the Subject to *fruerentur*, *patres* to *vulgarent*; and again in

xii. 38, 4 and 5, one sentence ends with *ccidere*, having 'Roman soldiers' as the Subject: the next, without any hint of change, ends with *profligant*, with 'the British enemy' for the Subject.

The omission of the Subject in cases like the above springs from a desire for brevity: the idea being that if the reader can guess the right Subject for himself, there is no necessity for expressing it. The same desire for brevity produces sentences which, taken literally, are illogical, as in xii. 47, 7: *Illi cupido regni fratre et filia potior*: for it was the kingdom, not the desire for it, which was dearer than brother and daughter; while in xvi. 13, 3 the sentence is actually absurd as it stands: 'wives and children were in many cases burnt on the pyre while watching and bewailing their dying friends' (*inter coniugum et liberorum lamenta, qui dum assident, dum deflent, saepe eodem rogo cremabantur*).

In many cases words and ideas essential to the sense are omitted. Thus the pronoun *se* is needed before *arceri* in xiii. 13, 6; in xii. 18, 3 the relative *quod* has for its antecedent an unexpressed idea lurking in the word *prole*; in xv. 2, 3 *causa quam armis retinere*, the word *potius* is implied, not expressed; in xv. 54, 1 *pridie insidiarum* means 'on the day before that fixed for the execution of the plot;' and in Hist. iii. 68 the phrase *obsistentium penatibus privatis* would make no sense at all if translated into English, the meaning being 'raising objections to (his entering) a private house.' In xv. 60, 3 we have an *ut*-clause which bears no logical relation to the sentence on which it depends: Seneca's death 'was well pleasing to Nero,' *non quia coniurationis manifestum compererat sed ut ferro grassaretur quando venenum non processerat,*

'not because he had established his guilt, *but in order that* he might accomplish by the sword what he had failed to do by poison.' The sense requires 'because he could now do by the sword what he had failed to do by poison;' instead of which the words *ut ferro grassaretur* are illogically substituted, without any logical relation to the preceding clause.

A similar illogical or elliptical use of an *ut*-clause occurs in xi. 28, 3: *in eo discrimen verti, si defensio audiretur, utque clausae aures etiam confitenti forent*. With the *si*-clause, the words *in eo discrimen verti* mean 'the critical or dangerous thing would be if;' with the *ut*-clause, they mean, 'the important thing to secure would be that.'

Another favourite device by which Tacitus attains brevity is the use of the figure *Zeugma*, whereby one verb, coupled with inconsistent ideas, does duty for two. Thus in xiii. 5, 1, *dum antiquitatem generis consulatus ac triumphos maiorum enumerabat*, the verb *enumerabat* is appropriate to *consulatus ac triumphos*, but not to *antiquitatem generis*; in xiii. 35, 7, *laudem strenuis, solatium invalidis, exemplum omnibus ostendere*, the verb *ostendere* is not appropriate to *laudem* or to *solatium*; in xvi. 29, 1, *cum per haec atque talia Marcellus, ut erat torvus ac minax, voce, vultu, oculis ardesceret*, the verb *ardesceret* is not at all applicable to the first of the three nouns which go with it. A still harsher instance occurs in xvi. 7, 3: *quippe semina belli civilis et defectionem a domo Caesarum quaesitam*, where the participle *quaesitam* is applicable to *defectionem*, but not at all to *semina*.

Many of the best phrases of Tacitus would be unintelligible if translated literally into English. What meaning could be extracted from the following

put into English words:—*nocturnae quietis imaginem ad spem haud dubiam retraxit* (xvi. 1, 1)? How could Antonia be said to ‘have lent her name and danger to an empty hope’ (*inanem ad spem Antoniam nomen et periculum commodavisse*, xv. 53, 5), when the meaning is that ‘she had lent her name to a dubious and perilous enterprise’—though perhaps an enterprise not more dubious or perilous than that of attempting to translate Tacitus into Tacitean English? Every page of Tacitus contains collocations and abrupt changes of construction which arrest the attention, and arouse a feeling of pleased surprise in one who has mastered the intricacies of Tacitean logic, but which would be harsh, and frequently unmeaning, if put into an English dress. In xiv. 49, 5 three different and inconsistent constructions are tied together, each qualifying the Subject:—*plures numero tuti, Thræsea sucta firmitudine animi et ne gloria inter-cideret*. Such combinations of diverse and dissimilar constructions are constantly occurring in Tacitus.

If we pass on to consider the Period of Tacitus,¹ which forms so important an element in his style, we find the same fundamental differences between his modes of expression and our own; and some interesting examples of it are to be found in these books. The Ciceronian period was more or less imitated by our writers of the eighteenth century. But modern English has drifted more and more away from the periodic style; and the Tacitean period, which abandons the easy gliding movement by which Cicero made clause after clause slip into its natural logical place, and which tacks loosely together clauses of the most disparate kind, as if

¹ See Introd. to vol. i. pp. lix.-lxiv.

revelling in syntactical complications, has passed quite beyond the reach of imitation in English. Let any one study the following passages, and ask himself how they would bear translation into English:—

Caesonio Pacto Petronio Turpiliano consulibus gravis clades in Britannia accepta: in qua neque A. Didius legatus, ut memoravi, nisi parta retinuerat, et successor Veranius modicis excursibus Siluras populatus, quin ultra bellum proferret morte prohibitus est, magna, dum vixit, severitatis fama, supremis testamenti verbis ambitionis manifestus (xiv. 29, 1).

In this passage, *accepta* is the only principal verb; even the substantive verb *est* is not expressed. The rest of the sentence is dependent on *in qua*, with its two subdivisions, introduced by *neque* and *et*. Under the *neque* clause we have a second dependent sentence *ut memoravi*; while dependent on the *et* clause we have (1) the participial clause *populatus*; (2) the *quin* clause (*proferret*); (3) and (4) the two adjectival phrases *magna . . . fama*, and *supremis . . . manifestus*, while (5) under the first of these we have the further dependent clause *dum vixit*.

Not less complicated is the following:—

C. Suctonio L. Telesimo consulibus Antistius Sossianus, factitatis in Neronem carminibus probrosis exilio, ut dixi, multatus, postquam id honoris indicibus tamque promptum ad caedes principem accepit, iniquis animo et occasionum haud segnibus Panmenem eiusdem loci exulem et Chaldaeorum arte famosum, eoque multorum amicitiiis innexum, similitudine fortunae sibi conciliat, ventitare ad eum nuntios et consultationes non frustratus (xvi. 14, 1).

Here observe that there is no principal verb

until we get down to *conciliat*—that verb itself indicating a fact of quite secondary importance. The sentence begins with an ablative absolute giving the date; next comes the Subject, with a participial clause in agreement with it (*multatus*), which itself has two ablatives, one within the other, dependent upon it (*exilio* and *factitatis carminibus*); then follows a dependent *postquam* clause, giving two additional considerations which influenced the Subject in the action about to be described; next two adjectival additions to describe the character of the Subject; then we reach the Object, with an adjectival description; and then, at last, comes the principal verb, followed by one more participial sentence to explain the motives which induced the man to act. And yet all this time we have not been given the least idea of what Antistius, the Subject, is going to do.

Another period remarkable for the number of its ablatives, and for the apparently random manner in which they are strung together, occurs in xv. 11, 1:—

At Vologeses, quamvis obsessa a Pacto itinera hinc peditatu inde equite accepisset, nihil mutato consilio, sed vi ac minis alaris exterruit, legionarios obtrivit, uno tantum centurione Tarquitio Crescente turrin, in qua praesidium agitabat, defendere auso, factaque sacpius eruptione et caesis qui barbarorum propius suggrediebantur donec ignium iactu circumveniretur.

Here the central idea of the passage is conveyed by two principal verbs standing close together (*exterruit, obtrivit*); the rest of the effect in this comprehensive description is produced by four dependent sentences, and five ablatival constructions.

It is obvious that English does not possess the

mechanism, and is not used to the logic, needed for constructing passages like these; and that any attempt to imitate them would result in the cumbersome and the uncouth. Yet they have no such effect in the original. In the Latin, these periods seem to march bravely along, in spite of continual breaks, gathering in all the circumstances of the case in one comprehensive grasp, each clause containing a new point, tersely put, in a construction of its own, and in the proper logical order, so as to create at the end the sense of a powerful and compact whole in which its proper place and prominence has been assigned to every part. It is an affair of logic as well as of language; we English do not think in the periodic style, and our modes of writing must correspond to our modes of thinking. When learning to write Latin Prose at school, we used to be told to 'think in Latin.' In translating Tacitus, the converse operation must be performed, and we must 'think in English.'

These differences in logic lie at the root of many of the translator's difficulties. The typical epigram about Galba quoted above, *capax imperii nisi imperasset*, has often been propounded as a puzzle for translators; but in reality the difficulty is not so much in the language as in the logic. 'Capable of ruling, had he not ruled,' is as good English as it is Latin; but it fails to convey the point, because the English mind declines to allow half the meaning of a sentence to be unexpressed.

It is the same difference in logical requirement which makes the Latin writer use so freely, and so differently from English, the various conjunctions of time or inference by which phrases or sentences

are joined together.¹ The use of the copula by Tacitus is often singularly loose. No English writer would join sentences together in this fashion:—

Igitur dimissis quibus senectus aut validudo adversa erat, supplementum petivit, et habiti per Galatiam Cappadociamque delectus, adiectaque ex Germania legio cum equitibus alariis et peditatu cohortium, retentusque omnis exercitus sub pellibus (xiii. 35, 4 and 5).

Such loose connections are carefully avoided in the ordinary classical writers: they abound in Tacitus. In xiii. 39, 2, we have four clauses loosely bound together by *neque, et, que, que*:—

Sed neque commeatibus vim facere potuit, quia per montes ducebantur praesidiis nostris insessos, et Corbulo, ne irritum bellum traheretur, utque Armenios ad sua defendenda cogeret, excindere parat castella, sibi que, quod validissimum in ea praefectura, cognomento Volandum, sumit.

Similarly the copula *que* often opens sentences in what we should consider a very awkward manner, as in xiii. 38, 6; 32, 4; xiv. 25, 2 and 38, 4; xvi. 9, 2 and elsewhere.

Nam or *namque* are words which have frequently to be omitted in translation; sometimes because in English they would be awkward and superfluous, sometimes because they give the reason, not for anything stated in the text, but for an inference which may be drawn from the preceding words. The word is superfluous in xv. 71, 3; xvi. 18, 1; xiv. 11, 3, etc.; while in xiv. 12, 7, *nam* gives the reason why Silana was spared, though as yet no mention of Silana or her case has been made. So with such words as *igitur, at, sed, ceterum*, and other resumptive words;

¹ See Introd. to vol. i. p. lvi.

so with adverbs of time, such as *interea*, *dein*, *deinde*, *tum*, *mox*, etc.; they are constantly used to suit the logic of the Roman mind in places where their intrusion in English would be cumbersome and unnecessary.

Another difficulty for the translator is caused by the vague and indeterminate meaning with which abstract terms are used. This point is more or less common to all Latin writers; but it is conspicuous in Tacitus. The Roman mind had no aptitude, like the Greek mind, for accurate and subtle definition; hence the unfitness of the language for purposes of philosophical discussion. Cicero did his best to create a terminology to express the subtle distinctions of Greek philosophy; but he only half understood them himself, and he sometimes makes things darker rather than clearer by his explanations.

Tacitus constantly uses the same word in different meanings, in passages close to each other, as if he either were unconscious of the difference, or deliberately preferred to leave his meaning wide and large that the reader might fill up the precise contents for himself. In his excellent 'Hints on Latin Prose Composition,' the late Dr. Potts described the word *res* as 'a blank cheque,' to be filled in according to the needs of the occasion. This description of the word is well illustrated by Tacitus in his use of the phrase *summa rerum*, which denotes variously 'the supreme command' (Hist. ii. 35); 'the general situation' (do. ii. 81); 'the general plan of campaign' (do. iii. 50); while in other places it may be translated 'the main issue,' 'the Government,' or 'the Empire.' In Hist. i. 89, *Augustus res Caesarum composuit* means 'Augustus established the authority of

the Caesars;’ but in Ann. xi. 11, 2, *res Domitiani composui* means ‘I wrote the history of Domitian’s reign.’

The term *cultus* is used in various meanings. In ii. 24, 2, it has its natural meaning of ‘cultivation’ (*nullo illic hominum cultu*, ‘uninhabited’); in iii. 55, 5, Vespasian is described as *antiquo cultu victuque*, ‘of an old-fashioned manner or style of life.’ Pomponia for many years *non cultu nisi lugubri egit*, ‘wore nothing but mourning clothes’ (xiii. 32, 5); similarly Corbulo on the march went *levi cultu*, ‘lightly clad’ (xiii. 35, 7). The speech of Seneca *multum cultus praeferret*, ‘was a highly polished performance’ (xiii. 3, 2). In xvi. 31, 1, *cultus dotales* are ‘marriage ornaments;’ the *vestem et gemmas* given to Agrippina by Nero are described as being added to *cultus suos* (xiii. 13, 6); while the singular is also used of ‘respect,’ ‘observance,’ ‘veneration.’ In xii. 51, 5, *regio cultu* means ‘with royal state.’

The word *flagitium* causes much trouble; scholars will differ about its exact meaning in different places. It stands for what is scandalous or outrageous in the way of crime or immorality in almost any department of life. Sometimes it is used without any particular application, as *flagitia et facinora* (iii. 50, 2); *flagitiis atque sceleribus* (xiii. 47, 1); *fraudibus aut flagitiis* (xvi. 32, 3); *stupra et flagitia* (Hist. i. 74). It is more often perhaps used of sexual immorality than of any other form of vice, as in xiv. 2, 2 and 4, and frequently in these books; but it is also used by itself, without qualification, of extravagance at the table (ii. 53, 2); of cowardice (vi. 34, 5 and Germ. 6); of the disgrace of breaking down the bridge across the Rhine (i. 69, 1); of betraying a leader or a cause (xii. 46, 5);

of the mutinous demands of the soldiers (i. 27, 1); and of the effrontery of accusers (iv. 66, 1, and xvi. 24, 3). The word *libido* also, primarily denoting lust, may stand for almost any form of evil passion.

One of the most difficult and comprehensive of Tacitean phrases is *artes bonae* or *honestae*; with its occasional counterpart *artes malae*. It is sometimes used in the widest possible sense, to denote everything or anything which is commendable, whether intellectual, or moral, or in relation to any possible pursuit: in other cases it refers to something perfectly specific. It is often used for 'virtue' in general: Seneca in his dying moments leaves his 'character for virtue' (*bonarum artium famam*, xv. 62, 1) as his noblest legacy to his friends; Arruntius has a reputation for the highest virtue (*sanctissimis Arruntii artibus*, vi. 7, 1); Agrippina's 'virtue' is as eminent as her birth (*congruere artes honestas*, xii. 6, 3); in ancient days candidates trusted to their 'merits' for election (*bonis artibus fiderent*, xi. 22, 4); and in vi. 46, 2, *bonarum artium cupiens* stands for 'a well-meaning man.' In other places *bonae artes* stands for 'culture' in general. Agrippa Postumus was *rudem bonarum artium*, 'uncultured' (i. 3, 4); Carrinas had no 'real culture' in his soul (*animum bonis artibus non induerat*, xv. 45, 4). The Senate listened approvingly when Nero praised Claudius for his 'learning' (*liberalium artium*, xiii. 3, 1); in xi. 15, 1, Claudius complains of the general indifference to 'learning' (*circa bonas artes socordia*), meaning especially the science of soothsaying. Elsewhere it may stand for any particular form of learning or accomplishment. It is used specially of oratory in xi. 61, 2; of an orator and historian, iii. 66, 5;

of philosophy, in xvi. 32, 3; of knowledge of the law in iii. 75, 2, and generally for every kind of useful pursuit or creditable mode of life, as in xiv. 15, 5. And so with many other words: Tacitus presents us with many 'blank cheques,' which different commentators may fill up differently.

Thus whether we look at the grammar and constructions of Tacitus; at the way in which he puts together his short, sharp phrases; at his long periods, or at his mode of employing single words, we find that he is largely a law unto himself, and that his modes alike of thinking and writing are alien to our own tongue. But these various differences form, from a technical point of view, the characteristics of his style; it is vain therefore to demand that in any but a wide and general sense the manner of Tacitus can be reproduced in English; or to condemn a translation by saying of it that it may be excellent, 'but that it is not Tacitus.' Many of the points here noticed would be considered faults in an ordinary English style; but it is just these irregularities, these roughnesses and surprises, these departures from grammatical uniformity, coupled with intensity of meaning, which fascinate the reader of Tacitus, and compel his attention. There is joy in the unexpected, whether in speech or in writing. There is nothing so tedious to listen to as the long-drawn correctness of a commonplace speaker, the end of whose sentences can be foreseen almost before he has begun them; nothing more distasteful to read than the genteel accuracy of a tradesman's circular, or of those florid advertisements which encumber the pages of our daily newspapers. And the curt half-developed

phrases of Tacitus, like those of some racy impromptu speaker, come with double force because you never know what he is going to say next, or how he is going to say it.

We cannot therefore say things as Tacitus said them; but if we regard the ideas of Tacitus, apart from his language, we find ourselves in a familiar world, in which, if we go to the heart of the thing signified, without being dominated by the words, we can express ourselves in modern English. Professor Tyrrell has pronounced Tacitus 'the despair of the translator;'¹ but in saying this he had special regard to his epigrams, a form of speech which may be called a speciality of Latin, and of which somewhat too much has been made in considering the style of Tacitus as a whole.² If we regard the broader and higher qualities of his style: his compactness; his masculine and almost peremptory tone; his sense of order, and of the relative importance of things; his never-flagging variety in the choice of words and expressions; his contempt for the florid, the turgid and the dull; his majestic but uninflated diction, which never permits the use of a mean or unworthy or ineffectual word; his power of vivid picturesque description; his instinct as to how far to go and when to stop—in all these points his style may be reproduced, and followed as a pattern by modern writers. In one sense indeed he might be called the inspirer, rather than the despair, of translators; for his ideas, often even his phrases, seem positively to invite translation.

Excellent examples of Tacitean phrases turned into idiomatic English are to be found scattered over

¹ The Academy, Sept. 29, 1908.

² Introd. to vol. i. p. lxxii.

Mr. A. D. Godley's edition of the Histories.¹ No figure is more Tacitean, and less English, than the *Hendiadys*; the figure by which an essentially single idea is broken into two parts connected by the copula. But how easily, and yet literally, in Mr. Godley's hands, the following slip into natural English:—*avaritia et festinatio* (Hist. i. 67), 'impatient greed;' *in rem famamque* (iii. 8), 'profitable and creditable;' *furere quodam et instinctu* (ii. 46), 'with wild enthusiasm;' *robur et sedem belli* (ii. 19), 'a strong fighting base.' Equally good translations are 'an alarming report' (*terrore fama*); 'threats of war' (*minis armisque*); 'flushed with victory' (*ex ferocia et successu*); 'threatening language' (*minis verbisque*). Not less natural and idiomatic are the following:—*honestas rerum causas* (i. 83), 'honourable motives;' *proinde tuta quae indecora* (i. 33), 'cowardice then is safety;' *easdem omnium partes* (iv. 17), 'they were all on the same side;' *nihil arduum fatis* (ii. 83), 'the omnipotence of fate;' *fortuna pro virtutibus fuit* (ii. 82), 'success was their only merit;' *composita in magnificentiam oratione* (iii. 37), 'a laboured and high-flown oration.'

Professor Tyrrell has given an admirable translation of the phrase *pessimum veri adfectus venenum sua cuique utilitas*, 'that worst bane of sincerity, self-interest.' But he also fully recognises that Tacitus has many expressions which 'cannot be Englished,' and that his pregnant sentences must often be expanded in English, as when *metu tamquam alias partes favissent* must be rendered 'fear arising from the

¹ It is a great misfortune, and says little for our buyers of classical books, that this and so many excellent editions of the classics—notably Mayor's monu-

mental edition of Juvenal—should be known only through the poor type, paper and binding of a cheap school edition.

consciousness of being regarded as favouring the wrong side. What would be the effect of turning other Tacitean phrases literally into English may be judged from the perfectly correct version offered by another editor of *ordinem agminis disiecti per iram ac tenebras* (Hist. iii. 22), 'the order of march was dislocated by passion and the darkness;' while the following rendering offered of Hist. iv. 17, *proinde arriperent vacui occupatos integri fessos*, shows how fruitless is the attempt to follow Tacitus in his constructions:— 'Let us also who are at leisure fall on those who have their hands full, us with one strength unimpaired, them weary with strife.' Nor could much meaning be extracted from Mr. Furneaux' literal rendering of *dum aspectui consulitur spreta conscientia* (Ann. xiv. 18, 2), 'inasmuch as appearances are consulted, sense of truth despised.'

A famous story about a translation from Tacitus is told in Stanhope's 'Life of Pitt' (vol. iv. p. 410). The incident was related to Mr. Rogers by Mr. Redhead Yorke, who was present, and Mr. Rogers has put it on record in his 'Recollections.' One day, in Pitt's company, some person quoted the passage from the *Dialogue* of Tacitus:—

Magna eloquentia, sicut flamma, materia alitur et motibus excitatur et urendo clarescit.

Another of the party observed that it was untranslatable; upon which Mr. Pitt immediately replied, 'No; I should translate it thus:—"It is with eloquence as with a flame: it requires fuel to feed it, motion to excite it, and it brightens as it burns."'

The translation is perfect; but lest any one should infer that even Pitt could have translated all Tacitus

with a like facility, it is sufficient to observe that the passage is taken from the *Dialogue*, which was written in the Ciceronian style; and that neither the passage itself, nor Pitt's translation of it—nor indeed what we know of Pitt's own style of speaking—bear the slightest resemblance to the style of the later works of Tacitus.

Another feature in his style is its highly rhetorical character; and we should bear in mind that his history was probably first brought out through the medium of recitation. Recitation was the regular and ordinary mode of publication in that day; Juvenal tells us what trouble, anxiety and expense were caused to unknown authors by the business of canvassing for audiences. Tacitus, like Horace, could afford to choose his audience; and it is interesting to speculate in what manner his history was first given to the world.

The date of the publication of the *Annals* is not known; they were published, and no doubt written, some time during the reign of Trajan, a time when Juvenal, Tacitus, and others of their way of thinking felt themselves at last unmuzzled. Writing as it were in a sure haven of peace, they could dare to tell the truth, and say what they thought of earlier emperors. But the *Histories* must have been begun before the death of Domitian (A.D. 96), and were probably written mostly during his reign. They were published not long after his death; and so elaborate a work, every word of which is redolent of labour, comprising in its original form the whole period from the beginning of A.D. 69 to the death of Domitian, must have taken years in the composing.

Free speech, in private circles, was never killed in

Rome, even under the most tyrannical of emperors ; and the cases of Clutorius Priscus (iii. 49), of Cremutius Cordus (iv. 34), and of Antistius who, being praetor at the time, composed, and recited at a crowded entertainment scurrilous verses upon Nero (xiv. 48, 1), are enough to show that men did not hold their tongues in private. But those who composed such things, or recited them, did so at their own peril ; they had to hold forth only to those whom they could trust. What Tacitus wrote of Domitian in his Histories is lost to us ; but we may be quite sure that he would not have been allowed many hours to survive the publication of it. We may be also certain that he did not keep to himself for all those years the biting epigrams upon the government and personages of the day which he was slowly forging in his mind. But he would be very careful of his audiences ; they would be composed of an inner circle of cultivated Stoical friends, bound together by common opinions in philosophy, literature, and politics, and by the strictest ties of mutual loyalty. How sacred such a bond was felt to be may be judged by the sturdy way in which some at least of those present at such recitations gave evidence that 'they had heard nothing ;' and by the vials of wrath which Tacitus himself pours upon traitors who gave evidence against their friends, especially traitors to philosophy like Egnatius Celer (xvi. 32, 3).

We can imagine with what delight such a coterie, assembled in secret conclave, would listen to the trenchant *sententiae* of Tacitus ; we may believe also that such occasions would do much to form his style. We may presume that his hearers would be men of 'severe' character and ways of thinking ; men in chronic opposition to the prevailing follies and

fashions of the day. Their attitude in literature would be that of the Stoic poet Persius, who in style was the true fore-runner of Tacitus—an attitude of protest against the graces, the artificialities, and affectations of the popular school. It was one of the principles of the Stoics—it was their main foible—to affect singularity in manner and in speech; and we can believe that such an audience would not only delight in the mordant epigrams of Tacitus, but would also revel in his violations of grammatical decorum, in his rough and abrupt transitions, in the virility and *severitas* which mark his whole manner of writing, and which, to their ears, would present a grateful contrast to the ornate and elaborate correctness affected by the orators of the day.

If then the rhetorical character of the writing of Tacitus shows that he wrote for recitation, his work should be judged in the same way. If any one would gain a true idea of the weight and brilliance of his style, let him hear some of his more telling passages read slowly and carefully aloud, and feel what power can be added to his utterances by the living voice, as it brings out word after word, idea after idea; each idea exactly in its right place, each just sufficiently indicated to catch, without wearying, the intelligence of the hearer, and leaving him quite indifferent to the particular construction by which it has been conveyed.

An interesting anecdote related at a recent meeting of the Scottish Classical Association by Professor Butcher records the opinion of a great Latin scholar upon this point. The late Mr. H. A. J. Munro opened a course of lectures on Tacitus by telling his hearers that it was only by reading aloud that Tacitus could be understood: he would himself try what he could

do in that way. He accordingly proceeded to read aloud a long passage, slowly and deliberately, with careful emphasis. At the end he looked dissatisfied: 'No,' he said, 'that's not quite it. I must try again.' Thereupon he repeated the performance, with new energy and greater emphasis, and with more satisfaction to himself. 'That's more like it,' he said; and then, at last, he went on with his lecture.

Reading aloud is seldom practised now; and spoken English nowadays, as Mr. Rouse tells us,¹ 'is mostly a gabble.' Mr. Munro's recitation shows how well he understood the rhetorical side of Tacitus; and if a translator would judge his own work, let him test it by the same method. Let him read aloud some of the more striking passages, not necessarily to scholars, but to any audience of fairly educated persons, and mark how the English falls upon the ear.

If the translator can thus learn to give a rhetorical ring to his sentences where the sense demands it; if he looks first to the ideas of the original rather than to its grammar; if he pays but little attention to the construction, but much to the meaning of individual words; if he has great regard to the order, and none at all to the punctuation:² so best may he hope to preserve as much of the Tacitean flavour as it is possible to reproduce in a translation. He will seek for strength in vigorous English idiom, rather than in pedantic correctness of phrase. He will use terms current among us to-day; but he will avoid anachronisms which may be suggested by some more or less tempting analogy between ancient and modern life, but

¹ Introduction to Mat. Arnold's lectures on translating Homer, p. 17.

² See vol. i, Introd. pp. lxiv-v.

which will destroy the reader's illusion that he has before him an ancient classic as presented to the public for whom it was written.¹

It is to be observed that there are fewer biting epigrams in Books XI to XVI than in the earlier books of the Annals; fewer passages in which it may be argued that Tacitus has failed to fulfil his own promise to write *sine ira et studio*. Some have called him unjust, even to the point of malevolence, towards Tiberius; and though his testimony cannot be shaken in any important particular, there is no doubt that he takes an unduly harsh view of Tiberius, and is too ready to put a sinister construction upon his motives. Nothing of the kind appears in his treatment of Nero; there is no sense of exaggeration in his comments on the enormities of that emperor.

For this difference several reasons may be given. Nero's character was too patent, his conduct too gross, to require emphasizing. The facts of his life speak for themselves; and Tacitus was too great an artist to introduce comment where no comment was needed. Secondly, the writing of these books was the work of his old age; and his resentments may have been modified by time. But why had he felt so bitterly towards Tiberius, by no means the worst or most tyrannical of the emperors of the first century? One explanation may be furnished by supposing that Tacitus felt a special grudge against him as having been the first to deflect the imperial system from the more generous lines on which it had been started by Augustus, and that

¹ For this reason I regret to see such words as 'colonel,' 'sergeant,' 'claymore,' 'the sainted Augustus,' etc., introduced into the admirable transla-

tion of the minor works of Tacitus by Mr. W. Hamilton Fyfe, lately published by the Clarendon Press.

he visited upon Tiberius the sins of his successors. Mr. Spooner suggests another and very probable reason. The earlier books of the *Annals* must have been written during the first years of Trajan, at a time when the horrors of the reign of Domitian were still fresh in the mind of Tacitus. How poignantly he felt the indignities and cruelties of those times—in which he himself, as a Senator and a Praetor, had had to bear his part—we know from his own passionate outburst in the *Agricola*. Such an experience may have coloured his view of the whole imperial period; and it is not impossible 'that the dark colours in which he has painted in the *Annals* the later years of Tiberius' rule owe some at least of their gloom to the sense that Tiberius' evil acts were an anticipation of, perhaps a preparation for, the miseries and the degradation which Tacitus himself had experienced at the hands of Domitian.'¹

On the whole, our belief in the authority and the fairness of Tacitus is more than confirmed by the contents of *Annals* XI to XVI. He has everywhere this great merit, that even where his prejudices are strongest, and his judgments harshest, he puts into our hands the materials for correcting them; and it is interesting to find that recent archæological research has proved him in one matter not to be wanting in true historical instinct. Dr. Arthur Evans has made the interesting discovery that there was in use in Crete, about the year B.C. 1500, a syllabary script, each sign representing both a consonant and a vowel. These signs, of which some 60 or 70 in all have been discovered, impressed upon many thousands of clay tablets, came to be used as

¹ Spooner's 'Histories of Tacitus,' *Introd.* p. 7.

numerals; and a selection of them was employed by Cretan craftsmen to mark the order in which pieces of ivory, etc., were to be fitted into a pattern. A similar practice prevailed among Egyptian artists; and some of these signs correspond with the Cretan. It is conjectured that the Phoenicians struck upon the idea of making an alphabet out of some of these signs; while their command of the sea (*quia mari praeepollebant*) enabled them to act as middlemen and carriers to the Greek world, as Tacitus suggests, of ideas originally derived from Crete, which they gave back with improvements of their own.¹

But the greatest of all the gifts of Tacitus to posterity is his style; and there never was a time when the teaching to be derived from the study of such a style was more needed than the present. The vast increase in the number of semi-educated readers; the corresponding increase in the number, and deterioration in the quality, of writers; the sensational methods of modern journalism; the poverty, if not worse, of popular modern fiction; the hurry of modern life, which compels readers to skip half of what they profess to read, and to abstain from reading anything which requires thought and patience to understand; the false view of education which imposes a multiplicity of subjects, and expects every subject to be made easy to the learner—all these things are tending to lower the standard of taste in literature. Vast numbers of people read nothing but the newspapers; and when a daily paper may pour out more printed matter than all the books of the New Testament put together, it is needless

¹ I am indebted to Professor R. C. Bosanquet for the information given in the above paragraph.

to ask how much care can be expended on either the writing or the reading of it. Now the first and indispensable condition of good style is to have something to say worth saying; the second is to say it in as few words as possible. Everything but emptiness and prolixity can be forgiven; and no writer sets so fine an example in both those respects as Tacitus. His matter seems always larger than his expression of it. In his sparing use of words, in his using always the right words, and in putting them in their right order, he fulfils the definition of good style given by Swift when he declared it to consist in the art of putting 'proper words in their proper places.'

Another of the fine features of the style of Tacitus is its impersonality; and on this point again modern writers have much to learn from him. His eye is always fixed upon the things which he is describing; and he lets his story tell its own tale. He is not for ever intruding his own ideas, or informing the reader what he ought to think or feel. In the rare cases where some indignant comment, some epigrammatic summing-up, bursts from him, as in xiii. 17, 3, it seems to rise spontaneously out of the facts as a necessary and inevitable reflection.

Modern writers seldom leave their story to explain itself. They dress up their facts, telling the reader at each point what he ought to think or feel about them, as though he would be unable to find that out for himself without their assistance. Just as many a good story is spoilt in the telling by the narrator's insisting upon explaining its point, so are narratives spoilt by the inartistic mixture of fact and comments on the fact. We live in a self-conscious

and self-advertising age ; and few writers are exempt from the weakness of unnecessarily introducing their own subjectivity, or of acting as showmen to their own narratives. Even writers of the first rank err in this way. I have before me a passage from a recent work of great repute and high literary quality. The author has occasion to recount a tragic incident, truly Tacitean in its character. But just when the story is reaching its climax, he interposes with the words, 'A scene which it would be difficult to rival in pathos and dramatic effect then ensued.' Why let the cat out of the bag in this way ? Why spoil the picture by informing the reader beforehand what feelings it ought to excite in him ? If the story were so told as to bring out its pathetic and dramatic character, the feeling aroused would be all the keener and more genuine because more spontaneous. If modern writers would but study Tacitus for no other purpose than for that of appreciating the distinction between writing about things and writing about oneself, they would learn one of the many priceless lessons which ancient literature has to teach us.

And yet Tacitus has a personality of his own ; felt all the more that it is not obtruded. It is impossible to study any great style without having the consciousness of a great mind beneath : *le style c'est l'homme*. The Master of Peterhouse struck the right note in his recent eloquent address on Milton when he told us that 'the supreme gift which belonged to Milton above every other English writer might best be defined by the word "style" ; and that 'the real secret of Milton's style lay in the elevation of his soul.'

So it is with Tacitus. His point of view may be

onesided and prejudiced, but it is a lofty point of view; and there is nothing mean or sordid or ignoble in his prejudices. If he is bitter, he is never cynical; it is unjust to speak of him as morose. His censoriousness springs from a high and noble conception of the capacities of human nature; his gloominess from an indignant sense of how far man falls below his possibilities. Everything that he has written bears the stamp of *μεγαλοψυχία*; and one who has spent years in the endeavour to interpret him cannot part from such a master without a feeling of true regret, for to live in daily companionship with Tacitus is to live in goodly company.

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VERANIUS.

CHAPS. 5, 6. Vitellius induces the senate to sanction the marriage; his adulatory speech—7. The Senate legalizes such marriages for the future—Agrippina becomes mistress of the state—8. Suicide of Silanus—Expiations offered—Seneca recalled from banishment—9. Nero betrothed to Octavia—10. Arrival of Parthian envoys; they demand Meherdates as their king—11. Claudius grants their request—12. Cassius, Governor of Syria, accompanies Meherdates to the frontier—Delays of Meherdates—13. He undertakes long and difficult marches—14. The army of Meherdates melts away—He is defeated in a bloody battle; he is captured and allowed to live with his ears cut off—Gotarzes dies, is succeeded by Vonones, and soon after by Vologeses—15. Mithradates attempts to recover his kingdom of Bosphorus—He is opposed by the Roman forces and Eunones, chief of the Aorsi—

16. The combined forces defeat Mithradates, take Soza, and besiege Uspe—17. Capture of Uspe and slaughter of the garrison—Surrender of Zorsines, king of the Siraci—Disaster to the returning fleet—18. Mithradates throws himself on the mercy of Eunones—19. Eunones writes to Claudius and intercedes for Mithradates—20. Claudius hesitates; but grants the petition—21. Mithradates brought to Rome—His independent bearing—22. Agrippina causes Lollia to be accused—Lollia condemned to exile and confiscation—Case of Calpurnia—Lollia compelled to commit suicide—23. Privilege granted to Gallia Narbonensis—Deaths of Jewish princes—The 'Solemn Augury'—Claudius extends the pomerium—24. Line of the pomerium as laid down by Romulus.

A.D. 50. CONSULS GAIUS ANTISTIUS VETUS AND
MARCUS SUILLIUS NERULLINUS.

CHAP. 25. Pallas urges Claudius to adopt Agrippina's son—He is accordingly adopted into the name of Nero, and pointed out as heir—26. Unhappy position of Britannicus—27. Agrippina founds a colony after her name—An incursion by the Chatti—28. It is vigorously repressed—29. Vannius driven from the Suebian throne—Claudius offers him a refuge—30. Defeat of Vannius; his kingdom is divided between Vangio and Sido—31. Affairs in Britain; activity of Ostorius—His measures provoke the Iceni into rebellion; they are defeated in a pitched battle—32. Next the Decangi are chastised, the Brigantes are repressed, and the Silures held in check by a camp—33. The Silures put forth all their strength under Caratacus, who stakes all upon one battle—34. He raises the enthusiasm of the tribes—35. The legions not less enthusiastic—Ostorius storms the enemy's position, and gains a complete victory—36. Caratacus betrayed, and taken to Rome, where he exhibits a high front—37. Bold speech of Caratacus; he is pardoned by Claudius—Pretensions of Agrippina—38. Honours to Ostorius; but his successes come to an end—39. Guerilla warfare in Britain, carried on mainly by the Silures—Death of Ostorius—40. He is succeeded by Aulus Didius—Defeat of Manlius Valens—Proceedings of the Brigantine prince Venutius and Queen Cartimandua—Roman successes.

A.D. 51. CONSULS TIBERIUS CLAUDIUS CAESAR
AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS V AND SERVIUS
CORNELIUS ORFITUS.

CHAP. 41. Nero assumes the Toga Virilis; honours conferred on him—Britannicus studiously put on one side; Agrippina inflames Claudius against him; his tutors removed—42. She secures for Burrus the command of the Praetorian Guards, and exalts her own position—Accusation of Vitellius—43. Various prodigies—Short supply of corn in the city—44. War again in the East—Ambition of Radamistus, son of the Iberian King Pharasmanes

—His treacherous conduct towards his uncle Mithradates, King of Armenia—**45**. Pharasmanes declares war, and Radamistus invades Armenia—Siege of Gorneae—Radamistus seeks to bribe Pollio, the Roman commander ; disgust of the Centurion Casperius—**46**. Pollio urges Mithradates to treat—Casperius fails in his appeal to Pharasmanes, and Pollio forces Mithradates to submit—**47**. False promises of Radamistus ; he and his father are guilty of the grossest treachery, and put to death Mithradates and all his family—**48**. Weakness of Quadratus and his council—**49**. Julius Paelignus vainly invades Armenia, and is won over by Radamistus—**50**. Vologeses intervenes on behalf of Tiridates, but is compelled to retire—**51**. Radamistus driven out by his own people ; he escapes with his wife Zenobia—Zenobia deserted but saved.

A.D. 52. CONSULS FAUSTUS CORNELIUS SULLA FELIX
AND LUCIUS SALVIUS OTHO TITIANUS.

CHAP. **52**. Accusation of Scribonianus—Astrologers expelled—**53**. Law passed as to marriage between free women and slaves—Rewards voted to Pallas—**54**. Misgovernment of his brother Felix and Ventidius Cumanus in Judaea—Quadratus, governor of Syria, intervenes—Order restored and Cumanus punished—**55**. Outbreak of the Clitae in Cilicia—**56**. Opening of the emissarium for draining Lake Fucinus—Grand naval battle on the lake—**57**. The work a failure ; show of gladiators on a second occasion—Accident and panic at the opening.

A.D. 53. CONSULS DECIMUS IUNIUS SILANUS AND
QUINTUS HATERIUS ANTONINUS.

CHAP. **58**. Nero marries Octavia ; he pleads for the people of Ilium and Bononia—**59**. Agrippina causes the ruin of Statilius Taurus—**60**. The judicial powers of Procurators are enlarged—The old quarrels as to the judicia have ended in favour of the Knights, and even of freedmen—**61**. The Island of Cos relieved of tribute—**62**. Petition of the Byzantines—**63**. History and situation of Byzantium—Remission for five years granted.

A.D. 54. CONSULS MARCUS ASINIUS MARCELLUS AND
MANIUS ACILIUS AVIOLA.

CHAP. **64**. Various prodigies—Agrippina jealous of Domitia Lepida ; she determines to ruin her—**65**. Lepida accused and condemned—Narcissus inveighs against Agrippina, and places his hopes in Britannicus—**66**. Agrippina takes advantage of Narcissus' illness to compass the death of Claudius—**67**. He is poisoned by a dish of mushrooms—**68**. Agrippina at first conceals the death ; then shows extravagant grief—**69**. On October 13th Nero accepted as Emperor, first by the soldiers, then by the Senate—Honours voted to Claudius.

BOOK XIII

CHAP. 1. Junius Silanus the first victim of the new reign—Death of Narcissus—2. Burrus and Seneca governors of the young Emperor; their characters—Honours paid to Agrippina—3. Funeral oration pronounced by Nero—Emperors compared in respect of oratorical powers—4. Nero appears in the Senate, and sketches his future policy—5. Measures passed by the Senate—Arrogant attitude of Agrippina—6. Fresh troubles in Armenia—Some anxious because of Nero's youth; others inclined to trust his counsellors—7. Nero takes vigorous measures; Corbulo is appointed to the Armenian command; the Parthians retire—8. Joy in Rome—Distribution of the forces of the East—Corbulo meets Quadratus in Cilicia—9. Vologeses gives hostages—Quarrel between Corbulo and Quadratus over the hostages—Nero composes the difference—10. Honours conferred and declined.

A.D. 55. CONSULS CLAUDIUS NERO CAESAR
AUGUSTUS AND LUCIUS ANTISTIUS VETUS.

CHAP. 11. Instances of moderation and clemency exhibited by Nero—12. Nero's passion for Acte raises the indignation of Agrippina—13. She first alienates him by a storm of abuse, and then tries to conciliate him by indulgence—A display of temper—14. Pallas dismissed from office—Indignation of Agrippina—She threatens to befriend Britannicus—15. Nero alarmed; his jealousy of Britannicus heightened by an incident at the Saturnalia; he resolves to make away with him—Poison administered, but fails to act—16. A more rapid poison is provided, which acts at once—Consternation of Agrippina—17. The banquet is resumed, and the body burnt the same night—Nero issues an edict of explanation—18. He lavishes gifts on his friends—Wild conduct of Agrippina; Nero dismisses her guards and stops her levees—19. She is at once deserted, save by a few friends—Enmity of Junia Silana—Silana concocts a charge of treason against her—20. Paris communicates the supposed plot to Nero, whose wrath is with difficulty appeased by Burrus—21. Next morning Agrippina clears herself in a speech full of indignation—Nero punishes her accusers—22. Various appointments made—Silana banished—23. Pallas and Burrus accused and acquitted—Arrogance of Pallas—24. Soldiers withdrawn from the theatre.

A.D. 56. CONSULS QUINTUS VOLUSIUS SATURNINUS
AND PUBLIUS CORNELIUS SCIPIO.

CHAP. 25. Excesses of Nero in the city—Nero is taught a lesson—He fosters the passions of the theatre—26. Ill conduct of freedmen to their patrons—Some suggest strict measures to repress it—27. Others deprecate legislation on the subject—The latter view approved by Claudius—28. The power of Tribunes curtailed by the Senate; as also that of the Aediles—The Exchequer transferred from the Quaestors to Special Commissioners—29. History

of the management of the Exchequer—30. Convictions of Laenas and Quirinalis—Deaths of Rebilus and Volusius.

A.D. 57. CONSULS NERO CAESAR II AND LUCIUS CALPURNIUS PISO.

CHAP. 31. New amphitheatre in the Campus Martius—Various fiscal and other measures—32. Provision as to murders of masters by slaves—Case of Pomponia Graecina ; her life of melancholy—33. Various prosecutions.

A.D. 58. CONSULS NERO CAESAR III AND MARCUS VALERIUS MESSALA CORVINUS.

CHAP. 34. Grants to Messala and others—Renewed designs of the Parthians upon Armenia—35. Corbulo brings his army under discipline—Intense cold of the winter under tents—Corbulo shares in every hardship, but shows no mercy to offenders—36. He advances with caution ; Paccius disobeys orders, and meets with a repulse—Indignation of Corbulo—37. Tiridates invades Armenia ; his elusive tactics are well met by Corbulo—Tiridates seeks to negotiate ; Corbulo advises him to petition Nero—38. An interview arranged—Corbulo declines the conditions proposed ; a second interview is arranged, but fails to come off—39. Operations renewed—Corbulo besieges Volandum—Volandum taken by storm ; all males slain—Other forts captured—Corbulo marches against Artaxata—40. Tiridates prepares to stop him ; but is baffled by Corbulo's prudent dispositions—Corbulo declines battle—41. Tiridates retreats, and Artaxata surrenders to Corbulo—Miraculous cloud—Extravagant jubilation at Rome—42. Trial of Publius Suillius ; he makes a violent attack on Seneca—43. Various charges are brought against Suillius ; his defence breaks down ; he is banished with partial confiscation—44. Gross outrage perpetrated by Octavius Sagitta ; he is found guilty of murder—45. History and character of Sabina Poppaea—46. Admitted by her husband Otho's facility to Nero's presence, she soon fascinates him—Otho is sent to Lusitania—47. Story of Cornelius Sulla ; a case is trumped up against him—48. Two embassies from Puteoli—49. Decree as to shows at Syracuse—Attack upon Paetus Thrasea—Thrasea's reply—50. Nero proposes to abolish custom duties—Opposition of his advisers—51. He makes certain fiscal reforms—52. Two Pro-consuls tried and acquitted—53. Affairs in Germany—The dam of Drusus completed—Canal from the Rhone to the Rhine—54. Seizure of land by the Frisii ; their kings come to Rome—Incident in the theatre—The Frisii have to retire—55. Their lands occupied by the Ampsivarii, whose cause is pleaded by Boiocalus—56. Boiocalus refuses private terms for himself ; and after much wandering the Ampsivarii are cut to pieces—57. Battle between the Hermunduri and the Chatti—Victory of the Hermunduri—Strange fire in the land of the Ubii—58. Withering and reviving of the Ruminal fig-tree.

BOOK XIV.

A.D. 59. CONSULS GAIUS VIPSTANUS APRONIANUS
AND GAIUS FONTEIUS CAPITO.

CHAP. 1. Nero meditates his mother's death—Reproaches of Poppaea—2. Horrible story told by Cluvius; other versions of the story—3. Nero resolves to make away with his mother, but hesitates as to the means—A plan proposed by Anicetus—4. It is approved by Nero—Nero welcomes Agrippina on her landing, has her brought to Baiae, and entertains her affectionately—5. She embarks on the prepared ship; the scheme fails, and Agrippina escapes by swimming—6. She acquaints Nero with her escape, and secures the will of Acerronia—7. Consternation of Nero; he summons Burrus and Seneca for consultation—Anicetus undertakes to complete the murder—Trick devised by Nero to inculpate Agrippina—8. Excited crowds flock to the scene of the accident—Anicetus breaks into Agrippina's villa; she is brutally put to death—9. The body burnt without ceremony—Suicide of a freedman—10. Nero's horror at the deed when done—Congratulatory of his guard and Campanian towns—He moves to Naples and writes to the Senate—11. He rakes up charges against his mother, and repeats the shipwreck story—Seneca gets the blame—12. Votes of joy and congratulation—Vain prodigies—Exiles recalled—13. Fears of Nero; he ventures to enter Rome, and is favourably received—He plunges into new excesses—14. His passion for charioteering—He begins charioteering in private; the public soon admitted—15. He forces nobles, and even women, on to the stage—Incitements offered to immorality—Nero himself appears upon the stage—Institution of the 'Augustiani'—16. Nero affects poetry and philosophy—17. Riot at Pompeii—18. Accusations by the people of Cyrene—Decision of the Emperor—19. Deaths of Domitius Afer and Marcus Servilius.

A.D. 60. CONSULS NERO CAESAR IV AND CORNELIUS
COSSUS LENTULUS.

CHAP. 20. Institution of Greek games; hotly condemned by some—21. They are defended by others—The games pass off quietly—22. Appearance of a comet; how interpreted—Nero's dinner-table struck by lightning—He bids Plautus retire into exile—Freak of Nero—23. Affairs in Armenia—Corbulo marches against Tigranocerta—He deals with the various tactics of the enemy—Attack of the Mardi—24. A long and laborious march—Corbulo escapes assassination—Tigranocerta opens her gates—25. The fort Legerda stormed—Hircanian embassy—26. Tiridates advances and retires—Nero puts Tigranes on the Armenian throne—Corbulo gives Tigranes an escort and retires—27. Earthquake at Laodicea—Attempt to recruit Italian colonies—Colonies not what they used to be—28. Praetorian elections—Appeals to the Senate—Vibius condemned for extortion.

A.D. 61. CONSULS LUCIUS CAESENNIUS PAETUS AND
PUBLIUS PETRONIUS TURPILIANUS.

CHAP. 29. Affairs in Britain—Suetonius Paulinus attacks Anglesea—
30. He overbears a desperate resistance—31. Revolt of the
province behind him, caused by outrages upon the Icenii and
their queen Boudicca—The revolted tribes march upon Camulo-
dunum—32. Various evil omens—The town has no sufficient
means of defence, and is stormed—Rout of the 9th legion—33.
Suetonius marches to London, which he is obliged to abandon—
The inhabitants are massacred—The same fate befalls Verula-
mum—Number of the slain—34. Suetonius retreats, the Britons
pursue—Suetonius selects his battle-ground—35. Boudicca
harangues her host—36. Address of Suetonius—37. Complete
victory of the Romans—Boudicca poisons herself—Suicide of
Poenius Postumus—38. Arrival of reinforcements—The new
Procurator attacks the policy of Suetonius—39. Mission of
Polyclitus—Suetonius is superseded, and Turpilianus takes his
place—40. Gross case of forgery in Rome—Punishment of the
guilty men—41. Punishment of Aelianus, and of Valerius Ponticus
—42. Murder of Pedanius Secundus by his own slaves—Debate
in the Senate—43. Cassius urges the maintenance of the existing
law in all its severity—44. Speech of Cassius continued—45. In
spite of some dissent, and a popular outburst, all the slaves are
executed—46. Condemnation of Tarquinius Priscus—Census of
Gaul taken—47. Death of Memmius Regulus—A Gymnasium
opened.

A.D. 62. CONSULS PUBLIUS MARIUS AND
LUCIUS AFINIUS.

CHAP. 48. Antistius accused of Majesty—In spite of conflicting
evidence, he is condemned to death—Paetus Thrasea appeals for
a lighter sentence—49. He carries his motion; to which Nero
gives a reluctant assent—50. Condemnation of Fabricius Veiento
—51. Death of Burrus; some thought he was poisoned—He is
profoundly lamented—Division of the Praetorian command
between Faenius and Tigellinus—52. Seneca's influence declines;
he is attacked by his enemies—53. He seeks an interview
with Nero—He prays for retirement—54. and to be allowed to
give up his fortune to Nero—55. Nero gives a crafty and
evasive reply—56. Professes the highest esteem for Seneca,
but declines his offer—Seneca changes his mode of life—57.
Tigellinus poisons Nero's mind against Plautus and Sulla—Sulla
assassinated at Marseilles—58. Various rumours about Plautus;
his father-in-law urges him to resist—59. Plautus declines to act,
and is slain by the Centurion—Nero's letter to the Senate—60.
He puts away Octavia on a false charge—An outburst of popular
indignation makes Nero hesitate—61. The riot suppressed—
Passionate appeal of Poppaea to Nero—62. A fresh accusation
is trumped up against Octavia, to which Anicetus lends himself

—63. Octavia banished to Pandateria; her pitiable condition there—64. She is put to death—Thanksgivings offered, as in all such cases—65. Doryphorus and Pallas poisoned.

BOOK XV.

CHAP. 1.—Indignation in Parthia at the aggression of Tigranes—Vologeses is urged to take up arms—2. He summons a council, resolves to reinstate Tiridates, and prepares for war with Rome—3. Corbulo prepares at once to succour Tigranes and to defend Syria—4. The Parthians under Monaeses besiege Tigranes in Tigranocerta, but without success—5. Corbulo sends a mission to Vologeses, who withdraws from Armenia—6. Corbulo's action is criticised—Caesennius Paetus appointed to the Armenian command—Division of the forces—Boasting of Paetus—7. He enters Armenia with two legions—The omens unfavourable—8. Ill-advised strategy of Paetus—9. Corbulo secures the Euphrates frontier—The Parthians turn off to Armenia—Paetus unprepared—10. His feeble and vacillating tactics—He occupies a pass on Mount Taurus—11. His force is utterly defeated—He implores help from Corbulo—12. Corbulo marches to the rescue, meets sternly the defeated men, and encourages his own army—13. Paetus hardly pressed in his own camp—Demoralisation of his army—He addresses a remonstrance to Vologeses—14. He gets an ambiguous reply—Paetus meets the king, and agrees to evacuate Armenia—15. Ignominious withdrawal of the Roman army—16. Corbulo asserts that there was no reason for the surrender—Disgraceful retreat of Paetus—He meets Corbulo on the river-bank—17. Corbulo declines to march back into Armenia—Agreement made with Vologeses—18. Vain rejoicings at Rome—Nero conceals the true state of affairs—19. Evil practice of fictitious adoptions—Remonstrances of fathers—Decree passed—20—21. Charge against a wealthy Cretan—Paetus Thræsea denounces the practice of provincial testimonials—22. A decree passed accordingly—Fire in Rome; earthquake at Pompeii.

A.D. 63. CONSULS GAIUS MEMMIUS REGULUS AND LUCIUS VERGINIUS RUFUS.

CHAP. 23. Nero's joy at the birth of a daughter; extravagant honours paid to her—The child dies—Ominous insult to Paetus Thræsea—24. Arrival of envoys with letter from Vologeses—25. Nero's eyes opened as to the state of affairs in Armenia—War decided on—The Eastern command given to Corbulo with extended powers—26. Corbulo re-arranges his forces, and concentrates at Melitene—27. Corbulo advances into Armenia—His moderate reply to the Parthian envoys is backed up by vigorous action—28. He arranges an interview with Tiridates—Meeting of Corbulo and Tiridates—29. Terms agreed upon—Tiridates places his diadem beneath Nero's effigy—30. Grand manner of Corbulo—31. Vologeses makes some further stipulations—32. Latin franchise conferred on Alpine tribes.

A.D. 64. CONSULS GAIUS LAECANIUS BASSUS AND
MARCUS LICINIUS CRASSUS FRUGI.

CHAP 33. Nero resolves to appear upon the public stage—Theatre at Naples packed—34. An evil omen occurs—Gladiatorial show of Vatinius—35. Torquatus Silanus is driven to his death—36. Nero gives up his projected trip to Achaia—His edict to the people—37. Extravagant and profligate entertainments given by Nero and Tigellinus—38. Calamitous fire in Rome—Sufferings of the people—39. Nero arrives from Antium, and provides relief for the people—Rumour of his singing the Tale of Troy—40. The fire is got under on the sixth day, but breaks out again in the Aemilian quarter—Extent of the damage—41. Temples and property destroyed—Coincidence of July 19th—42. Nero's new palace—Proposed canal from Lake Avernus to Ostia—43. Careful regulations for the rebuilding of the city—Doubts as to the healthiness of the broader streets—44. The Gods propitiated—Nero shifts the blame of the fire on to the Christians—Origin of that sect; cruel persecution of its members—45. Italy and the provinces ransacked for contributions for rebuilding the city—Seneca seeks retirement—46. Outbreak of gladiators—Naval disaster—47. List of prodigies.

A.D. 65. CONSULS AULUS LICINIUS SILIUS NERVA
AND MARCUS VESTINUS ATTICUS.

CHAP. 48. Conspiracy formed to raise Piso to the Empire—Character of Piso—49. Names of the principal conspirators—50. Many men of position join the movement, including military officers—Various proposals made—51. Attempt of Epicharis to gain over the fleet through Volusius Proculus—Proculus reports all to Nero—52. Piso objects to his Baian villa as the scene of the assassination; the real reasons for this refusal—53. It is resolved to do the deed during the Circensian games—Pliny's account seems improbable—54. Incautious behaviour of Scaevinus—55. His freedman Milichus betrays his suspicions to Nero—Scaevinus denies the whole story; Natalis is sent for—56. Under threat of torture, Natalis reveals the plot; Scaevinus also turns informer—57. Epicharis put to the torture; her heroic fortitude—58. The city in a state of siege—Savage examination of the accused—59. Piso is urged to make a bold stroke, but declines—He opens his veins—60. Death of Plautius Lateranus, and of Seneca—Evidence of Natalis against him—61. Seneca's reply—Nero orders his death—Account of Fabius Rusticus—62. Noble behaviour of Seneca; he solaces and rebukes his sorrowing friends—63. His wife insists upon sharing his fate, and the veins of both are opened—Seneca's eloquence in his last moments—64. Paulina's death stayed by Nero's order—Seneca at last calls for hemlock; and finally perishes in a warm bath—65. Story that Subrius had intended to make Seneca emperor—66. Faenius Rufus is betrayed—67. And also Subrius Flavus—Flavus boldly acknowledges

the charge, and no less bravely meets his end—68. Fortitude of Sulpicius Asper and other Centurions—Nero fails to get evidence against the Consul Vestinus—69. He orders his death without reason—70. Next came the deaths of Lucan, of Senecio, Quintianus, and Scaevinus—71. Others variously punished, pardoned, or rewarded—72. Gifts to the soldiers; honours to others—Case of Nymphidius—73. Nero publishes the details of the conspiracy—Gallio denounced but spared—74. Various adulatory votes are passed; Nero declines a temple to himself.

BOOK XVI.

CHAP. 1. Nero befooled by promise of a concealed treasure, seen in a vision—2. He sends off messengers to Africa to secure it—Flattery of the orators—3. The man Bassus fails to find the treasure, and kills himself—4. The Senate vainly attempts to keep Nero from the stage—He appears as a harp-player; the city mob applauds—5. But spectators from a distance are less enthusiastic—Compulsion applied to enforce attendance and applause—6. Death of Poppæa—Her body is embalmed—7. Nero denounces Gaius Cassius—8. and Silanus—9. Both are exiled; a centurion is despatched to kill Silanus—10. Accusations against L. Vetus, Sextia, and Pollitta—Vetus retires to Formiac—The widowed Pollitta appeals in vain to Nero—11. Pathetic death of all three together—They are sentenced after death—12. Banishment of Publius Gallus—Names of months changed—13. Storms and pestilence—Fresh levies held—Handsome gift to Lyons.

A.D. 66. CONSULS GAIUS SUETONIUS PAULINUS AND GAIUS LUCCIUS TELESINUS.

CHAP. 14. The exiled Antistius informs against Anteius and Ostorius—Anteius anticipates his condemnation—15. Ostorius kills himself rather than be killed—16. These horrors that I have to relate came of the wrath of the Gods against Rome—17. Death of Seneca's brother Annaeus Mela, and of others—Cause of the accusation against Mela—Memorandum in Mela's will—18. Strange character of Gaius Petronius—Tigellinus, out of jealousy, accuses him of friendship with Scaevinus—19. He opens his veins at the first hint of danger; and dies as cheerfully and fastidiously as he had lived—20. Nero banishes Silia for revelations made in the will of Tigellinus—21. He at last assails Virtue herself in the person of Thrasea Paetus—Thrasea is accused by Capito Cossutianus—22. Capito charges him with having become a public danger; an enemy to religion, to the laws, and to the principle of authority—23. Barea Soranus also is accused of treason—24. Thrasea demands the cause of his accusation—25. Some of Thrasea's friends advise him to appear in the Senate—26. Others offer the contrary advice—Enthusiasm of Rusticus Arulenus—27.

The city occupied by troops—Message from Nero to the Senate—**28**. Attack upon Thrasea and Helvidius by Marcellus—**29**. Consternation of the Senate—**30**. Sabinus denounces Soranus and his young daughter Servilia—**31**. Servilia is questioned as to having resorted to magical rites; her piteous answer—**32**. Soranus vainly pleads for her—P. Egnatius appears as a hostile witness—**33**. Noble conduct of Asclepiodotus—Thrasea, Soranus, and Servilia are condemned—**34**. Thrasea receives the message in his garden, discoursing on the immortality of the soul—He bids the company depart, has his veins opened, and offers the blood as a libation to Jupiter the Liberator.

THE ANNALS OF CORNELIUS TACITUS.

BOOK XI.¹

A.D. 47. CONSULS TIBERIUS CLAUDIUS CAESAR
GERMANICUS IV AND LUCIUS VITELLIUS III.

I . . . for Messalina believed that Valerius Asiaticus,² who had twice held the Consulship, had been one of

Messalina
attacks
Valerius
Asiaticus
and
Poppaea.

¹ The lamentable lacuna in the Annals here comes to an end; and the narrative broken off at the death of Tiberius in A.D. 37 (vi. 51, 6) is here abruptly resumed in the middle of the year A.D. 47—the 800th from the foundation of the city, the 7th of the reign of the Emperor Claudius. In this year the Emperor himself occupied the consulship, his colleague in that office being the notorious courtier L. Vitellius, in whose character the mixture of soldier-like qualities with base sycophancy is so pungently described in vi. 32, 6 and 7.

The blank in the work of Tacitus—from the middle of Book VI. down to the middle of Book XI.—thus extends over a period of somewhat more than ten years, from the death of Tiberius on the 16th of March, A.D. 37 (vi. 51, 6), down to the middle of A.D. 47. It comprises the whole of the reign of Gaius (A.D. 37-41), and the first six years of that of Claudius. The curtain here rises to discover to us Valeria Messalina (commonly known as Messalina) in the height of her power and her infamy, omnipotent over Claudius, and rushing headlong into that career of lust and crime which was so soon to bring her to ruin, and which has left so gross a stain upon the reign of Claudius. This fascinating woman, the most

worthless perhaps of all the evil women of the early Empire (see Juv. vi. 116-132; Dio, lx. 18), possessed of none of the imperial qualities which extort our admiration for her successor Agrippina (*non per lasciviam, ut Messalina, rebus Romanis inludenti*, xii. 7, 5), came of the noblest blood of Rome. Her father, M. Valerius Messala Barbatus, belonged to the great house of the Valerii; through her mother, Domitia Lepida, she was granddaughter of Antonia Major, and so cousin to Claudius himself. The weakest and the most uxorious of husbands, after being twice betrothed to others, Claudius had already been twice married and had divorced two wives (Plautia Urgulanilla and Aelia Paetina) when he succeeded to the empire; he then married Messalina as his third: and thenceforth that *portentum mulieris*, as she may well be called (Claudius himself was called *portentum hominis* by his own mother Antonia, Suet. Claud. 3), exercised an ascendancy over her husband's facile nature only equalled by the other potent influence of the Claudian reign, that of the imperial freedmen ('his ministers were the most profligate of women, and the most selfish of emancipated slaves,' Merivale, v. p. 487).

² This distinguished man had been Cos. Suf. under Gaius, and again under

Poppaea's lovers;¹ but she also coveted his gardens—these being the gardens which had been laid out originally by Lucius Lucullus,² and which were now being beautified on a sumptuous scale by Valerius. She accordingly set on Suillius³ to accuse them both, associating with him Sosibius, the tutor⁴ of Britannicus,⁵ who was to hint to Claudius by way of friendly warning that, *Such wealth, such power, were a danger to the Empire. Asiaticus had been a chief mover in the assassination of Gaius Caesar; he had not shrunk from acknowledging the fact publicly before the people, and had gloried in the crime. Hence his reputation in the city;*

Claudius in A.D. 46. He had been among the intimates of the former Emperor; and though he had been grossly insulted by him (Sen. de Const. Sap. 18), he still continued attendance at court. He was not himself privy to the conspiracy, but was in the palace on the day of the assassination (Jos. Ant. xix. 1, 14), and the charge now advanced against him, that he had exulted in the deed when done, is confirmed by Dio (lix. 30, 2) and by Josephus (Ant. xix. 1, 20), who both say that when Valerius was asked by the crowd outside 'who had done the deed?' he replied that 'he wished he had been the doer of it.'

¹ This lady was Poppaea Sabina the elder, mother of the more famous (or infamous) Poppaea who became the wife of Nero in the year A.D. 60, and daughter of the illustrious Poppaeus Sabinus, so well known to us for his long tenure of Proconsular commands under Tiberius (i. 80, 1 and 2; vi. 39, 3). She was herself a person of surpassing beauty (*aetatis suae feminas pulchritudine supergressa*, xiii. 45, 2); and Messalina's wrath had been kindled against her for having carried on an intrigue with one of her favourites, the pantomime actor, Mnester. Desiring to shield Mnester, and yet destroy Poppaea, she accused Valerius of being Poppaea's lover; Dio asserts that her desire to possess herself of his gardens was her guiding motive.

² The famous conqueror of Mithradates and Armenia (B.C. 74 to 66). As celebrated for his luxury and his love of learning as for the strictness of

his military discipline, Lucullus was the first to set the example of laying out pleasure grounds on that scale of splendour which became so fashionable after his time. These Lucullan gardens lay on the south side of the Pincian hill, sloping towards the Quirinal; a little to the E. were the no less famous gardens of the historian Sallust, occupying the site of the late Ludovisi gardens. From these two pleasure gardens the hill now known as 'the Pincian' received its ancient name of 'Collis Hortulorum.'

³ This P. Suillius Rufus is an instance of a man filling the highest official position and yet stooping to the basest arts of the informer. Having been quaestor under Germanicus, he was banished by Tiberius for judicial bribery A.D. 24 (iv. 31, 5); recalled by Claudius, he became *terribilis et venalis* (xiii. 42, 1); he rose to be Cos. Suf. in A.D. 46, and was subsequently governor of Asia. The bitterness of his tongue is well illustrated by his attack upon Seneca (xiii. 42, 3-7). He was ultimately banished to the Balearic Islands (xiii. 43, 6).

⁴ More properly an attendant or governor: he would probably be a freedman. The freedman Anicetus is mentioned in xiv. 3, 5 as having been *pueritiae Neronis educator*. After Messalina's fall Sosibius was put to death (Dio, lx. 32, 5).

⁵ The son of Claudius and Messalina, born in A.D. 42, and called Britannicus in honour of the invasion and occupation of Britain in the year A.D. 43. See below n. on xii. 31, 1.

while in the provinces it was reported that he was meditating a journey to the German armies. Born at Vienna,¹ and having the support of many powerful connections there, he had it in his power to bring about a rising among his own tribesmen.

3 Without further inquiry, Claudius sent off Crispinus,² Prefect of the Praetorians, in hot haste, with soldiers enough to put down a rebellion. Crispinus found Valerius at Baiae, put him into chains, and carried him off to Rome.

Valerius
seized at
Baiae.

2 He was refused access to the Senate.³ He was heard in a private chamber, in Messalina's presence, where Suillius accused him of tampering with the soldiers, and of having won them over, by bribes and foul practices, to join in any act of wickedness; he accused him also of adultery with Poppaea, and finally of personal effeminacy. At this the accused could contain himself no longer, and burst out with:—*Inquire of your own sons, Suillius; they will testify to my manhood.*

He is tried
in private.

3 He then entered upon his defence, which greatly
4 affected Claudius, and moved Messalina to tears. As she left the room to wipe them away, she whispered to Vitellius that *he must not let the accused give them*

¹ This important colony, the modern *Vienne* (described by Claudius in the Lyons inscription as *Ornatissima colonia et valentissima*), lay upon the left bank of the Rhone, about 20 miles S. of Lugdunum (*Lyons*). It was the capital of the Allobroges.

² This Rufrius Crispinus was at this time colleague in the command of the Praetorian Guards with Lusius Geta (xii. 42, i). The attempt of Sejanus had shown the danger of leaving this important command in one hand. At a later period sometimes three, and even four, were associated in the office.

³ We have seen how under Tiberius the Senate had become a high court of

criminal judicature, especially for great political offences. But the princeps could also hold a private court of his own for such cases, and it will be remembered in the case of Piso how Tiberius was implored to take the trial into his own hands (iii. 10, 6). In that and similar cases it was part of that emperor's policy to throw responsibility upon the Senate; but Claudius, with that pedantic and fussy vanity which possessed him, was fond of exercising his judicial functions in person. One of the first promises of Nero on his accession was to abjure the system of bedchamber justice which had been practised by his predecessor (xiii. 4, 2).

Poppaea driven to commit suicide.

the slip. She then hurried on the destruction of 5 Poppaea, suborning persons to drive her to suicide from terror of being cast into prison. And so little did Caesar know about it, that when Scipio,¹ Poppaea's husband, was dining with him a few days afterwards, he asked:—*Why had he not brought his wife with him?* to which Scipio replied that *she was dead.*

Treachery of Vitellius.

Claudius took counsel with Vitellius as to 3 acquitting Asiaticus; whereupon Vitellius, with tears in his eyes, spoke of his own old friendship with the accused, and how they had both been devoted to the Emperor's mother Antonia. He then recounted his public services, including those in the recent war against Britain,² together with other points which seemed likely to tell in his favour, and suggested that he might be permitted to choose his own mode of death. Claudius followed with words to the same merciful effect.³

Asiaticus puts an end to himself.

Some urged Asiaticus to resort to a gentle form 2 of death, such as starvation; but he declined any such favour, and after going through his accustomed exercises,⁴ he bathed, ate his dinner cheerfully, and then opened his veins, saying:—*Better have perished by the cunning of a Tiberius, or the frenzy of a Gaius Caesar, than fall a victim to a woman's treachery and the filthy tongue of a Vitellius.* And so perfect was his composure to the last that, after inspecting his own pyre,

¹ For this Scipio see iii. 74. 2.

² What part Asiaticus took in the British campaign is not known.

³ These words are ironical. Claudius was himself inclined to spare Asiaticus; and the art of Vitellius lay in ignoring this feeling, in taking the guilt of Asiaticus for granted, and in assuming that the utmost leniency which could be extended to him was the choice of

his mode of death. The dull and fatuous emperor assented, as though 'his own promptings to mercy would thus be fully satisfied' (F.).

⁴ Asiaticus seems to have been a noted athlete. Claudius alludes contemptuously to his prowess in such exercises in his Gallic speech: *et odi illud palaesticum prodigium.*

he ordered it to be shifted to another spot, that the foliage of the trees above it might not be injured by the flames.¹

4 The Senate was then convened, and Suillius
 proceeded to find new victims in the persons of two
 2 Roman Knights called Petra. The real reason for
 the destruction of these men was that they had lent
 their house for the rendezvous of Mnester² and
 3 Poppaea; but the ostensible charge was that one
 of the two had in a dream seen Claudius with a
 crown of wheat-ears, turned backwards, on his head,
 and had interpreted this to portend a scarcity in the
 4 harvest. Others say that the wreath seen was one
 of faded vine-leaves, foreboding the death of the
 5 Emperor at the fall of the year.³ But whatever the
 dream was, it is beyond question that it caused
 the death of both the brothers.

His
 accuser
 Suillius
 finds other
 victims.

A million and a half sesterces, together with the
 6 Praetorian insignia,⁴ were voted to Crispinus; to
 which Vitellius added that a million should be given
 to Sosibius *for giving to Britannicus the benefit of his
 teaching, and to Claudius that of his advice.* When
 7 Scipio was called upon for his opinion, he replied:—
*Seeing that I think what others think about Poppaea's
 misdemeanours, you may take it that I say what others*

Rewards to
 Crispinus
 and
 Sosibius.

¹ The pyre was evidently raised in some part of the Lucullan gardens.

² This famous pantomime actor had received extravagant marks of affection from Caligula (*Mnesterem pantomimum etiam inter spectacula osculabatur*, Suet. 55), and was notorious for his arrogance and profligacy under Claudius. He was one of Messalina's favoured lovers, and it seems scarcely possible to acquit Claudius himself of connivance in that attachment. See chap. 36, 1, and Dio, lx. 22, 5. For his death on Messalina's fall see chap. 36, 3.

³ This dream and its interpretation

recall Pharaoh's famous dream of the seven rank, and the seven thin, ears of corn interpreted by Joseph in Genesis xl. 5-8; as well as the favourable interpretation put upon the chief butler's dream because the vine 'budded and her blossoms shot forth' (ib. xl. 10). The agricultural deities were usually represented with crowns of corn round their heads.

⁴ The practice of bestowing the ornaments of an office not actually held, as a title of distinction, became frequent under the empire. See n. on chap. 38, 5.

say: thus gracefully holding the mean between the affection felt by the husband and the compliance exacted from the Senator.

Fresh
accusations
by Suillius.

Thenceforward Suillius plied his accusations 5
ceaselessly and without mercy; and many emulated
his audacity. For the Emperor had opened up a
wide field for plundering by taking on himself all
judicial and magisterial functions;¹ and there were 2
no wares in the public market so saleable as the
treacherous tongues of advocates. Thus a distin-
guished Roman Knight² called Samius had given
Suillius a fee of four hundred thousand sesterces;
but, discovering that Suillius was playing him
false,³ he went to his house, and there threw himself
on his sword. Upon that, first the Consul-designate 3
Gaius Silius,⁴ of whose dominance and fall I shall
speak in due time,⁵ and after him the Fathers in a
body, rose and demanded the enforcement of the old

Demand
for enforce-
ment of
Cincian
Law.

¹ Tacitus uses almost the same words of Augustus in i. 2, 1 (*munia senatus magistratum legum in se trahere*); but they are there used in a larger sense, of the manner in which Augustus gradually drew all sources of political power into his own hands. The phrase here refers to the constant personal exercise by Claudius of his judicial powers, even in the privacy of his own chamber. In such trials the checks imposed by publicity and constitutional usage were removed, intrigue flourished, and any kind of accusation might succeed or be profitably threatened when all depended upon the caprice of one man who took his opinions from his freedmen. Hence 'the material for plundering' mentioned in the text. A freedman's assistance was not to be had for nothing.

² The term *insignis* or *illustris* seems to have been applied as a term of courtesy to *equites* of fortune and dignity, and especially such as were possessed of the fortune required for admission to the Senate. See ii. 59, 4 and xvi. 17, 1 (*equites Romani dignitate senatoria*).

³ The word *prævaricatio* has a double

meaning. It properly signifies a collusive accusation, so conducted as to procure the acquittal of the accused. But it is also used of any betrayal of a client's case by an advocate who has undertaken to conduct it. In the instance before us, Samius was obviously an accused person: and the natural explanation is that he had paid a large fee to Suillius to defend him, that Suillius betrayed his case, and that the ruined Samius, by way of vengeance, committed a sensational suicide in his own advocate's house in order to attract public attention to the scandal. The explanation of Nipp. that Suillius accused Samius, took a bribe to conduct the accusation collusively, and then after all secured his condemnation, seems needlessly complicated. The fact that an advocate who had received a large fee betrayed his client's cause would be a sufficient reason for an agitation against the system of fee-giving as a whole.

⁴ Silius did not live to hold the consulship: see chaps. 12, 2 and 28, 1.

⁵ See chaps. 37-38.

Cincian law which forbade advocates to receive money or reward for their services in the courts of law.¹

6 This proposal was met by clamour from those at whom the indignity was aimed; but Silius, who hated Suillius, made a violent attack upon him, quoting the example of the ancient orators who had looked to fame and posterity for their reward:—

The demand supported by C. Silius.

2 *Otherwise, he declared, the fairest, and indeed the mistress, of all the arts would be debased by hireling service; how could even the good faith of advocates be depended on if they looked only to the greatness of their*
 3 *gains? If law business brought no profit to any one, there would be less of it; the present system fostered quarrels and accusations, malignity and injustice: for just as the prevalence of disease brought fees to doctors, so did advocates make money out of the distempers of the law-*
 4 *courts. Let them bethink them of Gaius Asinius,² of Marcus Messala,³ and of such younger men as Arruntius and Aeserninus: how these men had attained to the highest eminence while keeping their lives and their eloquence undefiled.*

¹ The *Lex Cincia de donis et muneribus*, passed by the Tribune M. Cincius Alimentus in the year B.C. 210, was a law whose principal object was to impose certain restrictions on private property; but it also contained a provision which was either intended or construed to prohibit the taking of fees by advocates. That the law was systematically evaded, is proved by the large fortunes made by Cicero and other successful advocates; but it was revived along with other equally fruitless sumptuary laws by Augustus, who imposed a fourfold penalty on offenders (Dio, liv. 18, 2). But such a law could only be passed to be broken or evaded; and the case of Suillius himself (see xiii. 42 and 43) is enough to show how vain were the limitations upon fee-taking now laid down by Claudius. It is to be remembered that in early times advocacy was one of the chief duties

which the patron had to discharge towards his client; the only reward he looked for was the reputation which might open up his path towards public office. But as usual in such matters, the sentiment long survived the circumstances which had created it.

² The reference is to C. Asinius Pollio, the founder of the Palatine Library (B.C. 28), the magnificent patron of literature under Augustus, himself an historian, poet, orator, and advocate (*Insigne maestis praesidium reis = Et consulenti, Pollio, curiae*, Hor. Od. ii. 1, 13-14).

³ For Messala, see n. on iii. 34, 2; for L. Arruntius, of whom Augustus had pronounced that 'he was not unworthy of empire, and if the chance were offered him, he would embrace it,' see n. on i. 13, 2; and for Aeserninus, see iii. 11, 2 and n.

Consternation of the accusers.

These remarks of the Consul-designate met with 5
 general approval; and a motion was proposed by
 which offenders should be amenable to the law of
 extortion, when Suillius and Cossutianus¹ and the
 rest, perceiving that it was not so much a case
 of being tried—for their guilt was manifest—as of
 having their punishment determined, gathered round
 Claudius and implored forgiveness for the past.

Permission to speak having been granted, they 7
 thus began:—

They appeal to Claudius.

*What man could be so presumptuous as to count upon
 an eternity of fame? The orator had to prepare himself² 2
 to serve men and support them in their affairs, lest the
 lack of an advocate should leave them at the mercy of
 some powerful adversary. But eloquence was not to be 3
 acquired without cost; the orator had to give up his own
 affairs to attend to those of other people. Some made a 4
 living by soldiering, some by husbandry: no man pursued
 any calling unless he could see his way to making some
 profit out of it. It was easy for Asinius and Messala, 5
 gorged with the spoils of the wars between Antonius
 and Augustus, or for the heirs of wealthy families like
 the Aesernini and the Arruntii, to play the magnani-
 mous; but on their side they could point to the 6
 huge fees received by Publius Clodius³ and Gaius*

¹ The accuser Cossutianus Capito, infamous as the accuser of Paetus Thrasea and his brother Stoics in xvi. 28 and 33.

² There is an ambiguity here, according as we take 'the preparation' or 'provision for the future' here spoken of (*præparari*) to be made (1) by those who may have need of advocates, *i.e.* the clients; or (2) by the advocate himself. In the former case the meaning will be, 'Men look out for, provide themselves with, advocates to assist them in their difficulties, and cannot expect to get that assistance without paying for it (*neque tamen eloquentiam*

gratuito contingere); in the latter case the sense will be, 'Advocates have to fit themselves to be of use to their fellow-citizens, and they cannot acquire the necessary eloquence without expense, having to give up their own business to attend to that of other people.' In the mouth of Suillius, the latter perhaps gives the better meaning.

³ Publius Clodius Pulcher, the deadly enemy of Cicero, and one of the worst and most corrupt characters of his age. It was he who, as tribune of the Plebs, brought about the banishment of Cicero in revenge for the evidence given by the orator in connection with the scandal

7 *Curio*¹ for their orations. As for themselves, they added, they were but Senators of modest means, living in quiet times, and seeking only the gains of peace. Let Claudius bethink him of the plebeians who had achieved distinction through the gown:² as well destroy a profession as rob it of its rewards.

8 Discreditable as these arguments were, the Emperor thought that they were not unreasonable, and fixed ten thousand sesterces as the maximum for a lawyer's fee; any who accepted more were to be deemed guilty of extortion.³

8 About this same time Mithradates, whom I have mentioned⁴ as having been King of Armenia, and as having been thrown into prison by order of Gaius Caesar,⁵ was encouraged by Claudius to return to his kingdom.⁶ This he accomplished by the help of his

Claudius takes a middle course.

Mithradates returns to Armenia.

of the Bona Dea. His murder by Milo in B.C. 52 gave the occasion for Cicero's celebrated speech *Pro Milone*.

¹ C. Scribonius Curio, not less corrupt than Clodius, an orator of considerable parts, and originally a friend of Cicero's, was one of the men won over to the cause of Caesar by the payment of their debts. As tribune of the Plebs in A.D. 50, he precipitated the final breach between Caesar and the Senate. He was married to the notorious Fulvia, who afterwards became Mark Antony's wife.

² This sounds like an echo of Juvenal, who tells the man who plumes himself on his birth how eloquence and knowledge of the law, once the exclusive property of the patricians, were now to be found among plebeians:—*tamen ima plebe Quiritem = Facundum invenies; solet hic defendere causas = Nobilis indocti; veniet de plebe togata = Qui iuris nodos et legum aenigmata solvat* (viii. 47-50).

³ The full force of *teneri*, in connection with accusations, should be noted. It does not mean simply 'to be liable under,' or 'to be bound by,' but 'to be found guilty under,' 'to be convicted of.' See iii. 13, 5; 50, 6; 67, 2.

⁴ How this Mithradates, an Iberian prince, was helped to the throne of

Armenia by Tiberius is told above in book vi. chaps. 31-33.

⁵ A gap of two words in Med. may here be supplied by *insuque G.* Dio states positively that Gaius summoned Mithradates to Rome (not later than A.D. 43), and kept him there in custody (lx. 8, 1); an apparently wanton act which threw Armenia once more under the influence, and probably under the rule, of Parthia.

⁶ For a general account of the policy of Rome towards Armenia and Parthia, see nn. on ii. 1, 1; 3, 1; and 4, 1; also vi. 37, 6. The complete story of the affairs of the two countries as told in the compact, abrupt sentences of Tacitus, is very difficult to disentangle and keep in memory, though its general features are clear enough. It will be remembered that in the last years of his reign (A.D. 35 and 36) Tiberius had been provoked by the insolence of the Parthian monarch Artabanus III. to make a forward move on the traditional lines of Roman policy in regard to both countries, and that under the vigorous leadership of L. Vitellius his action had met with considerable success.

The cause of the quarrel was that on the death of the Armenian king Artaxias (A.D. 34) who had been crowned by Germanicus in A.D. 18, Artabanus had

brother Pharasmanes, King of the Hiberians,¹ who reported that Parthia was in a distracted state, the dispute about the sovereignty having withdrawn all attention from minor matters.

For the Parthian King Gotarzes,² among other cruelties, had put to death his brother Artabanus,³ as well as his wife and son; and his subjects,² in terror of further barbarities, had called in Vardanes. Ever ready for deeds of high daring, Vardanes traversed three thousand stadia in two days,⁴ sur-

ceeded by a son of the same name, who either was, or would have been, Artabanus IV. ; in any case this Artabanus stood in the way of his brother Gotarzes, and fell a victim, with his wife and son, to the necessities of the Parthian system of succession. Thus the old round of Parthian affairs is once more repeated. The cruelty and incapacity of Gotarzes create disaffection at home ; a civil war between the brothers Gotarzes and Vardanes, waged with varying fortunes, ensues ; Rome once more responds to an invitation to send out a Rome-bred Parthian prince, Meherdates, son of Vonones, to fill the Parthian throne ; and once more the attempt ends, in spite of notable successes, in ignominious failure.

dared to put his own son Arsaces upon the throne of that kingdom, and to send a message of defiance to Tiberius. Tiberius accordingly, in response to a petition from malcontents in Parthia, sent out from Rome a Parthian prince, Phraates, son of the former king of that name, to assume the Parthian throne ; and upon his dying soon afterwards, selected another Arsacid prince called Tiridates to succeed him ; while the Iberian prince Mithradates, with the help of his brother Pharasmanes, who was king of that people, was to recover Armenia to Roman influence. This latter policy was successful. Artabanus was defeated in an attempt to reconquer the country, and a threat of force from Vitellius was enough to place Mithradates firmly on the Armenian throne.

¹ For the position of Hiberia (or Iberia) see iv. 5, 4 n., and map at the end of this vol.

² The change of subject here (*Nam Gotarzes . . . paraverat, unde metus in ceteros et accivere Vardanen*) is intolerably harsh, and could not be permitted in English.

³ As recorded in vi. 33-37, the attempt of Tiberius to place Tiridates on the Parthian throne in lieu of Artabanus III. had ended in failure ; and that wily monarch remained king until his death, which took place at some time between A.D. 40 and 42. As to the immediate successor to Artabanus, there is some doubt. In the passage before us, Gotarzes and Vardanes are evidently mentioned as persons already known to the reader, having no doubt been mentioned in the lost books ; and the way in which the murder of Artabanus by his brother Gotarzes is mentioned seems to imply that Artabanus III. was suc-

ceeded by a son of the same name, who either was, or would have been, Artabanus IV. ; in any case this Artabanus stood in the way of his brother Gotarzes, and fell a victim, with his wife and son, to the necessities of the Parthian system of succession. Thus the old round of Parthian affairs is once more repeated. The cruelty and incapacity of Gotarzes create disaffection at home ; a civil war between the brothers Gotarzes and Vardanes, waged with varying fortunes, ensues ; Rome once more responds to an invitation to send out a Rome-bred Parthian prince, Meherdates, son of Vonones, to fill the Parthian throne ; and once more the attempt ends, in spite of notable successes, in ignominious failure.

⁴ The figures here given are impossible. To march nearly 350 miles in 48 hours is a feat which probably no force has ever performed. At the time of the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the Guides, horse and foot, in their famous march to Delhi, covered 580 miles in 21 days 5 hours, *i.e.* over 27 miles a day. In his great march from Kabul to Candahar Lord Roberts with 10,000 men (with followers) did 313 miles in 20 days (= 15½ miles a day). It will be said that cavalry alone could do more. I am told by officers who went through the late South African War that in some of the big 'drives' done by cavalry alone, in the best condition, our people trekked on occasion as much as 80 to 100 miles in 24 hours. But this was very severe work ; men and horses were quite played out by it. Some editors propose here to read *triduo duo millia* instead of *biduo tria millia*, but it is useless to make numerical corrections of this kind by

Troubles
in Parthia.
Contest
between
the
brothers
Gotarzes
and Var-
danes.

prised Gotarzes, and drove him in terror out of the country; and then, without a moment's delay, seized the adjoining prefectures.¹ Seleucia² alone held out
 5 against him; and prompted by his wrath against the inhabitants, who had revolted from his father as well as from himself, rather than by his present interests, he entangled himself in the siege of that place of strength, protected by river as well as by walls,
 6 and well supplied with provisions. And before long Gotarzes, reinforced by the Dahae and the Hyrcani,³ renewed the contest, and compelled Vardanes to raise the siege of Seleucia and withdraw to the plains of Bactria.⁴

9 The forces of the East being thus torn asunder, and the issue uncertain, Mithradates embraced the opportunity of seizing Armenia, the Hiberian army scouring the plains,⁵ while a powerful Roman force
 2 attacked the mountain strongholds. Demonax, the Armenian commander, ventured to give battle; but
 3 with his defeat all resistance ended. A slight check was occasioned by Cotys, King of Lesser Armenia,⁶

Mithradates succeeds in holding Armenia.

guess-work. Similar inaccuracies in numbers are not infrequent in the text of Tacitus.

¹ These 'Prefectures' or 'Provinces' were, doubtless, as F. suggests, great vice-royalties, corresponding to the Satrapies in the Persian Empire, and to our own Lieutenant-Governorships in India. Pliny gives the number of these in the Parthian Empire as eighteen.

² For Seleucia see vi. 42, 1 and n. Founded by Seleucus Nicator in B.C. 300, this city retained its Greek character and institutions, and a certain amount of independence, in the midst of the Parthian Empire. In A.D. 36 it had cast off its allegiance to Artabanus, and thrown its gates open to the Roman candidate Tiridates. Mommsen calls it 'the great capital of the Hellenes on the Euphrates.'

³ These were Scythian tribes to the E. of the Caspian. See map. It will

be remembered that Artabanus had been brought up among the Dahae (ii. 3, 1).

⁴ Bactria or Bactriana was to the E. of Parthia proper, bounded by the Paropamisus (or Hindoo Kooshi) upon the South, and lying along the upper courses of the Oxus and the Jaxartes.

⁵ The Iberian force would consist mainly of cavalry, the Roman of infantry.

⁶ Lesser Armenia lay on the W. side of the upper Euphrates, having Armenia proper on the E. and the provinces of Pontus and Cappadocia to the W. This Cotys, being a son of the Cotys king of Thrace mentioned in ii. 67, 4, had been made king of Lesser Armenia by Gaius (Dio, lix. 12, 2), and it would appear from this passage that he had been affording countenance to the Parthian or anti-Roman party in

who had been joined by some of the Armenian nobles; but he was warned off by a dispatch from Claudius. After that Mithradates carried all before him; but he governed more tyrannically than was politic for a new-made king.

The two Parthian chiefs¹ now prepared for battle; 4
but they suddenly came to terms on discovering a plot among their countrymen of which Gotarzes informed his brother. There was some hesitation when first they met; but in the end, the two joined hands before the altars of the Gods, and bound themselves to punish the treachery of their enemies. Each made some concession to the other: it was 5
thought best that Vardanes should retain the kingdom, while Gotarzes, to avoid occasions of rivalry, withdrew into Hyrcania.

Vardanes, on his return, received the submission 6
of Seleucia,² in the seventh year after its defection; but it was little to the credit of the Parthians to have been so long baffled by a single city. He then 10
visited the most important provinces, and had it in his mind to recover Armenia; but Vibius Marsus,³ the Legate of Syria, kept him back by a threat of war.

By this time Gotarzes had repented of his 2

Armenia until peremptorily checked by orders from Claudius himself.

¹ By this term obviously the two rivals, Gotarzes and Vardanes, are indicated.

² There is some difficulty in dating these seven years. We can hardly doubt, however, that the revolt of Seleucia here spoken of is that recorded in detail by Tac. under the year A.D. 36, when the city threw off its allegiance to Artabanus and went over to Tiridates, who at once put the popular party in power (vi. 42, 1-4). In that case Tac. must be recounting the events of several previous years in the chapters before us; a supposition confirmed by the

evidence of coins, which proves that Vardanes died not later than 45 or 46 A.D. See also next n.

³ C. Vibius Marsus had become legate of Syria some years previously, and was succeeded by C. Cassius not later than A.D. 45. He had been cos. suf. in A.D. 17; he was on the staff of Germanicus in the East (see ii. 74, 1 and 79, 1) at the time of that prince's death; he afterwards became proconsul of Africa for three years (A.D. 27-29), and narrowly escaped death in A.D. 36, being included in the same accusation as the famous L. Arruntius. On that occasion Tac. describes him as *Vetustis honoribus et illustri studiis* (vi. 47, 3).

In Parthia,
Gotarzes
gives way
to Var-
danes;

repents his
abdication,

abdication; and on the invitation of the nobles, to whom submission is intolerable in time of peace, he collected an army and encountered Vardanes on the banks of the Erindes.¹ In a severe engagement at the crossing of that river, Vardanes gained the day; and by successive victories he subdued all the tribes as far as the river Sindes, which separates the Dahae from the Arii.² But there his successes ended; for the Parthians, victorious though they were, refused to serve so far from home. So after setting up a monument on which he recorded his own greatness, and how no Arsacid had ever taken tribute from those peoples before, he returned home in triumph.

but is
defeated.

But this triumph made him more insolent and overbearing than ever. A plot was concerted against him; he was taken unawares, and assassinated while intent upon the chase. Cut off though he was in early youth, he had a fame which few long-lived monarchs could have equalled had he only sought as much to be loved by his own countrymen as to be a terror to his foes.

Vardanes
is cut off
by assassi-
nation.

The death of Vardanes wrought confusion among the Parthians, divided as they were as to the succession. Many were inclined to Gotarzes; some to Meherdates, son of Phraates, who had been given to us as a hostage. In the end, Gotarzes prevailed;³ but no sooner was he established in the palace than his cruelty and his profligacy compelled the Parthians

Gotarzes is
recalled;
but the maleon-
tents
petition
Claudius
to send out
Meher-
dates.

¹ This river, as well as the Sindes mentioned in the next sentence, are alike unknown. The inscription on the trophy mentioned below shows that the campaign took place far to the East, probably somewhere between the Caspian Sea and Herat.

² This name is probably corrupt. The Arii lived too far to the S.

³ Coins show that Gotarzes was on

the throne in A.D. 46; and in the sentence which follows, Tac. brings his narrative down to the beginning of the year A.D. 49, when it is resumed with the admission of the Parthian envoys to the Senate (xii. 10, 1). In dealing with foreign affairs Tac. deems it unnecessary to mark the chronology as strictly as in regard to matters happening in Rome itself.

to send a secret petition to the Roman Emperor, begging that Meherdates might be permitted to mount the throne of his fore-fathers.

In this same year the Secular Games were held, I I
 being the 800th year after the founding of the city,
 and the 64th since they were celebrated by Augustus.¹
 Of the calculations which guided these two princes, I 2
 need say nothing, having sufficiently explained that
 point in my history of the times of Domitianus.² For 3
 he too held Secular Games, at which it was my duty
 to be present, both as a member of the College of
 Fifteen, and also as Praetor at the time³—a fact which 4
 I mention, not out of vanity, but to explain that in

¹ The religious authorities—the Sibylline books and the *Quindecimviri Sacrorum*—gave 110 years as the proper length of the *saeculum*, the close of which was celebrated by a festival which no man might see twice in his lifetime. Augustus acted on this view, anticipating the date by one year; one of the most interesting of modern archaeological discoveries is that of the stone recording at great length the ceremonies to be observed on the occasion in B.C. 17, and appointing Horace to compose his famous 'Secular Hymn.' Claudius, in this 800th year from the foundation of the city, naturally found it more convenient to follow those authorities who gave 100 years to the *saeculum*, and excellent precedents no doubt were furnished to him for that purpose. Domitian at once adopted, and departed from, the Augustan view, by celebrating the games in A.D. 88; ignoring the Claudian celebration, anticipating the Augustan calculation by six years, and thus laying himself open to the happy witticism of one of his own courtiers, *Saepe facias*, 'Many happy Returns!'

² The allusion is to the Histories, which were published before the Annals, at some time after the accession of Trajan (Hist. i. 1, 5). That work, which contained twelve, or more probably fourteen books, comprised the whole period from the 1st Jan., A.D. 69 to the death of Domitian in A.D. 96. Of the whole work only four and a

half books are extant, covering a period of less than two years, from Jan. 1, A.D. 69 to the early part of A.D. 70.

³ What adds special interest and weight to the authority of Tacitus is the fact that he was a man of action as well as a man of letters. He was a senator; he had climbed up the official ladder, had held in turn all the great offices of state, and was thus familiar with all the phases of public life, was acquainted personally with the leading men of his day, including the emperors under whom he served, and thus had ready means of access to all authentic sources of information in his own day, as well as to the traditions of the great governing families in regard to the immediately preceding generations. Born in the very beginning of Nero's reign—perhaps in the year of his accession, A.D. 54—he was in a position to obtain his accounts of the whole of that reign from first-hand witnesses, being about 14 years old when that emperor died. He filled the quaestorship under Vespasian (A.D. 69-79); the aedileship, or perhaps tribunate of the plebs, under Titus (A.D. 79-81); in A.D. 88, as he tells us in this passage, he was both Praetor and Quindecimvir Sacrorum under Domitian (A.D. 81-96); and finally under Nerva (A.D. 96-98) he reached the highest post of all as *cos. suf.* in the year A.D. 97 (see Hist. i. 1).

olden times that duty fell upon the College, and that the ceremonial functions were mainly performed by those members of the body who happened to be magistrates.

- 5 During the equestrian part of the games, the Pageant of Troy¹ was performed by lads of noble birth in the presence of the Emperor. Among the performers were the Emperor's son Britannicus, and Lucius Domitius,² who succeeded soon afterwards by adoption to the Empire and to the name of Nero. The greater favour with which Domitius was received
- 6 by the people was regarded as an omen; and a tale after the fashion of foreign marvels got abroad that he had been attended in infancy by dragons.³ But as he himself told the story—and he was by no means inclined to belittle himself—it was only one snake that had been seen in his chamber.

Appearance of Britannicus and Domitius. Popularity of the latter.

- 12 The favour of the people towards him was a survival of their love for Germanicus, of whom he was the only male descendant; while their compassion for his mother Agrippina was intensified by the relentless hostility of Messalina. That hostility was now fiercer than ever; but Messalina was diverted from setting up charges and accusers against her by a new passion which was next door to madness.

- 2 For she had become so enamoured of Gaius Silius,⁴

Messalina enamoured of G. Silius.

¹ This was the famous *Ludus Troiae*, of which Virgil gives an elaborate description in *Aen.* v. 552-602. Virg. tells us it was brought from Troy by Ascanius, son of Aeneas, taught by him to the early Latins, and so brought eventually from Alba Longa to Rome.

² This is the first mention in the extant books of the Annals of the future Emperor Nero—now known as L. Domitius Ahenobarbus—being the son

of the younger Agrippina, daughter of Germanicus and of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (see iv. 75, 1 and n.).

³ The snake story is told somewhat differently by Suet. (*Nero* 6).

⁴ This unhappy youth was the son of the legate in Upper Germany, of whom we heard so much in i. 31, etc., and whom Tiberius compelled to commit suicide from jealousy of his outstanding position (iv. 18, 1). The family was

the most beautiful youth in Rome, that she forced him to put away his highborn wife Junia Silana,¹ that she might have him all to herself. Silius knew full well the shame of the thing, and the danger of it; but seeing certain death before him if he refused, having some hopes of concealment, and finding presents heaped upon him, he let things take their course and solaced himself with the enjoyment of the present. Messalina made no secret of her passion. She would go to her lover's house with a crowd of attendants; she clung to him when he went abroad; she lavished money and distinctions upon him; until at last, as though the Empire had already changed hands, the slaves, the freedmen, and even the household furnishings of the Emperor, were to be seen in the possession of her paramour.

Claudius, meanwhile, knowing nothing of his wife's proceedings, was busying himself with his censorian duties.² He issued an edict sternly rebuking the populace for turbulent conduct in the theatre, where they had insulted Publius Pomponius,³ a Consular, the author of the piece, as well as some ladies of distinction. He passed a law to check

originally plebeian; but Juv. speaks of him as *optimus et formosissimus idem = Gentis patriciæ* (x. 331).

¹ This woman was at first the object of Agrippina's affection, afterwards the victim of her furious hatred, dying in exile. For the story of the cruel plot concocted against her by Agrippina, see xiii. 19, 2 and 22, 2; xiv. 12, 8.

² No translation can express the satire conveyed by the juxtaposition of words in this sentence—*matrimonii sui ignarus et munia censoria usurpans*—by which Tac. pillories the absurdity of Claudius acting as the supreme arbiter of morals at a moment when his own household was the scene of the grossest scandals. See n. on xii. 5, 5. The office of Censor had been in abeyance since

B. C. 23; Augustus preferring, in accordance with his usual policy, to exercise the powers of the office under the modest title of *corrector morum* or under the name of *regimen legum et morum* (see Mon. Anc. Græc. iii. 15), rather than hold the office itself. To revive the office with its antique and arbitrary powers, significant of the morality of a bygone age, was a thing exactly suited to the pedantic antiquarian mind of Claudius; and Suct. fills a whole chapter with an account of the absurd edicts issued by Claudius in his censorial capacity (Claud. 16).

³ This man had a great reputation as a poet, especially as a tragedian, and is highly praised by Pliny, Quintilian and Tac. (see v. 8, 4 and xii. 28, 2).

Claudius discharges his duties as censor by various measures.

the rapacity of usurers, forbidding them to lend money to sons under age in expectation of their father's death;¹ he built an aqueduct to convey spring water into the city from the hills above Sublaqueum; and he brought into use some new letters, having discovered that the Greek alphabet was not begun and completed all at one time.

He introduces three new letters.

The first people to express their ideas graphically were the Egyptians:² this they did by representations of animals, such as are still to be seen graven upon their monuments of stone, those most ancient of human records. Hence they claim for themselves the invention of the alphabet; asserting that the Phoenicians, having command of the sea, had introduced it into Greece, and so gained the credit of discovering what they had learnt from others.³

History of the alphabet;

For the legend is that the art of writing was introduced by Cadmus,⁴ who arrived with a Phoenician fleet when the people of Greece were still uncivilized.

its introduction into Greece and Italy.

Others say that an alphabet of sixteen letters was invented at the time of the Trojan War, either by the Athenian Cecrops, or by the Theban Linus, or by the Argive Palamedes;⁵ and that the remainder were devised afterwards by others, and notably by

¹ For a strengthening of this law see Suet. Vesp. 11.

² *i.e.* they were the first to express their thoughts by external signs on material substances; in other words, they invented writing, using that word in the larger sense. Tac. makes the mistake of supposing that the only signs used by the Egyptians were representations of animals, overlooking the hieratic and demotic modes of writing. See Hdt. ii. 36, 9, quoted by F., and Sayce, App. to Hdt. pp. 354 and 398; also (for the tradition) Plin. H. N. vii. 56, 57, 192.

³ See *Intro.* p. lxxxi.

⁴ This tradition about Cadmus is

confirmed by Hdt. v. 58. For the other names mentioned in this chap. see F.'s note. No other writer mentions Cecrops as the inventor of letters. As Cecrops was an *αὐτόχθων*, his name probably represents the patriotic Attic view that the Greeks invented their own alphabet. Perhaps the same applies to Linus, whose name appears in sundry traditions.

⁵ Pliny attributes to Palamedes the introduction, not of the whole alphabet, but of four additional letters, the other four being introduced by Simonides; but he does not state which these letters were. The tradition that the original number was sixteen was pretty general.

Simonides. In Italy, the Etruscans learned the art⁴ from the Corinthian Demaratus, the Aborigines¹ from Evander the Arcadian: the Latin letters being of the same shape as those first used by the Greeks. Rome also began with only a few letters, others being added afterwards;² following which example Claudius⁵ now introduced three new ones.³ These letters were employed during his reign; and though they afterwards fell out of use, they can still be seen on the brazen tables used for publishing laws⁴ in the forums⁵ and in the temples.

Claudius next made a motion in the Senate for¹⁵ establishing a College of soothsayers,⁶ to prevent

Motion as to soothsayers.

¹ The *Aborigines* here are the Latins (as in Liv. i. 1, 5); and the whole passage represents the undoubted fact that letters were brought into Italy by Greeks, though probably at a period long previous to that of Demaratus, the supposed father-in-law of Tarquinius Priscus (Liv. i. 34, 2).

² Four in all: viz. G (originally written as C), X, Y and Z: the two last were not in general use before the time of Cicero, and then only for Greek words.

³ The three letters added to the Latin alphabet by Claudius were:—(1) The symbol \mathcal{J} , or inverted F, to express the sound of V when used as a semi-consonant; (2) the C (or Greek S) reversed, i.e. \mathcal{C} , to express the peculiar Latin sound of ps or bs; and (3) the sign | (already used in Greek to express the rough breathing) to denote the peculiar Latin sound, halfway between *u* and *i*, in such words as *opti(u)mus*, *maxi(u)mus*. The conflict amongst modern scholars as to the pronunciation of Latin U or V suggests that the innovation proposed by Claudius was not wholly pedantic.

⁴ Med. here is corrupt, reading *in aere publico dis plebiscitis*; but the meaning is plain. I follow the obvious conj. of Grot. followed by Or. and others *in aere publicandis plebiscitis*. This implies only the loss of the single letter *n* in *publicandis*, and the natural change of *publica* into *publico* to agree with *aere*. Modern edd. attach undue

importance to the fact that the words *aere publico* (but without the preposition *in*) occur in xii. 53, 5.

⁵ In the time of Nero, there were two other Fora besides the *Forum Romanum* devoted entirely to legal, literary, or religious purposes, viz. (1) *Forum Iulium*, begun by Julius Caesar in B.C. 46, in which were the temple of *Venus Genetrix*, and (2) *Forum Augusti*, laid out by Augustus, with the temple of Mars Ultor dedicated in B.C. 2. At a subsequent date were laid out (3) *Forum Nervae* or *Forum Transitorium*, and (4) the magnificent *Forum Traiani*, in which the famous column of Trajan still stands erect.

⁶ The *haruspices* or soothsayers occupied a much lower position than the augurs, whose offices were in requisition for every important state function, as well as for the most important acts of private life, such as marriage, etc. The whole augural and divining art is always represented as having had its origin and its headquarters in Etruria; and in early days it was always to Etruria that Rome turned when any special means were sought for propitiating the favour of the Gods. It was thus that stage plays were first introduced into Rome from Etruria in the year 341 B.C. (Livy, vii. 2) in a time of pestilence. The learning necessary for such arts seems to have been specially preserved in certain Etruscan families of high rank (*Etruria principes disciplinam doceto*, Cic. Legg.

that most ancient of Italian sciences from dying out through disuse :—

It had often happened, he said, in times of disaster, that persons had been called in by whose advice ceremonies had been revived and properly conducted afterwards. In Etruria, the leading men had kept up the science, and handed it down in their families, either voluntarily, or at the instance of the Roman Fathers ; but this custom had now fallen into neglect from a general indifference to learning,¹ and from the prevalence of foreign superstitions.² All was well with them for the present ; but they should thank the Gods for their mercies, and not permit sacred rites which had been observed in the hour of danger to pass out of use in times of prosperity.

Speech of
Claudius
on the
subject.

² The Senate accordingly passed a decree enjoining the priests to consider what portions of the sooth-saying art should be retained or amplified.

Decree
passed.

⁶ In this same year the Cherusci,³ having lost many of their nobility in the course of civil war, sought a king from Rome ; for the one surviving member of their Royal house, Italicus by name, was now living in the city. This man was the son of Flavus, brother

The
Cherusci
send to
Rome for
Italicus to
be their
king ;

ii. 9 ; cf. de Div. i. 41, 92), just as in Rome in early times a knowledge of the law and of religious ritual was confined to the patrician families. It would appear from inscriptions (C. I. L. vi. 1, 2161, etc.) that the 'College' instituted by Claudius contained sixty members. The desire to preserve or revive ancient usages and learning was a special feature of his character.

¹ Note that the phrase *bonae artes* here stands for any reputable learning or accomplishment. See *Introd.* p. lxxix.

² Including especially, no doubt, Judaism and Christianity. See the fate of the 4000 votaries of Egyptian and Jewish rites recorded in ii. 85, 5 ; also the famous account given by Tacitus of the *exitabilis superstitio* of the Christians, xv. 44, 3-5.

³ For this famous people, who under their leader Arminius destroyed the three legions of Varus in A.D. 9, and for ever stemmed the tide of Roman invasion, see nn. on i. 3, 6, and *ib.* chaps. 55, 56. Flavus, the brother of Arminius, had taken the Roman side and had served in the Roman army under Tiberius : hence below (§ 6) he is contemptuously styled 'a scout' (*explorator*). In ii. 9-10, Tacitus dramatically describes a colloquy between the two brothers held across the river Weser. That the Cherusci should be seeking a king from Rome is one sign amongst others that the power of that people was now declining. 'The *exploratores* were mounted scouts, of especial use in frontier service, and were frequently natives of the districts in which they were employed' (F.).

of Arminius; his mother was a daughter of Actumerus, a chief among the Chatti.¹ He was a man of fine person, and he had been trained to ride and to carry arms both in the German and the Roman fashion. Claudius supplied him with money, provided him with an escort, and urged him to take up the honours of his house with a stout heart:— *He was the first Rome-born prince*, he declared, *to go forth to a foreign throne—and that not as a hostage,² but as a citizen of Rome.*

Claudius offers him every assistance.

Italicus welcomed at first;

At first Italicus was welcomed by the Germans. A stranger to their quarrels, affable to all alike, exhibiting at times the courtesy and the forbearance which all men appreciate, more often that love for wine and women which delights barbarians, he was courted and made much of; and his fame was beginning to spread far and near, when those who had flourished on faction, becoming alarmed at his ascendancy, went off to the adjoining tribes, protesting that—

Germany was having her ancient liberties taken from her, and Roman influence was becoming dominant. Were they so destitute of a home-born prince to fill the highest place that they must needs exalt a son of the scout³ Flavius above them all? It was idle to put forward the name of Arminius: if a son of Arminius himself, brought up in

but soon a party rises against him.

¹ This people are spoken of by Tac. as the everlasting enemies of the Cherusci, xii. 28, 2. They occupied the modern Nassau and the two provinces of Hesse on the right bank of the Rhine. See i. 55, 1.

² The reference here is to the Parthian princes (1) *Vonones*, given as a hostage to Augustus by Phraates IV. (ii. 1, 1); (2) *Phraates*, a son of Phraates (IV.?) (vi. 31-32); and (3) *Tiridates* (vi. 32, 5), all of whom had been sent to Rome as hostages, either to keep them out of

harm's way, or to prevent them from heading rebellions at home. The two first were summoned to the kingship by embassies from malcontent Parthians; the third was put forward by Tiberius.

³ The word 'scout' (*explorator*) is evidently here used in an ironical and contemptuous sense; so it is of little purpose to point out (F.) that in the 5th century there were picked corps (ep. our 'Lovat's Scouts') bearing this title.

an enemy's land, had come to be their king, it might be feared that he would be tainted with foreign ways in such outward matters as food, slaves,¹ dress, and everything else; but if Italicus were like his father Flavus, what man had ever fought more strenuously than he against his country and his country's Gods?

Using arguments such as these, they collected a large force; no less numerous was the following of Italicus:—

Italicus
addresses
his
followers;

He was no intruder, he reminded them, upon an unwilling people; he had been called in because of his pre-eminence in birth. Let them make trial of his valour, and see whether he would prove himself worthy of his uncle Arminius, of his grandsire Actumerus. It was no shame to him that his father had loyally paid to Rome a homage which the Germans had offered of their own free will. The cry of liberty was a pretext; it rang false in the mouths of men who were degenerate in their private lives, whose public policy meant ruin, and whose only hope was in civil discord.

Such words were clamorously applauded by the populace; and in what barbarians might deem a big battle, the King gained the day. But he became arrogant in success; and being first banished, and then restored by the Langobardi,² he proved alike in good fortune and in evil a scourge to the Cheruscan people.

wins a
battle, but
has a
chequered
career
afterwards.

About this time the Chauci, being at peace

The
Chauci

¹ I take the word *servitium* here differently from G. and G. The word is constantly used by Tac. in two different senses: (1) to denote 'servility'; (2) in the concrete sense of 'slaves.' As F. remarks, the concluding words *omnibus externis* belong equally to all the three points, *alimontio, servitio, cultu*. The Germans would naturally think first of external points

of national life: nor would 'servility' be appropriate to a king, unless it meant the expectation of servility in others. For the same reason the meaning of 'dress' for *cultus* is to be preferred to F.'s explanation 'refinement in general.' See *Introd.* p. lxxviii.

² Neighbours of the Chauci, on the lower Elbe. See ii. 45, 1.

invade
Lower
Germany.

among themselves, and emboldened by the death of Sanquinius,¹ made an incursion into Lower Germany while Corbulo² was on his way to that province. Their leader Gannascus belonged to the tribe of Canninefates;³ after serving as an auxiliary he had deserted, and was now making plundering expeditions in swift vessels along the coast, chiefly that of Gaul, knowing well how opulent and unwarlike were the inhabitants of that country.⁴

They are
repelled by
Corbulo,
who re-
stores the
discipline
of the
legions.

Corbulo took up his command with vigour, and soon made himself a name in this his first military campaign.⁵ Bringing up his triremes by the main channel of the Rhine, and the other vessels by different estuaries and canals⁶ as suited the build of each, he sank the enemy's flotilla and drove Gannascus out of the country. Having thus settled matters sufficiently for the present, he restored ancient habits of discipline among the legions, which had become

¹ For this Sanquinius Maximus, who had recently died as Legate of Lower Germany, see vi. 4, 4, and n.

² His full name was Cn. Domitius Corbulo. This famous general, the most conspicuous example in this epoch of the highest kind of Roman imperator, loyal to his Emperor and to Rome, restorer of ancient discipline, statesman as well as soldier, was doubtless son of the Domitius Corbulo mentioned in iii. 31, 4-7. The father there appears as a strenuous administrator of roads, and as demanding reparation for a want of respect to his years exhibited by the young noble Sulla; the same high spirit, the same masterful zeal for efficiency and good government, show themselves throughout the career of the son, whose campaigns both in the West and in the East constitute (along with the British campaigns) the main feature in the foreign history of Rome during the Claudian and Neronian reigns, and present us with the most perfect picture we possess of a Roman Proconsul in the plenitude of his power. After a uniformly successful tenure of his great Eastern command

(A.D. 54-67), he paid the usual penalty of success under a jealous Emperor, being recalled by Nero and forced to commit suicide A.D. 67—thus fulfilling the words *ignavo principi praegravem*, which occur in the chapter below (19, 6).

³ See n. on iv. 73, 2.

⁴ The wealth and unwarlike character of the Aedui is specially dwelt upon in iii. 46, 4: *quanto pecunia dites et voluptatibus opulentos, tanto magis imbelles Aeduos*. And in his speech recommending the admission of the Gauls, especially the Aedui, into the Senate, Claudius lays stress upon their wealth: *aurum et opes suas inferant potius quam separati habeant* (chap. 24, 10).

⁵ Corbulo had been Consul in A.D. 39 and Proconsul of the province of Asia some time between 51 and 53. But that province would afford him no chance of gaining military experience.

⁶ No doubt the *fossa Drusiana* is meant (see ii. 8, 1), the great military water-way which opened up an easy route to the Northern Ocean, and subsequently to Britain.

enamoured of plundering and disinclined to toil and labour. He would permit no soldier to leave the ranks, or to engage in combat without orders; all picket and sentry duty, whether by day or night, had to be done under arms; and the story goes that he put one soldier to death for digging at the rampart without side-arms, and another for having no other weapon upon him than a dagger. Such reports may be exaggerated, and perhaps untrue; but they had their origin in the General's character for sternness, and we may be sure that he was strict and inexorable towards grave offences if he was believed to have punished slight faults with such severity.

19 The terror thus inspired¹ affected our soldiers and the enemy very differently. It doubled the valour of our men: it broke the spirit of the barbarians. The Frisians,² who had been hostile, or wavering in their loyalty, ever since the revolt which began with the defeat of Lucius Apronius, now gave hostages, and settled down on lands assigned to them by Corbulo; he set up for them a Senate, magistrates, and laws, and built a fort to ensure their obedience.³ He then sent envoys to tempt the Greater Chauci⁴ to submission, and to bring about the death of Gannascus.

4 The plot was successful; but though it was not

Corbulo settles the Frisians,

and compasses the death of Gannascus

¹ The words *is terror* naturally refer to one and the same thing, viz. the terror inspired by the severe discipline of Corbulo, and not also (as some commentators suppose) to 'the alarm created by the defeat of Gannascus.

² For the position of the Frisii, and their revolt against L. Apronius, see i. 72 and 73, and nn.

³ This sentence gives the secret of Roman success in Empire-building; the imposition of law and order was with them a necessary accompaniment of conquest. Thus the object of founding the Colony of Colchester in A.D. 50

is not merely to keep rebellion in check, but also *imbuendis sociis ad officia legum* (xii. 32, 5). But while granting to the Frisians a certain amount of autonomy, with 'a Senate, Magistrates and Laws,' Corbulo took good care to provide against any possibility of a rising by building and garrisoning a fort; thus carrying out hand in hand the twin maxims of Roman empire, *Imperium et Libertas*.

⁴ The *Chauci maiores* were situated between the Weser and the Elbe, the *Chauci minores* to the W. of the former river (Ptol. ii. 11, 11).

dishonourable against a deserter, and one who had broken his allegiance, nevertheless the murder 5 exasperated the Chauci and sowed the seeds of disaffection. Most persons approved of Corbulo's proceedings; by others they were sharply criticised:—

*Why must he needs provoke the enemy? they asked; 6 his disasters would fall upon the State: if he gained victories, the pre-eminence of one man, under a feeble Emperor, would endanger the public peace.*¹

Claudius stops hostilities. Corbulo submits, and occupies his men with useful works.

Claudius accordingly not only forbade any fresh 7 attack upon Germany, but ordered the garrisons to be withdrawn to this side of the Rhine.

This order reached Corbulo as he was con- 20 structing his camp in the enemy's country. Taken aback as he was, and with many thoughts crowding in upon his mind—dread of the Emperor's anger, fear of being scorned by the barbarians and ridiculed by the allies—he gave the signal for retreat, with no further remark than this:—*How happy the Roman Generals in olden times!*² Desiring, nevertheless, to 2 keep his soldiers employed, he dug a canal twenty-three miles in length between the Meuse and the Rhine, to avoid the perils of the Northern sea.³ And though Claudius had forbidden the war, he 3 granted to Corbulo the triumphal insignia.

Triumphal insignia

Not long afterwards the same distinction was 4

¹ In using these words, Tac. must have had in his eye the ultimate fate of Corbulo: see n. on chap. 18, 1.

² The reading *quondam*, in place of the unmeaning *quosdam* of Med., was excellently restored by Lips. from Dio (lx. 30, 5), who gives πάλαι in reporting the same speech.

³ Tacitus gives an account of these two channels in ii. 6, 5. The correction of *vitarentur* for the Med. *vetarentur* seems certain. The object must have been to cut off part of the sea passage

towards Germany which had proved so disastrous to the army of Germanicus. The same was the object of the impossible canal projected by Nero from Ostia to Lake Avernus (xv. 42, 2). *Vetarentur* has been explained by some (relying on Dio, lx. 30, 6) as though the object was to 'keep back' the flow of water at the high spring tides: to which the objection of Tac. to the Ostian canal might well be applied (*nec satis causae*).

conferred upon Curtius Rufus,¹ who had opened up some silver mines in the country of the Mattiaci.² The product of the mines was small, and soon came to an end; while the legions had to bear the losses and the labour, digging out channels and carrying on work under ground which would have been arduous above
 5 it. Worn out by these and similar toils which were being endured in many provinces, the soldiers drew up an anonymous petition on behalf of all the armies, imploring the Emperor to grant triumphal honours beforehand to all Generals whom he proposed to put in command of armies.³

granted to
Corbulo
and to
Curtius
Rufus.

21 As to the origin of this Curtius Rufus, whom some affirm to have been the son of a gladiator, I would not assert what is false; and yet I am ashamed to
 2 tell the truth. On arriving at man's estate, he served on a Quaestor's staff in Africa. One day, as he was walking by himself in a colonnade at the empty mid-day hour⁴ in the town of Adrumetum, the form of a woman of more than human stature appeared to him, and uttered these words:—*All hail to thee, O Rufus! thou shalt enter this province as Proconsul!*

History of
Curtius
Rufus.

His hopes thus raised, he returned to Rome; where through his own talents, and by help in money from his friends, he gained the Quaestorship, and

¹ Evidently at that time Legate of Upper Germany. For the limits of the two German Provinces, see n. on i. 31, 2. This Curtius is supposed to have been the father of the historian Q. Curtius Rufus.

² For this people see i. 56, 6 and n.

³ The commentators accept this story without a question; but it is scarcely credible—even supposing that anonymous letters had been invented in those days—that under the severe military discipline of Rome, an impudent and ironical 'Round Robin' of this kind

could actually have been written and despatched to the Emperor. The whole thing sounds more like an after-dinner witticism, the cleverness and aptness of which gave it vogue, and ultimately erected it into a fact. The confirmation of the story by Suet. (Claud. 24) does no more than show that the story had established itself in the gossip of the Court.

⁴ The quiet and solitary hour of the day in hot climates; just as with us the proper hour for apparitions is midnight.

after that the Praetorship. That office he obtained, among noble competitors, on the recommendation of the Emperor Tiberius, who screened his low origin by the remark:—*Curtius Rufus seems to me to have been his own father.*¹ Servile, and yet surly, to his superiors, insolent to his inferiors, ill-tempered towards his equals, he lived to a great age, gaining the Consulship, the triumphal ornaments, and last of all, the province of Africa; in which province, having fulfilled his predicted destiny, he died.

About this time, without any ostensible reason, or any subsequently ascertained, a Roman Knight of the name of Gnaeus Nonius was discovered at the Emperor's morning reception with a sword on his person.² Though grievously racked by torture, he neither denied the charge nor revealed the names of his accomplices—if he had any.

In the course of this year Publius Dolabella³ proposed that a gladiatorial exhibition should be held annually at the expense of persons designated for the Quaestorship.⁴ In the days of our ancestors,

¹ Cicero uses the same phrase of himself, as a *novus homo*, Phil. 6, 6. After the capitulation of Mack's army at Ulm, the Grand Duke took Napoleon over his palace and exhibited to him with much pride the portraits of his ancestors. 'But I,' said Napoleon, tapping himself on the breast, 'am my own ancestor.' We know that Napoleon hated Tacitus (Intro. vol. i. pp. xxv. and xxvi.), and therefore must have read him; it is possible, therefore, that his speech may have been suggested by a reminiscence of the passage before us.

² Suet. informs us that detectives or searchers (*scrutatores*) made a strict examination of all persons presenting themselves at the emperor's morning levées, *saluatoribus scrutatores semper apposuit* (Claud. 35), not even women and girls being exempted from this

indignity. Vespasian abolished the practice (Vesp. 12).

³ Mentioned as a servile Senator in iii. 47, 4 and 69, 1.

⁴ The Quaestors were the finance officers of the state; originally two only, their number was gradually increased as stated below (there were at one time as many as forty under Julius Caesar, Dio xliii. 47, 2) to meet the needs of the armies and the provinces. Though not a curule office, the quaestorship was the first stage in the career of public office; in addition to this, its chief importance lay in the fact that it afforded a qualification for admission to the Senate. The office being for this reason greatly coveted, the imposition upon candidates of the heavy expense of a gladiatorial show was practically a kind of Entry-money to the Senate. One of the first

Case of a Roman Knight.

Motion as to Quaestors. History of that office.

public office was the reward of merit,¹ all citizens who could trust to their deserts being allowed to compete; and as there was no limit of age,² the Consulship or the Dictatorship might be held by
 5 men in early youth. The Quaestorship was instituted as early as the time of the Kings,³ as appears from the Curiate Law recited⁴ by Lucius Brutus;
 6 after that the appointment lay with the Consuls, until

acts of the Senate after the accession of Nero was to abolish this burden, in spite of the opposition of Agrippina (xiii. 5, 1).

¹ It is curious to find Tacitus thus calmly asserting that in the early days of the Republic public office was open to all citizens alike, and was given solely as the reward of merit. The phrase 'all citizens' could only have been applicable if by 'citizens' Tacitus meant patricians only—the original *populus*—to the exclusion of the plebeians. The quaestorship was the first of the high offices to be thrown open to the plebeians, B.C. 421; but no plebeian was actually elected until B.C. 409. The last office to be thrown open to them was the Censorship (prob. in B.C. 367), which was first occupied by a plebeian in B.C. 351. The phrase, *bonae artes*, used so variously by Tacitus, is here employed in its widest possible sense to include every element of character, accomplishments, or public service which might worthily be held to constitute a claim upon the suffrages of the citizens. See *Introd.* p. lxix.

² Only true of the earlier days of the Republic, previous to the passing of the *Lex Villia Annalis*, B.C. 180, which fixed the proper age at which the several magistracies might be held. The legal age for holding the quaestorship at this time was apparently twenty-five (iii. 29, 1 n.).

³ Much doubt exists as to the origin of the office. The term 'quaestor' is a contraction for *quaesitor*, an 'enquirer' or 'investigator'; and the term would be as suitable to use for any kind of public enquiry or executive duty as our own term 'commissioner.' The existence therefore of officers termed *quaestores parricidii*, or 'Commissioners on Murder Cases' (usually identified

with the *duumviri perduellionis* mentioned by Livy, i. 26, 5) is no proof that a financial authority similar to the quaestorship of historical times existed under the kings; and such a sub-division of office in those early times is in itself improbable. The full designation of the financial quaestors was *quaestores aerarii*; and the addition of the word *aerarii* at the beginning of the Republic is in itself a proof that while the title of quaestor had been in use before, the office now created was a new one. See Momm. Staatsr. ii. p. 523, Seeley Hist. Exam. Livy, Bk. I, pp. 90-92.

⁴ The term *lex curiata* properly denoted any law passed by the *comitia curiata*—the original public assembly, consisting entirely of patricians—but in historical times was used only of the *Lex curiata de Imperio*, the confirming act by which the *imperium* was conferred upon the higher magistrates, after their election by the people. The continuance of this custom as a necessary formality, long after the *curiae* had ceased to exercise any political power, is a notable instance of the tenacity with which the Romans clung to their ancient constitutional usages. It is doubtful if the word *repetita* here used can mean 'renewed' or 'revived' as F. supposes. The word *repetere* means merely 'to retrace,' or 'to go back upon,' something in the past; and the idea here is that the *lex curiata* passed by L. Brutus to establish the new constitution on the expulsion of the kings, 'went back to,' 'was founded on,' the precedents of the old *lex curiata* of the kings; these precedents being apparently quoted in the body of the *lex* itself. The language of Tac. implies that the text of the law was still extant in his day.

this office, like the rest, was thrown open to popular election.¹

The first election of Quaestors was held in the 7
63rd year after the expulsion of the Tarquins,² when
Valerius Potitus and Aemilius Mamercus were
attached as Quaestors to the army.³ As business 8
increased, two were added to attend to affairs in
Rome.⁴ When Italy had become tributary, and
revenues from the provinces came in, the number
was again doubled; and subsequently Sulla, having 9
handed over criminal jurisdiction to the Senate, and
wishing to enlarge that body, passed a law increasing
the number to twenty.⁵ And though the Knights 10
recovered their judicial rights, the Quaestorship
continued to be bestowed without burden im-
posed, according to the merits of candidates, or
the goodwill of the electors, until by this proposal
of Dolabella it was as it were put up to auction.⁶

¹ 'The meaning of Tacitus seems to be that the king nominated his quaestors after his own election, and their appointment was then ratified by the *lex curiata*. Another explanation is that the *lex* recited that the kings appointed quaestors, and empowered the consuls to do so.' Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, p. 8r.

² *i.e.* in B.C. 447. That popular election was substituted in that year for consular nomination in the case of the quaestors is only known to us from this passage. That date makes it obvious that the throwing open of the quaestorship to popular election was one of the measures included among the Valerio-Horatian laws carried after the downfall of the Decemvirs. It is to be noted that the election to that office was exercised, not by the *Comitia Centuriata*, which elected to the other high offices, but to the plebeian assembly, the *Comitia Tributa*.

³ This passage has been usually held to imply that Tac. means that the military duties of the quaestorship constituted their proper business, and that the urban duties were added afterwards.

Livy gives the opposite and more likely order (iv. 43, 4); but Tac. need not mean more here than that the occasion when election was first introduced was for the wars which followed on the deposition of the Decemvirs.

⁴ Probably in or about B.C. 267, as Momm. supposes. The four new quaestors then added were no doubt the same as those assigned to the four so-called 'provinces' in Italy; see n. on iv. 27, 2.

⁵ Sulla restored to the Senate, and took away from the equestrian order, the coveted privilege of serving as jurors on criminal trials (*quaestiones perpetuae*); and Tac. seems to mean that Sulla's sole object in increasing the number of quaestors was to keep up the numbers of the Senate with a view to the discharge of its judicial duties. But the extra quaestors were certainly needed for administrative purposes; Caesar even increased their number to forty; and it was an essential part of Sulla's general policy to strengthen the Senate both in numbers and importance (Momm. *Staatsr.* ii. p. 533).

⁶ The emphatic word in this passage

A.D. 48. CONSULS AULUS VITELLIUS AND LUCIUS
VIPSTANUS POPLICOLA.

23 In this year, when the question of adding to the Senate¹ was raised, a petition was presented from the chiefs² of that part of Gaul which is called Comata,³ who, having long been admitted to the Roman citizenship under special treaties, now demanded the right of holding public office.⁴ This claim gave rise to much and various talk, and was hotly debated before the Emperor. Some protested that—

Petition from Gallia Comata for admission to public office.

3 *Italy was not reduced to such straits that she could not find Senators for her own capital. In the days of*

The demand opposed.

is *gratuito*; the general meaning being that although the numbers of the Senate no longer needed to be kept up for the performance of its judicial duties, the number of quaestorships had been still maintained, both as a mode of distinguishing deserving men, and as an occasion for exercising patronage, but without imposing any burden on the recipients. The new regulation put the office as it were up to sale by imposing a severe tax on all candidates.

¹ It was part of the regular duties of the Censor to make up the roll of the Senate—purging it of unworthy members, and admitting new ones.

² It appears from the speech of Claudius as preserved at Lyons (see n. on chap. 24, 11) that this petition was supported by a deputation of young chiefs from the tribes of Northern Gaul.

³ The name of 'Long-haired' was given to the three Northern provinces of Gaul (*Aquitania*, *Lugdunensis*, *Belgica*), in distinction to the *Gallia Togata* of North Italy, and the Romanised Province of *Narbonensis*, in consequence of their keeping up the old fashion of long hair. We are told that hairdressers were first introduced into Rome from Sicily in B.C. 300.

⁴ These words imply that there was a discussion, *pro* and *con*, in presence of the emperor. In this chapter only the arguments of those who opposed

the admission of the Gauls is given. But the words at the beginning of the next chapter (*et statim et vocato senatu*) show that Claudius had at once supported the claims of the Gauls, as well as more formally afterwards before the Senate.

The constitutional discussion here related gives an admirable picture of the difference between the old Conservative or Senatorial view of the relation of Rome to the provinces, and that larger and more liberal policy which was inaugurated by Caesar, and consistently practised under subsequent emperors. Nowhere does the essential fairness and judicial impartiality of Tacitus as an historian come out more clearly than in his presentment of this question. His own sympathies, not concealed, are all with the senatorial view; and yet he states the case on the other side with arguments which carry conviction, and with a rhetorical power not less than that exhibited by those who were most earnest in advocating the grant of full political privileges to the Transvaal in 1906. The liberality of Great Britain in giving full self-government to that country five years after a bitter war seems quite outdone by what is here stated as to the liberality of Romulus, who *plerosque populos eodem die hostes dein cives habuerit* (chap. 24, 6).

old a Senate of native-born Romans had been good enough for peoples of kindred blood; and would any one find fault with those old days now? ¹ Was it not from the fashions of those times that men still took their examples of Roman valour and renown? Was it a ⁴ small thing that Venetians and Insubrians ² had forced their way into the Senate-house, without having hordes of aliens poured into it, as into a conquered city? What ⁵ place of honour would be left for such nobles as remained, or for impoverished Latin Senators? Every post would ⁶ be filled by those wealthy men whose grandfathers and great-grandfathers had led hostile nations against us, had destroyed our armies in battle, or besieged the divine Julius in Alesia. ³ These matters were of yesterday; what ⁷ if they bethought them of those who had been struck down ⁴ by these same barbarians beneath the Capitol and citadel of Rome? Let such men enjoy, by all means, the name of citizens; but let not the insignia of Senators, and the honours of public office, be opened to all and sundry. ⁵

But arguments like these made no impression ²⁴ upon Claudius. He pronounced against them at

¹ The meaning is clear enough, though the expression is obscure. The meaning is that in the best and purest days of the Republic—days of which every Roman was still proud—the group of kindred states then combined under the leadership of Rome were content that the Senate should be composed of Romans only.

² These tribes in North Lombardy, along with the other *Transpadani*, received the Roman franchise from Caesar in B.C. 49.

³ In Burgundy, near Dijon, the seat of the last desperate struggle of Vercingetorix against Caesar, who during one stage of the siege was himself besieged by a relieving force from outside.

⁴ The reading here followed (*prostrati sint*) is that conj. by Ritter. The passage is corrupt, and no very probable emendation has been proposed.

But the words of Med. *Capitolio et arce* (or *arce*), coupled with the necessities of the sense, show clearly that the reference is to the capture of Rome by the Senonian Gauls in B.C. 390.

⁵ It is to be noted that though Tacitus doubtless sympathised with the senatorial view, there is no suggestion in this chapter that any form of degeneracy, any lowering of the standard of public life, would result from the admission of Gauls into the Senate. Indeed, Tac. himself admits elsewhere that the introduction of provincials into the Senate had had an excellent effect in introducing a more simple style of living:—*Simul novi homines e municipiis et coloniis in senatum crebro assumpti domesticam parsimoniam intulerunt, et quamquam fortuna et industria plerique pecuniosam ad senectutem pervenirent, mansit tamen prior animus* (iii. 55, 4).

once; and having summoned the Senate, he thus delivered himself:—

I am encouraged by my own ancestors, the oldest of whom, Clausus, was a Sabine, and was admitted to the Roman citizenship and to the patriciate on the same day, to follow the same policy, and to bring excellence to
Rome wherever it may be found. I cannot forget that the Julii came from Alba,¹ the Coruncanii from Camerium, the Porcii from Tusculum: and without going back into antiquity, that men from Etruria, Lucania, and all Italy, have been admitted to the Senate;² and finally, that Italy itself has been pushed forward to the Alps, not individuals only, but entire territories and nations,
being united under the name of Rome. Peace was assured at home, and affairs abroad were prospering, when the Transpadanes received the citizenship,³ and when, under colour of settling the legions throughout the world, the best blood of the provinces was brought in to rein-
vigorate the exhausted Empire. Does any man regret that the Balbi⁴ came over to us from Spain? or others of equal distinction from Narbonensian Gaul? Their

¹ The Julii held themselves descended from Iulus, son of Æneas, and to have been translated to Rome on the destruction of Alba (Virg. Aen. i. 268). At the funeral of Drusus, son of Tiberius, the procession included *origo Iuliac gentis Æneas, omnesque Albanorum reges* (iii. 9. 3).

² This refers to the great extension of the franchise throughout Italy and as far as the Po after the Social War, B.C. 90.

³ As the words *solida domi quies* are inapplicable to the time when Caesar extended the franchise to the *Transpadani* (B.C. 49), at the beginning of the great Civil War, the commentators either suspect a gloss, or variously explain away the words. But they have missed the meaning of the passage. Claudius is anxious to show that the extension of the franchise beyond the

Po. was a matter of deliberate policy, and was not brought about either under the pressure of foreign war, or (as after the Social War) by any rising within Italy itself. Thus *solida domi quies* means 'there was no disaffection at home, no agitation, to bring about the change'; *adversus externa floruimus*, 'we were enjoying peace abroad, we had entirely pacified Gaul, when we extended the franchise across the Po.'

⁴ The wealthy and accomplished Spaniard L. Cornelius Balbus obtained the citizenship through Pompey, and became afterwards the staunch and invaluable supporter and instrument of Caesar. He attained to the Consulship in B.C. 40. The theatre built in the Campus Martius by his equally distinguished nephew is mentioned in iii. 72, 2.

descendants are among us now, with a patriotism not inferior to our own.

What was it that brought the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians to ruin but that, strong as they were in arms, they held the conquered away from them as though they were aliens? Far wiser was our own founder Romulus, who fought with many peoples, and made citizens of them, on the self-same day. We have had foreigners to reign over us; and to commit magistracies to freedmen's sons is not, as some falsely aver, a thing of yesterday, but was common in the olden time.¹

We fought, you say, with the Senonians: but did the Volscians and the Aequians never stand in battle array against us? We were taken captive by the Gauls: yes,— and did we not also give hostages to the Etruscans? Did we not pass under the Samnite yoke?² And yet, if we review all our wars, none was more quickly ended³ than that with the Gauls; and it has been followed by a stable, unbroken peace. The Gauls have mingled with us in blood, in manners, and in the arts: let them bring to us their gold and their wealth, rather than keep them apart for themselves. The things which we now deem oldest, Conscript Fathers, once were new. After patrician magistrates, came plebeian; after plebeian, Latin; after the Latins, all the tribes of Italy. This new thing likewise will become old; and what we fortify by precedents to-day, will itself be a precedent to-morrow.⁴

¹ The allusion no doubt is to the celebrated case of the scribe Cn. Flavius, son of a freedman, who held the Curule Aedileship in B.C. 303 (Liv. ix. 46, 1), and to the bitterly-resented and soon-rescinded admission of *libertini* to the Senate by Appius Claudius Caecus B.C. 312.

² In allusion to the defeat of Rome by Porsena after the expulsion of the Kings, and to the disaster of the Caudine Forks B.C. 321.

³ Claudius is here contrasting the ten years which it took Caesar to complete the conquest of Gaul with the more prolonged wars against Carthage, Spain, Mithradates, etc.

⁴ The arguments of this chapter are as applicable to the British as to the Roman Empire. The summary with which it ends might have been found in the mouths of British statesmen any time during the past century.

One of the most interesting things

25 The Emperor's speech was followed up by a
 2 decree of Senate; and the Aedui¹ were the first to
 obtain the right of becoming Roman Senators—a
 privilege granted because of their ancient treaty, and
 also because they alone among the Gauls are styled
 'brethren of the Roman people.'

The
 petition
 granted to
 the Aedui.

3 On this occasion Claudius admitted into the
 patrician order the older members of Senate, and
 some others of illustrious parentage.² For there were
 few now left of the families to which Romulus had
 given the name of 'the Greater Houses,' and Lucius
 Brutus that of 'the Lesser';³ none even remained of
 those chosen by the Dictator Caesar under the
 Cassian Law,⁴ or by the Emperor Augustus under
 the Saenian.⁵

Admission
 of new
 patricians.

4 The Emperor greatly enjoyed exercising his

Claudius
 purges the
 Senate;

in Latin literature is that two stone tablets, discovered at Lyons in the 16th century, have put us in possession of a considerable part of the original speech delivered on this occasion by Claudius; and we are thus able to form some idea of the manner in which Tac. made use of the original materials on which his history is founded. See Introd. p. liv. The contents of these tablets, so far as preserved, are given and discussed by F., vol. ii. pp. 54-60.

¹ Not as a state, but as individuals. The chiefs of this people, who occupied the centre of Gaul with Autun (*Augustodunum*) as their capital, were the friendliest and wealthiest of the Gaulish tribes, and would thus naturally be the first admitted to the Senate.

² *i.e.* illustrious by their character or position (*claris*) rather than by birth (*nobilitas*).

³ The traditional account, given by Livy, is that the patricians were descended from the 100 *patres* selected by Romulus to form his Senate (*patres certe ab honore, patricisque progenies eorum appellati*, Liv. i. 8, 7). These, with certain houses which came in with the Sabine Tattius, and perhaps from Alba, were styled 'the greater houses' (*maiorum gentium*); a further 100,

admitted by Tarquinius Priscus, were styled *minorum gentium*; while Brutus, on the downfall of the Kings, made up the Senate to 300 by adding new families (probably plebeians) who were styled *Conscripti*. The Senate thus formed was addressed as *Patres et Conscripti*; the connecting particle *et* being soon omitted. Tacitus, it will be noticed, omits all allusion to Tarquin. Any early admissions to the patriciate must have taken place by the act of the patrician assembly, the *Comitia Curiata* (Momm. Staatsr. iii. 29), so long as the powers of that ancient assembly survived. Claudius would add to the number in virtue of his power as Censor.

⁴ This law is unknown; but Caesar was entrusted with the powers here mentioned in B.C. 25 (Dio, xliii. 47, 3; Suet. Jul. 41). It appears that under this law the Octavii were admitted (Suet. Aug. 1).

⁵ Augustus himself refers to his exercise of the powers conferred on him by this law under the year B.C. 29 (Mon. Anc. 2, 1). L. Saenius was cos. suf. in the last months of the year B.C. 30. The words do not necessarily mean that the families so admitted had died out, but only that their admission had failed to keep up the numbers of the order.

ensorian functions in welcome measures like these ;⁵ but being troubled how to expel from the Senate men of notoriously evil character, he adopted a gentle and modern device,¹ rather than resort to ancient methods of severity. Such persons he warned to take each his own case into consideration, and seek the privilege of giving up his rank :—*The permission, he promised, would readily be granted ; and he would mitigate the indignity of the censorian judgment by publishing the names of those expelled in the same list with those whose own modesty led them to retire.*²

he declines
new
honours.

In return for this, the Consul Vipstanus moved⁷ that Claudius should be entitled 'Father of the Senate.' *The title of 'Father of his country,' he urged, had become common ;³ new services to the State should be distinguished by new appellations.* Claudius however⁸ put his veto on the proposal, as savouring too much of flattery. He then closed the lustrum,⁴ bringing out a total of 5,984,072 citizens.⁵

And now the Emperor's ignorance of his own domestic affairs came to an end. He was soon to learn and to punish the infamous conduct of his wife, and then himself to lust after an incestuous union with his niece.

Passion of
Messalina
for Silius.

By this time the very ease of its gratification was 26

¹ Used by Augustus (Suet. Oct. 35 ; Dio, lii. 42), in distinction to the public disgrace of expulsion by the Censors in accordance with previous practice.

² If this reason was really given by Claudius, it was somewhat simple of him not to reflect that if the ignominy of those expelled was lessened by their being included in the same list as those who retired voluntarily, the ignominy of these latter would be increased in the same proportion. Possibly the passage is ironically inserted as an instance of the fatuous remarks sometimes made by Claudius.

³ See n. on i. 72, 2.

⁴ *Condere lustrum* is the technical phrase for bringing the *lustrum* to a close by the ceremony of purification (*lustratio*), and by the solemn sacrifice of a bull, a sow, and a sheep (*suove-taurilia*).

⁵ This number, which seems to represent the reading of Med., corresponds closely enough with the number of citizens given by Augustus on the Mon. Anc. for the years B.C. 28 and 8 respectively : viz. 4,063,000 and 4,233,000.

turning Messalina's passion into disgust, and she was plunging into unheard-of excesses, while Silius himself, whether moved by some fatal infatuation, or believing that the best cure for impending danger was to meet it,¹ would urge her to have done with concealment:—

2 Things were not so bad with them, he said, that they must needs await the Emperor's old age. Innocent counsels were for the innocent; manifest guilt must look
3 to daring for its salvation. They had confidants in like peril with themselves. He had neither wife nor child; he was ready to marry her, and to adopt Britannicus.
4 Messalina would be all-powerful as before; and if they took Claudius in time, they would have safety also: for he was as slow to suspect as he was swift to wrath.

Silius urges her to have done with concealment.

5 These suggestions were but coldly received; not that Messalina loved her husband, but she was afraid that Silius, once possessed of power, would despise his mistress, and put its true value on the crime which in the moment of difficulty he had approved.
6 Nevertheless the very greatness of the scandal, offering the last of all attractions to an abandoned mind,²
7 made her long for the name of wife; and having

Messalina reluctantly consents;

¹ It is not easy to improve upon the literal version of Richard Greenway, 'or thinking dangers themselves to be (sic) the remedy against imminent dangers.'

² The meaning here given to *prodigos* by itself is unexampled: prob. Or. is right in taking it with *famae*, which may be supplied from the preceding word *infamiae*. The word would then denote the reckless ill-liver, who has cast all regard for reputation to the winds, and actually courts an evil notoriety. So *puccitiae prodigus*, of utter shamelessness, Vell. ii. 48. Or. well quotes Sen. Epp. 123, *nolunt solita peccare quibus peccandi praemium infamia est*.

I am unable to accept F.'s explanation of the phrase *cuius apud prodigos*

novissima voluptas est, 'a pleasure, which, with the abandoned, outlasts all others.' That explanation certainly receives some countenance from Hist. iv. 6, 2, *etiam sapientibus cupido gloriae novissima exiit*, a sentiment so familiar to us from the imitation in Lycidas, where Fame is spoken of as 'That last infirmity of noble mind.' But the word *novissima* may be as well used of that which is the last to come as of that which is the last to go; and Tac. could never have meant to suggest that a taste for infamy, like a longing for glory, is part of the original equipment of any human character. The meaning must be that an actual delight in infamy for its own sake marks the last and lowest stage in the career of the abandoned.

waited only till Claudius set out to perform a sacrifice at Ostia,¹ she went through all the forms of a marriage-ceremony.

and goes through the ceremony of a formal marriage with him.

I am well aware how fabulous it will appear that in a city where everything is known, everything talked about, any person whatsoever, not to say a Consul-designate, should have been so fool-hardy as on an appointed day, before duly-summoned witnesses,² to unite himself to the Emperor's consort, as if for the purpose of rearing children;³ that she should have listened to the augur's words,⁴ gone through the ritual,⁵ and sacrificed to the Gods; that the two should have taken their places at a banquet,⁶

27

¹ Claudius was specially interested in Ostia. He had greatly improved the harbour there; and Dio says that on this occasion he went down to look after the corn-supply. Some suppose that the sacrifice here mentioned may have been in a Temple to Castor and Pollux as Gods of fair weather, mentioned by Ammianus (xix. 10, 4). A phrase in Aurelius Victor de Caess. 4 (*animi et pellicum causa*) suggests that Claudius may have gone to Ostia for similar purposes of enjoyment to those which detained Messalina in Rome.

² The witnesses were there to witness the marriage contract.

³ The words *suscipiendorum liberorum causa* formed an essential part of a legitimate marriage contract.

⁴ Though now reduced to a mere form (Cic. Div. i. 16, 28), the presence of augurs (*auspices*) was still essential to a marriage ceremony; it appears from this passage that they had to repeat some form of words. They probably acted as witnesses (*dote inter auspices obsignata*, Suet. Claud. 26). Juv. specially mentions the *auspex*.

This monstrous story of the mock-marriage ceremony between Silius and Messalina, incredible as it appeared to Tacitus himself, and unexplained by any reasonable hypothesis, is too well attested to be disbelieved. It has been made famous not by Tacitus only, but also by the magnificent description of Juvenal:—

*Mulier sacvissima tunc est
Quum stimulos odio pudor admovet.
Elige, quidnam
Suadendum esse putes, cui nubere
Caesaris uxor
Destinat? Optimus hic et formosissimus idem
Gentis patriciae rapitur miser extinguendus
Messalinae oculis (x. 328-333).*

⁵ The word *subisse* occurs here without an object; whether corrupt or not, it must have referred to some part of the marriage ceremony. Nipp. supposes that the word omitted may be *flammeum*, the saffron-coloured veil which had to be put on by the bride. The *flammeum* is specially mentioned by Juv. in the lines following the above quotation:

*Dudum sedet illa parato
Flammeolo, Tyriusque palam genialis
in hortis
Sternitur, et ritu decies centena
dabuntur
Antiquo, veniet cum signatoribus
auspex (x. 333-6).*

So in the pretended marriage of Nero to Pythagoras, *inditum imperatori flammeum, visi auspices, dos et genialis torus et faces nuptiales* (xv. 37, 9). It is also possible that *subisse* may have dropped out from its right place before *oscula complexus*, where it would be quite appropriate.

⁶ *i.e.* at the wedding feast; see Juv. ii. 119.

indulged in kisses and embraces: and finally have passed the night together with all the freedom of man and wife. Yet this is no story made up for marvel's sake: I shall but relate what was heard and recorded by my elders.

8 These proceedings sent a shudder through the imperial household, and especially among those in authority, who had most to fear from change. Secret confabulations were followed by open murmurs:—

Alarm of the imperial household.

It was a disgrace, no doubt, that the Emperor's bed-chamber should have been outraged by an actor;¹ yet that did not put the Emperor's life in danger. But here was a noble, handsome, and capable youth, with the Consulship before him, girding himself for a still higher destiny. None could be blind to what must follow upon such a marriage.

2 These men doubtless had their fears as they reflected how dull-witted Claudius was, how wife-ridden, and how many deaths had been brought about
3 at Messalina's bidding; but then again the very weakness of the Emperor gave them confidence. If they could only possess his mind with the enormity of the charge, Messalina might be condemned and crushed before she was accused. The one danger was that Claudius might listen to her defence; the one hope that his ears should be closed even to her confession.²

9 First there was a consultation between Callistus,³

Doubts and hesitations.

¹ The actor here referred to is the pantomimist Mnestor, for whom see above chap. 4, 2: his fate is given below, chap. 36, 1-3.

² This sentence gives a good example of how Tac. trusts rather to the intelligence of his reader than to the logical correctness of his language. *In eo discrimen verti, si defensio audiretur:* 'Everything turned upon this—whether Messalina would be heard in her own defence: 'logically the words *or not*

should have followed; but Tac. treats the point raised by that question as already decided, and as though the preceding words had meant, 'The object to be aimed at was that Messalina's defence should *not* be heard,' he proceeds with a positive clause, 'and that the ears of Claudius should be closed even to her confession.'

³ Callistus, enfranchised by Gaius, whose name he bore, as well as that of Claudius (his full name, after his

whom I have already mentioned in connection with the assassination of Gaius Caesar; Narcissus, who had contrived the death of Appius Junius Silanus;¹ and Pallas, whose influence at that moment was supreme, as to whether they should privately frighten Messalina into breaking off her amour with Silius, and ignore everything else. But the fear that they might thereby bring about their own ruin caused this plan to be abandoned. Pallas had no stomach for it; and Callistus had learned from his experience in a former Court that for those who would keep hold of power, caution is a safer counsellor than zeal. Narcissus alone persisted; but with this difference, that he would give no warning to Messalina of either accuser or accusation.² So he watched eagerly for his opportunity; and during the Emperor's long sojourn at Ostia, he prevailed on two courtesans who were intimate with Claudius to play the part of informers, working on them by presents and by promises, and representing that they would gain in influence by Messalina's fall.

Narcissus
resolves to
act;

adoption, would be *Iulius Claudius Callistus*), rose to great wealth from humble beginnings under the former emperor, and seems to have taken an important part in the plot for his assassination. He was now one of the secretaries (*a libellis*) of Claudius, his duty being to deal with petitions to the emperor. Narcissus was the emperor's principal secretary, having charge of his letters. Pallas had been a slave of Antonia's; and passing at her death into the possession of Claudius, was by him manumitted. His immense wealth passed into a proverb: *ego possideo plus = Pallante et Licinis*, *Juv. i. 108-9*. We shall hear much of these three below; they were practically the rulers of Rome during the reign of Claudius.

¹ This Appius Junius Silanus, *cos.* in A.D. 28 (*iv. 68, 1*), had become step-father to Messalina by marrying her mother Domitia Lepida (see below, chap. 37, 4, and *xii. 64, 4-6*). How Silanus rejected the advances of Mes-

salina, and was put to death in *B.C. 42* by a trick played on Claudius by her and Narcissus, is told by Suet. (*Claud. 37*), and was no doubt recorded by Tac. in the lost portion of the Annals.

² Here again Tacitus is too short to be intelligible. The original plan of the three freedmen was to induce Messalina to give up her infatuation for Silius, but to conceal from her their knowledge or suspicion of her ulterior designs. Pallas and Narcissus shrunk back from the proposal, as too dangerous: Narcissus alone *perstitit*, 'persevered'; only with this important difference, that he was to give no warning to Messalina. But the giving of the warning to Messalina constituted the essence of the original plan; it is obvious therefore that *perstitit* does not mean 'held to the plan,' but 'maintained his resolution to do something'; and thereupon he proceeded to put a totally different plan into execution.

A.D.

Thereupon Calpurnia—so one of the women was called—obtained a private interview with Claudius, threw herself down at his feet, and blurted out that *Messalina had been married to Silius*. With that she asked Cleopatra, who was standing by for the purpose, *Had she heard the news?* Cleopatra confirmed the report: whereupon Calpurnia suggested that Narcissus should be sent for. Narcissus craved pardon for his past omission in not having denounced cases like those of Vettius and Plautius,¹ and protested that—

he employs
two women
to inform
Claudius.

Even now he would not charge him with the adultery; still less should he² ask back from Silius his palace, or his slaves, or the other appurtenances of his high state. All these let him keep; but let him give back to Claudius his wife, and break that nuptial contract. Do you not know,³ Caesar, he continued, that you have been divorced? The marriage of your wife to Silius has been witnessed

Narcissus
shames
Claudius
into action;

¹ The reading of Med. here is manifestly corrupt: *quod ei cis vetticis plautio dissimulavisset*. The correction to *Vettios Plautios* (here adopted) alludes to Vettius Valens (chap. 31, 6) and to Plautius Lateranus (chap. 36, 5: cp. xiii. 11, 2, *Plautius Lateranus, quem ob adulterium Messalinæ ordine demotum reddidit Senatui*), two lovers of Messalina: the plurals being used rhetorically as in i. 10, 3. Some have attempted to make a meaning out of *cis* ('on this side of') as though Narcissus excused himself for saying nothing so long as Messalina 'confined herself to' these persons; but for this meaning the Latin is as lame as the apology. Or, however adopts this meaning, reading (after Gron.) *quod ei cis Vettios cis Plautios dissimulavisset*.

² There is a baffling change of subject here after the manner of Tac. The natural subject would be *Narcissus*, who is the subject of the principal verb *obiecturum*. If that be so, *reposceret* must have the peculiar sense of 'advising to ask back': 'much less would he (*i.e.* if he were Claudius) ask him

(Silius) to restore the slaves,' etc. But the verb *frueretur* which immediately follows has Claudius for its subject, and it is better to make Claudius the subject of *reposceret* also. The awkwardness of such a transition is great: 'He (*i.e.* Narcissus) would even now say nothing of the adultery, much less should he (*i.e.* Claudius) demand back,' etc. The above explanation assumes, with F. and others, that *ne* here is equivalent to *nedum*, 'much less.' But the instances quoted are not convincing; and *ne* may quite well be used either in its ordinary sense of 'lest,' or as equivalent to *ut non*; (1) 'he (Narcissus) would not charge Silius with the adultery, (which he mentioned) lest he (Claudius) should demand back the other things'; or (2) 'so that he need not demand them.'

³ Nothing could be more dramatic than this sudden change on the part of Narcissus from a tone of deprecatory remonstrance to the abrupt point-blank question by which he seeks to rouse Claudius to a sense of the realities of his position.

by the people, by the Senate and by the soldiers: and unless you bestir yourself, her husband will be master of the town!

Claudius consults with his friends.

Claudius then called together his chief friends, 31 and questioned first Turranius, Superintendent of the Corn-market,¹ and then Lusius Geta, Commander of the Praetorians. These confirmed the story: 2 whereupon the rest with one voice called on him to go to the camp and secure the Praetorians:—*Let him think of safety first, of vengeance afterwards.*

Continued abandonment of Messalina; she holds a mock vintage.

Claudius seems to have been overcome with terror: 3 he kept asking, *Was he still Emperor? Was Silius still a private citizen?* Messalina meanwhile was abandon- 4 ing herself more recklessly than ever. It was full autumn; and she was celebrating a mock-vintage in the house. There were wine presses at work; vats 5 overflowed with liquor; women clad in fawn-skins capered about, like sacrificing or frenzied Bacchanals. She herself, with streaming hair, was brandishing a thyrsus; by her side was Silius, crowned with ivy, with buskins on his feet, rolling his head about amid a yelling wanton crew.² The story goes that 6 Vettius Valens, in a frolic, climbed up a high tree, and that, on being asked what he saw, he replied that, *He saw an ugly squall coming up from Ostia*—whether anything of the kind had begun to show itself, or that some phrase dropped by chance was turned into a prophecy.³

¹ For this office, which Turranius held in A.D. 14, and apparently had held ever since, see n. on i. 7, 3.

² Silius was thus playing the part of Bacchus, just as Antony did in his wilder revels (Vell. ii. 82, 4).

³ The comm. seem to miss the obvious meaning of this passage. The two alternatives suggested are (1) That

Vettius actually saw some sign of a storm coming from Ostia (*sive coeperat ea species*), just as Elijah's servant saw 'a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand'; or (2) That Vettius had merely let fall some chance expression which was afterwards interpreted as a presage of impending disaster.

32 During this time not rumours only, but messengers also, kept pouring in on every side, announcing that Claudius knew everything, and was on his way to Rome resolved on vengeance. Messalina took herself off to the Lucullan Gardens;¹ Silius, by way of disguising his fears, to his business in the Forum. As the company slunk away in all directions, Centurions appeared upon the scene and put into chains such of them as they could find, whether in hiding or in the streets. Stupefied as she was by the blow, Messalina boldly resolved to meet the danger, and save herself, as she had so often done before, by presenting herself to her husband: she sent orders² that Britannicus and Octavia should go forth to embrace their father. She also implored Vibidia, the senior Vestal Virgin,³ to approach the Pontifex Maximus, and crave a pardon for her; while she herself, with a retinue of no more than three persons—so suddenly had she been deserted—traversed the whole city⁴ on foot, and proceeded along the Ostian Road in a cart used for removing garden rubbish. And pity for her there was none: men could only think of the enormity of her offences.

The company disperses on hearing that all is known to Claudius.

Messalina sets out for Ostia.

33 Nor was there less alarm on the part of Claudius. Little trust could be placed on Geta, the Commander of the Praetorians, a man who was easily swayed either to good or evil. Narcissus, therefore, in

Alarm of Claudius.

¹ These gardens were the Naboth's vineyard for the sake of which Messalina had done Valerius Asiaticus to death. See n. on chap. I, I.

² So Halm (*misilque*) for the *missique* or *misique* of Med. There is no reason for reading *iussilque* with Or. and the early comm. It is clear that Octavia and Britannicus set off separately from Messalina; and it is not to be supposed that they were present at the orgies in the gardens of Lucullus.

³ The sacred character of the chief Vestal Virgin would give special weight to her intercession, especially with the Emperor in his character of *Pontifex Maximus*. Even Narcissus did not venture to brush her petition aside without an answer (chap. 34, 5).

⁴ From the Pincian garden on the North to the Ostian Gate on the South Messalina would have to traverse the entire length of the city.

concert with those who shared his fears, declared that, *The only hope for Caesar's life lay in transferring the command of the forces for that one day to one of the freedmen.* He volunteered to undertake the charge himself; and being afraid that Lucius Vitellius and Largus Caecina might change the mind of Claudius on his way back to the city, he asked and obtained permission to take his seat in the same carriage with the Emperor.

He sets out for Rome, and encounters Messalina and her children ;

After that, according to the common account, Claudius kept changing his tone every moment—now railing at Messalina's misconduct, now recurring to thoughts of his wife and infant children. Vitellius would do nothing but exclaim: *O how monstrous! O how shocking!* In vain did Narcissus urge him to be done with riddles, and say plainly what he thought; he would give nothing but dubious answers, that might be taken in any sense. Caecina did the same.

Narcissus keeps them off.

And now Messalina came in sight, loudly calling upon Claudius to listen to the mother of Octavia and Britannicus. Narcissus shouted her down with reproaches about Silius and the marriage; and then, in order to keep the eyes of Claudius off her, he handed to him a list of her lovers. Soon after that, as he was entering the city, their two children were put in his way; but Narcissus ordered them off. He could not do the same however with the Vestal Vibidia, who assailed him bitterly, demanding that, *A wife should not be condemned to death unheard.* Narcissus promised that the Emperor would grant a hearing to Messalina, and give her an opportunity of clearing herself:—*Meanwhile let Vibidia go, and attend to her Vestal duties.*

Meeting with the Vestal Vibidia.

Narcissus
takes
Claudius to
the house
of Silius
and then to
the camp.

35 During all this time Claudius preserved a strange silence; Vitellius did not appear to understand what was going on. The freedman took everything into his own hands. He gave orders that the house of Silius should be broken into, and that the Emperor
2 should be conveyed thither. As they entered the fore-court,¹ he pointed out the image of Silius' father,² which the Senate had ordered to be destroyed; he then showed him how all the heirlooms³ of the Neronian and Drusian families had formed part of
3 the wages of dishonour. Incensed, and big with threats, Claudius was carried off to the camp, where the soldiers were assembled to hear him. Here he mumbled out a few words, prompted by Narcissus; for however just his anger, he could scarce speak for shame.

¹ F. and other commentators presume that the statue here referred to was one of the *imagines maiorum*, preserved in every noble house; and the prohibition of such statues 'is somewhat beyond the usual practice.' No doubt it was; for though the statues of suspected ancestors might be forbidden to appear at funerals (ii. 32, 2; iii. 76, 3), we never hear of their being removed from within a noble's house. Even in xvi. 7, 3, the offence did not consist in C. Cassius having an image of the conspirator Cassius among his ancestors, but in his having distinguished the image by the title of *Dux partium*. Furthermore, the images of ancestors were placed in the *atrium*; whereas the statue of Silius was in the *vestibulum*, the open fore-court in front of the house. Such a statue would be very conspicuous. Cp. the triumphal four-horse chariot mentioned by Juvenal in the *vestibulum* of Aemilius:—

*Huius enim stat currus aeneus,
alti*

*Quadriuges in vestibulis, atque ipse
feroci
Bellatore sedens, curvatum hostile mina-
tur
Eminus, et statua meditatur proelia
lusca* (vii. 125-8).

We are not informed that the statues of Silius were to be pulled down as part of his sentence; but that would follow almost as a matter of course. In chap. 38, 4 a decree is passed that Messalina's statues are to be removed 'both from public and from private places.' The 'private places' need not refer to the images in the *atrium*, but would doubtless include such a statue as that of Silius in the *vestibulum*.

² It will be remembered that C. Silius the father was the distinguished general who had been Legate of Upper Germany for seven years from A.D. 14, having served under Germanicus in his German wars, and put down the rising of the Aedui under Sacrovir (i. 31, 2; ii. 6, 1, etc.; iii. 42-6; and iv. 18, 1). For his accusation and death see iv. 19. He was too eminent to be permitted to survive; hence the famous epigram of Tacitus: *Nam beneficia eo usque laeta sunt dum videntur solvi posse; ubi nullum antevenero, pro gratia odium redditur* (iv. 18, 3).

³ *Avitum* here is practically a certain restoration for the *habitus* of Med. The same mistake is made in xiii. 34, 3 and 56, 1. And in ch. 12, 4 we are told that even the household equipment (*paratus*) of the Imperial palace had been transferred to the house of Silius.

Punish-
ment of
Silius and
others.

The Cohorts responded with continued cries for 4
the names and the punishment of the guilty. Silius
was brought up before the tribunal; he made no
defence, and asked for no delay; he only prayed for
a speedy death. Four illustrious Roman Knights 5
showed equal firmness in making a like request:
these were Titius Proculus, who had been put in 6
charge¹ of Messalina by Silius, and who now turned
informer; Vettius Valens, who confessed his guilt;
together with Pompeius Urbicus and Saufeius Troguus.
All were ordered off to death as accomplices. In
addition to these, Decrius Calpurnianus, Commander 7
of the Watch, Sulpicius Rufus, the manager of a
gladiatorial school, and Juncus Vergilianus, a Senator,
were similarly punished.

Further
punish-
ments.

The case of Mnester alone caused some hesitation. 36
Tearing off his clothes, he implored Claudius to note
the marks of stripes,² and reminded him of the words
in which he himself had ordered obedience to Messa-
lina in all things:—*Others had been led astray by gifts, 2*
or by hopes of greatness; with him it had been a matter
of compulsion. Had Silius become master of the state,
he would have been the first to perish.

This appeal moved the tender heart of Claudius; 3
but the freedmen persuaded him not to waste mercy
on a stage-player, after so many illustrious men had

¹ Such a *custos*, it seems, was not unfrequently put on by a husband to keep a watch upon his wife's proceedings, just as a detective may be employed amongst ourselves now-a-days, *ex post facto*, to obtain evidence in matrimonial suits. Wives exercised a similar care for their husbands. Martial satirises a certain lady who employed such a 'guardian' to watch her husband's conduct, though permitting no such warder over her own (Epigr. x. 69, 1); and it is not generally remembered that Juvenal's famous question *quis custodiet*

ipso = *Custodes*? (vi. 347) had reference to this particular kind of guardianship.

² *i.e.* stripes inflicted on him by Messalina, or by Messalina's orders. Great ladies in the Court of Versailles used not unfrequently to thrash their servants with their own hands, and for the most trivial faults: in Bradby's 'Great Days of Versailles' an amusing story is told of how cleverly a French maid disarmed a French Princess (who was as *plagosa* as Horace's teacher Orbilius) of her whip, and retaliated on her in kind.

been put to death :—*It mattered little*, they said, *whether his heinous offence had been committed at another's bidding or at his own*. Even the defence of the Roman Knight Traulus Montanus was not listened to. This was a quiet young man of fine person who had been sent for by Messalina and dismissed after a single night; for she was as capricious in her dislikes as in her desires.

5 But the lives of Suillius Caesoninus¹ and Plautius Lateranus were spared. The latter owed his escape to his uncle's² services; the former to his own vices, having endured, in that foul company, the foulest of degradations.

37 Meanwhile Messalina was putting off the evil hour in the gardens of Lucullus, and drawing up petitions; now hopeful, now wrathful: so great was her arrogance to the last.³ And had not Narcissus been quick in bringing about her end, the blow would
2 have fallen on his own head: for when Claudius, on his return home, had been soothed by an early dinner, and was warm with wine, he ordered a message to be sent *to the poor lady*—that is the term they say he used—to come and plead her case on the morrow.

Messalina
in the
gardens of
Lucullus.

3 These words showed Narcissus that the Emperor's wrath was cooling down, and his love reviving; and fearing the effect which the approaching night, and

Narcissus
finds it
necessary
to act,

¹ Son of the accuser Suillius: see above chaps. 2, 1; 4, 1; 5, 2.

² This uncle was the famous General, Plautius Lateranus, who carried out the great invasion of Britain in A.D. 43 (xiii. 32, 3), and formed that country into a Province.

³ Here both reading and meaning are uncertain. The reading of Med. (*tantum inter extrema superbia egebat*) might possibly mean 'so entirely was she deficient in proper pride in her last moments'; the reference being to the *preces*, the *ira* and the *spes* just men-

tioned. That interp. agrees with what is said below, § 5, *sed animo per libidines corrupto nihil honestum inerat*; but it can hardly stand, seeing that Tac., though repeatedly using the word *superbia*, only once uses it in a clearly good sense (Hist. iii. 66, 2). F. and most edd. have adopted the emendation translated in the text, with an exactly opposite meaning: *tantum inter extrema superbiae gerebat*. Yet certainly Tac. describes the end of Messalina as abject in the extreme rather than arrogant.

the thought of the conjugal chamber, might have upon him, he rushed out and gave orders to the Centurions and Tribune in attendance to despatch Messalina at once: ¹—*Such*, he told them, *were the Emperor's orders.*

The freedman Euodus was sent to prevent escape and see the sentence executed. Hurrying off to the gardens before the rest, he found Messalina lying at full length upon the ground. Beside her sat her mother Lepida, ² who had quarrelled with her in her days of grandeur, but was overcome with pity for her in her last extremity, and was advising her not to await the executioner:—*Her life was over*, she said; *she could look for no honour save in death.*

But in that lust-polluted heart there was no sense of honour left. She went on weeping and pouring out idle lamentations until the door was violently burst open, and the Tribune stood silently before her; the freedman reviled her with insults after his kind.

Then at last she looked her fortune in the face. She took up a dagger; and was vainly pressing it with fumbling hand now against her throat, now against her bosom, when the Tribune ran her through with his sword. The body was given to her mother. Claudius was still at dinner when he was told that she was dead—whether by her own hand or by that of another was not mentioned. He asked no questions, called for more wine, and went

¹ Juvenal's version of the story implies that Narcissus had persuaded Claudius to give the order:—*Indulsit Caesar cui Claudius omnia, cuius = Paruit imperiis uxorem occidere iussus*, xiv. 330-1.

² This lady comes into great prominence in Book xiii. as the one woman who ventured to stand up against Agrippina at the beginning of Nero's reign, and aimed at winning for herself, by indulgence and caresses, the ascendancy over the young emperor which

the masterful Agrippina claimed as a matter of maternal right. Her full name was Domitia Lepida. She was by birth a grand-daughter of Mark Antony, her mother being the elder Antonia; she was sister of Nero's father, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, and thus Agrippina's sister-in-law as well as Nero's aunt. Her character, and her death at Agrippina's instigation, are described in xii. 64 and 65.

and orders
Messalina's
death.
Messalina
in her
extremity.

She is slain
by the
Tribune;

indiffer-
ence of
Claudius.

3 on with the entertainment as usual. Even on the following days he gave no sign of displeasure or satisfaction, of sorrow or indignation, or indeed of any human feeling; not even when he saw the delight of Messalina's accusers, and the sorrow of
 4 his children. And the Senate helped him to forget: decreeing that Messalina's name and effigy should be
 5 removed from all public and private places.¹ They also voted the Quaestorian insignia² to Narcissus—a paltry reward for one of his pretensions,³ holding his head, as he did, high above Pallas and Callistus.

[Such was the end of Messalina: an end merited] indeed, but pregnant with the most dire consequences.⁴

¹ Similarly in the case of Piso, the Consul Aurelius Cotta *nomen Pisonis radendum fastis censuit* (iii. 7, 8); in the case of Livia, *atroces sententiae dicebantur in effigies quoque et memoriam eius* (vi. 2, 1). Inscriptions have been found with the name of Messalina erased.

² The practice of bestowing the Consular, Praetorian, or Quaestorian insignia upon men who had never actually held those offices, was analogous to that by which Triumphal Ornaments were granted to generals who had deserved triumphs, but were not permitted to celebrate them. The Consular insignia were first thus bestowed by Caesar (Suet. 76). Tiberius gave Praetorian insignia to Sejanus (Dio, lvii. 19, 7), and the Quaestorian insignia to Laco (lviii. 12, 7), though neither of them was a Senator; and Claudius extended the practice. See above chap. 4, 5 and xii. 21, 2.

³ I fail to see how a satisfactory sense can be extracted from the reading of

Med. *levissimum fastidii eius*. F. translates 'This honour was the least ground of his arrogance.' But the arrogance of Pallas was based on his position before receiving this honour; and the meaning wanted is rather that Pallas looked with contempt on the honour as inadequate to his services. I have therefore taken the reading *fastigii*, which has some MS. authority, and is just the word which Tac. would use ironically of the position of a favourite freedman. The reading *fastidii* would naturally suggest itself to a transcriber who did not see that the notion of despising the honour was already conveyed by *levissimum*.

⁴ The book breaks off abruptly in Med. with an unintelligible and obviously corrupt sentence:—*honestam quidem sed ex quis deterrima orerentur tristitiis nullis*. The general sense is fairly clear, but the connection is incomplete. There seems to be some omission before *honestam*.

BOOK XII.

Various
wives pro-
posed for
Claudius.

THE death of Messalina shook the Imperial house- I
hold to its foundations. The freedmen at once
quarrelled as to which of them should choose a wife
for Claudius; for he was incapable of living single,
and was made to be ruled by his wives. Not less 2
hot was the rivalry between the candidates: each
pointing to her own birth, wealth, and beauty, as
fitting her for the lofty alliance. The chief doubt 3
however lay between Lollia Paulina,¹ daughter of
Marcus Lollius, a Consular, and Julia Agrippina,
daughter of Germanicus. The latter was supported
by Pallas, the former by Callistus; while Narcissus 4
championed Aelia Paetina,² who belonged to the
family of the Tiberones.

Claudius himself inclined now this way, now that,
lending a ready ear to each adviser in turn. At last
he summoned a Council, and bade the divergent
opinions to be laid before him with the reasons
for each.

¹ This lady, famous for her jewels (Plin. H. N. ix. 35, 58, 116), was the daughter (more probably Tac. meant the grand-daughter) of the celebrated M. Lollius, Cos. B.C. 21 (Hor. Epp. i. 20, 28), who amassed great wealth in Gaul, and sustained there a severe defeat in B.C. 16. He is described by Horace as the very pattern of a pure and high-minded statesman (Od. iv. 9, 30-45), by Velleius and Pliny as a monster of perfidy and corruption. He was sent by Augustus as companion

and adviser to his youthful grandson Gaius Caesar on the occasion of his mission to the East in A.D. 1. During that mission he incurred the enmity of Tiberius, then living in retirement in Rhodes (iii. 48, 3). Lollia had been for a short time married to Caligula, who took her away from her first husband.

² Of a consular family. She had already been married to Claudius, and divorced after the birth of her daughter Antonia (*ex levibus offensis*, Suet. 26).

2 Narcissus dwelt upon his former marriage with Aelia, and the daughter Antonia whom she had borne to him:—*A wife thus familiar would bring no strange element into his home; and she was little likely to entertain a stepmother's hatred towards Britannicus and Octavia—children almost as near to her as her own.*

Narcissus recommends Aelia,

2 Callistus pronounced Aelia disqualified by the long separation:—*A re-marriage would puff her up with pride. Better far for the Emperor to take into his home Lollia, who having no children of her own would be free from jealousy, and be as a mother to her step-children.*

Callistus Lollia Paulina,

3 Pallas again, in recommending Agrippina, laid emphasis mainly on the fact that *she would bring with her a grandson of Germanicus, a youth in every way worthy of imperial rank; let Claudius unite the noble stocks of the Julian and Claudian families,¹ rather than permit a woman of proved fertility, and in the bloom of youth, to transfer to another house the illustrious blood of the Caesars.*

while Pallas champions Agrippina.

3 These arguments, aided by Agrippina's blandishments, carried the day. Paying frequent visits to her uncle under cover of her relationship, she coaxed

Agrippina gains the day, and schemes to marry Nero to Octavia.

¹ I follow the Med. reading, which is perfectly intelligible; *stirpemobilem, et familiae Claudiae posteris quae coniungeret*, 'A noble stock and one which would unite (*i.e.* connection with which would unite) of the descendants' (*i.e.* the two branches) 'of the Claudian house': the *posteris* being either Nero and Claudius alone, or, as seems more probable, Claudius and Octavia as the one branch, and Nero with his mother Agrippina and his grandfather Germanicus as the other branch. *Stirpemobilem* may be regarded as standing in apposition to Nero alone, or more probably to the general meaning of the preceding sentence, 'the stock' of Nero and his mother taken together. F. follows Freinsheim in inserting *Iuliae* before *Claudiae* (though there is no sign of omission in Med.) and charging *que*

into *que*, translates 'Let him unite to himself a noble race, the posterity (*et* explanatory) of the Julii and the Claudii.' But (1) this gives a poor meaning to *coniungeret* (standing only for *sibi coniungeret*); (2) it omits what is obviously the strong point in favour of the marriage, that it would unite two branches of the family; and (3) it suggests somewhat too palpably that Claudius needed to strengthen his position by his marriage. *Stirpemobilem* may either be taken as above, as a short way of expressing 'marriage with a noble stock'; or we may suppose a Tacitean zeugma, the verb *coniungeret* being allowed to govern *stirpem* instead of some appropriate verb like *eligeret*: 'let him select one of noble stock who would unite.'

him into giving her the preference, and allowing her to exercise, even before marriage, the power of a wife. For from the moment when her marriage was assured, she extended her aims, and schemed for an alliance between her son Domitius, whom she had borne to Gnaeus Ahenobarbus, and Caesar's daughter Octavia—a union which could not be brought about without dishonour, seeing that Claudius had betrothed Octavia to Lucius Silanus,¹ a youth of much distinction, and had introduced him to popular favour by the triumphal insignia, and by a splendid exhibition of gladiators. But nothing was impossible with a prince who had no preferences, no dislikes, except such as were put into him by other people.

Vitellius abets her designs, and attacks Silanus.

Vitellius now used his title of Censor as a cloak for servility and falsehood. Foreseeing the direction in which power was setting, and seeking to win Agrippina's favour by abetting her designs, he brought a charge against Silanus, whose beautiful and lively sister Junia Calvina had been married to a son of Vitellius not long before.² This giving him a starting-point, he denounced both brother and sister, putting a scandalous construction upon their unrestrained but innocent affection for each other.

Claudius gave ear to these charges, his affection for his daughter rendering him open to suspicion against a son-in-law. Silanus knew nothing of the plot; and though he happened to be Praetor at the

¹ This distinguished member of a distinguished family was a great-great-grandson of Augustus, through his mother Aemilia Lepida, who was the daughter of Julia the younger. He was one of the few living male descendants of Augustus, and as such had been promoted to various honours: among them that of being allowed to hold magis-

tracies five years before the proper age (Dio, lx. 5, 8).

² As no mention is made of Calvina having been a wife of Vitellius, the future Emperor, the person intended must be his brother Lucius, who was *cos. suf.* in this same year; succeeding, curiously enough, to his own brother (Suet. Vit. 3).

time, Vitellius suddenly issued an edict expelling him from the Senate—in spite of the fact that the senatorial roll had already been made up, and the lustrum closed.¹ Claudius at once cancelled the betrothal, and compelled Silanus to swear himself out of office.² The remaining period of his Praetorship was conferred upon Eprius Marcellus.³

A.D. 49. CONSULS GAIUS POMPEIUS AND QUINTUS VERANIUS.

5 The project of marriage between Claudius and Agrippina was now regarded as a settled affair, and was established by illicit cohabitation; but they did not as yet venture to solemnize their nuptials, since there was no precedent for a marriage between an uncle and a brother's daughter. They shrank from the name of incest; ⁴ and were afraid of some public disaster were they to brave it out. At last Vitellius

Vitellius induces the Senate to sanction the marriage;

¹ The Censorship, under the Republic, nominally lasted for five years (*lustrum*); but as the great powers of that office made it invidious for any one to hold it for so long a time, censors usually brought their office to a close within eighteen months. The close of the *lustrum*, and therefore of the duties of the censorship, was marked by the solemn purificatory sacrifice, called *suovetaurilia*. It was unconstitutional, therefore, to use censorial powers after the *lustrum* had been thus closed (*conditum*), and the *lectio senatus* completed. There is some evidence, however, that Claudius, who revived the office after it had been in abeyance since B.C. 22, and delighted in its exercise, may have held the office for the whole five years. The *lectio senatus* is recorded xi. 23, 1; the closing of the *lustrum* in xi. 25, 8.

² For the sarcastic use of this verb by Nero in reference to the dismissal of Pallas, see xiii. 14, 1. On vacating his office, the magistrate swore 'that he had done nothing contrary to law.'

³ One of the most famous *delatores* under Nero. He is chosen by the disputants in the *Dialogus de Oratoribus* as being a conspicuous example on the one hand of the value of oratory, and of the wealth and power won by orators; and on the other, of their restless, anxious, and perilous lives. His immense services to Vespasian are there dilated upon by Aper; yet after a career full of public honours, Eprius conspired against Vespasian and had to commit suicide in A.D. 79 (Dio, lxxvi. 16, 3). On the occasion before us he was made *praetor peregrinus* for a single day.

⁴ The Latin here is difficult. *Incestum* is best taken substantively, as the subject to *metuebatur*: 'they were afraid of the name (or fact) of incest, and of its entailing some public misfortune were they to brave it out.' The usual interpretation *metuebatur (esse) incestum*, 'they were afraid that it was (or would be) incest' is both weak and unmeaning. There was no doubt as to the character of the marriage; what they were afraid of was the possible consequences.

undertook to bring their hesitation to an end by methods of his own. He demanded of Claudius, ³ *Would he yield to the wishes of the people, or to the recommendation of the Senate?* and receiving from him the answer that *he was but a citizen, and could not resist a unanimous appeal*, Vitellius bade him wait within the Palatium. He then entered the Senate-house; and ⁴ announcing that the highest interests of the commonwealth were at stake, he craved leave to be heard first, and thus began:—

his
adulatory
speech.

In his most arduous functions, embracing as they did the entire world, the Emperor had need of a helpmate, that while providing for the public good he might be free from care at home. What more excellent relief for their ⁵ august Censor¹ than to take to himself a wife, who might share in all his fortunes, prosperous or doubtful: to whom he might confide his inmost thoughts, and commit his young children—being one to whom wanton pleasures were unknown, and who had lived an orderly life from his youth up?²

This persuasive preface having been received ⁶ obsequiously by the Fathers, Vitellius proceeded:—

Since they were all of opinion that the Emperor should marry, the choice should fall on one distinguished alike by birth, by fertility, and by purity of life. None could ² dispute Agrippina's pre-eminence in birth; she had given proof of her fertility; and she was no less conspicuous for

¹ We can hardly doubt that the words here used by Tacitus (*ensoriae mentis levamentum*) are meant to be ironical. They hit off delightfully the contrast between the pedantic delight of Claudius in the exercise of the office of Censor—the office whose special function it was to guard and correct the morals of the Roman people—and his own open violation of one of the cardinal principles of morality insisted on by Roman

custom. The same ironical juxtaposition occurs in xi. 13, 1, where see n. See also xi. 25, 8, where Tac. passes in one sentence from the censorian acts of Claudius to the last phase of Messalina's excesses.

² These words were only true of Claudius in a very comparative sense. All that can be said for him is that his life was not openly scandalous like those of Gaius and Nero.

3 *her virtue.¹ *It was a happy circumstance, and divinely ordered, that, having no husband,² *she should be united to a prince who had loved no man's wife but his own. Their fathers had told them—their own eyes had seen³—*how wives had been torn from their husbands at a Caesar's pleasure: how different the decorum of the present reign!****

4 *Let them rather set up an example whereby the Emperor*

5 *should receive his wife from the Fathers.*⁴ *Some might say that it was a novel thing in Rome that a man should marry his brother's daughter: but it was customary among other nations; and there was no law forbidding it. The inter-marriage of cousins⁵ *had long been unknown; but it had become common in course of time. Men's manners had to fit themselves to circumstances; and this thing too would soon become the vogue.**

7 Some of the Senators, in their zeal, protested that they would use force with Claudius if he hesitated;

2 they burst out of the Senate-house, collected a chance mob, and cried aloud that the Roman people were at

3 one with them in their prayers. Claudius hesitated no longer. Presenting himself in the Forum to receive the public congratulations, he then entered the Senate-house, and demanded a decree to legalize marriages between an uncle and a brother's daughter

4 for all future time.⁶ And yet one man only was found

The Senate legalizes such marriages for the future.

¹ See xi. 15, 1 and n.

² Agrippina was first left a widow at the age of twenty-five by the death of Nero's father, Cn. Domitius. She had then married the orator Crispus Pasiensis, who made the famous saying about Gaius, that 'No man had ever been a better slave or a worse master' (vi. 20, 2), and whom she was thought to have poisoned. She was now thirty-four years of age.

³ The 'hearing' refers to Augustus, who forced the father of the Emperor Tiberius to give up Livia to him in the year B.C. 38; the 'seeing' to the abduction by Gaius of Drusilla, Livia Ores-

tilla, and Lollia Paulina, from their respective husbands (Suet. 24, 25).

⁴ There is a lacuna in Med. after *accipere*, which has been plausibly filled up by Ritter with the words *a senatu*.

⁵ The word here used (*sobrinarum*) properly signifies what we term 'second cousins'; but Tac. probably means to refer to marriages between first cousins (*consobrini*), which were prohibited in early times. He uses the fem. *sobrinarum* because he is speaking of the marriages lawful for a man.

⁶ A marriage with a sister's daughter was not included in the permission.

to desire such a union—a Roman Knight of the name of Alledius Severus;¹ and he only did so, it was said, to win Agrippina's favour.

Agrippina becomes mistress of the state.

And now a change came over public affairs. All 5 was dominated by a woman: one who did not, in mere wantonness, like Messalina, make a sport of public affairs, but who held the reins with a firm and masterful hand.² Her manner in public was severe, and often arrogant; her private life correct, save 6 where she saw that power was to be gained; and if her greed for gold was unbounded, she could plead that she was laying up resources for the empire.

Suicide of Silanus.

On the marriage day, Silanus put an end to 8 himself; whether because up to that moment he had cherished a hope of life, or that he chose that day to aggravate the feeling against Claudius. His sister Calvina was expelled from Italy; to which 2 Claudius added certain rites and expiations to be performed by the priests in the grove of Diana,³ in accordance with the ordinances of King Tullus.⁴ But this searching out of penalties and expiations for incest at such a moment met with universal ridicule.

Expiations offered.

And now Agrippina, desiring to be known for 3

Seneca recalled from banishment.

This law of Claudius, so little practised, seems not to have been repealed till the time of Constantine.

¹ Claudius and Agrippina specially countenanced this marriage by their presence on the occasion (Suet. Claud. 26). Suet. adds that only one freeman besides Alledius followed the imperial example.

² The word *adductus* is used of anything 'tightly drawn': of a bent bow (Virg. Aen. v. 507); of an arm drawn back to cast a javelin (ib. ix. 402); of a drawn brow (Capitol. Ver. x.); of a severe expression of face (Suet. Tib. 68); of a concise style (Plin. Epp. i. 66). So of Nero's grave converse with his mother (xiv. 4, 8). Prof. Holbrooke says 'the metaphor is taken from the

management of a horse': but quotes no examples.

³ This must have been the famous grove of Diana on the lake of Nemi, near Aricia, round which Dr. J. G. Frazer has woven such a fascinating web of tradition, philosophy, and romance in his 'Golden Bough,' and 'The Early History of the Kingship.'

⁴ The only expiatory rites known to have been instituted by King Tullus Hostilius were those prescribed to Horatius for the murder of his sister after the famous fight between the Horatii and the Curiatii (Liv. i. 26, 13). As Pontifex Maximus, Claudius would have the right of prescribing the form of the expiation.

something that was not evil, caused Annaeus Seneca¹ to be recalled from exile, and promoted to the Praetorship. His pardon, she thought, would be well received, because of his reputation for learning; while she would secure² an instructor of high distinction for the tender years of Domitius. She hoped also to make use of his counsels in her designs upon the sovereignty, believing that gratitude for her favours, no less than hatred of Claudius for the wrong inflicted on him,³ would bind him to her interests.

9 She lost no time in taking her next step. She induced Mammius Pollio, Consul-designate, by immense promises, to move in the Senate that Claudius should be petitioned to betroth Octavia to Domitius:—*The alliance, he said, was not unsuitable in regard to*
 2 *age,⁴ and would be rich in future advantages.* His

Nero be-
trothed to
Octavia.

¹ Here first this famous personage steps upon the scene. Combining the parts of an ardent Stoic philosopher, a graceful writer, a polished speaker, a poet and tragedian, a usurious capitalist, and a man of the world, with that of an imperial tutor and adviser, the development of Seneca's character and career furnishes one of the most interesting episodes in the later books of the Annals. Committed to the impossible task, first of guiding, then of holding in check, the hot passions of the young prince, he found himself compelled to merge the character of the philosopher in that of the opportunist statesman and the courtier. Slipping deeper and deeper into the policy of indulgence, and conniving at, if not encouraging, some of Nero's worst excesses, he met at last his inevitable end with a fortitude which, in the eyes of the historian who has pitilessly recorded all the weaknesses, was enough to atone for all the errors, of his life. Born at Corduba in Spain, son of the wealthy rhetorician M. Annaeus, L. Annaeus Seneca came to Rome as a child. There he devoted himself to rhetoric, to literature, and to increasing his ample patrimony by judicious investments in the provinces. Banished by Gaius, he was restored by Agrippina to

be an implement in her scheme of aggrandisement for herself and her son, and so found himself embarked on that career of greatness and of peril to which there could be only one ending.

² Note here the illogical use of *ut*. It has no reference to the construction of the preceding sentence. That sentence is treated as if the words *laeta in publicum rata* were equivalent to a final sentence, giving one motive for the recall of Seneca; the *ut* proceeds to give a second.

³ Seneca had been banished by Claudius in the first year of his reign at the instance of Messalina on the charge, true or false, of adultery with Julia, the daughter of Germanicus. Seneca's enemies assume that the charge was true (xiii. 42, 3); and we are nowhere definitely informed that he cleared himself from it. He revenged himself, after the death of Claudius, by writing a furious satire against that emperor under the title of *Apocolocyntosis* or 'Pumpkinification,' in ridicule of his deification after death.

⁴ Nero was twelve years old, having been born in A.D. 37; Octavia's age is not exactly known, but she was probably older than Britannicus, who according to Suet. was born in A.D. 41 (*vicesimo imperii die*, Claud. 27).

arguments were similar to those used not long before by Vitellius. And so the betrothal took place. In addition to his previous relationship, Domitius became now an affianced son-in-law; and all his mother's efforts, all the arts of those who feared that Messalina's son would revenge himself on the accusers of his mother, were employed to put him on a level with Britannicus.

About this same time the Parthian envoys who had been sent to fetch Meherdates from Rome, as above related,¹ appeared before the Senate and delivered their message in this wise:—

They were not unaware of their treaty² with Rome; nor had they come as rebels against the house of the Arsacidae. They had come to call in the son of Vonones,³ the grandson of Phraates, against the tyranny of Gotarzes, which was intolerable alike to the nobles and to the people. He had slain his brothers, his relations, near and distant, nay, even their pregnant wives and little children. A sluggard at home, unfortunate in war, his cruelty was but a cloak for cowardice. They had long been on terms of public friendship with Rome; let Rome now come to the aid of an ally who was her equal in strength, and whose

¹ See above, xi. 10, 8, where the despatch of this mission is first mentioned, two years before the present time. For the general relations between Parthia and Rome see nn. on ii. 1, 1 and 2.

² This was the treaty first made with Augustus (see ii. 1, 2) under which Rome acquired over Parthia a nominal suzerainty which the Parthians repudiated whenever it suited their convenience to do so. The treaty was acknowledged by Artabanus to Germanicus (ii. 58, 1), and also to Gaius. The vain attempt of Tiberius to place his nominee Tiridates on the throne of Parthia in place of Artabanus, in A.D. 35 and 36, is recounted at length in vi. 31-37 and 42-44. He had been more fortunate in maintaining the Iberian

Mithradates on the throne of Armenia; but even this advantage was lost under Gaius, and Artabanus remained master of the position in Armenia as well as in Parthia until his death in A.D. 40. How Claudius helped to reinstate Mithradates in Armenia; how the brothers Vardanes and Gotarzes struggled for the Parthian crown; and how the threat of Roman interference kept Vardanes from carrying out his designs on Armenia, have been narrated in xi. 8-10. Gotarzes was finally restored in A.D. 45; and it was in consequence of his tyranny that the mission to ask for Meherdates had been now sent to Rome (xi. 10, 8).

³ See ii. 1, 1 and 2.

Arrival of
Parthian
envoys;

10

they
demand
Meher-
dates as
their king.

4 *homage was the homage of respect. When they gave the sons of their kings as hostages to Rome, it was in the hope that if they were unsatisfied with their rulers at home, they might have recourse to the Emperor and the Fathers, and receive at their hands a king made all the better by being trained in Roman customs.*¹

I I The envoys having delivered themselves in this strain, Claudius replied. He dwelt first upon the suzerain position of Rome,² and the homage of the Parthians; comparing himself with the Divine Augustus, at whose hands, as he reminded them, they had sought a king: but saying nothing of Tiberius, who
2 also had sent them one. He then went on to lecture Meherdates, who was present, exhorting him, *Not to regard himself as a master over slaves, but as a ruler of free men, and to practise clemency and justice—virtues all the more welcome to the barbarians that they had no knowledge of them.*

Claudius grants their request.

3 Turning then to the envoys, he belauded their Prince as a *foster-son of Rome, whose conduct, he said, had been above reproach. Nevertheless, they ought to put up with their kings as they were: no good could come of*
4 *constant changes. Rome had advanced to such a pitch of glory herself that she desired peace for foreign nations also.*³

¹ Reference has been made above on xi. 16, 3 to the mixed motives from which Parthian 'hostages' were sent to Rome. On the present occasion the Parthian malcontents make a happy appeal to the simplicity and vanity of Claudius by representing that such hostages were sent by the Parthian people to be improved by Roman culture, and to supply pretenders to the throne when wanted.

² This part of the speech is a rebuke to the assumption of equality in chap. 10, 3. As we have seen in the earlier books, it was the Roman cue to exaggerate the homage paid by Parthia to

Rome under Augustus and his successors. Horace speaks as if it were a case of complete submission: *ius imperiumque Phraates = Caesaris accepit genibus minor* (Epp. i. 12, 27-28); but, as a matter of fact, it was a homage of the most shadowy kind, and the only tangible advantage ever gained by it was the restitution in B.C. 20 of the standards captured by the Parthians on the fatal field of Carrhae. See n. on ii. 1.

³ It seems almost incongruous to attribute to Tacitus the quality of humour; yet it is impossible not to recognize the spirit of irony in which

The duty of escorting the young Prince to the bank of the Euphrates was entrusted to Gaius Cassius, Governor of Syria.¹

Now Cassius was pre-eminent at that time for his knowledge of the law; for no one hears of the military art in times of peace.² Peace puts the good soldier

this speech of Claudius is recorded. No description could have given us so perfect a presentation of the well-meaning, but vain, tactless, and pedantic personage that Claudius was, or show off so well how different were his tone and style from those of other Roman Emperors. He begins and ends with boastful statements of Roman greatness; he lectures Meherdates in the tone of a schoolmaster, bidding him rule as a constitutional sovereign, and set an example of Roman clemency and justice to his barbarian subjects: then, turning to the envoys, he gives the young prince an excellent testimonial to character, and sagely advises the envoys not to be for ever changing their kings, but to put up with them as they find them. The irony of the words *neque usui crebras mutationes*, in view of the recurring facts of Parthian history, and in the mouth of a Roman Emperor sending out a fresh pretender to the throne, could hardly be surpassed.

The patronizing tone in which the Emperor, full of the greatness and glory of Rome, professes to desire peace for the entire world, is suggestive of the somewhat similar desires for universal peace professed by modern potentates at the head of gigantic armies.

¹ This C. Cassius was the brother of L. Cassius, whose marriage to Drusilla, daughter of Germanicus (and therefore sister of the Empress Agrippina), is recorded in vi. 15, 1. He had succeeded Vibius Marsus (xi. 10, 1) as Legatus of Syria some little time before this, and was himself succeeded by Ummidius Quadratus, whom we find in command A.D. 51 (xii. 45, 6), and whose supineness in dealing with Armenia, and quarrelsome conduct when associated with Corbulo in the command, are related in xii. 48 and xiii. 9. Cassius is one of the most interesting personalities of the later books of the Annals. He belonged to the old uncompromising school of Roman statesmen: a famous jurist, full of family pride, vigorous in counsel, exhibiting

all the old Roman sternness of discipline in command, and insisting with merciless severity upon carrying out the cruel Roman law which condemned to death all the slaves in a murdered Roman's household (xiv. 42-45). We also find him maintaining a bold front towards the Emperors, sarcastically checking the absurd multiplication of honours upon Nero (xiii. 41, 5), fostering in his young followers the highest ideals of public life (*L. Silanus eximia nobilitate disciplinaque C. Cassii apud quem educatus erat ad omnem claritudinem sublatus*, xv. 52, 3), and even daring to place over the image of his proscribed ancestor C. Cassius the title, '*Dux Partium*.' For this he was accused and exiled; but Tacitus indicates what were the real causes of his fall: *nullo crimine nisi opibus vetustis et gravitate morum* (xvi. 7, 2).

² F. notes that the tone of this remark is suited to the age of renewed military glory under Trajan. But we need seek no such explanation for a tone of 'militarism' in Tacitus. Greatly as the Romans generally, and Tacitus in particular, respected legal eminence, their highest praises, in all ages, were reserved for the military art and for success in war. Whatever may have been his own personal feelings as a man of peace and of letters, Cicero exhausts his vocabulary in his speech *Pro Murena* to prove that the soldier's calling is the highest of all callings, his own domain of oratory coming next, and the law being only third in the scale. Himself an orator and a lawyer, Tac. never fails to express his admiration for law and lawyers; but he considers military achievement the highest of all topics for the historian. His heroes are Germanicus and Corbulo; and he considers his own subject poor and tame, because of its lack of military incidents, as compared with that of the early historians of Rome:—'They had great wars to describe, the storming of cities, the rout and capture of armies. . . . My theme is narrow and

Cassius, Governor of Syria, accompanies Meherdates to the frontier.

12

2 and the bad upon one level. Nevertheless Cassius, so far as was possible without war, had been reviving old ways of discipline, exercising his troops, providing and foreseeing everything, just as if an enemy were upon him: deeming this due to his own ancestors and to the Cassian house,¹ whose name stood high in
 3 those parts.² He now summoned those by whose advice Meherdates had been sent for, and pitched his camp at Zeugma,³ the best point for crossing the Euphrates. On the arrival of the Parthian grandees, accompanied by Acbarus, King of the Arabians,⁴ Cassius urged Meherdates to push on at once, as delay would cool down the enthusiasm of the bar-
 4 barians or convert it into treachery. But this advice was disregarded through the cunning of Acbarus, who kept the thoughtless youth tarrying many days before the town of Edessa, possessed of the idea
 5 that kingship consists in self-indulgence. And though invited by Carenes,⁵ who assured him that all would go well if he advanced at once, instead of making

Delays of
Meher-
dates,

inglorious, a peace unbroken, or disturbed only by petty wars,' etc. (iv. 32, 2-3). His own highest ideal was that of imperial military expansion; and yet in recording military exploits it is remarkable how totally devoid he is of that topographical and strategical exactness which is essential for the proper understanding of a campaign. See n. on chap. 31, 1.

¹ The motive for patriotism embodied in the words *ita dignum maioribus suis* was almost as strong among the Romans as among the modern Japanese.

² Referring to the vigorous and victorious campaigns waged by his ancestor C. Cassius Longinus (the liberator) against the Parthians, when they crossed the Euphrates and invaded Asia, after the fatal battle of Carrhae, in the years B.C. 52 and 51.

³ The nearest and most convenient point for crossing the Euphrates for an army entering from Cilicia. The town took its name from a bridge built there

either by Alexander or by Seleucus Nicator. On the left bank opposite was the town of Apamea, founded by Seleucus Nicator, to be distinguished from the town of *Apamea ad Orontem*, which lay to the S. of Antioch. When Alexander marched against Darius, he crossed not at Zeugma, but at Thapsacus, a point considerably below Zeugma, as he was marching not from Cilicia but from Egypt.

⁴ This Arabian tribe inhabited the district opposite to Commagene, on the upper bend of the Euphrates, having Edessa, some 30 miles N. of Carrhae, as their chief town. Acbarus (more properly Abgarus) seems to have been a title rather than a name. See F.

⁵ Perhaps the name of the Parthian Governor of Mesopotamia: in vi. 37, 4 we hear of a *praefectus* of Mesopotamia. It would appear that this man was a governor of Mesopotamia who belonged to the party who had invited Meherdates into Parthia.

straight for Mesopotamia, he took a circuitous route by Armenia—a country which in the winter season then setting in was impracticable,

Worn out by marches over snow and mountains, 13
they were joined by the forces of Carenus on nearing the plains. Crossing then the Tigris, they traversed the country of the Adiabeni,¹ whose King Izates had ostensibly embraced the cause of Meherdates, but secretly and in his heart was inclined to Gotarzes. On their way, they captured the city of Ninus,² that 2
most ancient of Assyrian cities, together with the famous fortress before which the Persian power fell in the final battle between Darius and Alexander.³

Meanwhile Gotarzes was offering vows to the 3
Gods of the place upon a mountain called Sanbulos.⁴ The God specially worshipped there is Hercules; who at certain periods, in the dead of night, warns the priests to have horses ready near the temple, equipped for hunting. Quivers full of arrows are 4
fastened on to the horses, and then off they go through the woods in the dark. After a time they return, panting violently, with their quivers empty. Then the God reveals in a vision the course he 5
has taken through the woods, and wild beasts are found lying dead all along it.

¹ For the position of Adiabene, between the Upper Tigris and the Zab, see map.

² The reader would scarcely suspect from the narrative of Tacitus that by this time the army must have gone through a difficult march of several hundred miles, and at the worst season of the year. The mention here of Nineveh shows that other writers are mistaken in speaking of that city as having been wholly destroyed before this time. See F.

³ Where this fort was does not appear. There were no fortifications

on the open plain of Gaugamela (in the fork between the Tigris and the Great Zab), where Alexander destroyed the forces of Darius in the so-called battle of Arbela. But Tac. has little regard to geography; and *castellum* may be used of such walls as there were left round Nineveh itself.

⁴ This place is unknown. Orientalists conjecture that the God here called Hercules may have been either the Assyrian God *Nin* (or *Ninip*), or else the Assyrian Sun-God *San* or *Sansi*. See F.

14 His army being as yet too weak in numbers, Gotarzes took up a position behind the river Corma;¹ and disregarding the taunts and challenges of the enemy, he spun out the time by moving from place to place and employing agents to corrupt the fidelity
2 of their army. First the Adiabene² Izates, and then Acbarus, King of the Arabians, deserted with their following; partly from the natural fickleness of their race, partly because experience had taught them that the Parthians were more inclined to fetch their kings from Rome than to keep them when they came.³

The army of Meherdates melts away.

3 Deprived of these powerful auxiliaries, and apprehending treachery in the remainder, Meherdates resolved on the one course open to him, and to try the fortune of war. Emboldened by the diminution of his enemy's numbers, Gotarzes accepted battle.
4 After a bloody engagement, the issue was still doubtful when Carenus, having defeated the force in his front, advanced too far, and was surrounded by a fresh body of troops coming up from his rear.

He is defeated in a bloody battle;

5 Thereupon Meherdates abandoned hope; and having trusted to the promises of a client of his father called Parraces, he was treacherously put into
6 chains and delivered to the conqueror. Gotarzes scoffed at him as being *no kinsman of his, no Arsacid, but an alien and a Roman*; he then cut off his ears, and bade him live on as an exhibition of his own
7 clemency, and for an insult to Rome. Gotarzes died

he is captured and allowed to live with his ears cut off.

¹ This river is unknown; it was doubtless a tributary of the Tigris on its left or eastern bank, on the road from Nineveh to Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital.

² The *Adiabenus* of Med. is unnecessarily changed by Gron. Halm and F. to *Adiabeno* to agree with *exercitu*: a very awkward construction.

I cannot see that the reading *Adiabenus* 'loses the antithesis' (F.); rather it expresses it in a Tacitean manner.

³ The happy epigram *barbaros malle Roma petere reges quam habere* hits off exactly the attitude of the Parthians towards pretenders issuing from Rome, or indeed from anywhere else.

Gotarzes dies, is succeeded by Vonones, and soon after by Vologeses.

soon afterwards by a natural death, and Vonones, then governing Media, was called in to occupy the throne. After a brief and inglorious reign, distinguished by no event of note, whether for good or evil, this prince died, and the kingdom of Parthia passed on to his son Vologeses.¹

Mithradates attempts to recover his kingdom of Bosphorus.

During this time Mithradates, the deposed King of Bosphorus,² had been a homeless wanderer;³ but learning that Didius, the Roman General, had retired with the bulk of his army, leaving the new kingdom to the inexperienced youth Cotys, with a few auxiliary cohorts under the Knight Julius Aquila, and deeming neither of these to be of any account, he proceeded to gather the tribes, and tempt deserters to his standard. Having at last collected an army, he drove out the King of the Dandaridae⁴ and took possession of his kingdom. When this news reached

He is opposed by the Roman forces and Eunones, chief of the Aorsi.

Aquila and Cotys, they made sure that Mithradates would lose no time in invading Bosphorus; but being conscious of their own weakness, and finding that Zorsines, King of the Siraci,⁵ had once more turned

¹ Several years must be assigned to the events recorded in these last sentences. Coins show that Gotarzes certainly lived till A.D. 51, in which year probably Vologeses succeeded. This would give only a few months to the reign of Vonones. The reign of Vologeses covers all the remaining period covered by the Annals, and lasted till the year A.D. 77 or 78.

² Tac. now takes up the little-known history of the Kingdom of Bosphorus, properly the Cimmerian Bosphorus, being the remains of the kingdom wrested by Pompey from Mithradates VI., commonly called the Great, in the year B.C. 63. This outlying kingdom, which remained in the possession of the descendants of Mithradates under the suzerainty of Rome, embraced all the Crimea, with the exception of the Greek town of Heraclea (*Sevastopol*), together with certain territories to the East of the Palus Maotis (*Sea of Azov*), and

had for its capital Panticapaum (*Kertch*) upon the Cimmerian Bosphorus (*Straits of Kaffa*). The reader will distinguish this Mithradates from the Mithradates placed upon the throne of Armenia by Tiberius in A.D. 35 (vi. 32, 5), and treacherously murdered by Radamistus in A.D. 51 (xii. 47, 7).

³ Mithradates appears to have been deposed by Claudius in the first year of his reign (A.D. 41), his brother Cotys being set up in his place under protection of a small Roman force. Aulus Didius may have been *Legatus* of the neighbouring province of Moesia; we shall hear of him again as commander in Britain for some years after A.D. 52. The previous events in the kingdom of Bosphorus were no doubt related in the lost books of the Annals.

⁴ Apparently a Sarmatian tribe to the E. of the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

⁵ These names have been restored by conj. Both were Sarmatian tribes from

against us, they sought foreign aid for themselves also, and sent envoys to Eunones, chief of the Aorsi.¹

3 Having the power of Rome to point to, as against the rebel Mithradates, they readily induced Eunones to join them; and it was agreed that Eunones should supply cavalry for the campaign, while the Romans should conduct the sieges.

16 The combined² forces then advanced, the Aorsi being in the van and on the rear, while the cohorts and the Bosporans in Roman arms formed the strength
2 of the centre. In this order they defeated the enemy, and reached Soza,³ a town in Dandarica which had been deserted by Mithradates, and which it was thought well to secure by a garrison because of the doubtful
3 temper of the inhabitants. They next marched against the Siraci, and having crossed the river Panda, laid siege to Uspe, a town perched upon an eminence, and protected by walls and ditches; but as the walls were not of stone, but only made of hurdles and wicker-work with earth between, they offered but feeble resistance to attack. The besiegers set up
4 high towers from which they poured down brands and javelins upon the garrison; and had not night interrupted the conflict, the assault would have been begun and carried through on the same day.

17 Next morning the besieged sent out envoys craving mercy for all free-born persons, and offering ten thousand slaves. But these terms were declined;

The combined forces defeat Mithradates, take Soza, and besiege Uspe.

Capture of Uspe and slaughter of the garrison.

the region between the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Azov.

¹ After these words Halm, followed by F., unnecessarily inserts *praesidens opibus*. That the word *praecellere* should nowhere else be used in exactly this sense is almost a reason the more for supposing it was so used by Tac., after the analogy of *praesidere*, etc.

² The word *composito* from the con-

text seems here to mean 'combined.' Its more usual meaning is 'arranged' or 'ordered.'

³ The position of this town, as well as of Uspe and the river Panda, is unknown. The mention of the Tanais (the *Don*) in chap. 17 shows that the march must have been northwards, rather than towards the Caucasus. †

for what with the cruelty of killing the prisoners, and the difficulty of guarding so great a number, the victors thought it better to let them perish by the laws of war. So the signal for slaughter¹ was given to the soldiers, who had scaled the walls by ladders. The destruction of Uspe struck terror into the rest,² who gave up all for lost, seeing that neither arms nor fortifications, neither hills nor obstacles, neither rivers nor cities, could stop the Roman advance.

Zorsines hesitated for some time whether to stand³ by Mithradates in his extremity, or save his ancestral kingdom; but in the end, putting the interests of his own people first, he offered hostages and prostrated himself before the image of the Emperor—a great triumph for the Roman army, which had marched to within three days of the river Don,² victorious and unscathed.³

But their return was not so prosperous. For⁴ some of the ships, on their return voyage,⁴ were carried on to the Tauric coast, where they were surrounded by barbarians who killed the Prefect of a cohort and a large number of the auxiliaries.

¹ Thus the Romans refused to make terms of any kind, leaving the vanquished to submit to what is somewhat ironically called *ius belli*. They would see no cruelty in slaying men supposed to be offering resistance.

² The Latin name being *Tanais*.
³ The words *incurantem et victorem* seem a reminiscence of Horace's phrase *sine clade victor* (Od. iv. 14, 32).

⁴ Halm and Nipp., followed by F., unnecessarily emend the reading of Med. *navium quae mari remeabant* on the ground that it is absurd to say of ships that they 'went back by sea.' But they have missed the strategical point. The troops composing the expedition against the Sarmatian tribes would be ferried across the Cimmerian Bosphorus to the Asian side. As they marched northward towards the Tanais, the ships also would proceed northward

along the coast, keeping in touch with the troops as far as possible, according to the plan adopted by Germanicus in his German campaign (see i. 70, and ii. 8, 23 and 24), and by Agricola in his invasion of Scotland. On the return from their successful expedition, part of the force (as was done by Germanicus ii. 23), perhaps the whole, were put on board the transports as soon as convenient, so as to save the long land march back to the straits. These ships would thus have to strike across the open sea of Azov, and so might be said *mari remeare*, instead of merely ferrying the troops across the narrow Bosphorus. Encountering bad weather, some of them were driven ashore on the northern and savage part of the Crimea, beyond the frontier of the kingdom of Bosphorus, and there met with the ill-usage recorded.

Surrender of Zorsines, king of the Siraci.

Disaster to the returning fleet.

8 Meanwhile Mithradates, finding no help in arms, deliberated on whose mercy he should throw himself. He distrusted his brother Cotys, who had once betrayed him, and afterwards made war on him; and none of the Romans on the spot were in sufficient
 2 authority to have their promises respected. He turned therefore to Eunones, who had no quarrel of his own with him,¹ and whose recently-formed friendship with Rome would entitle him to consideration.
 3 Adapting his dress and appearance, so far as possible, to his present fortunes, he entered the palace and threw himself down on his knees before Eunones:—

Behold, he said, the Mithradates whom the Romans have sought for so many years both by land and sea, coming to you of his own free will. Use as you please the blood of the great Achaemenes²—the one and only thing still left to me by my enemies.

9 Touched by his suppliant's distinction, by his change of fortune, and by the dignity of his petition, Eunones raised Mithradates from the ground; commended him for having sought pardon through the nation of the Aorsi, and their king's right hand, and
 2 despatched envoys to Caesar with a letter to the following effect:—

*The friendships, he wrote, between Roman Generals and the sovereigns of great nations had sprung out of the likeness of their fortunes; between himself and Claudius
 3 there was a partnership in victory also. A war was most happily ended when it was settled by a pardon: thus the conquered Zorsines had been left undespoiled. For Mithradates, who merited a harder fate, he would not*

¹ The sense here seems to require resort to the desperate expedient of inserting *non* before the *infensum* of Med.

² Mithradates the Great claimed de-

scent from the Royal house of Persia, who took their name of *Achaemenidae* from Achaemenes, the great-grandfather of Cyrus.

Mithra-
 dates
 throws
 himself on
 the mercy
 of
 Eunones.

Eunones
 writes to
 Claudius
 and inter-
 cedes for
 Mithra-
 dates.

ask the restoration of his power and his dominions; he only asked that he should not be led in Triumph, nor have to pay the penalty with his life.

Claudius
hesitates;

Now though Claudius was always conciliatory 20
towards foreign princes, he hesitated whether to
accept Mithradates as a captive on promise of his
life, or to gain possession of him by force. The sense
of injury received, and the thirst for vengeance, drew
him one way; but against that it was urged that— 2

*He would have to undertake a war in a country with-
out roads or harbours, against savage chiefs and wander-
ing tribes, and on a soil which grew no crops—a war in
which delays would be tedious and hurry dangerous; in
which victory would bring little glory, and defeat great
dishonour. Better take what was offered, and let Mithra- 3
dates live on in exile and in poverty; the longer his life,
the greater would be his punishment.¹*

but grants
the peti-
tion.

Moved by these arguments, Claudius wrote thus 4
to Eunones:—

*Although Mithradates deserved the severest punish-
ment, and he himself was strong enough to exact it, yet
it had always been the way of their ancestors to be as
merciful towards a suppliant as they were resolute against
a foe. As for the Triumph, a Triumph was never held
except over a people or a kingdom as a whole.²*

Mithra-
dates
brought to
Rome.
His inde-
pendent
bearing.

Thereupon Mithradates was given up and con- 21
veyed to Rome by Junius Cilo,³ the Procurator of

¹ The same argument as that used by Caesar when he spoke against capital punishment being inflicted on the Catilinarian conspirators.

² Tacitus takes every opportunity of putting inane and boastful platitudes into the mouth of Claudius when dealing with foreign affairs.

³ A story told about this man by Dio (lx. 33, 5) well illustrates the manner in which the facile and half-imbecile Claudius was managed by his freedmen.

One day Claudius was holding a court when certain Bithynians who were present loudly denounced their governor Cilo for extortion. Not able to catch amid the din what it was that they were saying, Claudius turned to Narcissus and asked for an explanation. Narcissus boldly replied that they were expressing their gratitude to Cilo for his excellent administration. 'Well then,' said the emperor, 'let him hold his province for two years longer.'

Pontus. He is said to have addressed the Emperor in a tone somewhat too free for his position, and a speech of his to the following effect was reported:—

I have not been brought back to you, Caesar: I have returned. If you doubt it, set me free and fetch me.

2 He presented also an undaunted front when exhibited to the people beside the rostra under a guard of soldiers. The Consular insignia were voted to Cilo, the Praetorian to Aquila.

22 In this year Agrippina, unrelenting in her hatred of Lollia, and full of wrath against her for her rivalry in the matter of the imperial marriage, set up an accuser to charge her with having trafficked with Chaldaeans¹ and magicians, and with having consulted the image of the Clarian Apollo² about the Emperor's nuptials. Without giving the accused a hearing, Claudius opened a speech in the Senate by dwelling upon Lollia's illustrious birth: telling how her mother was the sister of Lucius Volusius, how Cotta Messalinus³ was her great-uncle, and how she had once been the wife of Memmius Regulus—for he purposely said nothing about her marriage to Gaius Caesar.⁴ He then went on to charge her with evil designs against the State:—*The means for criminal enterprise, he said, must be taken from her; she must*

3 *leave Italy and submit to confiscation.* Out of all her

Agrippina causes Lollia to be accused.

Lollia condemned to exile and confiscation.

¹ The Chaldaeans were the higher order of astrologers, greatly patronised in this age by people of every rank, including emperors, and believed in to a certain extent by Tacitus himself (iv. 58, 2-4; vi. 22, 5). The *Magi* were an inferior order of practitioners who dealt in incantations, potions, spells, etc.

² Why the statue of the God should be specially named is not known. The reference is to the Oracle of Apollo at Colophon, consulted by Germanicus on his way to the East (ii. 54, 3-5). In

that passage the method of the oracle is described, but nothing is said about a statue.

³ The celebrated flatterer of the reign of Tiberius: *promptissimo Cotta Messalino cum atroci sententia* (v. 3, 4); *saevissimus cuiusque sententiae auctor* (vi. 5, 1).

⁴ According to Suet., Gaius ordered her husband Memmius to bring her to Rome from his province, and dismissed her in a few days (chap. 25)

immense wealth, she was allowed to carry with her into exile no more than five million sesterces.

Case of Calpurnia.

Another illustrious lady, Calpurnia by name, had to suffer because the Emperor had happened, in a chance conversation, to commend her beauty; but as there was no love in the case, Agrippina's wrath stopped short of extreme measures. A tribune was ⁴ despatched to Lollia to compel her to make away with herself.

Lollia compelled to commit suicide.

Cadius Rufus also was condemned for extortion on the prosecution of the Bithynians.

Privilege granted to Gallia Narbonensis.

A privilege was now granted to the province of ²³ Narbonensian Gaul¹ on account of its respectful attitude towards the Fathers. Senators from that province were to be allowed to visit their properties without having to ask the Emperor's leave, just as is the rule with Sicily.²

Deaths of Jewish princes.

On the deaths of Sohaemus and Agrippa,³ Kings ² of Ituraea⁴ and Judaea, those countries were annexed to the Province of Syria.

It was resolved to revive and to perpetuate the ³

¹ Gallia Narbonensis (whence *Narbonne*) was the old Gallic province, occupying the whole coast of France S. of the Cevennes, and extending from Tolosa to Vienna on the Rhone. The inhabitants of this district, essential to Rome as securing her communications with Spain, had long been specially favoured, and had for some time enjoyed the *ius honorum*, i.e. eligibility to public office.

² Roman Senators were only free to travel outside of Italy by the fiction of a *Legatio libera*, or roving envoyship. Augustus forbade them to visit any province without his leave, making an exception for Sicily only. There was thus no escape from the long arm of the Emperor. It was a crime even to have meditated flight: in the reign of Tiberius, Rubrius Fabatus, a Senator or Knight, was dragged back to Rome from Sicily by a Centurion sent to fetch him for no other crime than

that he was meditating a flight to Parthia in disgust at the state of affairs in Rome (vi. 14, 3-4). Yet as Senators had immense sums invested in the provinces (we hear of Seneca having money lent in Britain to the extent of ten millions of sesterces in A.D. 58-9), it must have been a matter of great importance to them to be able to visit the places where their money was invested.

³ This was Herod Agrippa I., grandson of Herod the Great, whose tragic death, apparently in A.D. 44, is recorded in the Acts, xii. 23. Judaea had been put under native princes once more in order to pacify its turbulent population.

⁴ This wild Arab tribe, far out in the desert to the E. of the Jordan, was first subdued by Pompey, and had been placed under the rule of Herod the Great. Sohaemus had been made king by Gaius A.D. 39.

ceremony known as 'The Solemn Augury for the Welfare of the Roman people'¹ which had been intermitted for twenty-five years.²

The
'Solemn
Augury.'

⁴ Claudius also extended the pomerium³ of the city, in accordance with the ancient custom whereby those who have pushed forward the boundaries of the Empire are permitted to advance those of the city also. And yet none of the Generals of Rome, except Lucius Sulla and the Divine Augustus,⁴ had exercised this right, however great the nations which they had conquered.

Claudius
extends the
pomerium.

²⁴ Of the ambition or vanity of the Kings in this matter various accounts are given; but I think it well to describe how the founding of Rome was set about, and how the pomerium was laid down by Romulus.⁵

Line of the
pomerium
as laid
down by
Romulus.

¹ What little we know of this ceremony is due to Dio (xxxvii. 24, 1) who tells us that the augurs had to obtain leave by divination to pray for the welfare of the Roman people on a particular day, and that such a day could only be fixed in a time of profound peace. The last certain occasion when the rite was held was in B.C. 29; though Suet. seems to imply that Augustus restored the custom when he became Pontifex Maximus in B.C. 13 (Aug. 31).

² Med. gives the number as 25; but as the *augurium* is not known to have been held in the year A.D. 24, most edd. insert 'L' before the 'XXV', and suppose the reference to be to the celebration by Augustus in B.C. 29. But as the interval in that case would be 78 years and not 75, it is scarcely worth while to correct the one mistake only to make another.

³ The *pomerium* (probably = *post-moerium*) was a narrow space left within the city walls on the founding of a new city. The width of this space was marked by boundary stones (*cippi*), and within that space no buildings could be erected. Varro informs us (L. L. v. 143) that 'Towns in Latium were founded according to Etruscan ritual. A pair of oxen—a bull on the outer side, a heifer on the inner—drew a plough round the city. The furrow from which

the clods were thrown up was called the "foss" of the city, the earth thrown up on the inside the "wall."

⁴ Other authorities differ from Tac. on this point. See the n. of F. Seneca (*De brev. vitae* 13, 8) and Gellius (xiii. 14, 1) both attribute an extension of the pomerium to Sulla, but they are silent as to Augustus; and the fact that no such act is recorded in the Mon. Anc. seems conclusive against it.

⁵ Until Roman archaeology was placed in its present scientific position, certain archaeologists maintained that the line of the *pomerium* as described in this chapter did not embrace the entire Palatine hill, but only its N., or more strictly its NW., half; and that the furrow of Romulus passed across the slight depression which divides the hill into two halves. Now on the side facing the Circus Maximus, this depression is scarcely noticeable; there is a wall of practically unbroken cliff along that whole side of the Palatine. There are thus three fatal objections to the theory that the *pomerium* enclosed only one half of the Palatine: (1) The Palatine, as a whole, with its ring of natural cliff, offered an admirable defensible position for a young community; whereas a settlement on only one half of the hill would have had no natural defence against an enemy occupying the other half; (2) Varro's bull and

Starting from the Cattle-market, where now stands ² the brazen statue of a bull¹—that being the animal that is used in ploughing—the furrow for marking out the city was drawn so as to include the altar of Hercules.² Thence its course, marked at certain ³ intervals by stones, ran along the base of the Palatine to the altar of Consus; then on to the Old Council-chamber, then to the Chapel of the Lares, and thence to the Forum Romanum:³ the Forum itself, it is believed, and the Capitol, having been added to the city by Titus Tatius, and not by Romulus.⁴ After that, as the fortunes of Rome grew, the ⁴ pomerium was advanced. The boundaries laid down

heifer would have had to draw their plough, and make their furrow, up an impracticable face of rock; and (3) The position of the words *per ima Palatini montis*, coming before his enumeration of the four defining points as given below, makes it certain that Tac. meant to say that the furrow ran all the way round the foot of the Palatine cliff, exactly as suggested by the configuration of the hill. Mr. Ashby, Director of the British School in Rome, informs me that this is now the view of all archaeologists. He writes: 'The *Sacellum Larum* has not been found for certain, though some would identify it with the *Templum Larum*, and that with the recently discovered remains NW. of the Arch of Titus. Nor is there any fresh light upon the *Curiae Veteres*. But I think there is little doubt that the four points are at the four corners of the whole Palatine, including the Germalus. Thus the *Ara Herculis* would be at the SW., the *Ara Consii* at the SE., the *Curiae Veteres* at the NE., and the *Sacellum Larum* on the NW.' See Hulsen, 'The Roman Forum,' p. 238; 'Römische Mitteilungen,' 1905, p. 119; *Classical Review*, 1905, p. 75, and Platner's 'Topography and Monuments of Ancient Rome,' pp. 36 foll.

¹ See F. and Pliny H. N. xxxiv. 2, 5, 10.

² This was the celebrated *Ara Maxima* at the N. end of the Circus, the legendary founding of which on the occasion of the slaying of Cacus by

Hercules is described to Aeneas by Evander (Aen. viii. 184-272) in the well-known passage ending

*Hanc aram Iuco statuit quae Maxima nobis
Dicitur nobis, et erit quae Maxima semper.*

The altar was doubtless erected to some Italian deity mistakenly identified with the Greek Hercules. See F. and Seeley, *Introd. to Livy*, p. 30.

³ Having reached the Forum, and the main entrance from the Forum to the Palatine, Tac. gives no indication of the line followed from thence to the starting point in the *Forum Boarium*, leaving it to be inferred that it followed, as on the other side, the natural line of the cliff. It is still more remarkable that he says nothing whatever of the line adopted by Claudius in his extension. That the Aventine was included is now certain from the discovery of one of the boundary-stones close to the Monte Testaccio. See next n.

⁴ These words again show that the Romulean *pomerium* included the whole Palatine hill, and not a half of it only. The Forum and the Capitol are named as the next additions to the city; had Romulus only occupied one half of the Palatine, the occupation of the other half must have been mentioned. That the Capitol was originally a Sabine settlement, probably an outpost of the Sabine settlement on the Quirinal, is in accordance with tradition (*Liv.* i. 11, 6).

by Claudius can easily be traced, and are described in the public records.¹

A.D. 50. CONSULS GAIUS ANTISTIUS VETUS AND
MARCUS SUILLIUS NERULLINUS.²

25 The adoption of Domitius was now hurried on by the advice of Pallas. Devoted to Agrippina's interests as having brought about her marriage, and now bound to her as a lover, he urged Claudius to bethink him of the public good, and to provide a protector for the youthful Britannicus³ :—

Pallas
urges
Claudius
to adopt
Agrip-
pina's son

2 *Just as the Deified Augustus had advanced his step-
sons, though he had grandsons to support him; and just
3 as Tiberius, though having offspring of his own, had
adopted Germanicus besides: so should Claudius now
take to himself a youth who might relieve him of some
portion of his anxieties.*

Overcome by these arguments, Claudius put Domitius before his own son, though only two years older;⁴ his speech to the Senate was to the same

He is ac-
cordingly
adopted
into the
name of
Nero, and
pointed out
as heir.

¹ Four of the *cippi* set up by Claudius to mark his extended pomerium have been found (see the interesting n. in F.²). The following is a specimen of the inscription which they bear. It fixes the date to the year A.D. 49 in the style usual with Imperial inscriptions, by reference to the various titles of the Emperor, and the number of times, *i.e.* years, for which they had been enjoyed; it also exhibits two of the literary conceits of Claudius :—(1) the archaic spelling of the name *Caesar*, and (2) the use of the inverted F as the symbol for the consonantal V (xi. 13, 3 n.) :—

TI. CLAUDIUS. DRUSI. F.
CAISAR. AUGUSTUS. GERMA-
NICUS. PONT. MAX. TRIB.
POT. VIII. IMP. XVI. COS. IIII.
CENSOR. P.P. (*pater patriae*) AUC-
TIS. POPULI. ROMANI. FINI-
BUS. POMERIUM. AMPLIAËIT.
TERMINAËITQUE.

The increase of territory alluded to seems not to have been that in Britain,

but some extension of the boundaries of N. Italy. See F.²

² This man was son of the Suillius whom we have encountered as an informer in xi. 1 and 2, and brother of the Suillius Caesoninus who is mentioned in xi. 36, 5 as having been a favourite of Messalina's, and as owing his pardon to his vices (*vitiis protectus est*). The name Caesoninus seems due to Caesonia, his father's half-sister, who was married to the Emperor Gaius.

³ Rather an extravagant pretension, seeing that Nero was only twelve years old. The adoptions of Tiberius and Germanicus offer no just parallels. Tiberius was over forty years of age when adopted, and was not adopted until all the natural heirs of Augustus had failed; Germanicus was of age for service when adopted by Tiberius, and Tiberius did not adopt him of his own will, but at the bidding of Augustus.

⁴ There is a mistake here; for Nero was more than three years older than

purport as that supplied to him by the freedman. Learned persons noted that this was the first case of adoption among the patrician Claudii,¹ that family having come down without a break from the days of Attus Clausus.²

Thanks were offered to the Emperor, with elaborate compliments to Domitius. A law was passed³ for his adoption into the family of the Claudii and the name of Nero, Agrippina also being distinguished by the appellation of 'Augusta.'⁴ But when all this was done, none were so devoid of pity as not to be touched by the grievous fortune of Britannicus. The very slaves who waited on him forsook him one by one; the lad himself saw through his step-mother's falseness, and would scoff at her ill-timed attentions.⁵ For he was said to be by no means dull of wit:

Unhappy position of Britannicus.

Britannicus, having been born on December 15th A.D. 37 (Suet. Nero 6), while Britannicus was born on February 12th A.D. 41, on the 20th day after the accession of Claudius to the empire (Suet. Claud. 27). Some edd. would in consequence read *triennio* here instead of *biennio*; but as the text of Tac. in other places contains small inaccuracies of this kind it is better to leave it as it stands.

The two being now made equal, Nero would take the first place as the elder.

¹ There was also a plebeian branch of the Claudii, with the cognomen of *Marcellus*. The 'learned persons' here somewhat contemptuously mentioned were probably none other than Claudius himself, as is stated by Suet. (Claud. 39). The remark is one just suited to his pedantic antiquarianism, and would doubtless be passed on as a *mot d'ordre* coming from himself. The name of their founder Attus Clausus was always paraded on family occasions by the Claudii, as at the funeral of Drusus (iv. 9, 3).

² The adoption of Germanicus by Tiberius was no exception; for it was an adoption, not into the Claudian, but into the Julian family.

³ This law, relating to a patrician

adoption, would be a *Lex curiata*, passed by the *Comitia Curiata* presided over by the *pontifices*, as in the adoption of Piso by Galba, *si te privatus lege curiata apud pontifices adoptarem* (Hist. i. 15, 1). The obsolete *Comitia Curiata* was now formally represented by thirty lictors.

⁴ Her title now became *Julia Augusta Agrippina*. She was the first empress to be styled 'Augusta' in her husband's lifetime; and she evidently regarded the title as conferring on her some share of the imperial power. Hence in chap. 27 she appears as the foundress of the Colony of Cologne. Even Livia had only received the title by will, after the death of Augustus; and in her case her son Tiberius had regarded it with some jealousy.

⁵ Med. here reads only *p. intemptiva*; Or. and F. follow Ritter in coining the possible but unlikely word *perintemptiva*. But the sentence needs a subject; and the word *puer* adds to it an indescribable pathos, entirely in the manner of Tac. A closely parallel use of *puer* occurs in i. 58, 9: *Arminii uxor virilis sexus stirpem edidit: educatus Ravennae puer quo mox ludibrio conflictatus sit, in tempore memorabo.*

whether that really was so, or that his perils won for him a repute that was never put to the proof.¹

27 Desiring now to display her power to the allied nations also, Agrippina had a colony of veterans sent out to the town of the Ubii,² where she had been born, to be called after her own name. For it had so happened that when that people crossed the Rhine, they made their submission to her grandfather Agrippa.

Agrippina
finds a
colony
after her
name.

3 Just at this time a disturbance was caused in Upper Germany by a plundering incursion of the Chatti.³ The Legate Publius Pomponius⁴ sent off against them the auxiliaries of the Vangiones and the Nemetæ,⁵ with some allied cavalry, instructing them either to head off the plunderers, or to fall unawares upon them if dispersed. These orders were promptly executed. Of the two columns that were formed, that which took the left-hand course⁶ surprised the enemy when they had newly returned, and were heavy with sleep after a carouse over the spoil. It added to their joy that they rescued some victims of the Varian disaster,⁷ after forty years of slavery.

An incur-
sion by the
Chatti

¹ The tragic fate of Britannicus has cast a halo round his memory; but the only three facts recorded of him by Tac. show him to have been boyishly offensive, and devoid of the circumspection indispensable to one in his difficult position:—(1) He here openly scoffs at his stepmother's attentions; (2) he affronts Nero after his adoption by addressing him still as 'Domitius' (chap. 41, 6); and (3) when called upon, perhaps maliciously, by Nero to give some recitation during a family feast at the Saturnalia in A.D. 55, he produced a poem in which he not darkly stigmatised Nero as a usurper. A tactful prince of fourteen would have known better than that.

² This famous town—the modern Cologne—had long been the headquarters of the Lower German Army: see i. 36, 1 and 37, 3, with n. on i. 31,

3. It was there that Agrippina herself was born, as recorded in an Arval table, probably in the year A.D. 15.

³ For the Chatti, the perpetual enemies of the Cherusci, see n. on i. 55, 1.

⁴ This doubtless is the *P. Pomponius Secundus* who narrowly escaped conviction as a friend of Sejanus in A.D. 31, and is described as a man *multa morum elegantia et ingenio illustri* (v. 8, 1 and 4). He was famous as a poet, especially as a tragedian. See below chap. 28, 2.

⁵ These tribes inhabited the left bank of the Upper Rhine, in Alsace and the Palatinate.

⁶ 'Probably up the valley of the Lahn,' F.

⁷ For the disaster of P. Quintilius Varus in A.D. 9, see nn. on i. 3, 6 and 10, 2.

is vigorously repressed.

Those who had taken the shorter route to the right encountered the enemy in open battle, inflicted on them a still severer defeat, and returned to Mount Taunus¹ laden with spoil and glory. Here Pomponius was waiting with the legions, in case the hope of revenge might induce the Chatti to offer battle. The Chatti, however, fearing to be caught between the Romans and their everlasting enemy the Cherusci,² sent envoys with hostages to Rome. Pomponius was accorded triumphal honours; but this added little to his reputation with posterity, which holds him in high honour as a poet. 28

Vannius driven from the Suebian throne;

About this same time Vannius,³ who had been placed on the Suebian⁴ throne by Drusus Caesar, was driven out of his kingdom. Beloved by his own people during the early days of his rule, he became tyrannical in course of time, and the hostility of his neighbours, added to sedition at home, brought about his fall. 29

Claudius offers him a refuge.

The movement against him was headed by Vibilius, King of the Hermunduri,⁵ and two of his sister's sons, Vangio and Sido. Claudius resisted all entreaties to intervene with arms in this barbarian quarrel; but he promised Vannius a safe refuge if defeated,⁶ and he ordered Palpellius Hister, the governor of Pannonia, to place a legion upon the river bank, together with 2

¹ On this range of hills, to the E. of the Rhine near Wiesbaden and Homburg, and still bearing the same name, the Romans had a fort; see i. 56, 1.

² See note on i. 56, 7.

³ The kingdom under Vannius, who had been recognised by Drusus in A. D. 19 after the defeat of Maroboduus (see ii. 44, 3 and chaps. 62-64), seems to have extended over Bohemia, and to have embraced the two important tribes of the *Quadi* and the *Marcomani*.

⁴ The name *Suebi* or *Suevi* was given by the Romans to a collection of German tribes occupying most of the country from the Danube to the Baltic.

⁵ The Hermunduri, who are mentioned as being under the chief Vibilius in ii. 63, 7, were a tribe friendly to Rome bordering on Rhaetia (Germ. 41, 1) and the Marcomani.

⁶ Thus following the same policy as that pursued by Tiberius in the case of Maroboduus (ii. 63).

the auxiliaries from the province, in order to support the conquered, and threaten the victors, in case success should embolden the latter to disturb the
 3 peace of our borders. For an unnumbered host of Lugii¹ and other tribes were advancing, attracted by the great wealth which Vannius was said to have
 4 amassed, both by plundering and by custom-dues, during his reign of thirty years. His own force was of foot; his horsemen were from the Jazyges,² a Sarmatian tribe. But being no match for the enemy in numbers, he resolved to shelter himself behind his forts and spin out the war.

30 The Jazyges, however, impatient of confinement, roamed over the adjacent country; and as the Lugii and the Hermunduri continued their advance, a battle
 2 became inevitable. So Vannius came down from his forts, and was defeated; he gained credit however in his defeat for fighting hand to hand with the enemy,
 3 and receiving wounds upon his front. He found refuge in the flotilla awaiting him on the Danube; his adherents soon followed, and they were settled with a grant of land in Pannonia.

Defeat of
Vannius;

4 Vangio and Sido divided the kingdom between them. They remained steadfast in their loyalty to Rome; but among their own people—whether through their own fault or because of the slavelike nature of their subjects—though greatly loved while attaining to the sovereignty, they were still more hated after they had attained to it.

his king-
dom is
divided
between
Vangio
and Sido.

31 In Britain,³ the pro-Praetor Ostorius arrived to

Affairs in
Britain;
activity of
Ostorius.

¹ A Suebic tribe, apparently occupying the country to the NE. of Bohemia.

² The Jazyges occupied the main part of modern Hungary, on the left bank of the Danube, opposite to the Province of Pannonia.

³ We now enter upon the exciting but difficult narrative of the progress of affairs in Britain, which adds such interest to this and the two following books of the Annals. In this chapter we take up the narrative from the fourth

find a disturbed state of affairs.¹ In the expectation that a new General, with a strange army, and at the beginning of winter, would not dare to meet them, the enemy had made a furious inroad into the territory of our allies.² But Ostorius, knowing well that it is by the first results that feelings of confidence or alarm are engendered, hurried up his light cohorts, slaughtered such as resisted, and followed up

year after the successful invasion of the island by Aulus Plautius Silvanus with a formidable force of four legions, in the year A.D. 43. During the first few years of occupation, with her usual thoroughness, Rome had not only firmly established her rule over the South of the island 'within a diagonal line that might not improbably be drawn from the mouth of the Severn to that of the Nen, or even of the Trent' (F. vol. ii. p. 138); but she had done much also to civilize the inhabitants and reconcile them to her rule. To use Mr. Furneaux's words, 'The writings of Tacitus, even in the mutilated state in which we now possess them, constitute our most complete and most consecutive authority for the whole history of the Roman invasion and conquest in Britain down to the recall of Agricola in A.D. 84' (Introd. to vol. ii. p. 126); but unhappily, not only have the books of the Annals been lost in which he must have given an account of the invasion and of the first years of the Roman occupation, but even in the portion preserved to us, his narrative is most unsatisfactory, and totally fails to give those details of places, dates, and movements, which are essential to the proper understanding of the campaigns. Still less does he tell us what we should like even more to know, what were those methods of administration which alternately won over the Britons, and provoked them into fierce rebellion. See Introd. p. xvi.

¹ P. Ostorius Scapula was the immediate successor as pro-Praetor in Britain of the distinguished soldier A. Plautius, who conducted the successful invasion of Britain in A.D. 43, and who celebrated an ovation for his successes in A.D. 47. Of the three or four interesting years which intervened between the first invasion and the arrival of Ostorius we have unhappily no record either from Tac. or from any other

ancient author. They must have been years of careful administration as well as of strenuous fighting. In a military point of view, these campaigns are famous as having afforded to Vespasian his first opportunity of developing his genius as a general; for Suet. informs us that as Legate of a legion he fought thirty battles, conquered two powerful tribes, took more than twenty cities, and subdued the Isle of Wight. Ostorius was probably appointed in the year 46; and he certainly did not reach Britain later than the year following. But the dates are somewhat uncertain, seeing that Tacitus, in his account of British, as in that of Parthian affairs, deserts his usual chronological order for the purpose of making a continuous narrative. Thus he tells us below: *haec quamquam a duobus pro praetoribus plures per annos gesta coniunxi ne divisa haud perinde ad memoriam sui valerent* (chap. 40, 8). In this and the following nine chapters (31 to 40) the events of no less than eleven years are included (A.D. 47-58); and the narrative is hard to follow because of the rapidity with which events separated by considerable intervals of time and place are strung together, with nothing to mark the transitions from one to the other.

² This term denotes the population of Romanised Britons, friendly to Rome. How readily the Britons accepted Roman rule and civilization, when fairly treated, may be gathered from the fact that when London and Verulamium (*St. Albans*) were captured by the insurgents in A.D. 61, Tacitus puts the number *civium et sociorum* who perished at 70,000, and by far the greater number of these must have been *socii* (xiv. 33, 5). It must be remembered, however, that these numbers are probably grossly exaggerated.

dispersed forces of the enemy; then to prevent their gathering again, and for fear that an armed and treacherous peace should leave no rest either to himself or to his army, he proceeded to disarm the suspected tribes, and establish forts to hold in check all the country between the Avon and the Severn.¹

3 The first to rebel against this measure² were the Iceni,³ a powerful nation which, having sought our alliance voluntarily, had not yet been crushed in

His measures provoke the Iceni into rebellion;

¹ For the different readings and interpretations of this famous but corrupt passage, see the n. in F.² and references. I follow the reading of the new Oxford text and of F.², which gives *cunctaque castris Avonam inter et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat*. This reading departs from Med. only in (1) substituting *Avonam* for the corrupt *Antonam*; and (2) inserting *inter* after *Avonam*. There is obviously something missing in Med., and the simplest of all the suggested emendations, and that which most nearly fulfils the required conditions, is either to read as proposed above, or else to supply *ad* before *Avonam*, and to read *cunctaque castris ad Avonam et Sabrinam fluvios*. In either case (notwithstanding F.'s objections) *castris* will be used to signify 'a chain of forts'; if *Antonam* were kept, that name might possibly refer to the river Nen. Mr. H. Bradley's brilliant emendation, which by the change of a single letter, and without insertion of a word, changes *cunctaque castris Antonam* into *cunctaque cis Trisantonam* ('all the country on this side of the Trent') must reluctantly be negatived for three reasons:—(1) There is no sufficient, or indeed any, evidence to show that the Trent was ever known by that name; (2) the line of the Trent is too far N. for probability, and is unsupported by existing remains; and (3) the word *cohibere*, standing alone, would give no hint of the method employed; while the addition of *castris*, though doubtless *castellis* would be the more appropriate word, is essential for the sense. No single camp could have fulfilled the object aimed at; nor would any single camp, still less a camp near the Severn, have provoked the indigna-

tion of the Iceni, whose seat was in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire. The Roman system of securing an outlying frontier, notably in England, was to establish a line of forts, backed by roads within the territory secured; and there are remains of such a chain of works having existed along practically the whole of the supposed route from the Warwickshire Avon to the Nen (see Sir J. H. Ramsay's 'Foundations of England,' vol. i. p. 54, and Appendix, pp. 62 and 63). No dogma as to the inappropriateness of the word *castris* can reasonably be maintained against evidence like this. Even if Tacitus himself used it in its ordinary sense, he may have meant to indicate only the strongest point in the line: an instance of the inattention to details which marks his entire narrative. It is not to be supposed that the chain of forts was completed at this time; the words *cohibere parat* do not imply more than that the mere threat of such a policy drove the Iceni to revolt.

² The word *quod* refers not only to the order for disarmament, but also to the menacing system of forts by which it had to be made effectual.

³ The principal town of this people seems to have been Norwich. Coins of a king Andredrigus have been found scattered over the Eastern counties, some even in the West: it has been supposed that he may have been the leader of a national party expelled by the Romans, while the Prasutagus whom we hear of in xiv. 31, 1 as friendly to Rome, and *longa opulentia clarus* (A.D. 61), may have been set up as his successor (see F. ii, Introd. p. 138).

battle. Under their leadership, the tribes round
 about chose a battlefield in a spot protected by a
 rude embankment, and with an approach so narrow
 as to leave no access for cavalry. The Roman
 General at once prepared to force his way through
 this rampart, though his force consisted only of allies,
 unsupported by legionaries; and having distributed
 his cohorts, and equipped his horsemen also to fight
 on foot, he gave the signal to attack. Our men
 broke through the embankment and overpowered the
 enemy, who found themselves entangled in their own
 defences. Conscious of their disloyalty, and finding
 their escape barred, they behaved with great gallantry.
 In this battle Marcus Ostorius, the son of the Legate,
 gained the distinction of saving a citizen's life.¹

they are
 defeated in
 a pitched
 battle.

Next the
 Decangi
 are
 chastised,

The defeat of the Iceni quieted down the tribes
 that were wavering between peace and war, and
 the army was then led against the Decangi.² Their
 territory was wasted, and much booty was driven off,
 the enemy not venturing on open battle; and if they
 attempted to ambush our columns, their trickery met
 its chastisement. Our army was now nearing the
 sea which confronts the island of Hibernia,³ when
 the General had to turn back in consequence of
 an outbreak amongst the Brigantes;⁴ for he was

the
 Brigantes
 are re-
 pressed,

¹ See iii. 21, 3, and n., and vi. 15, 2. Pliny N. H. xvi. 4, 5, 11 gives details about this honour. For the fate of the son Ostorius, see xvi. 15.

² This name presents another puzzle. The reading of Med. is *inde Cangos*, which can hardly stand; but the discovery in Cheshire and Staffordshire of certain pigs of lead, with an apparently abbreviated form of the name *Ceangi* or *Deceangi* written on them, has led to the conjecture that the tribe here indicated may have inhabited the lead-producing parts of Flintshire. See F. on this passage.

³ Tacitus describes Hibernia in the

Agricola (24) as being smaller than Britain, but larger than the Mediterranean islands; also as lying halfway between Spain and Britain, being conveniently situated for Gaul also.

⁴ The Brigantes were a powerful tribe occupying the Northern parts of England from the Trent to the Tyne. See map. The mention of these operations against the Brigantes offers undoubtedly some countenance to those who would place the line of the forts of Ostorius as far N. as the Trent. We must suppose in any case that the Brigantes had made an incursion into Roman territory, perhaps on the invita-

determined not to enter upon new ventures until he had secured his former conquests.

- 4 The Brigantes settled down as soon as the few who had taken up arms were slain; the rest were pardoned. But neither severity nor kindness could keep the Silures¹ from carrying on the war.² A legionary camp had to be established to keep them
5 down; and to secure the desired end more quickly, a powerful colony of veterans was settled upon conquered territory at Camulodunum, both as a defence against rebellion, and to make our allies familiar with the rule of law.³

and the
Silures held
in check by
a camp.

tion of the Iceni, and that the Roman success consisted in driving them back into their own country (*resedere*).

¹ The *Silures* were the most resolute and formidable of the three Celtic tribes that inhabited Wales. North Wales was occupied by the *Ordovices*; the main part of South Wales, with the counties of Monmouth and Hereford, was the country of the *Silures*; while the extreme West was inhabited by the allied tribe of *Demetae*.

² This passage can only be understood by recognising that in these chapters Tacitus crowds into single sentences events widely separated in point of time, with little or no regard to geographical considerations. He here mentions the *Silures* as if they had formed part of the forces recently combated by Ostorius; whereas, according to his own account, the war had never passed the Severn, and the most serious resistance had been offered by the Iceni, in the East country. After that, Ostorius devastates the country of the Decangi (?), and passing to the North of Wales, reaches a country confronting Ireland. He is recalled thence by *discordiae* among the Brigantes, to compose which he interrupts his further plans, not wishing to advance into new country *nisi prioribus firmatis*. These words imply that the Romans had already established themselves in the Brigantine territory; whereas hitherto the Nen, or at the very furthest the Trent, had formed the outside limit of the Roman operations. And now, in the same breath with the

Brigantes of the North, he introduces, for the first time, the *Silures* of the West, who persist in keeping up the war (*bellum exerceret*), insensible alike to the severities and the blandishments of Ostorius. The gaps in the narrative are obvious; yet all these events, which must have occupied a considerable time, and afforded material for several campaigns, are packed into one short chapter. And finally, as the *Silures*, on the W. bank of the Severn, required a legionary camp to hold them down, we are informed that a powerful colony had to be established at Colchester in the extreme SE. of Britain! The state of affairs suggested by this curt statement seems to be that it was found necessary to post strong legionary camps on the frontier, and to establish for their support one strong Roman colony, to serve as the *depôt* and headquarters for all the Roman forces in Britain. One of the camps was set up at Glevum (*Gloucester*), and became the headquarters of the 2nd Legion, being subsequently pushed on to Isea Silurum (*castra legionis = Caerleon*: see Momm. Hist. v. p. 162, 1, Eng. Trans. i. 178, 1) on the Usk; a second was at Deva (*Chester*), and a third at Lindum (*Lincoln*).

³ The phrase *officia legum* expresses the cardinal principle of Roman policy in the provinces. The Roman idea was not merely to keep down a conquered country by force of arms, but also to train the natives in Roman habits of self-government and obedience to law. The phrase includes the attitude of the

The Silures put forth all their strength under Caratacus, who stakes all upon one battle.

Then the Silures were attacked. Besides their own high courage, they put their trust in Caratacus,¹ whose many battles, some doubtful, some victorious, had raised him to a pre-eminence among the princes of Britain. Inferior in numbers, but superior in cunning and in knowledge of the country, he shifted the war to the country of the Ordovices;² and having gathered to himself all who dreaded the Peace of Rome,³ he staked everything upon one battle, choosing a site where approaches, exits, and everything else were disadvantageous for us and favourable for his own men. On one side was a steep hill; on the parts where the access was more easy, he built up a kind of rampart with stones; in front ran a river of varying depth. The defences were lined with swarms of well-armed men.

Added to this, the chiefs went round exhorting and encouraging their tribesmen; dissipating their

natives towards their rulers as well as that of the rulers towards the natives—the performance of legal duties by the governed as well as the execution of the law by the governors.

¹ The mention of this famous prince makes it necessary to recur to the time of the Roman invasion. Friendly relations, it would seem, had long been maintained between the Romans in Gaul and Cunobelinus (the Cymbeline of Shakespeare), the powerful ruler of the Trinovantes of SE. Britain, whose capital had been established at Camulodunum. On his death, after a long reign, probably about the time of the accession of Claudius, troubles seem to have broken out in his family, and thus given to Rome a long wished-for occasion for interference. The campaign under Plautius, during which Claudius himself was present for sixteen days, was conducted against Togodumnus and Caratacus, the two sons of Cymbeline; the Britons were defeated, Togodumnus was slain, and some portion of the conquered country was left under a vassal prince, Cogidumnus, perhaps of the royal blood. But the

bold and intractable Caratacus fled to the Silures, aroused their enthusiasm against Rome, and remained for years the heart and soul of the national cause. As to the spelling of the name Caratacus, it is a trial to have to depart from the traditional and familiar form; but in this case as well as in that of *Boudicca* below (xiv. 31, 3 and 35, 1), and in that of *Mons Groupius* (Agr. 29), the MS. authority is conclusive.

² This people, as we have seen, inhabited North Wales; and the language here used would imply that Ostorius first attacked the Silures in their own valleys, and then was obliged to follow them through impracticable country to the North. It may well be doubted whether so experienced a commander as Ostorius would have permitted himself to be drawn into so wild a chase, and compelled finally to stake everything (*novissimum casum experiri*) in ground of the enemy's own choosing.

³ The famous *Pax Romana*, so pungently described by Calgacus in the well-known phrase *ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant* (Agr. 30, 5).

He raises the enthusiasm of the tribes.

fears, kindling their hopes, and rousing their
 2 enthusiasm for battle. Caratacus flew hither and
 thither proclaiming:—*Now was the hour, and here
 was the field, either to regain their liberty, or to accept*
 3 *slavery for ever!* He called by name upon the
 ancestors *who had repulsed the dictator Caesar,¹ whose
 valour had saved them from the axes and from tribute,
 and had preserved for them the persons of their wives and*
 4 *children undefiled.* At this the multitude shouted
 applause, each man binding himself by his tribal oath
 not to shrink either from weapons or from wounds.

5 The Roman General was staggered by such
 enthusiasm. He scanned anxiously the river in front,
 the added rampart, the heights above: all formidable,
 2 all bristling with defenders. But the soldiers
 clamoured for battle, shouting that valour could
 carry all before it; while the Prefects² and the
 Tribunes, haranguing in the same key, still further
 3 inflamed their ardour. Then Ostorius, having studied
 at what points the defences could or could not be
 penetrated, put himself at the head of his eager
 4 troops, and passed the river without difficulty. On
 reaching the rampart, so long as it was an affair of
 missiles, our men suffered most, and many of them
 5 were killed; but when under cover of their locked
 shields³ they had torn down the rude and ill-compacted
 structure of stones, and it came to fair hand-to-hand
 fighting, the barbarians withdrew to the heights
 6 above. But here too our soldiers, light-armed⁴ and

The
 legions no
 less enthu-
 siastic.
 Ostorius
 storms the
 enemy's
 position,

¹ The well-known phrase of Tac. himself in regard to Caesar's two British campaigns is that *potest videri ostendisse (Britanniam) posteris, non tradidisse* (Agr. 13, 2).

² The 'prefects' were the commanders of the auxiliary troops.

³ F. seems right in thus interpreting

the phrase *facta testudine*, as used in Liv. xxxiv. 39, 6. There obviously would not have been time to erect a regular penthouse.

⁴ The term *ferentarius*, which bears somewhat different meanings at different periods, is here used of the more lightly equipped British auxiliaries, armed

heavy, followed them up: the former assailing them with javelins, the latter charging in close order, and thus throwing into disorder the ranks of the British, who had neither breastplates nor helmets to protect them.¹ If they faced the auxiliaries, they were felled by the swords and *pila* of the legionaries; if they turned against the latter, they were cut down by the broad-swords and spears of the auxiliaries. It was a notable victory; the wife, daughter, and brothers of Caratacus were captured and made submission.²

and gains
a complete
victory.

only, as Tac. tells us in the next sentence, with the *spatha* (a broad two-edged sword without a point, = Italian *spa*, and French *épée*: the word properly signifying a batten used in weaving) and the *hasta*, and probably without defensive armour; as contrasted with the *gravis miles*, i.e. the legionaries, armed with two formidable *pila* and the *gladius*. The *pilum*, two of which were carried by every Roman legionary, was a formidable pike or lance over six feet in length, which could be used either to thrust with, or to throw; while the *gladius* or Spanish sword, adopted after the Punic wars, could both cut and thrust, but was more formidable with its point than with its edge. Our word 'javelin' scarcely does justice to the *pilum*; but we have no better word to use.

¹ So in ii. 14, 4 Germanicus contrasts the *pila et gladios et haerentia corpori tegmina* of the Roman soldiers with the inferior equipment of the Germans: *non lorica Germano, non galeam*.

² It is impossible to locate the scene of this famous battle from the description of Tacitus. The guerilla Welsh war was probably protracted over several years; and we cannot doubt, from the tribute paid to Caratacus below, that he must have gained many partial successes, and often given his pursuers the slip. But if anything like certainty is impossible, it is pleasing to believe that some one scene may be regarded as having superior claims to the distinction of having been the site of so notable a battle, by which the last hopes of the race of Cunobelinus were extinguished. We may therefore provisionally accept the site assigned to it by Dr. Hodgkin, who thus describes the scene which

seems best to fulfil the required conditions:—

'On the border of three counties, Shropshire, Hereford, and Radnor, is the district in which tradition or the conjecture of learned men has placed the battlefield. High up soars Caer Caradoc, commanding a splendid view of the distant Wrekin. Not far off are the strongly-marked lines of Brandon Camp (possibly the work of the soldiers of Ostorius); the quiet little village of Leintwardine, enriched by the rapid waters of the Terne, sleeps at the foot of hills any one of which may have been the chosen position of the British King' (Political History of England, vol. i. p. 35).

In any case we have to recognise a division of Britain between the Romans, the Brigantes in the North, and the Welsh in their mountain fastnesses, which corresponds very closely to that struck out between Hotspur, Mortimer, and Glendower in Henry IV., Part i., Act 3, Scene 1:—

Glend. Come, here's the map. Shall we divide our right
According to our three-fold order ta'en?
Mort. The Archdeacon hath divided it
into three limits equally.
England, from Trent and Severn hither-
to,
By South and East, is to my part
assigned:
All Westward, Wales, beyond the
Severn shore,
And all the fertile land within that
bound,
To Owen Glendower:—and, dear coz,
to you
The remnant Northward, lying off from
Trent.

6 Caratacus himself was to discover that there is no safety for the unfortunate. Throwing himself upon the mercy of Cartimandua,¹ Queen of the Brigantes, he was bound and handed over to the conquerors, in the ninth year after the beginning of the war in
 2 Britain.² His fame had travelled far beyond those islands; it had reached the adjoining provinces, and even spread through Italy. People longed to see what man it was that for so many years had defied the
 3 power of Rome. His name was great in Rome itself; and Caesar, in exalting his own glory, enhanced that
 4 of his fallen foe. The people were summoned as if for some great spectacle; the Praetorians were drawn up in arms on the parade-ground in front of
 5 their camp. The royal clients were led along in procession, together with the bosses,³ necklaces, and other decorations which the King had won in foreign wars; then came his brothers, his wife and
 6 daughter; and last of all Caratacus himself. The others dishonoured themselves by craven supplications: but not so Caratacus. Abating nothing of his high looks, and making no appeal for mercy, he took his stand upon the tribunal, and spoke as follows:—

Caratacus betrayed,

and taken to Rome, where he exhibits a high front.

7 *Had I been as moderate in prosperity as I was great by birth and station, I should have entered your city as a friend, rather than as a captive; nor would you, Caesar, have disdained to offer peace and alliance to one sprung from illustrious ancestors, and ruling over many nations.*

Bold speech of Caratacus;

¹ For the part played by Queen Cartimandua, see below, chap. 40, 3-5.

² The triumphal arch erected by Claudius to commemorate his British successes, including the conquest of eleven British kings, is dated A.D. 51; so that Tac. must here be counting from

the first invasion by Plautius in A.D. 43, and reckoning both years inclusively, in the usual Roman fashion.

³ These *phalerae* were 'plates or bosses of chased metal worn on the breast' F.; see Mayor on Juv. xvi. 60.

*My present fate is as glorious to you as it is degrading 2
to me. Horses and men, arms and wealth, have
been mine; is it a strange thing that I am loth to give
them up? And if you Romans must needs lord it over 3
the world, does it follow that all welcome your yoke?
Were I being delivered to you after having surrendered at
once, where had been my name, and where your glory?
Wreak your will on me, and I shall be forgotten: spare 4
my life, and I shall be, for all time, a memorial of your
clemency.*

he is par-
doned by
Claudius.

Claudius replied by granting a pardon to Caratacus, his wife and brothers. Agrippina sat on a con- 5
spicuous seat beside him; and when the captives
were released from their chains, they paid her the
same compliments and thanks as to the Emperor. It 6
was indeed a new thing, unknown in olden times,
that a woman should take her seat before the Roman
standards;¹ but Agrippina deemed herself partner in
an empire won by her own ancestors.

Preten-
sions of
Agrippina.

The Fathers were then convened, and many fine 38
things were said about the capture of Caratacus:—*It
was as grand an achievement as the capture of Syphax²
by Publius Scipio, of Perses by Lucius Paulus, or that
of any other monarch exhibited in chains to the Roman
people.*

Honours to
Ostorius;
but his
successes
come to an
end.

The triumphal insignia were voted to Ostorius; 2
but after this his fortunes, hitherto so prosperous,
began to waver: whether it was that the removal of

¹ But Tacitus had already commented bitterly on Plancina for being present at the exercises and manœuvres of the troops (ii. 55, 5); and Caecina had used her example to give point to his denunciation of women (iii. 33, 3).

² This Syphax, King of the Western Numidians, was captured by the Romanising Masinissa in 203 B.C. and handed over to Scipio Africanus to be

taken to Rome. Perses, the last King of Macedon, was defeated by L. Aemilius Paulus in the decisive battle of Pydna, June 22, B.C. 168, and was led in triumph along with his three sons in the year following. Livy, however, is inclined to believe that Syphax died at Tibur before Scipio came home for his triumph (xxx. 45, 5).

Caratacus led to carelessness in our military operations, as though the war was over ; or that compassion for their great King's fate had whetted the enemy's
 3 appetite for vengeance. They surrounded the Prefect of the camp, with the legionary cohorts which had been left behind to construct defences in the Silurian
 4 country ; and had not help been quickly sent up to the besieged men from the neighbouring forts on receipt of the news, they would have been cut off
 5 to a man. As it was, the Prefect himself was killed, together with eight Centurions and the bravest of the private soldiers.

39 Not long after this a party of our foragers was routed, as well as some squadrons of cavalry which had been sent out to support them. Ostorius then brought up his light-armed cohorts ; but even so he would not have checked the flight had not the legions
 2 taken up the fighting.¹ Their arrival made things even, and our men had the best of it in the end ; but as the day was well nigh spent, the enemy got
 3 off with little loss. Then began a series of skirmishes fought mostly in guerilla fashion, in woods or morasses, as chance or each man's courage might direct : some planned beforehand, some not ; some for plunder, some for revenge ; some at the orders, others without even the knowledge, of the officers.

Guerilla warfare in Britain,

4 The most stubborn resistance was that offered by the Silurians, whose wrath had been kindled by a reported speech of the Roman General to the effect that, *Just as in former days the Sugambri² had been extirpated or transplanted into Gaul, so should the Silurian*

carried on mainly by the Silures.

¹ We may note how frequently the auxiliaries were placed in the forefront of danger, and the legions, as here, used only as a reserve.

² The Sugambri were a powerful

German tribe, between the Rhine and the Lippe. They were partly conquered by Tiberius in the reign of Augustus (Hor. Od. iv. 2, 33-6), partly transplanted to the Roman side of the Rhine.

name be blotted out now. Thus two auxiliary cohorts, 5
 which through the cupidity of their Prefects had been
 incautiously sent out for plundering purposes, were
 cut off; and the other tribes were being tempted to
 desert by presents of spoils and captives when at last,
 worn out by anxiety, Ostorius died. The enemy
 were well pleased that so capable a commander, if
 not defeated in battle, should at least have been
 worn out by the war.

Death of
 Ostorius.

He is suc-
 ceeded by
 Aulus
 Didius.

Defeat of
 Manlius
 Valens.

On hearing of the death of the Legate, not to 40
 leave the province without a governor, Claudius
 appointed Aulus Didius¹ in his place. Though
 journeying with all speed, Didius found matters still
 worse on his arrival, owing to the defeat of the legion
 commanded by Manlius Valens. The affair had been
 exaggerated by the enemy in order to alarm the
 coming General; while he himself exaggerated it
 still more, in order either to gain greater credit if he
 quelled² the insurgents, or a better claim for pardon
 if they held out. This mishap also was the work of 2
 the Silurians, who scoured the country far and wide
 till they were driven back by the advance of Didius.

Proceed-
 ings of the
 Brigantine
 prince
 Venutius
 and Queen
 Cartiman-
 dua.

After the capture of Caratacus, the most able of 3
 the British generals was Venutius, of the Brigantine
 tribe, as I have already stated. This prince remained
 true to Rome, under the protection of a Roman force,
 so long as his Queen Cartimandua held by him; but
 when a divorce, followed by war, took place between
 them, he declared hostility against us also. At first 4

¹ This is the A. Didius Gallus mentioned in chap. 15, 1 as conducting operations against Mithradates of Bosphorus. He was at that time probably Legate of Moesia. He was appointed to Britain in A.D. 51; his five years of command extended to A.D. 57; then

came Veranius, who died in the first year of his command, and was succeeded in A.D. 58 by the great General, Suetonius Paulinus.

² Reading *compositis et* (after Lips.) instead of the Med. *compositi vel*. See F².

the fighting was entirely between themselves. Cartimandua cunningly contrived to cut off the brother
 5 and kinsmen of Venutius; but this so incensed her enemies, and they were so stung with shame at the idea of being ruled by a woman,¹ that they invaded her dominions with a picked and powerful body of
 6 their young men. Our people, having foreseen this movement, sent up some cohorts to her aid; a sharp engagement which ensued was at first doubtful, but ended in our favour.² A battle with a similar result was fought by the legion commanded by Caesius
 7 Nasica; for Didius himself, being old and sluggish and surfeited with honours, was content to act on the defensive and to leave everything to others.

Roman
 successes.

8 These events took place under two pro-Praetors, and were spread over several years;³ but I have related them in conjunction, fearing that they might be less easily remembered if told unconnectedly. I return now to the regular order of events.

A.D. 51. CONSULS TIBERIUS CLAUDIUS CAESAR
 AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS V AND SERVIUS
 CORNELIUS ORFITUS.

41 Nero now assumed the toga of manhood, before the usual age,⁴ that he might be thought fit to take

Nero
 assumes
 the Toga
 Virilis;
 honours
 conferred
 on him.

¹ This seems contrary to what Tac. says below of Boudicca in xiv. 35, 1 (*solitum quidem Britannis feminarum ductu bellare*) and Agr. 16, 1 (*neque enim sexum in imperiis discernunt*).

² But the trouble was by no means over. The contest between Venutius and Cartimandua is narrated with more detail in Hist. iii. 46. Venutius represented the national cause, the queen and her paramour called in the Romans; but though the Roman force, after many encounters, succeeded in rescuing the queen, Tacitus adds significantly *regnum Venutio, bellum nobis relictum*.

³ The narrative of British affairs is not resumed until xiv. 29, in the year A.D. 61. The phrase *plures per annos* is thus meant to cover the period from the arrival of Ostorius in A.D. 47 down to the end of the governorship of Didius in A.D. 57. In xiv. 29 a cursory mention is made of A. Didius, and of the one year's governorship of Veranius; but the narrative there really begins with A.D. 61, the eventful third year of Suetonius Paulinus, when the whole edifice of Roman rule in Britain was for a moment shaken to its foundations.

⁴ Nero was just over thirteen years of

part in public affairs. Claudius also willingly gave way to the flattering entreaty of the Senate that Nero should assume the Consulship in his twentieth year; that up to that time he should be Consul-designate, with proconsular authority outside the city; and that he should be styled 'Prince of the Youth.' A donative was also given in his name to the soldiers, and distributions were made to the populace.

At the Circensian games, which were held with a view to winning for him the favour of the mob, Nero paraded in a triumphal garb, while Britannicus wore his purple-edged toga; the intention being that the imperial array of the one, and the boyish dress of the other, should be regarded by the people as a presage of their future fortunes. At the same time the Centurions and Tribunes who pitied the lot of Britannicus were removed on various pretexts, some under guise of promotion: even such freedmen as were loyal to him were removed on some such occasion as the following:—

The two happening to meet, while Nero addressed

Britannicus studiously put on one side;

Agrippina inflames Claudius against him; his tutors removed.

age, and there is no recorded instance of the *toga virilis* being assumed before the end of the fourteenth.

¹ In this Claudius followed the example of Augustus, who states in the *Mon. Ancy.* that the Senate caused his grandsons Gaius and Lucius to be designated Consuls in their fifteenth year, the Consulship itself to be held in their twentieth year.

² The granting of the *proconsulare imperium* went a long way towards suggesting the holder as successor to the empire. So Tiberius is spoken of as *collega imperii* in the lifetime of Augustus (i. 3, 4); and Tiberius on his accession asked the same power to be conferred on Germanicus (i. 14, 4). See *nn.*, on i. 2, 1; 3, 3; and 30, 4. The proconsular power thus conferred upon Nero differed from that of the emperor in being exercised only outside the city.

³ A title of courtesy invented by Augustus for his grandsons; see *n.* on i. 3, 2.

⁴ The term *donativum* is only used of largesses to soldiers. The *congariatium* was properly a distribution in kind (wine, oil, etc.), made to the populace; but although the old word was still retained, these largesses were now usually given in money. See *iii.* 29, 3 (F.) and *Marqt. Staatsv.* ii. 138.

⁵ A triumphing general wore the *toga picta* of *Juppiter Capitolinus* over the *tunica palmata*. It was a purple mantle embroidered with gold; it was worn also by magistrates on certain great occasions, and became gradually regarded as the imperial dress.

⁶ The *toga praetexta* worn by free-born boys was the ordinary toga of unbleached wool as worn by men, but with the addition of a purple border.

Britannicus by that name, Britannicus addressed
 7 Nero as 'Domitius.'¹ Agrippina reported this incident to her husband, complaining loudly of it as a letting in of strife:—*Nero's adoption, she declared, was being ignored; the vote of the Fathers, the enactment of the people, were being set at naught within the family itself; if evil and ill-disposed counsellors were not kept away, grave public mischief would ensue.*

8 The charges thus hinted at induced Claudius to banish or put to death the best of his son's tutors, and place him under the guardianship of persons selected by his stepmother.

42 But Agrippina did not venture on her last step until Lusius Geta and Rufrius Crispinus could be removed from the command of the Praetorian Guards; for she believed that they had not forgotten Messalina, and were devoted to her children. On the plea
 2 therefore that the corps was being torn asunder by rivalry between the two Prefects, and that better discipline would be kept under a single commander, the appointment was transferred to Burrus Afranius,² a man of high military reputation, but who knew full well whose good pleasure it was that had given him the command.

3 Agrippina exalted her own position also.³ She would drive up to the Capitol in a chariot⁴—an honour which in olden days had been reserved for priests and holy things, and which attached a kind of

She secures for Burrus the command of the Praetorian Guards;

and exalts her own position.

¹ The point of the insult was that by addressing Nero as 'Domitius' Britannicus ignored his adoption by Claudius the year before.

² Pelham's note in F². shows from an inscription (C. I. L. xii. 5482), that Burrus was probably a native of Vasio in Gaul, that after serving as a military tribune he had been *procurator* to Livia,

Tiberius, and Claudius in succession, and had thus become a trusted servant of the 'household of Caesar.'

³ For the use of the word *fastigium*, see xi. 38, 5 and n.

⁴ This right could only be obtained by a decree of Senate (Dio, lx. 33, 2). It had been granted to Messalina also.

sacredness to one who as daughter of an Emperor, and sister, wife, and mother of reigning Emperors, held a position unexampled to this day.¹

Accusation
of Vitellius.

About this time her great champion Vitellius, in spite of all his influence and his extreme old age—so mutable a thing is fortune in high places—was accused of treason, and of aiming at the empire, by a Senator called Junius Lupus; and Claudius would have listened to the accusation had he not been prevailed upon by the threats, rather than the entreaties, of Agrippina, to interdict fire and water to the accuser—no further punishment being demanded by Vitellius.

Various
prodigies.

A number of prodigies occurred in this year. Birds of ill omen settled on the Capitol. There were several earthquakes, which shook down houses; and as the panic spread, many weak people were trampled to death. The deficient harvest and the dearth which ensued were regarded as a portent. Nor was the murmuring all in secret; for when Claudius was administering justice, he was surrounded and driven violently to the other end of the Forum by an angry mob which had to be dispersed by a company of soldiers.² It came out that there was not more than fifteen days' supply of food in the city; and nothing but the goodness of Providence and the clemency of the winter prevented a calamity. And yet, great

Short
supply of
corn in the
city.

¹ Agrippina was daughter of Germanicus, who had received the title of 'Imperator' from Tiberius (i. 58, 9); she was sister of the Emperor Gaius, wife of Claudius, and mother of Nero. The use of the term *imperator* in the English is necessary to show that Germanicus was not an 'Emperor' in our sense of the word, a reigning Emperor, or as Tac. here puts it, *qui rerum potius sit*.

² This incident shows with how little

state or escort an Emperor might move about the city, even for the performance of judicial duty. Similarly, when Tiberius announced that he would appear before the Praetor to support the accused Urgulania, 'he bade his guards follow at some distance, and might be seen making his way through the crowd, conversing calmly as he walked' (ii. 34, 5-6). Thus completely was the fiction maintained that the Emperor was only the first of citizens—*primus inter pares*.

heavens! in the days of old, Italy used to send supplies for the legions to distant provinces; nor is her soil unfertile now. But we prefer to cultivate Africa and Egypt, and commit to ships and accidents the sustenance of the Roman people!¹

44 In this same year a war broke out between the Armenians and Hiberians² which involved the Romans and the Parthians also in serious troubles.

2 The reigning Parthian king was Vologeses,³ son of a Greek concubine, whose brothers⁴ had yielded to him

War again in the East.

¹ These words are as applicable to the United Kingdom at this day as they were to ancient Rome. We import 80 per cent. of the wheat or flour consumed in these islands; and the Royal Commission on our food supplies reported in 1905 that in the month of August there is seldom more than from five to six weeks' supply of bread-stuff in the country. The command of the sea, and the ease with which under a system of Imperial Free Trade corn could be transported to Rome from the whole seaboard of the Mediterranean, had given a death-blow to Italian agriculture. Hence Virgil's attempt to revive an interest in it by his Georgics. Small farming had now become unprofitable in Italy, while at the same time the free male population had been largely impressed or tempted into the legions to meet the necessities of the empire, and looked forward to end their days on lands granted to them, by way of pension, in some distant province. (See i. 17, 5, and xv. 27, 3.) The system of small farms, cultivated by their owners, had thus gradually changed into one of vast estates owned by great capitalists, ill-managed, ill-cultivated, and worked by gangs of slaves who were confined in 'compounds' (*ergastula*), and placed under the worst form of servile conditions. Thus Italy was gradually drained of her best blood; she ceased to grow the corn needed for the capital; and before long she ceased to grow the soldiers needed to protect her frontiers. This page of history may be commended to the notice of the zealous Tariff Reformer of to-day. Since writing the above, I find that the point of this note has been developed in an article by Prince di Jeand in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1908.

² For the position of Iberia or Hiberia, see n. on iv. 5, 4, and map.

³ The accession of Vologeses was mentioned in chap. 14, 8; but it did not take place before the present year (A.D. 51)—Nipp. supposes not till the year following.

⁴ These brothers were Tiridates and Pacorus. Tiridates was soon to be put upon the throne of Armenia (chap. 50, 1); Pacorus had already been provided for in Media Atropatene (xv. 2, 1). We have seen how often in Parthia a safe succession was secured by the murder of brothers and other near relatives, as in the case of Gotarzes (see chap. 10, 2). The attitude of Vologeses to his brothers (xv. 2) was very different. With the common Parthian practice of fratricide, etc., we may compare what was at one time the regular practice of the Turkish Sultans, who may be regarded as the modern successors of the Parthians in their dynastic methods. On the death of the Sultan in 1594, the Venetian Ambassador, Marco Venier, thus writes to the Doge and Senate of Venice:—'The new Sultan seems to be a resolute man and terrible. The moment he arrived at the seraglio he went to look on his father's corpse; then his nineteen brothers were brought to him one by one. They say that the eldest, a most beautiful lad and of excellent parts, beloved by all, when he kissed the Sultan's hand, exclaimed, "My Lord and brother, let not my days be ended thus in my tender age." The Sultan tore his beard with every sign of grief, but answered never a word. They were all strangled, all the nineteen. . . . He (the late Sultan) leaves twenty-nine daughters, and six wives with child. If males are born, they will share the fate of their brethren' ('Queen Elizabeth and the Levant

the throne. Pharasmanes had long ruled over the Hiberians; while his brother Mithradates¹ was kept on the throne of Armenia by the power of Rome.

Now Pharasmanes had a son called Radamistus,³ a tall and handsome youth of great bodily strength, well versed in the arts of his country, and bearing a high name among his neighbours. This prince was⁴ for ever fuming and complaining that he was being kept out of his poor kingdom of Hiberia by an aged father, making no secret of what he desired.

Seeing then that his son was eager to grasp power⁵ and had popular favour behind him, and conscious of his own advancing years, Pharasmanes sought to divert his son's hopes elsewhere by pointing to Armenia, telling him how he himself had driven out the Parthians and given that kingdom to Mithradates:—*He would not recommend violence to begin with,* he said; *better proceed by craft, and crush Mithradates unawares.*

Thereupon Radamistus feigned a quarrel with his⁶ father, as though he were unable to hold his own against an unfriendly stepmother, and took himself off to his uncle. The uncle received him graciously, treated him as a son, and loaded him with honours; while all the time, unknown to him, Radamistus was tempting the Armenian nobles to revolt.

Radamistus then made a show of reconciliation⁴⁵ with his father, and returned to him with the information that *all that fraud could do had been done; arms must do the rest.* Upon that, Pharasmanes² trumped up an excuse for war:—*When he was at war with the Albanians,*² he said, *and had appealed to*

Company,' Rev. H. G. Rosedale, published for the Royal Society of Literature, 1907, pp. 38 and 39).

¹ For Mithradates and Pharasmanes see xi. 8, 1 and 2.

² For the Albani see n. on ii. 68, 1.

Ambition of Radamistus, son of the Iberian King Pharasmanes.

His treacherous conduct towards his uncle Mithradates, King of Armenia.

Pharasmanes declares war,

the Romans for help, he had been thwarted by his brother, who must now pay for that injury with his life.

3 At the head of a powerful force entrusted to him by his father, Radamistus struck terror into Mithradates by a sudden irruption, drove him from the open country, and shut him up in the fort of Gorneae; a place strong by its position, and defended by a Roman garrison under the command of the Prefect Caelius Pollio and a Centurion called Casperius.¹

and Radamistus invades Armenia.

4 Now the barbarians are entirely ignorant of the implements and artifices of sieges, a branch of the
5 military art so familiar to us; and being repulsed with loss in vain attempts at an assault, Radamistus entered on a blockade. Finding force of no avail, he appealed to the Prefect's cupidity by a bribe. Casperius implored his chief not to abandon an allied monarch, or the kingdom presented to him by the Roman people, for filthy lucre's sake: but when
6 Pollio pleaded the number of the enemy, while Radamistus pretended that he was acting under his father's orders, Casperius at last took his departure, after stipulating for a truce, resolved, if he could not deter Pharasmanes from war, to inform Ummidius Quadratus, the governor of Syria, of the state of affairs in Armenia.

Siege of Gorneae.

Radamistus seeks to bribe Pollio, the Roman commander;

disgust of the centurion Casperius.

46 Relieved thus from supervision by the departure of the Centurion, the Prefect urged Mithradates to come to terms. He dwelt on the bond of brotherhood, on the fact that Pharasmanes was the elder of the two, and on the other family ties between

Pollio urges Mithradates to treat.

¹ It will be noted what an important position was filled by centurions of the higher rank. Here Casperius seems to act as if he were almost the equal of

the commanding officer. This same Casperius is entrusted with an important mission in xv. 5, 2.

them—Mithradates being married to the daughter of Pharasmanes, and Radamistus to a daughter of Mithradates. *The Hiberians, he asserted, were not averse to peace, though they had the advantage for the moment; the perfidy of the Armenians was well known: having no defence but a fort destitute of provisions, Mithradates should not hesitate to prefer a bloodless compact to the hazards of battle.*

Mithradates hesitated; for he misdoubted the intentions of the Prefect, who had debauched one of the King's concubines, and was thought ready to sell himself to any kind of villainy.

Casperi-
us fails in his
appeal to
Pharas-
manes,

Casperi-
us meanwhile made his way to Pharasmanes, and demanded that the Hiberians should raise the siege. To this demand the King in public returned doubtful, but on the whole favourable, answers; but he secretly sent messengers urging Radamistus to hurry on the attack by every means available. The wages of iniquity were then raised, and Pollio, by secret corruption, induced his men to clamour for peace and threaten to give up the defence. Under this compulsion, Mithradates agreed upon a day and place for conference, and came out of the fort.

False
promises
of Rada-
mistus;

Radamistus began by throwing himself into the arms of Mithradates, pretending submission, and calling him his father-in-law and his parent. He took an oath also that he would make no attempt upon his life, either by sword or poison. He then drew him into a wood hard by, where he said preparations for a sacrifice had been made that the Gods might witness and confirm their agreement.

he and his
father are
guilty of

Now when these princes meet to form an alliance, it is their custom to join hands, to tie their thumbs

together, and fasten them tightly with a knot ;¹ when the blood has flowed into the extremities, a slight puncture is made to let it out, and each sucks the other's blood. This interchange of blood is supposed to add a mystic sanction to the treaty. On this occasion, the man who was applying the fastenings pretended to stumble, seized Mithradates by the knees, and threw him to the ground: others ran up, threw chains on him, and dragged him along by the foot—an act of great contumely among the barbarians—while the multitude, who had been harshly treated under his rule, assailed him with insults and with blows. There were some, however, who pitied him in this great change of fortune; his wife and little children followed, filling the whole place with their lamentations.

the
grossest
treachery,

The party were then thrust into separate closed vehicles, to await the orders of Pharasmanes. But Pharasmanes had a heart in which the lust for rule was stronger than love of brother or of daughter, and which was ready for any crime. Yet he spared his eyes the spectacle of the slaughter; and Radamistus also made as though he did not forget his oath. He employed neither sword, nor poison, against his sister² and his uncle; he had them thrown upon the ground, covered up under a pile of heavy clothing, and so smothered. The sons also of Mithradates were butchered for having shed tears at the slaughter of their parents.

and put'
to death
Mithra-
dates and
all his
family.

When Quadratus learnt how Mithradates had been betrayed, and that the kingdom was in the possession of his murderers, he summoned a council,

Weakness
of Quadra-
tus and his
council.

¹ For a similar practice see Hdt. i. 74, 6; and iv. 70, 1.

² This lady being the wife of Mithradates.

informed them of what had taken place, and asked them, *Should he avenge it?* But only a few of them thought of the public honour; the majority took the prudent line:—

The crimes of foreigners should be welcomed; it were well even to throw down seeds of strife among them, just as our own Emperors had often made a show of presenting to them this same Armenia, to unsettle their barbarian minds. Let Radamistus keep his ill-gotten kingdom, provided only he were hated and ill-famed: better so for Rome than if he had won glory also.

These views prevailed with the council;¹ but for fear that they should seem to have condoned the crime, or that Caesar might order differently, envoys were sent to Pharasmanes bidding him retire from Armenian territory and take his son with him.

Now at this time one Julius Paelignus was Procurator of Cappadocia, a man as contemptible in character as he was deformed in body; but he was a favourite with Claudius, who before becoming Emperor used to amuse his idle leisure with the society of buffoons.² This man collected the auxiliaries of the province under pretence of recovering Armenia; but after plundering our allies, rather than the enemy, he was driven by the desertion of his own men, and the attacks of the barbarians, to seek protection from Radamistus. Radamistus gained him over by presents; so that he not only urged Radamistus to assume the royal diadem, but actually

Julius Paelignus vainly invades Armenia,

and is won over by Radamistus.

¹ See chap. 45, 6. 'This whole narrative shows that the Legatus of Syria was the superior officer of all commanders of troops in Cappadocia and other Eastern provinces. Cappadocia being under a procurator was subject to the general control of the legate of Syria.' F².

² This agrees with the account of Suet., who tells us that when Tiberius had contemptuously refused the request of Claudius to be allowed to enter upon public life, Claudius *ex contubernio sordidissimorum hominum super veterem segnitiae notam ebrietatis quoque et aleae infamiam subiit* (Claud. 5).

3 authorised and assisted at the ceremony. When this disgraceful news got abroad, in order to prevent its being supposed that all Romans were like Paelignus, the Legate Helvidius Priscus was sent off with a legion to deal with the trouble as best he could.

4 Crossing rapidly Mount Taurus, and having done much to settle things by policy rather than by force, Helvidius was recalled to Syria for fear of provoking a war with Parthia.¹

0 For Vologeses, thinking that an opportunity had now presented itself for invading Armenia—a country held by his own ancestors,² and now shamefully usurped by a foreigner—collected an army to establish his brother Tiridates in that kingdom, lest any member of the family should be without a throne.

2 The Parthians, as they advanced, drove the Hiberians before them without striking a blow, and the Armenian cities of Artaxata³ and Tigranocerta⁴ submitted to

Vologeses
intervenes
on behalf
of Tiri-
dates,

¹ The events narrated in the foregoing chapters (from 45 to 49) well illustrate the incapacity, the indiscipline and the corruption which pervaded the empire under the well-meaning but feeble government of Claudius, and the ascendancy of his freedmen. Mithradates, who had been encouraged by Claudius to resume the throne of Armenia, is betrayed by the Roman force which had been assigned for his protection, and is suffered to perish under every refinement of treachery and barbarity; Quadratus, the Legate of Syria, listens to the basest counsels rather than take one bold step against the murderer and usurper Radamistus; Pelignus, the Procurator of Cappadocia, a man of no rank or character, hoisted into office as a court buffoon, raises a scratch force, without orders, on the pretence of saving Armenia from Radamistus, and after ignominious failure, sells himself to Radamistus, and ends by officially recognising the usurper in the name of Rome. This proves too much even for Ummedius; but all that he does is to send a single legion across Mt. Taurus, without any further instructions to the

commander than that he was 'to do the best he could in the circumstances'; and the moment his action seems likely to provoke the resentment of the Parthians, he orders him back again.

² For the constant efforts of the Parthian royal house to annex Armenia, see nn. on ii. 4, 3; vi. 31, 2, etc.

³ The city Artaxata was situate on a plain in high country beside the river Araxes (now the Eraseh, a tributary of the Cyrus (*Kür*)), to the NW. of Mt. Ararat, near the modern Erivan, and some 200 miles due E. of the modern Erzerum.

⁴ The position of Tigranocerta has been disputed, as the statements of Tac., Pliny, and Strabo cannot be reconciled. Tac. places it on the banks of the river Nicephorius, at a distance of thirty-seven miles from Nisibis. It was on the extreme S. border of Armenia; and though it is mentioned here in one breath with Artaxata, the two cities were separated by certainly not less than 300 miles of mountainous country. Henderson thus describes the position of Tigranocerta:—'On the extreme S. of Armenia, guarding the two

the Parthian yoke; but what with a severe winter, deficient supplies, and a pestilence due to both these causes, Vologeses was compelled to abandon the enterprise for the present. Thereupon Armenia, left once more without a ruler, was invaded by Radamistus, who ruled more cruelly than ever, treating the people as if they had revolted and were ready to revolt again. But used though they were to slavery, the people broke off their habits of submission, took up arms, and surrounded the palace.¹

but is
compelled
to retire.

Radamis-
tus driven
out by his
own
people; he
escapes
with his
wife
Zenobia.

Radamistus had no resource but to escape with his wife, and trust to the swiftness of their horses. Being pregnant at the time, she at first endured the flight as best she could, out of terror of the enemy and affection for her husband; but as they hurried on without stopping, she felt herself sorely shaken, and begged for an honourable death to save her from the shame of captivity. Radamistus began by embracing, soothing, and encouraging her; now full of admiration for her fortitude, now sickened at the thought that some other man might get possession of her if abandoned. At last, in the extremity of his love, and being used to acts of violence, he drew his scimitar,² and having plunged it into her, dragged her to the bank of the Araxes and threw her into the river, that even her dead body might be carried away; while he himself, with all speed, made his way back to his paternal kingdom of Hiberia.

Zenobia
deserted
but saved.

Meanwhile Zenobia (for that was her name) was discovered by some shepherds in a quiet pool, still

great passes of Mt. Masius from Mesopotamia into Armenia, was situated the strongly fortified city of Tigranocerta. It lay on the Nicephorius river, which is to-day the Zergan, tributary to the Khabur, and so to the Euphrates' 'Life of the Emperor Nero,' pp. 173-4).

¹ As we see from § 4 of this chapter, this palace was at Artaxata.

² Tacitus here uses the word *acinaces*, a short sabre, mentioned by Horace as characteristic of the Persians (*Medus acinaces*, Od. i. 27, 5).

breathing and giving signs of life. Gathering from the nobility of her person that she was of no humble birth, they bound up her wounds, applied some rustic remedies, and on being apprised of her name and story conducted her to the city of Artaxata. From thence she was conveyed at the public charge to Tiridates, who received her kindly and treated her as a queen.

A.D. 52. CONSULS FAUSTUS CORNELIUS SULLA FELIX¹
AND LUCIUS SALVIUS OTHO TITIANUS.²

52 In this year Furius Scribonianus³ was driven into exile on the charge of searching into the Emperor's end through the Chaldaeans.⁴ His mother Vibia was included in the accusation, as she had never ceased to complain of her former sentence of relegation.
2 Camillus, the father of Scribonianus, had headed an armed rising in Delmatia;⁵ and Claudius plumed himself on his clemency in thus twice sparing the
3 members of a disaffected family. But the exile did not long survive: as to whether he died a natural death, or was poisoned, everyone had his own story.

Accusation
of Scribo-
nianus.

A stringent but futile decree of Senate was now
4 passed for expelling astrologers from Italy;⁶ after

Astrologers
expelled.

¹ This Sulla was a son-in-law of Claudius, being married to his daughter Antonia.

² L. Salvius Otho Titianus, brother of the future Emperor Otho.

³ This man, whose surname was Camillus, was grandson of the Camillus who defeated Tacfarinas (ii. 52, 5), and who is mentioned by Tac. as the first of the family to gain military distinction since the Camillus who drove out the Gauls.

⁴ For this offence see iii. 22, 2, and F.'s n.

⁵ The allusion is to an abortive rising against Claudius in the year A.D. 42, promoted by Scribonianus Camillus when Legate of Delmatia. His two legions promptly returned to their allegiance, and he was himself killed by a soldier (Hist. ii. 75, 3). See F. *Introd.* to vol. ii., p. 11.

⁶ See ii. 32, 5, and Hist. i. 22, 9, *quod genus hominum et vetabitur semper et retinebitur.*

which the Emperor delivered a speech commending such Senators as voluntarily withdrew from the Order on account of poverty, while he expelled others who, by failing to retire, added lack of modesty to lack of means.¹

53
 Law passed as to marriage between free women and slaves.,
 Claudius next proposed to the Senate to inflict penalties on women who should marry slaves; and it was enacted that women who should so demean themselves without the master's knowledge should rank as slaves, but as freed-women if he gave his consent.² The Emperor having given out that Pallas³ 2 had been the deviser⁴ of this proposal, the Consul-designate Barea Soranus⁵ moved that the Praetorian insignia should be conferred upon him, together with a sum of fifteen million sesterces; to which Scipio 3 Cornelius added that *a public vote of thanks should be offered to one who, being sprung from Arcadian Kings, thought less of his own ancient ancestry than of the public service, and permitted himself to be numbered amongst the Emperor's servants.* Claudius announced that Pallas, 4 *content with his present poverty, would accept nothing but the honour.* And so a decree of Senate was put 5 up, in letters of brass, commending the old-fashioned

¹ This power of expulsion gave the princeps absolute power over the Senate.

² *i.e.* they were to become the slaves of the husband's master.

³ Pallas had been a freedman of Antonia, the mother of Claudius, and first came into importance for his disclosures in regard to the plot of Sejanus. He had been placed by Claudius at the head of a great new department (called *a rationibus*) for administering the revenues of the *fiscus Caesaris*. See F., *Introd.* vol. ii., p. 29. The name Pallas was probably a fancy slave-name; Scipio commits the audacious flattery of presuming that it denoted descent from Pallas, the fabled ancestor of Evander (*Virg. Aen.* viii. 54). Pliny the younger describes his disgust on finding this decree recorded on the tomb of Pallas

on the *Via Tiburtina*, and his still deeper disgust on inspecting the gross terms of the decree itself (*Lep.* vii. 27 and viii. 6).

⁴ Tac. uses this word *reperor* in the same sarcastic sense of Tiberius, whom he styles *callidus et novi iuris reperor* (ii. 30, 3).

⁵ It is a shock to find the name of Barea Soranus, celebrated by Tacitus as the highest example of Stoic virtue (xvi. 21, 1), attached to so adulatory a vote. But as Consul-designate, it would probably be imperative on him to propose an official vote of this kind; and whatever Tac. might think of the birth of Pallas, we have no evidence to show that he was not an efficient public servant.

frugality of a man possessed of three hundred million sesterces !¹

54 But his brother Felix,² who had long been governor of Judaea, showed no such moderation. With the great influence at his back, he imagined himself free
2 to commit any iniquity ; and certainly the Jews had shown symptoms of unrest. They had broken out in riot [in consequence of the order of Gaius ;³ and] although on the news of his assassination the order had not been carried out, the fear still remained that
3 any of his successors might repeat it. Meanwhile Felix, by ill-judged remedies, goaded the Jews into fresh excesses ; while his evil example was emulated by Ventidius Cumanus, who had part of the province under his charge.⁴ The arrangement between the two was that the latter should rule the Galilaeans, Felix the Samaritans—two tribes which had long been at feud with each other, and which now, in defiance of the government, gave full vent to their animosities.
4 They let loose plundering bands against each other, laying ambushes, and even meeting in open battle—

Misgovernment of his brother Felix and Ventidius Cumanus in Judaea.

¹ Equivalent to between 2½ and 2½ millions of our money.

² This is the well-known Felix, procurator of Judaea in the time of St. Paul (Acts xxiv. 4). He is mentioned by Suet. as one of the greatest of the freedmen in the time of Claudius (*quem cohortibus et aliis provinciarum Iudaeae praeponit, trium reginarum maritum*, Claud. 28). One of his 'three royal wives' was Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa.

³ This passage is imperfect in Med. ; but the allusion is obviously to the fatal order given by Gaius in A.D. 40 to Petronius, the Legate of Syria, to put up his statue in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem. The scandal was delayed on the intercession of Petronius and Agrippa, but was only averted by the emperor's death. Tac. had no doubt related the incident in its proper place ;

the only other allusion which he makes to it is in Hist. V. 9, 4: *dein iussi a C. Caesare effigiem eius in templo locare, arma potius sumpsere: quem motum Caesaris mors diremit*. F. points out that Tac. differs in his account from Josephus in so far that he represents the rising as having actually broken out instead of being only threatened (Jos. Ant. xviii. 8, 7).

⁴ The narrative of this chapter is not easy to follow, and Tacitus would seem to have been misinformed. Neither from Josephus nor from any other quarter is anything known of a division of Judaea between two procurators. According to Josephus, Cumanus was appointed as sole procurator in A.D. 48, and on his recall in A.D. 52 Felix took his place. The whole story illustrates the mixed incapacity and corruption of provincial government under the Claudian régime.

the spoil and booty being brought in to the Procurators. At first this was quite to their mind; but as the trouble grew more serious, they intervened with an armed force; some of our men were slain; and the whole province would have been in a blaze had not Quadratus, the governor of Syria, come to the rescue. The Jews who had dared to kill the soldiers were executed without hesitation; but the cases of Cumanus and Felix caused Quadratus some embarrassment, seeing that Claudius, on learning the causes of the outbreak, had given him power to deal with the Procurators also. But Quadratus gave Felix a place among the jurors, and called him up on to the bench in order to stop the mouths of his accusers. Thus Cumanus was condemned for the misdemeanours of both, and quiet was restored to the province.¹

Quadratus,
governor
of Syria,
intervenes.

Order re-
stored and
Cumanus
punished.

Outbreak
of the
Clitae in
Cilicia.

Not long after this, some wild Cilician tribes called Clitae,² who had often been restless before, set up a camp in rough mountain country under their leader Troxoboris, and from thence made descents upon the cities and the shore, attacking alike town-folk and country-folk, and even the traders and ship-people. They laid siege to the city of Anemurium,³ and routed a body of cavalry sent to its assistance from Syria under the Prefect Curtius Severus, the difficult character of the ground being as unsuitable for cavalry operations as it was favourable for foot-soldiers. Before long however Antiochus,⁴ the King of that district, contrived to split up the barbarian forces by cajoling the multitude, and tricking their

¹ Cumanus was sent to Rome for trial, and ultimately banished.

² For the Clitae, see vi. 41, 1.

³ On the coast of Cilicia, opposite to Cyprus.

⁴ Antiochus Epiphanes IV. The death of his father of the same name is men-

tioned under the year A. D. 17 (ii. 42, 7); after which for a time Commagene was placed under the legate of Syria. The son was restored and deposed again by Gaius, and once more restored by Claudius. Part of Cilicia had been added to his kingdom.

leader; Troxoboris himself and his chief men were put to death, the rest were pacified and pardoned.

6 Just about this time the tunnel between the lake Fucinus and the river Liris was completed;¹ and with a view to showing off the magnificence of the work to a large company, a grand naval battle was got up on the lake itself, like the one which Augustus exhibited, though with lighter and fewer vessels, in the basin which he constructed on the far side of the Tiber.²

Opening of the emissarium for draining Lake Fucinus.

2 Claudius fitted out a fleet of triremes and quinqueremes, manned with armed crews numbering nineteen thousand men. A barricade of rafts was moored all round to prevent escape, but leaving room for the fighting, the manoeuvring, and the charging
3 usual in sea battles.³ Upon the rafts were placed companies of Praetorians and squadrons of horse,

¹ This great engineering work, unlike the more vast and ambitious schemes which Tacitus condemns as attempts to fly in the face of Nature (xv. 52, 1), was one of great utility, intended to restore to health and cultivation an area of fine land of nearly 50,000 acres. Pliny describes how 30,000 men were at work on it for eleven years; but the work was inefficiently carried out, had to be restored more than once, became ultimately useless, and was only finally carried to a successful completion in our own day by the exertions of Prince Torlonia. The massive outlet of the *emissarium* of Claudius is still to be seen. The water was carried below ground through a channel carved out of the rock, or vaulted with bricks, for nearly three miles. For a third of that distance the tunnel went through the mountain (*perrupto monte*) which forms the SW. boundary of the lake, and then poured its waters into the Liris. The draining of these waters, which like many lakes in that volcanic country had no natural outlet, may be likened to the celebrated work of draining the Alban lake in early times, though the motive was economic instead of superstitious: unless indeed we accept the probable view that the draining of the Alban lake was a measure of safety,

which the people were induced to carry out because recommended in the name of religion.

² Edd. are perhaps here justified in the daring change of *cis* into *trans*. The *cis* of Med. must be wrong, as Augustus himself in the Mon. Ancyr. describes the scene of the fight as on the far side of the Tiber, in *quo loco nunc est nemus Caesarum* (iv. 43). He adds that the artificial lake then made was 1800 feet long by 1200 broad; that thirty ships of war (*triremes et quadriremes*), besides lighter vessels, were engaged; and that the number of the combatants, without counting the crews, was 3000. The operations of Claudius were on a still vaster scale; but the numbers must surely be exaggerated. It will be remembered that the total number of men who manned the two fleets of Russia and Japan at the great battle of Tushima did not much exceed the number here given.

³ This ring of armed rafts, bound together so as to form a kind of palisade, encircled the entire space left open for the combatants in the middle. The object was two-fold: partly to prevent escape, partly, like the *podium* in the amphitheatre, to protect the spectators from a possible attack by the desperate men engaged in the combat.

with defences in front, from behind which catapults and other engines might be worked.

Grand
naval
battle on
the lake.

The rest of the lake was occupied by decked ships manned with seamen. The banks, the slopes and the hill-tops were filled like a theatre by a countless multitude: some from the towns around, some from the city itself; some having come to see the show, others by way of compliment to the Emperor. Claudius himself presided, arrayed in a magnificent military cloak; by his side was Agrippina, wearing a mantle of embroidered gold. The crews fought with the spirit of brave men, though they were but condemned criminals; and after much bloodshed they were saved from utter slaughter.¹

The work
a failure;
show of
gladiators
on a second
occasion.

The spectacle over, the water-way was opened, when the carelessness of its construction was at once apparent; for it had not been carried down to the bottom, or even to the average depth, of the lake. The channel therefore had to be deepened; and again, after an interval, a multitude was assembled to witness an exhibition of gladiators who fought on foot upon floating pontoons. Close by the outlet a banquet was served, during which a panic was caused by a rush of water which swept off everything near it, while the crash and the roar shook or terrified those who were further off. Agrippina took advantage of the Emperor's terror to rail against the greed and robbery of Narcissus² in carrying out the

Accident
and panic
at the
opening.

¹ Dio (lx. 33) tells us that there were fifty vessels engaged on each side, the one side being called 'Rhodians,' the other 'Sicilians.' If the figures given above were correct, this would give an average of 190 combatants to each vessel. Suet. adds a scarcely credible particular, partially confirmed by Dio, that the men were unwilling to fight, and were only induced to do so by the

personal exhortations of the emperor (Claud. 21).

² It will be remembered that Narcissus had opposed Agrippina's claims in the marriage question, advocating those of Aelia Pæтина. From this time forward he became the determined enemy of Agrippina's projects (chap. 65, 2), and she had to seize the opportunity of his temporary absence from

5 *work.* Nor did Narcissus fail to retort, charging her with *extravagant ambition and all the evil passions of her sex.*

A.D. 53. CONSULS DECIMUS JUNIUS SILANUS AND QUINTUS HATERIUS ANTONINUS.

58 Being now sixteen years old, Nero took Octavia, the daughter of Claudius, to wife; and that he might show off his learning, and gain a name for oratory, he undertook the cause of the people of Ilium.¹ Having narrated with much eloquence how Rome was sprung from Troy, how Aeneas was the founder of the Julian line, with other ancient tales akin to the fabulous, he procured for his clients exemption from
2 all public burdens. His advocacy also procured for the colony of Bononia,² which had been burnt down, a subvention of ten million sesterces. The Rhodians were given back their liberties, which had been often forfeited and restored again, as a punishment for turbulence at home, or as a reward for services in war;³ while the town of Apamea,⁴ which had been

Nero marries Octavia; he pleads for the people of Ilium and Bononia.

Rome to carry out her design against Claudius (chap. 66, 1).

The story of Dio is that Narcissus purposely contrived the accident to conceal the scamped manner in which the work had been executed.

¹ The city of Ilium had always been specially favoured by Rome and Roman generals in acknowledgment of the traditional descent of Rome from Troy; but the words of the text, confirmed by Suet. (*tributa in perpetuum remisit*, Claud. 25), show that previous remissions of tribute cannot have been complete, or that they had been ignored by Roman governors.

² Bononia (*Bologna*), the first Roman colony in Cisalpine Gaul, was founded B.C. 189 (Liv. xxxvii. 57, 7).

³ The Rhodians had earned the gra-

titude of the Romans by assistance in the Macedonian and Mithradatic wars; but Dio tells us that Claudius had some years before deprived them of their freedom as a punishment for having crucified some Roman citizens (lx. 24, 4).

⁴ Out of several cities of this name, called after Apama, the wife of Seleucus Nicator (B.C. 312-286), the city here meant is that in Phrygia, on one of the tributaries of the Maeander. These remissions of tribute due to the *aerarium* were made by decrees of Senate on the motion of the emperor (see iv. 13, 1). In ii. 47, 3, Tac. attributes to Tiberius alone remissions made to the Sardians of sums due both to the *fiscus* and to the *aerarium*; but only in the former case could the emperor act without a decree of Senate.

overthrown by an earthquake, was granted a remission of tribute for five years.

Agrippina causes the ruin of Statilius Taurus.

Agrippina was now ceaselessly at work goading 59 on Claudius to acts of cruelty. Using Tarquiti¹ Priscus as her tool, she brought about the ruin of Statilius Taurus,² who was famous for his wealth, and whose gardens she coveted. Tarquiti³ had been 2 Legate under Taurus when the latter was Proconsul of Africa; on their return home, he accused Taurus of some acts of extortion, but more especially of resorting to magical rites. Unable to endure the 3 suspense of a false accusation and its undeserved indignities,³ Taurus laid violent hands upon himself without awaiting the judgment of the Senate. And 4 the Fathers were so indignant at the accusation that they expelled Tarquiti⁴ from the Senate, in spite of Agrippina's interest on his behalf.

The judicial powers of Procurators are enlarged.

During this year the Emperor was often heard to 60 declare that the judgments of his Procurators ought to have the same validity as if pronounced by himself; and that this might not be taken as a mere 2 chance opinion, the Senate passed a decree to that effect in ampler and more detailed terms than before.⁴

¹ This man was himself convicted of extortion in A.D. 62 (xiv. 46, 1).

² Son of the consul of A.D. 16 (ii. 1, 1), and himself consul in A.D. 44.

³ Med. reads *sortes*; but apart from the improper use of that word in the plural, *sordes* is the regular term to denote the afflicted position of an accused person, including the signs of neglect in dress and person which it was the custom for a *reus* and his friends to exhibit for the purpose of exciting compassion.

⁴ The measures here recorded seem to mark a distinct advance in the gradually increasing powers of the procurators. Of these officers there were three kinds: (1) Those who were in charge of the smaller Imperial provinces, as Pontius Pilate in Judaea: these naturally exercised all the jurisdiction, civil and

criminal, of other governors. (2) The procurators in Imperial provinces, who bore to the *legatus Caesaris pro praetore* a relation similar to that of a quaestor to the pro-consul in a Senatorial province. These doubtless had their powers now increased; for we find in xiv. 32, 3 and 7 that the procurator Catus Decianus not only had some troops at his disposal, but that his extortions had been the main cause of the British rebellion. See also Agr. 9, 5, and 15, 2. (3) A third class of procurators, in Senatorial provinces or elsewhere, dealt only with the private estates of the princes, and with the collection of purely 'fiscal' dues. With regard to this last class Tiberius had expressly disclaimed their having any judicial power, or any authority over the troops:

- 3 For the Divine Augustus had granted jurisdiction to the Knights placed in charge of Egypt,¹ and had ordered that their decisions should be treated as if pronounced by Roman magistrates. Subsequently, in other provinces, and in Rome itself, many cases had been committed [to the Procurators] which had formerly been heard by the Praetors; and now
- 4 Claudius handed over to them all those judicial rights which had so often been the cause of riot and armed conflict—rights which the Sempronian Laws had handed over to the equestrian Order, which the Servilian Laws restored to the Senate, and which formed the chief cause of the war between Marius and Sulla.
- 5 But in those days the struggle was between the two Orders; and the results which either gained held good for all alike.² Gaius Oppius and Cornelius Balbus were the first Knights who received authority, in virtue of Caesar's great power, to discuss terms

The old quarrels as to the *judicia* have ended in favour of the Knights,

si vim practoris usurpasset (Lucilius Capito), *manibusque militum usus esset, spreta in eo mandata sua* (iv. 15, 3). It is clear that the new arrangements would refer largely to this class of procurators, and that the principle on which Tiberius had acted of referring fiscal claims to the ordinary courts of law (*si quando cum privatis disceptaret, forum et ius*, iv. 6, 7), was now departed from.

¹ It is worthy of note that Tacitus here attributes to the example of Egypt—which had to be placed directly under the emperor's own direction, owing to its unique position as holding the key to the Mediterranean and the East (ii. 59, 4)—the institution of the new kind of civil and public service which was to be free from the embarrassing conditions as to rank, age, etc., which caused the emperor to look with jealousy upon the old established magistracies, with all their republican ideas and associations. Augustus had to rely upon a Maecenas and an Agrippa rather than on the members of the great ancient families; and besides the peculiar case of Egypt, notice has already been taken

of the new career now thrown open to knights in the three great 'prefectures,' those of the Praetorians, of the Markets, and of the Vigiles (corps of night-watchmen). Freedmen also had become indispensable to the Civil Service; and these books are full of examples of the opportunities for acquiring wealth and power open to them under Claudius.

² What Tacitus means is that in republican times the contests were between the great parties (or orders) in the state; and that a settlement once arrived at was binding upon the whole people. His object is to contrast with this the imperial method of piecemeal and partial legislation, enacted solely for the benefit of individuals. As examples of the former, he gives the increased powers of certain equestrian offices; the cases of Oppius and Balbus as examples of the latter. Under the Republic, rights gained by the *Ordo Equester* were gained by the entire order, and had to be respected by the other orders; under the present arrangement, only the judicial powers of certain equestrian offices were enlarged.

of peace, or decide upon issues of war. As to the Matii and Vedii, and other Roman Knights who became great in after times, it matters not to name them, seeing that Claudius put the freedmen who had charge of his own private affairs upon a level with himself and with the laws.¹

and even of freedmen.

Claudius then proposed to exempt the people of Cos from tribute, and discoursed at length upon their antiquity. *The Argives*, he said, or *Coeus*,² the father of *Latona*, had been the earliest inhabitants of that island; the physician's art had been introduced there by *Aesculapius*,³ and cultivated with great fame by his descendants, whose several names he recounted, with the dates at which each had flourished. He added that, *His own* physician *Xenophon*⁴ was descended from that same family; and recommended that, in deference to his

The Island of Cos relieved of tribute.

¹ The statements in this chapter are inaccurate and misleading, and exhibit the same want of political judgment that is so manifest in the celebrated disquisition on law in iii. 26-28. In the first place, the reference to the *iudicariae leges* of C. Gracchus and others is irrelevant. Those laws related solely to the composition of juries in criminal trials (*quaestiones perpetuae*) held in Rome; the present question is that of the extension of the jurisdiction of certain officers in trying, without jurors, in Rome or the provinces, certain civil cases in which the rights of the emperor were concerned. Secondly, the contents of the *Serviliae leges* are not correctly stated. There were two laws of that name; the one (that of Servilius Caepio, B.C. 106) effected some sort of a compromise between the orders (Momm. Staatsr. iii. 531, 2); the other, that of Servilius Glaucia, a little later, practically restored the *iudicia*, not to the Senate, but to the Equites; while the Aurelian law, which divided the *iudicia* between the Senate, the Equites and the *tribuni aerarii*, is entirely ignored. Thirdly, the question of the *iudicia* was not the main cause of the outbreak of war between Marius and Sulla; though no doubt Sulla, when victorious, in

accordance with the whole tenor of his legislation, once more restored the *iudicia* to the Senate. Fourthly, the power of Oppius and Balbus, as confidential agents of Caesar, has nothing at all to do with the judicial rights of the equestrian order. Fifthly, it seems unfair to put C. Matius, of whom nothing unfavourable is known, in the same class with Vedius Pollio, whose name was a by-word for evil luxury (i. 10, 4). And lastly, it is a great exaggeration to speak of Claudius as 'putting freedmen on a level with himself and with the laws,' merely because he had increased the powers of the lower class of procurators in dealing with a particular class of cases. The whole chapter is an outburst of senatorial indignation against the rise of those new classes whose services had become essential for the conduct of public business.

² One of the Titans, sons of Uranus and Gaea (*Heaven and Earth*).

³ The worship of Aesculapius would doubtless be introduced from its original seat at Epidaurus.

⁴ Mentioned below in chap. 67, 2 as abetting the murder of Claudius. Inscriptions show that his family and himself were held in high honour in the island.

petition, *The Coans should be relieved of tribute for all future time, devoting themselves and their sacred island to the worship of the God.*

3 Claudius might well have mentioned many services of the islanders to Rome, many victories which
4 they had shared with us; but with his usual facility, he used no external aids to disguise a favour which he had granted to one man.¹

62 A hearing was then given to the Byzantines, who in petitioning the Senate² for some relief from their
2 heavy burdens, recounted their whole history. Beginning with the treaty which they had made with us at the time of our war with that King of Macedon whose ignoble birth gained for him the name of the Pseudo-Philippus,³ they spoke of the forces which they had afterwards sent against Antiochus, Perses and Aristonicus;⁴ how they had helped Antonius⁵ in his war with the pirates; what services they had rendered to Sulla and Lucullus and Pompeius,⁶ and again more recently to the Caesars,⁷ in virtue of occupying a situation so commodious for the passage of generals and their

Petition
of the
Byzantines.

¹ The real absurdity here consists in the usual pedantry of Claudius, who uses mythological arguments for the favour to be granted to the Coans, while making no mention of their recent services to the Roman people. Tac. does not notice this, taking it for granted that the sole object of Claudius was to bring the merits of Xenophon into greater prominence.

² The Senate would be the proper body to grant the remission, as Byzantium was part of the Senatorian province of Bithynia, though situated on the opposite side of the strait.

³ His real name was Andriscus; but he imposed himself upon the Macedonians for one year as son of Perses until his capture by Caecilius Metellus in B.C. 148 (Liv. Epit. 49).

⁴ Antiochus the Great, King of Syria (B.C. 223-187), was finally defeated by L. Scipio at Mt. Sipylus, near Magnesia, in B.C. 180. Perses, the last king of Macedonia (178-165), was defeated by L. Aemilius Paulus at Pydua B.C. 168. Aristonicus was natural brother to Attalus III. of Pergamus; his pretensions to that throne were crushed in B.C. 130 by M. Perperna.

⁵ Not Mark Antony the Triumvir, but his father, who failed egregiously in a war with the pirates B.C. 74.

⁶ During the Mithradatic wars, and in the brilliant campaign of Pompey against the pirates B.C. 67.

⁷ Probably in allusion to the wars with Thrace (iv. 46-51), and against the Bosporan kingdom (xii. 15-21). See below, chap. 63, 3.

armies, whether by sea or land,¹ as well as for the transport of supplies.

For the city of Byzantium is situated at the extreme edge of Europe, at the narrowest part of the strait which separates it from Asia. When its Greek founders enquired of the Pythian Apollo where they should build their city, the oracle told them *to look for a site opposite to Blind-man's Land* :² a riddle which pointed to the people of Chalcedon, who having arrived there first, and having the better situation before their eyes, chose the worse. For Byzantium has a fertile soil, and a sea teeming with fish. These issue in immense shoals from the Euxine Sea; and being scared by some slanting rocks below water, they pass on to the harbours on the European side, instead of following the windings of the further shore.³ Hence the wealth and power of the inhabitants in early days; but the weight of their present burdens drove them to pray for their remission or abatement.⁴ Their demand was supported by the Emperor, who represented that their sufferings during the recent Thracian and Bosporan wars gave them a claim for relief. So a remission of tribute was granted for a period of five years.

¹ Compare the similar phrase *claustra terrae ac maris* applied to Egypt in ii. 59, 4.

² Herodotus tells the same story though somewhat differently (iv. 144).

³ The shoals were of tunnies. The fable of the fish being frightened by a white rock appears also in Strabo (vii. 6, 2, 320), and in Pliny (H. N. ix. 15, 20, 50). Horace recommends for fish-sauce the brine (*muria*) *qua Byzantia putuitorca* (Sat. ii. 4, 66).

⁴ The phrase *finem aut modum* suggests that of the 'ending or mending' which has become famous in recent times. Perhaps all readers are not aware that that phrase occurs in the 'Heart of Midlothian,' chap. 4, last page, 'There will be naething else spoken aboot frae the Weigh-house to the Water-gate, till this is either ended or mended.'

History and situation of Byzantium.

Remission for five years granted.

63

2

3

A.D. 54. CONSULS MARCUS ASINIUS MARCELLUS AND
MANIUS ACILIUS AVIOLA.

64 A series of prodigies in this year indicated a change for the worse in public affairs. Military tents and standards were set ablaze by fire from heaven. A swarm of bees settled on the pediment of the Capitoline temple. Babes were born that were half beasts; and a sow brought forth a pig with the claws of a hawk. The number of deaths also in the magistracy was accounted a portent: a Quaestor, an Aedile, a Tribune, a Praetor, and a Consul having all died within the space of a few months. And Agrippina had fears of her own from a remark let fall by Claudius in his cups that, *It was his fate to have first to endure, and then to punish, the misdemeanours of his wives.*

Various prodigies.

This terror determined her to act at once. She began by bringing about the ruin of Domitia Lepida,¹ out of female jealousy; for as Lepida was daughter of the younger Antonia, great-niece of Augustus, first cousin² to Agrippina, and sister of Agrippina's first husband Domitius, she regarded herself as Agrippina's equal. In beauty, age, and wealth, the two were nearly on a par. Both were dissolute, ill-famed, and violent-tempered: rivals in vice no less than in the gifts of fortune. But the keenest point of contention between them was as to whether the mother or the aunt was to stand first with Nero.³ Lepida

Agrippina jealous of Domitia Lepida; she determines to ruin her.

¹ A good instance of a certain correction. Med. reads *domitiale muliebribus* instead of *Domitia Lepida muliebribus*. On Lepida and her relationship to the imperial house, see n. on xi. 37, 4.

² The phrase *sobrina prior* is equivalent to our 'first cousin once removed': see F. Domitia's mother, Antonia

major, was the sister of Agrippina's grandmother, Antonia minor.

³ In this contest Agrippina carried the day; for Suet. tells us that Nero gave damaging evidence against Lepida in the process raised against her by Agrippina. And yet Nero owed much to his aunt, for when left an infant at

sought to captivate his youthful mind by indulgence and caresses, while Agrippina employed reprimands and menaces; for although she could help her son to reign, she could not endure that he should rule.

The offences charged against Lepida were that she had sought the life of the Emperor's wife by incantations; and that she was endangering the peace of Italy by the license permitted to her slave-gangs in Calabria. On these charges she was condemned to death, in spite of the strenuous opposition of Narcissus; for Narcissus was growing more and more suspicious of Agrippina, and he was reported to have thus declared himself to his friends:—

Whether Britannicus or Nero became Emperor, his own fate was sealed; but his obligations to Claudius were such that he would sacrifice his life to serve him. If Nero was to be Emperor, there would once again be cause for denouncing the crime of which Messalina and Silius had been found guilty; whereas there would be nothing for Claudius to fear with Britannicus for a successor.¹ The

his father's death, defrauded of his inheritance by Gaius, and deprived of a home by his mother's exile, he was taken in, *paene inops atque egens*, by Domitia. How she acquitted herself of the charge is not known; all that Suet. tells us is that she looked after his education by providing him with a barber and a dancer (Nero 6). What influence such instruction could have had upon the infant prince—for he returned to his mother on her return from exile a year after—does not appear; but Lepida kept up her close intimacy with him afterwards, and we may conjecture that her influence over him may not only have been of a spoiling kind, as Tacitus says, but corrupting also. It would certainly not be from his mother's side, or under her severe and uncompromising rule, that his passion for stage pleasures was engendered.

¹ The reading of Med. in this difficult passage is unintelligible, and the restoration of *metum*, adopted by Halm and

F. from Ferrarius in place of *meritum*, is indispensable to the sense. But something more is needed; and I venture to suggest that the words *si Nero imperitaret* are a gloss, intended to explain the very curt language of the text. F. himself acknowledges that the words, as they stand, spoil the sense: omit them, and the passage becomes intelligible. I further differ from F. in holding that the machinations of Messalina and Silius are here compared, not with those of Agrippina and Nero (whose relation to each other affords no point of comparison), but with those of Agrippina and her lover Pallas. The meaning of Narcissus may thus be paraphrased: 'I shall be lost in either case, whether Britannicus or Nero is made heir (having been an enemy to the mothers of them both); but loyalty bids me think first for Claudius. The story of Messalina and Silius is being repeated over again: as the former pair were condemned, so should be the latter.

Lepida
accused
and con-
demned.

Narcissus
inveighs
against
Agrippina,

65

2

3

imperial house was being rent asunder by the machinations of a stepmother, and a still greater outrage was being perpetrated than if he—Narcissus—had held his
 4 *peace about the wantonness of the former wife. And was there any lack of wantonness now? Was not Agrippina an adulteress, with Pallas for her lover?—lest any should doubt that she held all things—her fame, her honour, her person—as of no account beside the sovereignty.*

5 Talking in this fashion, Narcissus would embrace Britannicus, and pray that he might soon come to man's estate: stretching out his hands, now to the Gods, now to the lad himself, he would pray that he might grow up to scatter his father's enemies, and be avenged on the murderers of his mother.

and places his hopes in Britannicus.

6 In the midst of all these anxieties, Narcissus fell ill, and betook himself to the soothing climate and salubrious waters of Sinuessa to recruit. Agrippina promptly seized the opportunity. She had long resolved upon the crime; she had her agents ready; she only deliberated as to the kind of poison to be employed. A sudden, rapid drug would betray itself; if one with a slow and wasting action were selected, Claudius might detect the plot as death drew near, and his affection for his son might return.¹
 3 Something of a refined kind was wanted, that should confuse his mind without hurrying on the end.
 4 So she selected an artist in such matters called Locusta, who had lately been condemned for poisoning, and had long been retained as one of the

Agrippina takes advantage of Narcissus' illness to compass the death of Claudius.

To make Britannicus heir will be the saving of Claudius: but if Agrippina wins, she will bring ruin on the entire house. And as for the scandal of Messalina's liaison with Silius, it would be a scandal greater still to pass over unnoticed that of Agrippina with Pallas.'

¹ According to Suet., Claudius had

already on several occasions shown doubts about Agrippina and his adoption of Nero, and had exhibited signs of affection for Britannicus. On one occasion he repeated to him the ancient oracle, ὁ τρώσας καὶ ἰάσεται: 'The wounder shall be the healer also.'

instruments of imperial government. This woman 5
concocted a preparation which was administered by
a eunuch called Halotus who served the Emperor's
table, and acted as his taster.

He is
poisoned
by a dish
of mush-
rooms.

The whole story came out afterwards. The 67
writers of the time inform us that the poison was
poured into the Emperor's favourite dish of mush-
rooms; but that either because of his torpid habit of
body,¹ or from his being intoxicated, its effect was not
at once apparent; while an evacuation of the bowels
seemed to bring relief. Agrippina was dumbfounded; 2
the worst was now to be feared. Braving all present
obloquy, she called in the physician Xenophon,
whose connivance she had already secured. By way 3
of assisting the patient's effort to vomit, this man, it
is said, put a feather steeped in a rapid poison down
his throat: knowing well that if great crimes are
perilous in the inception, reward follows on their
execution.²

Agrippina
at first con-
ceals the
death;
then shows
extrava-
gant grief.

While this was going on, the Senate had been 68
convened; the Consuls and the priests were offering
up prayers for the Emperor's recovery; and his now
lifeless body was being swathed in bandages and

¹ The word *socordia* can hardly refer, as F. suggests, 'to the dulness of those watching' for the death: they were in fact too impatient to wait for the natural operation of the poison. The word must refer either to the generally lethargic habit of Claudius, or to the lethargy produced by the drug. The most probable account is that of Dio, who says that Claudius was carried out unconscious; but that as that often happened to him from intoxication, it excited no remark (lx. 34, 3).

² Though there are some discrepancies of detail, no fact in these times is better attested and made more famous by well-known quotations than the poisoning of Claudius by the vehicle of a mushroom. Nero himself acknow-

ledged it when in reference to the deification of Claudius he uttered the witticism recorded by both Suet. and Dio, that 'Mushrooms were food for the Gods.' Dio adds the particular that the poison was put into the biggest of a dish of mushrooms which the greedy Claudius was sure to select, while Agrippina herself partook of the remainder. Juvenal refers to it as an undoubted fact:—

*Boletus domino (sc. apponitur); sed
qualem Claudius edit
Post illum uxoris, post quem nil
amplius edit (v. 147-8).*

See also Juv. vi. 620 and Mart. i. 21, 4.

fomented, while the arrangements were being made
 2 for securing Nero in the empire. First Agrippina
 appeared, as if overwhelmed with grief, and looking
 to everyone for sympathy. She hugged Britannicus
 in her embraces, calling him the very image of his
 father: but hindering him by divers devices from
 3 leaving his chamber. She kept his sisters also,
 Antonia and Octavia, by her side; she had every
 approach secured with guards; while in order to
 reassure the soldiery, and to await the propitious
 moment promised by the Chaldaeans, she gave out
 from time to time that the Emperor's condition was
 improving.¹

69 At last, on the 13th of October, at mid-day, the
 palace gates were suddenly thrown open, and Nero
 came forth, accompanied by Burrus, and presented
 himself to the cohort which was on guard as usual.²
 He was received with acclamations prompted by
 2 the Prefect, and put into a litter. Some of the
 soldiers, they say, hesitated, looking round and
 asking for Britannicus; but as no counter proposal
 was made, they took the choice presented to them.
 3 Nero was then carried into the camp, where after
 saying a few words suitable to the occasion he
 promised a donative as liberal as that given by
 his father, and was hailed as 'Imperator.'³ Decrees

On Octo-
 ber 13th
 Nero ac-
 cepted as
 Imperator,
 first by the
 soldiers,

¹ Just as Livia had done on the death of Augustus (i. 5, 6).

² This escort was usually under command of a *tribunus*: so in i. 7, 7; xi. 37, 3.

³ This salutation by the soldiers was given on the analogy of the honorary title of 'Imperator' which used to be given by the soldiers to a successful general on the field of battle (see iii. 74, 6). But it was now beginning to be regarded as the indispensable preliminary to the accession of a new emperor. It is interesting to note how

rapidly, in spite of adherence to constitutional formulae, the fatal idea had already gained ground that the soldiers —as yet only the soldiers of the capital —were the makers of the Emperors. On the death of Augustus, no account was taken at first either of soldiers or of Senate: 'It was announced in one and the same breath that Augustus was dead, and that Tiberius was in possession of the Government' (i. 5, 6). It was not till his position was secure that Tiberius went through the form of submitting himself to the authority of the

then by the
Senate.

of Senate followed upon the decision of the soldiers :
the provinces gave no sign of hesitation.¹

Honours
voted to
Claudius.

Divine honours were voted to Claudius ; and the ⁴
funeral solemnities were celebrated on the same scale
as those accorded to the Divine Augustus. Agrippina
rivalled her great-grandmother Livia in magnificence.
But the will was not read ; it was feared that the ⁵
preference of the stepson to the son might create a
sense of wrong, and arouse indignation in the public
mind.

Senate (i. 7, 4 and 5). On the death of
Tiberius, Gaius came forth as the ac-
knowledged heir, confident in having
the support of Macro, commander of
the Praetorians, but not professing to
derive his title from their favour (vi. 50,
7). As a matter of fact, his first *salutatio*
as emperor was by the Senate (see F²).
On the assassination of Gaius, Claudius
was pitched upon by chance, dragged
out of his hiding, and saluted as 'Im-
perator' on the spot ; he was then
carried off to the camp for the night.
Next day, when the Senate vainly
attempted to summon him to their pre-
sence, he suffered the soldiers to take
the oath of allegiance to him, and set

the example of securing their fidelity by
a ' liberal donative which, after the eleva-
tion of Claudius, was exacted as a legal
claim on the accession of every new
emperor' (Gibbon : see Suet. Claud. 2).
The choice thus made, the various powers
needed to complete and formulate his
authority (*imperium, tribunicia po-
testas*, etc.), were passed by a decree of
Senate, confirmed by a *Lex* passed, or
supposed to be passed, by the comitia
(see Pelham in F²).

¹ The word 'provinces' here doubt-
less refers to the Roman armies in the
provinces, not to the opinion of the
provincials.

BOOK XIII.

- I THE first victim of the new reign was Junius Silanus,¹ Proconsul of Asia. His death was brought about by Agrippina's devices, unknown to Nero; nor was it provoked by any turbulent element in his character. He was a man of sluggish nature, and previous Emperors had treated him with contempt: Gaius Caesar used to call him 'The Golden Sheep.'
- 2 But Agrippina was afraid of him. She feared he might avenge the death of his brother Lucius,² which had been her doing; and popular talk kept saying that instead of a lad like Nero, barely out of his teens, who had won the Empire by a crime, it would be better to have a man of ripe age, of blameless life and noble blood, and moreover—what was still accounted of³—a descendant of the Caesars; for Silanus too was a great-great-grandson of the Divine Augustus. Such were the reasons for his death. The deed was done by Publius Celer, a Roman Knight, and a freedman called Helius, who had charge of the
- 4 Emperor's affairs in Asia:⁴ these two administered

Junius Silanus the first victim of the new reign.

¹ This M. Junius Silanus, consul in A.D. 46, was dangerous as being the great-great grandson of Augustus, born during the last year of that emperor's life. In point of blood relationship, he stood to Augustus in exactly the same position as Nero himself, his grandmother Julia having been sister of Nero's grandmother, the elder Agrippina—both of them granddaughters of Augustus.

² This was the unfortunate youth who had been betrothed to Octavia, and who committed suicide on being put aside (xii. 8, 1).

³ Tacitus is writing from the point of view of the time of Trajan, when the race of the Caesars had become extinct, and when emperors might be regarded as owing their elevation to merit only.

⁴ *i.e.* as procurators. See xii. 60, 1

poison to the Proconsul at a banquet, in a manner too open to escape detection.

Death of
Narcissus.

Not less hurried was the death of Narcissus, the freedman of Claudius, of whose wrangles with Agrippina I have already spoken.¹ Treated cruelly in prison, he was driven by dire necessity to take his own life. But his death was not to Nero's liking, to whose undeveloped vices his greed and prodigality were marvellously well adapted.²

Burrus and
Seneca
governors
of the
young
Emperor ;

Further deaths would have followed had not 2
Afranius Burrus and Annaeus Seneca, the governors of the young Emperor, stood in the way. With a 2
concert rare between partners in power, these two men acquired, by different means, an equal hold over the youthful Nero : the one by his soldierly qualities³ and by the gravity of his character ; the other by his lessons in rhetoric and his well-bred urbanity.⁴ Each

their
characters.

and 6. The phrases *res familiaris* and *res suae* are both used as equivalents to *fiscus*.

¹ In xii. 57, 4 and 65, 2.

² The meaning is that the greed of Narcissus in gathering in money was the essential complement of Nero's prodigality in spending it.

³ It is not quite clear what is meant by the words *militaribus curis*. They can hardly refer to general military distinction, for the previous service of Burrus seems to have been of a very ordinary kind. See n. on xii. 42, 2. They may refer simply to his important position as *praefectus praetorio* ; but they seem also to imply respect for the manner in which he discharged the duties of his office, perhaps also for his general knowledge of military matters. He impressed Nero both by his high character and as a careful commander.

⁴ The words *comitate honesta* are difficult. The adj. *honesta* seems to qualify the noun *comitas* rather from the point of view of Tac. than from that of Nero : it was a system of indulgence or geniality which was *honesta*, i.e. not to be condemned as inconsistent with virtue, but pardonable under the circumstances. The phrase seems meant to

hit off Seneca's method of treating his difficult pupil, so amply illustrated in the books that follow—the method that failed so signally, and that has loaded his name with obloquy and contempt. The methods of Burrus were those of a plain bluff soldier ; the policy of Seneca was one of geniality and complaisance so far as it could be pursued without loss of *honestas* ; that is, without sacrifice of any radical principle of conduct. But in the courtier hands of Seneca this policy soon broke down ; he never discovered the point at which he had to pull up, or break with, his pupil. His practice of condoning what he held as 'lawful pleasures,' and of sanctioning one form of vicious excess in the hope that it might keep Nero from another that was still worse, landed Seneca before long in the necessity of acquiescing in all the follies and wickedness of his outrageous pupil. Yet this was the opportunist policy on which he based, or at least justified, his treatment of Nero. Henderson well quotes his own words as given by Lactantius, Inst. Div. iii. 15 : 'The wise man,' he says, 'will do that even whereof he doth not approve that he may find the passage thereby unto greater ends . . . he will

helped the other to guide their charge over the perilous years of youth,¹ and to confine him, should he reject virtue, within the range of lawful pleasures.

3 Both made common cause against Agrippina's overbearing temper; while she, with all the evil passions of autocracy in her blood, had upon her side Pallas—the man who had brought Claudius to his ruin by counselling his incestuous marriage and that
4 calamitous adoption. But Nero had no mind to be ruled by slaves; and the sour arrogance of Pallas, out of all keeping with his station, filled him with disgust.

5 In public, however, every honour was heaped on Agrippina; and when the Tribune,² according to military custom, asked Nero for the pass-word, he
6 gave him, '*The Best of Mothers.*' The Senate assigned to her two lictors, and appointed her to be priestess of Claudius, to whom they voted at the same time a censorian funeral, soon followed by deification.

3 On the funeral day, his laudation was pronounced by Nero, who both spoke, and was listened to, with all seriousness while he dwelt on the antiquity of his race, and counted up the Consulships and Triumphs of his ancestors. The allusions also to his learning,³

Honours
paid to
Agrippina.

Funeral
oration pro-
nounced by
Nero.

fit his morality unto the necessities of the time.' To follow two such masters as Nero and Philosophy was impossible; and there are few more pathetic scenes in literary history than that in which the author of the *De Constantia Sapientis* endeavours to draw back when too late from a position in which he has suffered every principle of his teaching to be trampled upon without protest, but not without profit, and in vain asks permission from the monster whom he has reared to surrender some portion of the price he has received for the betrayal of his philosophic principles (xiv. 53-56).

¹ The phrase here used (*tubricam aetatem principis*), is repeated half-

ironically by Nero himself in his reply to Seneca's request to be allowed to retire (*tubricum adulescentiae nostrae*, xiv. 56, 2).

² The commanding officer of the escort on guard (xii. 69, 1).

³ Suet. (Claud. 41, 42) gives a prodigious and scarcely credible account of Claudius' literary work, attributing to him, amongst others, forty-two books on Roman history, an autobiography in eight volumes, more to be commended for its style than for its contents (*magis inepte quam inelanter*), twenty books of Greek history, and eight of Carthaginian.

and to the fact that no disaster had occurred abroad during his reign, were well received; but when Nero went on to speak of his foresight and his wisdom, no one could refrain from laughter. And yet the speech was a very polished performance, having been composed by Seneca, whose pleasing style was well suited to the hearers of those days.¹

Emperors compared in respect of oratorical powers.

Older men who had leisure to compare present things with past noted that Nero was the first of our rulers who had need of borrowed eloquence. The Dictator Caesar could hold his own with orators of the first rank;² and Augustus had a ready and fluent mode of speaking which well befitted his imperial position. Tiberius had rare skill in weighing out his words; he could express his meaning forcibly, or conceal it, as he chose. Even with Gaius, the disorders of his mind never interfered with his powers of speech; and when Claudius delivered a prepared discourse, his style left nothing to be desired. Nero's quick intelligence, from his earliest years, was turned to other things—to carving, painting, singing or charioteering; but at times he could write verses which showed that he was not destitute of the elements of culture.

Nero appears in the Senate,

The pretence of sorrow over, Nero presented himself to the Senate.³ Touching first upon the

¹ The contemptuous irony of these words is unmistakable. On the whole, Tacitus is singularly reticent as to the failings of Seneca; though we cannot doubt that the facility and smoothness of Seneca's style, as well as the supple versatility of his character, would be especially displeasing to him. He records his various acts of weakness, but without comment. Perhaps he desired to spare his brother-Stoic; perhaps he felt that all the weaknesses of his life were atoned for by his truly Stoic death (xv. 60-65).

² An estimate seemingly confirmed by Cicero himself (*Brut.* 72, 252; 75, 261).

³ Suet. describes this speech as an announcement that Nero intended to return to the scheme of government laid down by Augustus (*ex Augusti præsripto imperaturum se professus*); and Henderson says of it that 'in its importance for Roman constitutional history it is hardly exceeded in interest in Latin literature.' It re-established the principle of the 'dyarchy' between Senate and Princeps; chamber trials (like that

approbation of the Fathers, and the consent of the army, he spoke next of his excellent advisers, and of the examples of good government which he had before him:—*His youth had not been steeped in civil wars or family quarrels; he had formed no resentments, he had suffered no wrongs, and he brought with him no lust for vengeance.*

- 2 He then sketched his future policy, repudiating in particular everything which had aroused indignation in the late reign:—*He would not act as judge in every kind of case himself; nor exalt the power of a coterie by hearing accusers and accused within closed doors. Nothing within his own household should be open to bribery or favour;¹ his private affairs would be*
- 3 *kept apart from those of the State. The ancient privileges of the Senate should be preserved; suitors from Italy and the public provinces² should have access to the consular courts, and through the Consuls to the Senate;³ he would himself answer for the armies under his command.⁴*

and sketches his future policy.

of Valerius Asiaticus, xi. 2, 1) were to come to an end; the power of the freedmen, with the corruption that sprang from it, was to be kept down, and not suffered to encroach upon that of the magistrates; Senate and Consuls were to exercise their ancient functions, and the distinction between Senatorial and Imperial provinces was to be maintained.

¹ Tac. has already told us that Nero was not minded to be ruled by his freedmen (*neque Neroni infra servos ingenium*, chap. 2, 4). The great days of the freedmen were now over, under which, as we have seen above, Claudius *materiam praedandi patefecerat*, xi. 5, 1. After the reign of Nero we find equites in charge of the important palace offices. The allusion is to the policy of Claudius in giving the "domus Caesaris" and its officials the status of a public institution and magistrates of state' (Pelham, F²).

For the phrase here used, *nihil ambitioni peritium*, cp. xv. 59, 4:

cruciatui aut praemio cuncta pervia esse.

² *i.e.* the senatorial provinces. This sentence recalls the famous speech of the Emperor Napoleon III. to the Corps Legislatif at a time when some liberal concessions were being demanded. Having vaguely entrusted the cause of 'Liberty' to the Assembly, he concluded with the words, 'I, gentlemen, will answer for Order.'

³ The principle here so clearly restated by Nero was that appeals from Italy and the senatorial provinces should be heard by the Senate, and those from imperial provinces by the emperor. St. Paul was in the imperial province of Syria when he said, 'I appeal unto Caesar.'

⁴ Dio tells us that this speech gave such satisfaction to the Senate that they ordered it to be engraved on a silver pillar, and to be read aloud every year when the new consuls took office (Dio, lxi. 3, 1).

These promises were honestly made; and the Senate passed several measures on its own authority. One decree forbade pleaders to receive fees or presents;¹ another relieved Quaestors-designate from the obligation to hold shows of gladiators²—a decree which was held to by the Fathers in spite of the opposition of Agrippina, who regarded it as a reversal of one of the acts of Claudius, and although they had been convened in the Palatium to enable her to stand behind a curtain at a door constructed at the back, where she might hear everything without being seen.³ On another occasion, when envoys from Armenia were pleading their case before the Emperor,⁴ she was preparing to mount upon the imperial seat to take her place beside him. All present were dumb-founded: but Seneca motioned to Nero to advance

¹ This measure seems to have been an addition to, not a reversal or repetition of, the law passed by Claudius (xi. 7, 8). It provided that a pleader should not make a bargain with his client beforehand. This was often corruptly done, as in cases of *prævaricatio* and *tergiversatio*. Pliny probably refers to this law when he tells us that in his time litigants were obliged to swear beforehand that they had made no promises of remuneration to their counsel (Epp. v. 9, 4). Needless to say that this law was no better observed than the original Cincian Law, which forbade fees altogether.

² This was in fact a direct repeal of the law passed on the motion of the Consul Dolabella A.D. 47 (xi. 22, 3); and now at once begins the contest between the mother and the son. Agrippina had expected to have her son still more under her thumb than she had had Claudius, and she doubtless aimed at obtaining in a more or less regular form that *consortium imperii* which Nero after her death accused her of having aimed at (xiv. 11, 1). During the last months of the reign of Claudius her image had appeared on coins beside that of the Emperor; that practice was

continued for the first six months of the reign of Nero, and her attempt to sit beside Nero on the imperial seat on a state occasion—a thing she had never ventured to do in the reign of Claudius (see xii. 37, 5 and 56, 5)—proves that she had intended to assume a position equal to his own. She is up in arms at once on the first proposal to undo an act of the late reign, as though it had been an act of her own; it is evident that she had intended herself to appear before the Senate to oppose it. But Nero nipped her pretensions in the bud on the very first occasion of their manifestation. This instant resolution of Nero, however much he may have been fortified by his advisers, was an act of extraordinary independence; it required more courage in the lad of seventeen to stand up against his mother's first usurpation than to resolve upon her death after he had had five years' experience of her impracticable temper.

³ The prototype of the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons.

⁴ What embassy this may have been is not known. It probably represented the Romanizing party in Armenia (see chap. 34, 5).

to meet his mother, and thus, under the cover of filial respect, the scandal was avoided.

- 6 At the close of the year, news arrived of trouble in the East.¹ The Parthians had broken out again and were ravaging Armenia; Radamistus, who had so often laid hands upon that kingdom and then run away, had been repulsed, and had again given up the contest. So in a city where every tongue loves to wag, men were asking:—

Fresh troubles in Armenia.

How could a prince barely out of his teens grapple with so formidable a movement or repel it? What support could be expected from a youth under female government? Could tutors and governors conduct battles and sieges and other warlike operations?

Some anxious because of Nero's youth;

- 3 Others again argued thus:—

Things were better as they were than if the call to battle had come to an infirm and inert old man like Claudius, who would have taken his orders from his slaves. Burrus and Seneca were tried men, with large experience in affairs; how far off was Nero himself from full manhood? had not Gnaeus Pompeius conducted civil war in his eighteenth year, and Caesar Octavianus in his twentieth?² In the supreme place, it was by command and counsel, not by sword and arm, that things were

others inclined to trust his counselors.

¹ The narrative of Parthian and Armenian affairs is here taken up from xii. 51, when Vologeses had firmly fixed himself on the throne of Parthia for his long reign of twenty-six or twenty-seven years, A. D. 51-77 or 78 (see F. ii. Introd. p. 97). The expulsion of the usurper Radamistus, so feebly and corruptly dealt with by Rome, had enabled Vologeses, after some vicissitudes, to set up his brother Tiridates as King of Armenia with the goodwill of the people; and this news, showing that Roman policy in the East has completely and ignominiously broken down, reaches Rome in the end of the year 54 A. D., a month or two after the accession of Nero. Little wonder that Rome should be agi-

tated to see how the young emperor would deal with so difficult a situation. The prompt and vigorous measures at once taken show that the feeble and opportunist policy of Claudius is to be reversed. Recruiting is at once set on foot; Rome's ablest general, condemned by Claudius to inactivity, is sent with full power to the front; the subject princes are called upon to do their duty; the Armenian frontier is to be threatened, and Parthia itself at once invaded. The immediate result was the evacuation of Armenia by the Parthians (chap. 7, 2).

² Augustus only attained his twentieth year in the October succeeding the assassination of Caesar (March 15, B. C. 44).

done ; Nero would show plainly whether he followed good or evil counsellors by putting jealousy aside, and appointing an illustrious general to the command, rather than some wealthy favourite with influence at his back.

Nero takes vigorous measures.

Amid public talk like this, Nero ordered the Eastern legions to be made up to their full strength by recruiting young men from the adjoining provinces, and then take up a position upon the Armenian frontier ; the veteran kings Agrippa¹ and Antiochus² were to prepare a force for the invasion of Parthia, and bridges were to be thrown across the Euphrates. The kingdoms of Armenia Minor and Sophene³ were given to Aristobulus⁴ and Sohaemus respectively, with the royal insignia. At this opportune moment, a rival arose against Vologeses in the person of his son Vardanes ; and the Parthians, as though they were putting off the war, evacuated Armenia.

The Parthians retire.

Joy in Rome.

This success was extravagantly celebrated by the Senate. They voted days of public thanksgiving, on which the Emperor should wear a triumphal robe, and enter the city in ovation ; and that his statue should be set up in the Temple of Mars Ultor, of the same size as that of the God himself. And there was more than the usual spirit of flattery in their joy ; for the appointment of Corbulo to the Armenian command seemed to make merit the passport to promotion.⁵

Corbulo is appointed to the Armenian command.

Distribution of the forces of the East.

The forces of the East were distributed as

¹ The Herod Agrippa of Acts 25, 1.

² King of Commagene (see ii. 42, 7 and 56, 4).

³ A district in the SW. of Armenia, separated from Cappadocia by the Euphrates.

⁴ A son of Herod of Chalcis (Jos.

Ant. xx.8, 4), whose kingdom he appears subsequently to have possessed. He is the last recorded vassal-king of Lesser Armenia' (F.). See xiv. 26, 3.

⁵ For Corbulo's services in Germany see xi. 18-20.

follows. One half of the auxiliaries, with two legions, were to remain in Syria, under the command of Quadratus Ummidius, the Legate of that province; Corbulo was to have a like number of Roman and allied troops, with the addition of the infantry and
 3 cavalry now wintering in Cappadocia; and the allied princes, though they would have preferred to serve under Corbulo, were ordered to be ready wherever
 4 their services might be required. Knowing well the value of prestige in all new enterprises, Corbulo journeyed rapidly to Aegeae,¹ a city of Cilicia. He was there met by Quadratus, who had advanced to that place lest all eyes should be turned on Corbulo were he to enter Syria to take up his command. For he was tall in stature, high-flown in language, and in addition to experience and capacity he possessed the empty external advantages which command attention.

Corbulo
meets
Quadratus
in Cilicia.

9 Both Generals sent messages to Vologeses counsel-
 ing peace, and recommending him to maintain the respectful attitude of his predecessors towards the
 2 Roman people by offering hostages. Vologeses accordingly handed over the noblest members of the Arsacid family, either desiring to choose his own time for war, or because he wanted to keep sus-
 3 pected rivals out of the way under the name of hostages.² These hostages were taken over by a Centurion Insteius who happened to be on the spot, having been sent by Ummidius to interview the King about some previous affair.³ On learning this,

Vologeses
gives
hostages.

¹ A town on the coast of Cilicia, on the high road to the East.

² As mentioned above, this was one of the usual motives which induced Parthian kings to give hostages.

³ The reading of Med. *priore de causa* is here followed, rather than the scarcely grammatical *forte prior ea de causa*

adito rege adopted by Halm. Nipp. and F. The point of the story is that before the joint messengers from the two generals arrived, an envoy from Ummidius, despatched previously, and for some other purpose, happened to be on the spot and carried off the hostages.

Corbulo ordered Arrius Varus, Prefect of a cohort, to go and recover the hostages. Hence a wrangle 4 between the Centurion and the Prefect; until at last, to bring the unseemly spectacle to an end, it was agreed to leave the decision to the hostages themselves and to the officers in charge of them. Their choice fell upon Corbulo: partly because of 5 his newly-won distinction, partly because even enemies felt drawn to him. This created a quarrel 6 between the Generals: Ummidius complained that the results achieved by his counsels had been snatched from him, while Corbulo protested that the King had not been induced to offer hostages until his hopes had been turned into fears by his own appointment as General. To compose these differ- 7 ences, Nero ordered it to be proclaimed that, *On account of the successes of Quadratus and Corbulo, the imperial fasces should be crowned with laurel.*

The events which I have here recorded continuously extended into the year following.

In the same year Nero asked the Senate to put 10 up a statue to his father Domitius,¹ and to confer the consular insignia upon his late guardian, Asconius Labeo; but he declined a proposal to have statues of solid gold or silver set up to himself. And although 2 the Fathers had voted that the year should henceforth begin with the month of December, in which Nero had been born, he retained the old sacred custom of beginning the year upon the 1st of January.² Nor 3 would he permit the accusation of the Senator Carinas Celer by a slave, or that of the Knight Julius

¹ As to the character of Nero's father Domitius, see n. on iv. 75, 1.

² In the phrase *ut principium anni*

inciperet we may for once accuse Tac. of tautology.

Quarrel between Corbulo and Quadratus over the hostages.

Nero composes the difference.

Honours conferred and declined.

Densus, who was charged with being favourable to Britannicus.

A.D. 55. CONSULS CLAUDIUS NERO CAESAR
AUGUSTUS AND LUCIUS ANTISTIUS VETUS.

11 When the magistrates of this year took the oath of allegiance to the imperial acts, Nero would not suffer his own acts¹ to be included in the oath of his colleague Antistius.² For this he was warmly commended by the Fathers, who hoped that if his youthful mind were puffed up by the credit of small
2 virtues, he might pass on to greater ones. Then followed an act of grace towards Plautius Lateranus, who had been expelled from the Senate for adultery with Messalina.³ Nero now restored him to his rank, making sundry protestations of clemency in speeches which were put into his mouth and published to the world by Seneca to show how clever he was, and how excellent the advice he gave.

Instances of moderation and clemency exhibited by Nero.

12 But now by degrees Agrippina lost her hold upon Nero through his falling in love, unknown to her, with a freed-woman called Acte. Two youths of good position were his confidants in this affair: the one was Otho,⁴ a man of consular family, the other was
2 Senecio, son of one of the Emperor's freedmen. In vain did Agrippina, on discovering the intrigue, fight against it; for Nero had become so infatuated, so enamoured of the secrecy and mystery of the thing.⁵

Nero's passion for Acte raises the indignation of Agrippina;

¹ See n. on i. 72, 2.

² Mentioned below as commander in Germany, 53, 2; as vainly recommending his son-in-law Plautus to die courageously, xiv. 58, 3; and as himself committing suicide, xvi. 10, 1.

³ His life was spared out of regard for his uncle A. Plautius, the conqueror of Britain.

⁴ The subsequent emperor, who was about twenty-three years of age at this time: how his wife Poppaea became the cause of estrangement between him and Nero is recorded below, chaps. 45, 46.

⁵ *Acte* must be taken as the subject to *irreperat*.

that even his older friends offered no opposition to it. They were not sorry to see the prince's ardours satisfied, without harm to any one, by a woman of that class; for since by some fatality, or because illicit joys are sweetest, he had taken an aversion to his own high-born and virtuous wife Octavia,¹ they were afraid that if his passions were baulked now, they might vent themselves upon women of distinction.

But not so Agrippina. She raged in true woman's fashion at having *a freed-woman for her rival, a serving-girl for her daughter-in-law*, with other phrases of the kind: she would not wait till her son repented of his fancy, or grew tired of it. But the violence of her reproaches only added fuel to the flame; until at last, over-mastered by his love, he shook off all deference to his mother, and threw himself into the arms of Seneca. For one of Seneca's intimates, Annaeus Serenus by name, had served as a screen to the young man's amour in its early days, pretending himself to be Acte's lover, and permitting his name to be used as the giver of the presents secretly lavished on her by Nero. 13

Agrippina then changed her tactics. She tried 2 blandishments on the young man, offering the privacy of her own chamber to conceal the indulgences natural to his youth and exalted rank. She even 3 acknowledged that her severity had been out of place; and she put at his disposal her fortune, which was not much less than his own, being as extravagant now in giving way to her son as she had formerly been in restraining him. Nero, however, saw through 4 this change of attitude, and his friends were suspicious of it. They implored him to be on his guard

¹ He had been married to Octavia two years before (xii. 58, 1).

she first alienates him by a storm of abuse,

and then tries to conciliate him by indulgence.

against the wiles of a woman who had always been intractable, and was now false into the bargain.

5 It happened just then that Nero had been looking over the splendid apparel worn by the wives and mothers of the Imperial family. Choosing out some of the costliest garments and ornaments—things that any woman might have coveted—he sent them, un-
6 asked, as a present to his mother. But Agrippina declared that, *These gifts of his made no addition to her state*:¹ *she was but being kept out of everything else. Her son was parcelling out to her in bits what he had received from her as a whole.*

A display of temper.

14 These remarks were repeated with exaggerations. Incensed against every one who abetted such female arrogance, Nero dismissed Pallas² from the department over which he had been placed by Claudius, and in which he had become almost master of the Empire. As he quitted the Palace, escorted by a long train of attendants, Nero is said to have wittily remarked that *Pallas was going to swear himself out*
2 *of office*.³ For Pallas had stipulated that there was to be no inquiry into his past acts: all accounts between himself and the State were to be held as balanced.⁴

Pallas dismissed from office.

3 Then followed a furious outburst from Agrippina. She stormed and she threatened, telling Nero to

Indignation of Agrippina.

¹ 'Such things were no addition to her wardrobe' is the translation of Church and Brodribb.

² Pallas was Treasurer (*a rationibus*), as Narcissus was Private Secretary (*ab epistolis*), in the imperial household (Suet. Claud. 28).

³ The point of this witticism was that Pallas was taking his departure from office as seriously as if he had been one of the regular magistrates who at the end of their term had to take a solemn oath, '*se nihil contra leges fecisse*.' See xii. 4, 5, and n. on chap. 4, 2.

⁴ This impudent pretension gives some idea of the airs which the freedmen had assumed under the Claudian régime. Pallas behaves as if he were a Bismarck being dismissed from office; and Nero contents himself with a jibe. Just in the same way Paetus, after his ignominious failure in Armenia, is pardoned with a jest (xv. 25, 7). Pallas was allowed to carry his enormous wealth with him; not until A.D. 62 did Nero make up his mind that he was too wealthy to be allowed to live any longer (xiv. 65, 1).

his face that *Britannicus was now a man: he was of the true and rightful stock to succeed to his father's power—a power now being abused by an adopted interloper to perpetrate outrages on his mother.*¹ She did not hesitate to lay bare all the horrors of that unhappy house—especially her own marriage, and her poisoning of Claudius:—

*One thing only she and the Gods had secured: her step-son was still alive. She would carry him off to the armies: they should hear on the one side the daughter of Germanicus, on the other the crippled² Burrus and the exile Seneca—the one with his maimed hand, the other with his hireling tongue—demanding for themselves the government of the human race. With that she would flourish her arms, and amid torrents of abuse call to witness the deified Claudius, the spirits of the Silani³ below, and her own many bootless crimes.*⁴

All this disquieted Nero; and as the day was approaching when Britannicus would complete his fourteenth year,⁵ he began to turn over in his mind now his mother's violent temper, now the character of Britannicus, which had recently revealed itself in a trifling incident which had won much favour for the young man.

During the feast of the Saturnalia,⁶ among other

¹ F. is surely wrong here in translating *iniurias* 'the iniquities of his mother.'

² What this defect may have been is not known.

³ *i.e.* L. Silanus, who committed suicide in A.D. 49, and M. Silanus, who was poisoned in A.D. 55 (above, chap. 1). Both deaths were due to Agrippina.

⁴ Thus the breach between Nero and his mother became complete within six months of his accession to power—after which time her effigy no longer appears upon his coins. Whatever may be thought of Nero's act of matricide, it must be acknowledged that politically

Agrippina had placed both Britannicus and herself beyond the reach of pardon. She, in fact, staked her motherhood on the one side against undisguised treason upon the other.

⁵ As F. points out, this would be a crucial year in the life of Britannicus as entitling him to the manly gown. Britannicus would henceforth appear in public life as a prince with a title equal, if not superior, to that of Nero himself. Only by the Roman view of adoption did Nero, as the older in years, have the prior right.

⁶ The Saturnalia, during which all men were treated as equal, began on

She threatens to befriend Britannicus.

Nero alarmed;

youthful amusements, the game of choosing a king by
 3 lot was played.¹ The lot had fallen on Nero. Upon
 the others, he laid various commands of a harmless
 kind; but when he bade Britannicus come forward
 and sing a song, he thought to raise a laugh at the
 lad's expense, who was little used to feasts, even of a
 sober sort, much less to drunken orgies.² Britannicus,
 however, with much composure, delivered himself of
 a poem in which was signified how he had been
 ousted from his father's house and from the Empire.³
 The compassion thus aroused was the more un-
 reservedly manifested that the incident occurred at
 4 night and at a time of frolic: Nero felt all the odium
 of the thing, and it intensified his hatred of Britan-
 nicus. Alarmed by Agrippina's threats, yet having
 no charge to advance against his brother, and not
 venturing openly to order his death, he resolved to
 proceed secretly, and ordered poison to be prepared.
 The agent of the crime was to be Pollio Julius,
 Tribune of a Praetorian Cohort, in whose custody
 was the notorious criminal called Locusta, who had
 5 been convicted of poisoning. Care had previously
 been taken that those near the person of Britanni-
 cus should be men devoid of all regard for right and
 loyalty.

his
 jealousy
 of Britan-
 nicus
 heightened
 by an inci-
 dent at the
 Saturnalia;

he resolves
 to make
 away with
 him.

6 The poison was first administered by his own

Poison ad-
 ministered,
 but fails to
 act.

the 17th December. They were origin-
 ally confined to one day, the 17th
 December; but Augustus added two
 more, the 18th and 19th, and they were
 by custom prolonged still further. The
 Christians naturally fixed upon one of
 the days of this festal season for their
 great anniversary.

¹ A well-known game in all ages.
 See Hor. Epp. i. 1, 59: *At pueri luden-
 tes 'Rex eris,' aiunt = 'Si recte facies.'*
 The 'King's orders,' whatever they
 were, would have to be obeyed.

² Suet., with his usual taste for the
 trivial, asserts that Nero was as much
 moved to the murder of Britannicus by
 jealousy of his voice, which was sweeter
 (*iucundior*) than his own, as by fear
 of his political pretensions (Nero, 33).

³ Lips. conjectures that the passage
 may have been that from the Andro-
 meda of Ennius given by Cic. Tusc. iii.
 19, beginning, *O pater, O patria, O
 Priami domus!* Henderson quotes the
 whole passage, p. 65.

governors; but either because it was not deadly enough,¹ or that it had been so diluted as not to act at once, it passed off in an evacuation. Impatient⁷ at the delay, Nero reprimanded the Tribune, and ordered the execution of Locusta:—*They were letting his safety wait, he said, in expectation of a popular outcry, while preparing a defence for themselves.* Upon that⁸ they promised that the death should be as rapid as by the sword, and concocted a potion, close by Caesar's bedchamber, from poisons of known celerity.

A more rapid poison is provided,

Now it was the custom for the young princes¹⁶ to sit at a table of their own, less sumptuously provided, along with other nobles of their own age, and there dine in sight of their relations.² At this² table sat Britannicus; and as there was a special attendant to taste his food and drink, the following device was resorted to, so as neither to omit the custom, nor yet betray the crime by causing the death of two persons. A cup without poison in it,³ previously tasted, but too hot to drink, was handed to Britannicus. Britannicus pushed it back as overheated, upon which some cold water containing the poison was poured into it: and so rapidly did it permeate his whole system, that speech and breathing at once failed him.³ The company were horrified: those⁴ not in the secret fled. But those who knew more about it stayed on, rooted to their seats, with their eyes fixed on Nero. Nero never stirred from his⁵

which acts at once.

¹ This gives some support to the idea that the word *socordia* in xii. 67, 1 may refer to the slow action of the poison administered to Claudius.

² Under Augustus, the young princes sat (not reclined, as their elders did), on the third or lowest couch (*in imo lecto*, Suet. Aug. 64); under Claudius they sat *ad fulcra lectorum* (see F. and Friedlaender, i. 130).

³ Suet. asserts that Titus, who had been brought up with Britannicus, was sitting at the same table, took some of the same drink, and suffered severely from it. He afterwards had two statues of Britannicus made, one of them equestrian (Tit. 2).

couch, and as if knowing nothing, remarked:—*This was no unusual thing with Britannicus; he had been subject to fits of epilepsy from his infancy; he would soon recover sight and consciousness.*

6 Agrippina's consternation, in spite of her command of countenance, showed plainly that she knew no more than the lad's own sister Octavia. She saw that her last help was gone; and here was an example of parricide¹ before her eyes. Even
7 Octavia, young as she was, had learnt to conceal her sorrows, her affections, and all her feelings.

Consternation of Agrippina.

17 After a short silence, the festivity of the banquet was resumed. The body was burnt upon the same night; every preparation for the modest funeral had
2 been made. The remains were laid in the Campus Martius,² in a storm of rain so furious that the populace believed that the Gods were displaying their wrath at the crime. And yet most men were inclined to pardon it:—*Brothers, they judged, had ever fallen out with brothers³: there could be no partners in an Empire.*

The banquet is resumed, and the body burnt the same night.

3 Many writers of the time affirm that Nero had outraged the person of Britannicus, on divers days before, to make his death appear less untimely, less cruel, than it was—a death hurried on at the sacred board, under the eyes of his enemy, without even time to embrace his sisters⁴—a death that carried off the last of the Claudian blood,⁵ outraged first and poisoned afterwards!

¹ The Latin *parricidium* includes the murder of a mother, or of any near relation, as well as that of a father.

² *i.e.* in the Mausoleum of Augustus.

³ Cp. *Solita fratribus odia* (iv. 60, 5).

⁴ The other sister being Antonia, daughter of Paetina (xii. 2, 1).

⁵ Nero had Claudian blood in his veins, through his grandfather Germanicus; but he only became entitled to the name of Claudius through his adoption.

Nero issues
an edict of
explanation,

Nero issued an edict excusing the rapid obsequies:—*It had been the custom of their fathers, he explained, to withdraw from public gaze the funerals of the young, and not prolong them with processions and laudations. Now that he had lost a brother's aid, his one hope lay in the Commonwealth: all the more should the Fathers and the people rally round their prince—the one remaining member of a family born to sovereignty.*¹

and
lavishes
gifts on his
friends.

Nero then lavished presents upon his intimates. Many were indignant that men of austere professions should at such a moment be distributing among themselves town houses and country houses, like so much plunder²; others thought that they had no choice in the matter:—*Conscious as he was of his own guilt, Nero's only hope of forgiveness lay in binding over to himself by lavish gifts all important personages.*

Wild conduct of
Agrippina;

But no munificence could assuage his mother's wrath. She threw herself into Octavia's cause, and

¹ According to the narrative of Tac. the resolution to make away with Britannicus seems to have been immediately brought about by the aggressive attitude of Agrippina; and as far as we know, the only overt offence given by Britannicus to Nero as emperor was at the party during the Saturnalia of A.D. 54. During those first two months Agrippina had been honoured so far as to be allowed to listen to the Senate's proceedings from behind a curtain; Seneca's tact had prevented an outbreak at the reception of the Armenian envoys. What first goaded her to fury was the discovery of the affair with Acte, which showed that her son was passing beyond her control; and though for a moment she affected to relent upon this point, her *superbia muliebris* soon drove Nero into retaliation. His dismissal of her favourite and instrument, Pallas, was the last straw: in a paroxysm of rage Agrippina turned upon her son with a torrent of reproaches, acknowledged the murder of Claudius, and openly threatened to summon the legions round the standard of the rightful heir. Such a threat was too dangerous to be

ignored; and Agrippina must bear the blame of having been the immediate cause of the death of the luckless prince. The poisoning took place on the 13th February, less than two months after the unfortunate Saturnalia incident. That Seneca approved of the deed, that he even advised it, as a matter of political necessity, is highly probable; that he could have entertained no horror of it is certain, for in his treatise *De Clementia*, published only ten months afterwards, he lauds Nero to the skies as a very paragon of clemency: his clemency is far greater than that of Augustus, being 'unstained with one drop of blood.' See Henderson, p. 68.

² We cannot doubt that the allusion is to Seneca, who was piling up riches all this time. The excuse here suggested, though not endorsed, by Tac. (*necessitatem adhibitam*), is the same as that offered by Seneca himself to Nero, that 'He could not say "No" to an emperor' (*muneribus tuis obniti non debui*, xiv. 53, 6); but that was just the error of his whole life. Seneca makes a similar apology for himself in *de Benef.* ii. 18.

was for ever in secret conclave with her friends; she laid her hands on money, wherever it could be found, with even more than her natural cupidity, as though she were subsidizing a cause; she was gracious to Tribunes and Centurions; and she paid court to such nobles of virtue and high name as still remained, as though she were forming a party and looking about for a leader for it.¹

4 All this coming to Nero's ears, he took away the military guard which had been given to her as the wife, and continued to her as the mother, of an Emperor, as well as the additional escort of Germans²
5 which had been granted to her more recently; and to put a stop to her crowded levees, he removed her from his own house into that formerly occupied by Antonia. When he visited her there, he would take an escort of Centurions with him, and after a brief salutation take his leave.

Nero dismisses her guards and stops her levees.

19 There is nothing in human affairs so unstable, so evanescent, as a reputation for power which has no title of its own on which to lean. Agrippina's
2 door was at once deserted. None came to visit her, or to comfort her, save a few women: and whether these came from love or hatred, who could say? Among them was Junia Silana, who had been driven from her husband Gaius Silius by Messalina, as above recorded.³ High-born, beautiful, and abandoned, she had long been a dear friend to Agrippina; but a secret enmity had sprung up between them. For Agrippina had frightened the noble youth Sextius Africanus out of marrying Silana by telling him, *She*

She is at once deserted, save by a few friends.

Enmity of Junia Silana.

¹ Nothing could tame or teach Agrippina. She persevered in the outrageous courses which were certain to bring ruin both upon the hapless Octavia and herself.

² See n. on i. 24, 3.

³ *i.e.* in xi. 12, 1.

was a profligate old woman: not that she wanted to keep Africanus for herself, but as Silana was rich and childless, she did not want a husband to get hold of her.

Silana now saw her opportunity for revenge. ³ She set on two of her own clients, Iturius and Calvisius, to accuse Agrippina: not on the old and oft-repeated charge that she was bewailing the death of Britannicus, or publishing abroad the wrongs of Octavia, but that she was plotting to raise up Rubellius Plautus,¹ who was related to Augustus through his mother in the same degree as Nero, while she herself, by becoming his wife, was once more to lay her hands upon the empire. This tale ⁴ was told by Iturius and Calvisius to Atimetus, a freedman of Nero's aunt Domitia. Exulting in the chance thus offered—for there was deadly rivalry between Agrippina and Domitia²—Atimetus urged the actor Paris, who was himself a freedman of Domitia, to go at once and denounce the plot in all its atrocity.

The night was far advanced and Nero was lingering over his cups when Paris entered. Now Paris ²⁰ had been accustomed to appear at that hour to add a fresh zest to the Emperor's enjoyments; but on

¹ Son of the Rubellius Blandus quoted by Juv. as an example of extravagant family pride:—

*Tecum est mihi sermo, Rubelli
Blande, Tumes alto Drusorum stem-
mate, tamquam
Feceris ipse aliquid propter quod nobilis
esses,
Ut te conciperet quae sanguine fulget
Iuli,
Non quae ventoso conducta sub aggere
textit* (viii. 39-42).

Through his mother Julia (daughter of Drusus, the only son of Tiberius),

Plautus could claim Tiberius as his great-grandfather, and was thus (by adoption) the great-great-grandson of Augustus. Nero stood in the same relation to Augustus; but it was by strict lineal descent, through Julia (daughter of Aug.) and the two Agrippinae. For the exile and death of Plautus see xiv. 22, 5 and 59, 3.

² The sister of Domitia Lepida, Messalina's mother. Her enmity with Agrippina was of old standing, as her husband Passienus Crispus had deserted her in order to marry Agrippina. See xii. 64 6.

Silana
concocts a
charge of
treason
against
her.

Paris com-
municates
the sup-
posed plot
to Nero,

this occasion he assumed an air of solemnity as he set forth his story. Terrified by the recital, Nero proposed not only to put his mother and Plautus to death, but also to depose Burrus from the Prefecture, in the idea that he was making a recompense to Agrippina for the promotion which she had obtained for him. Fabius Rusticus asserts that an order was written to Caecina Tuscus committing to him the Praetorian Cohorts, and that it was through Seneca's influence that Burrus was retained in the command. Neither Plinius nor Cluvius make any mention of a doubt being cast on the Prefect's loyalty; and Fabius, no doubt, is partial to Seneca, whose friendship had been the making of him. As for myself, I shall follow the authorities when they agree, only naming them when they differ.¹

Nero was so alarmed, and in such haste to kill his mother, that nothing could put him off until Burrus promised that she should be slain if found guilty: but he protested that, *Any accused person, and above all a parent, should be granted an opportunity for defence; they had no accusers before them; they had nothing but the word of one man, and that man a member of a hostile household. Let Nero reflect how all the circumstances—the midnight hour, the protracted*

whose wrath is with difficulty appeased by Burrus.

¹ This is a very important passage as fixing the authorities whom Tacitus chiefly followed in the Annals, as also for the general statement that he only names his authorities when he finds a want of agreement among them. This is certainly the case in the first six books of the Annals, in which he only twice names an authority (i. 69, 3; iv. 53, 3); in both cases on points not noticed by his usual authorities. In Books xi. to xvi. he frequently refers to *temporum illorum scriptores*; but he only specially names the three authors here mentioned. Fabius Rusticus seems to

have been a client of Seneca's: his history probably embraced the reign of Nero. Cluvius Rufus, a consular and a courtier, wrote perhaps the reigns both of Claudius and of Nero. Pliny the elder, who perished A.D. 79, twice alludes to his own history, in connection with matters at the end of Nero's reign. Fabius Rusticus is again quoted xiv. 2, 3 and xv. 61, 6; also Agr. 10. Cluvius is again preferred to Fabius in xiv. 2, 4; Pliny is again mentioned in xv. 53, 4. See F. Int. i. pp. 12-13; and Henderson, pp. 428-429.

*carousal—were suggestive of reckless and unverified assertion.*¹

The Emperor's alarm thus allayed, Agrippina was 21 interviewed at daybreak. Burrus was commissioned to inform her of the charge:—*She must either meet it or pay the penalty.* This he did in the presence of Seneca; 2 some freedmen also were there to hear what passed. Having explained to her the accusation, and the accusers' names, Burrus assumed a threatening air; but Agrippina showed all her old spirit in her reply:— 3

I marvel not, she said, that Silana, who has never borne a child, should know nothing of a mother's feelings; for a mother cannot change her children as readily as an adulteress her lovers. If Iturius and Calvisius, 4 having devoured all their substance, take up an accusation as the latest mode of repaying an old woman's favours, is that a reason why I should incur the infamy of attempting my son's life, or Caesar have matricide on his conscience? If Domitia were vying with me in good 5 offices towards my dear Nero, I would thank her for her enmity; but instead of that, she is making use of her paramour Atimetus and the play-actor Paris to trump up tragedy-tales against me. When I was planning 6 the adoption of Nero, his designation to the Consular and Proconsular offices, and what else was needed to attain Empire, she was beautifying her fish-ponds at her Baian villa. Let witnesses stand forth² to prove that I 7

¹ I follow doubtfully Lips. and later edd. in reading *refutaret* instead of the reading of Med. *refutare*. But *refutare* would make very good sense: 'The late hour—the nocturnal carouse—the whole circumstances, so favourable to reckless and unverified assertion—were enough to disprove the charge.'

² The force of *stet* = 'else, here used elliptically, has generally been missed: F.'s interpretation is not satisfactory. It marks a sudden transition to a new alternative. In the two previous sen-

tences Agrippina has repudiated Lepida's claims to be the guardian of Nero's interests. It was she, Agrippina, who had won the empire for Nero while Lepida was constructing her fish-ponds. 'If it be not so (*stet*)—if any doubt be cast upon my loyalty—then let a definite accusation be forthcoming, and definite facts proved against me.' She goes on to show that under a Britannicus or a Plautus she would have been more open to accusation than she was now.

Next morning Agrippina clears herself

in a speech full of indignation.

have intrigued with the cohorts in the city, that I have shaken the loyalty of the provinces, or that I have seduced slaves or freedmen into crime. Should I have been alive now if Britannicus had been in power? And if Plautus, or some other, shall occupy the Commonwealth and become my judge, will there be any lack of accusers then, think you, to charge me, not with a few hasty words of impatient love, but with crimes of which no one but my own son could pronounce me innocent?

9 Moved by language like this, those present sought to calm her indignation. She demanded an interview with her son; when without uttering one word of exculpation, as though she doubted her innocence, or of reproach for the services she had rendered him, she secured punishment for her accusers and recompense for her friends.¹

Nero punishes her accusers.

22 The superintendence of the markets was now conferred upon Faenius Rufus, that of the games which Nero was preparing upon Arruntius Stella. Tiberius Balbillus was appointed Prefect of Egypt.²

Various appointments made.

2 Publius Anteius had been designed for Syria; but he was put off on various pretexts, and finally detained in Rome. Silana was banished, Calvisius and Iturius were relegated, and Atimetus was put to death; but Paris was too valuable an instrument of the Emperor's pleasures to be punished. Plautus was passed by without notice for the present.

Silana banished.

23 After this Pallas and Burrus were accused of

¹ Though Agrippina emerged triumphant from this dastardly attempt, it seems at last to have brought her to reason. She appears henceforth to have acquiesced in her fall from power; Tac. at least records no further act of aggression on her part to justify Nero's proceeding to extremities against her four years afterwards.

² These appointments, so far as known, like others made during the early years of Nero, were all good appointments. Faenius Rufus established a high reputation in his office (xiv. 51, 5), which led to his promotion to the command of the Praetorians; and Balbillus is highly praised by Seneca.

Pallas and Burrus accused and acquitted.

conspiring to bestow the Empire upon Cornelius Sulla,¹ a man of illustrious birth, and connected with Claudius by marriage—his wife Antonia being a daughter of that Emperor. The charge originated with one Paetus, who had earned a bad name by trafficking in debts due to the Treasury²; and his story was manifestly false. But pleased as the people were at the acquittal of Pallas, they were still more disgusted with his arrogance. For when some of his freedmen were named as his accomplices, his reply was that, *He never gave orders to his own household except by a nod, or by a wave of the hand: if anything more particular was needed, he had recourse to writing, so as not to put himself on speaking terms with them.*³

Arrogance of Pallas.

Burrus sat upon the bench, although himself accused, and pronounced judgment. Paetus was sentenced to exile; and his account books, containing notes for resuscitating long-forgotten Treasury claims, were burnt.

Soldiers withdrawn from the theatre.

At the close of this year, the cohort of soldiers usually placed on guard during the games was withdrawn, in order to give a greater appearance of liberty, and to make the experiment whether the populace would keep order without them.⁴ It was thought also that it would be better for discipline if the men were removed from the contaminating influences of the theatre. And because the temples of Jupiter and Minerva had been struck by lightning,⁵

¹ See xii. 52, 1 and n.

² The word here used (*sectiones*) implies that Paetus brought up claims due to the Treasury, and then made a profit by selling in parcels the properties thus acquired. It would appear from § 4 that he had also made himself obnoxious by hunting up treasury claims of old standing.

³ Pallas, having been himself a freedman, exhibits all the insolence of a parvenu.

⁴ The 'experiment' did not last long: the soldiers had to be replaced early in the following year (chap. 25, 4).

⁵ Nero would perform this 'lustration' in his character of Pontifex Maximus.

the Emperor, on the advice of the sooth-sayers, held a lustration of the city.

A.D. 56. CONSULS QUINTUS VOLUSIUS SATURNINUS
AND PUBLIUS CORNELIUS SCIPIO.

25 This year was a year of peace abroad; but it witnessed the most shameful excesses of Nero within the city. He would roam through the streets, the taverns, and the brothels of the city disguised as a slave, accompanied by friends who ran off with articles exposed for sale, maltreating all who came in their way; and so little did their victims know who they were, that Nero himself received chastise-
2 ments which left their marks upon his face.¹ Once it became known that this roisterer was none other than Nero, outrages on men and women of distinction were multiplied; the license once permitted, many carried on the same practices with impunity under Nero's name with companies of their own, until Rome at night presented the appearance of a conquered city. At last one Julius Montanus, a man of senatorial rank, though he had never held public office,² being attacked by Nero in the dark, repelled the assault with spirit; but having recognised his assailant, and implored forgiveness, the recognition was treated as a rebuke, and he was compelled to put an end to himself.

Excesses of Nero in the city.

3 After that Nero became more circumspect. He provided himself with an escort of soldiers and

Nero is taught a lesson.

¹ The account here given of Nero's roistering habits, and the story which follows, are fully confirmed by Suet. (Nero 21) and by Dio (lxi. 8, 1). See the graphic account of the state of the streets in Rome at night in Juv. (Sat. iii. 278-301) with Mayor's note.

² Montanus belonged to the senatorial order by birth and fortune, but had not yet actually qualified for a seat in the Senate by holding public office.

gladiators, who, at the beginning of a brawl, and as long as it seemed to be no more than a private quarrel, were to let it go on; but if those assaulted showed too much fight, they were to interfere with arms.

He fosters the passions of the theatre.

Nero turned also the disorders of the theatre ⁴ caused by the factions of rival actors into regular battles, giving prizes for them as well as impunity, and himself looking on, sometimes secretly, sometimes openly; until at last the fights among the populace and the fear of more serious trouble left him no remedy but to expel the actors from Italy, and replace the guard of soldiers within the theatre.¹

Ill conduct of freedmen to their patrons.

About this time the question of the ill-behaviour ²⁶ of freedmen was raised in the Senate, and it was moved that a freedman's misconduct should give a patron the right to revoke his freedom. Many favoured this proposal; and the Consuls, not ² venturing to put the question without the Emperor's knowledge, informed him by letter of the opinion of the Senate. Nero consulted a few friends as to whether he should issue an ordinance on the subject; the opinions were divided. Some denounced the insolence engendered by manumission:—

Some suggest strict measures to repress it;

Things had come to such a pitch of insolence that freedmen would ask their patrons whether they should assert their rights by law, or take them by force; some would even raise their hands to strike, or impudently suggest their own punishment.² What more could an ³

¹ It was thus only one class of actors—the *pantomimi*—that were expelled. This appears from xiv. 21, 7 (A.D. 60) when we hear that the *pantomimi* were restored.

² The reading of Med. in this passage is very corrupt and has been variously corrected. I have followed F. throughout except in the last words, where I

adopt Madvig's emendation *vel poenam suam ipsi suadentes* instead of following Med. *poenam suam dissuadentes*.

Neither the law nor the facts referred to are very clear. It is evident, however, that the gift of freedom was not held to be irrevocable; and that the patron had still some power—that of relegation—over a freedman who mis-

*insulted patron do than relegate his freedman beyond the 100th milestone, to some seaside resort in Campania?*¹

⁴ *Every other kind of action was open to both on equal terms. Some weapon should be provided which could not be treated with contempt. It would be no grievance for the enfranchised to have to maintain their freedom by the same*
⁵ *respectful behaviour which had gained it for them; and notorious offenders deserved to be dragged back into slavery, that such as were insensible to kindness might be restrained by fear.*

27 Upon the other side it was argued:—

While it was proper that the guilty few should suffer, the rights of the order as a whole ought not to be infringed.

² *Freedmen were to be found everywhere. That was the body which supplied the great part of the tribes,² the decuries,³ the attendants of priests and magistrates; even the city cohorts were made up of freedmen; most of the*
³ *Knights, many Senators, had no other origin: and to put freedmen in a class by themselves would show how few were the freeborn.⁴ It was not for nothing that our ancestors, in distinguishing degrees of rank, had made*
⁴ *freedom accessible to all. Furthermore, two modes of enfranchisement had been instituted,⁵ to leave room either*
⁵ *for a change of mind, or for a further favour: for those*

others
deprecate
legislation
on the
subject.

conducted himself. Claudius is stated to have reduced misbehaving freedmen to slavery again (*libertinos ingratos, et de quibus patroni quererentur, revocavit in servitutem*, Suet. Claud. 25); but no law on the subject is known.

¹ This, of course, is ironical. To 'relegate' for a hundred miles was to give the offender the run of the pleasantest watering-places in Italy. See n. on iii. 17, 8.

² *i.e.* the mass of free citizens composing the tribes, and entitled to vote (though the vote was now a mere form) in the Comitia Tributa.

³ These were orders or guilds embracing the lower branches of the public service; especially those of the lictors,

the scribes, the criers or auctioneers, and the *viatores* or street officers.

⁴ The scarcity of the free-born population had long become a subject of anxiety and alarm: witness the terror in Rome at the rising of Curtius, iv. 27.

⁵ There were two kinds of manumission: one styled *iusta manumissio*, the other of a less formal kind. Each included several varieties; the most formal of the first kind was that here mentioned 'by the rod,' when the slave was set free by a stroke of the lictor's wand in presence of a consul or other higher magistrate. The ceremony is described and satirized in the famous passage of Persius, Sat. v. 75, foll. See F.'s note on the whole subject.

whom the patron had not enfranchised by the lictor's wand remained in a state of semi-servitude.¹ Let masters weigh the merits of each case personally, and be slow to bestow a boon which, once granted, could not be recalled.

This view prevailed; and the Emperor wrote to 6 the Senate that they should consider individually all complaints of patrons against their freedmen, but not derogate from their privileges as a class. Not 7 long after this Paris, a freedman of Nero's aunt Domitia, was taken forcibly from her on pretended grounds of law²: and as Nero had ordered the decision pronouncing Paris free-born, he incurred no little discredit thereby.

Nevertheless some semblance of liberty still sur- 28
vived;³ for when a dispute arose between the Praetor Vibullius and Antistius, a Tribune of the plebs, because the latter had ordered the release of some disorderly theatrical partisans who had been put into prison by the Praetor, the Senate supported the 2 Praetor and censured Antistius for his presumption. They forbade also the Tribunes to take upon themselves the authority of Praetors or of Consuls, or to summon suitors from Italy to Rome;⁴ while Lucius 3

¹ These did not receive the full rights of citizenship, like those who had received 'just' manumission by the rod, but were still subject to certain disabilities.

² The word *quasi* before *iure civili* means that the decision, professedly founded on the law, was an unjust or inequitable one, resting on some kind of legal quibble. The case was this: Nero's favourite Paris, who had been a slave of Domitia's, and manumitted by her, now pretended that he had been free-born, and claimed back from Domitia the sum which he had given for his freedom. The court, under the orders of Nero, decided in his favour without enquiring into all the circumstances (Dig. xii. 4. 3. § 5).

³ Tacitus makes a similar despairing remark in i. 74, 6 and iii. 60, 1.

The phantom of freedom here spoken of refers to the fact that the Senate ventured to censure and curtail the rights of a tribune of the plebs. As the emperor possessed the *potestas tribunicia* without any of the limitations of place to which the tribunes themselves were subject, they might be regarded as the mere mouthpieces of the emperor, and so not subject to the criticism of the Senate.

⁴ This passage has caused much difficulty, since the tribunes of the plebs had no right to summon (*vocatio*), and they could only exercise what rights they had within the city. An ingenious explanation has been offered by Greenidge (Roman Public Life, App. 2, p. 447). He supposes the words to refer to the right of appeal from the

The latter view approved by Nero.

The power of Tribunes curtailed by the senate;

Piso, Consul-elect, added that they should not exercise jurisdiction in their own houses, and that fines imposed by them should not be entered on the public books by the Quaestors for a period of four months;¹ during which time objections might be lodged, to be adjudicated upon by the Consuls.

4 The powers of the Aediles were curtailed at the same time, a limit being placed upon the amount for which the Curule and the Plebeian Aediles
5 respectively might distrain or fine; and on the occasion of a personal quarrel between the Tribune Helvidius Priscus and Obultronus Sabinus, one of the Quaestors, whom the former accused of harshly enforcing his powers of sale against poor persons, the Emperor transferred the charge of the public accounts from the Quaestors to a body of Special Commissioners.²

as also that
of the
Aediles.

The
Exchequer
transferred
from the
Quaestors
to Special
Commis-
sioners.

9 The management of the Treasury has been subject to various and frequent alterations. Augustus committed it to Prefects appointed by the Senate; afterwards, when intriguing for votes was suspected, managers were chosen by lot from the whole body of
2 Praetors. But as the lot might fall upon incompetent persons, this plan soon broke down; whereupon Claudius reinstated the Quaestors, and lest fear of

History
of the
manage-
ment of the
Exchequer.

decision of municipal magistrates to Rome (*i.e.* to the praetor or the consul), on a matter of competency; and that the tribune, by his veto, could prevent the praetor from dismissing such an appeal and referring the case back to the local magistrate, and so compel him to try the case. He would thus practically have the right of deciding whether the case should, or should not, be heard in Rome. But the words *vocare ex Italia* seem scarcely applicable to so negative a power; the phrase *ius praetorum et consulum praeripere* seems rather to point to an encroachment on

the positive jurisdiction of those magistrates; while the line quoted from *Juv. vii. 228, Rara tamen merces quae cognitione tribuni = Non egeat*, suggests the power of deciding an appeal, rather than of only determining whether an appeal shall be heard.

¹ Similarly a decree of the Senate had to be registered at the Treasury before it could be enforced. In *iii. 51, 3*, to prevent hasty executions, a rule was made that fifteen days must elapse between the decree and its execution.

² The *aerarium* was at once Treasury and Record Office.

giving offence should make them deficient in strictness, he promised them higher magistracies out of the ordinary course.¹ Such youths, however, entering on office for the first time, proved not firm enough for the position, and so Nero selected for it men of tried capacity, who had already held the Praetorship.²

In this year Vipsanius Laenas was found guilty of rapacity in his government of Sardinia. Cestius Proculus was accused of extortion by the Cretans, but acquitted; and Clodius Quirinalis, the commander of the fleet at Ravenna,³ who had exercised his cruelty and his lust upon the Italians as though they were the very scum of the earth,⁴ anticipated his condemnation by poison. Caninius Rebilus, a man as eminent in wealth as for his knowledge of the law, sought escape from the torments of old age and bad health

Convictions of Laenas and Quirinalis.

Deaths of Rebilus and Volusius.

¹ *i.e.* he promised to raise them to the praetorship without requiring them to go through the intermediate grade of the aedileship.

² This chapter well illustrates how the emperors were gradually compelled, in the interests of efficiency, to curtail the powers still left to the Senate by Augustus. Under the system of the Republic, reverted to by Claudius, the *aerarium* was under the charge of the quaestors, who were the junior of all the officers of state; and the particular quaestors who were to manage it were appointed by lot. What system could have been worse? Imagine if our own Chancellor of the Exchequer were chosen by lot out of the young gentlemen who had most recently passed the Civil Service examination! The emperors were loth to deprive the Senate of any of their powers; but after repeated trial, the old system was found incompatible with good administration, and one of selection out of magistrates of tried capacity was substituted for it. The *fiscus*, on the other hand, had always been well and economically managed, so much so that we hear from time to time of large sums being paid over from the

fiscus into the *aerarium*. See next chap. § 2.

³ For the fleet stationed at Ravenna, see iv. 5, 1.

⁴ This passage is noteworthy as showing that *luxuria* and *saevitia*, both rampant in the capital so far as the Emperor and his *entourage* were concerned, were not tolerated on the part of magistrates in the provincial parts of Italy; and no less notable is the passage in chap. 33, 3, where Capito is accused by the Cilicians for being *maculosum foedumque* in his life, and for daring to exercise in a province *idem ius audaciae quod in urbe exercuerat*. These passages, coupled with those which state expressly how much more simple and orderly life was in Italy and in the provinces than in Rome (see iii. 55, 4 and xvi. 5, 1), remind us (1) that the profligacy of the upper classes in Rome is not to be taken as a sample of manners throughout the empire; and (2) that the *saevitia* of the emperors was exercised mainly upon those whose nobility and eminence made them dangerous. As Juvenal says of Domitian, *Sed periiit postquam cerdonibus esse timendus = Coeperat; hoc nocuit Lamiarum caede madenti* (iv. 153-4).

by opening his veins, although none had credited a debauchee so notorious for effeminacy with resolution enough to take his own life. But Lucius Volusius¹ left a noble name behind him. Though as virtuous as wealthy, he attained to the age of ninety-three without provoking the malevolence of all those Emperors.²

A.D. 57. CONSULS NERO CAESAR II AND LUCIUS CALPURNIUS PISO.

31 Few incidents worth recording occurred during this year, unless any have a mind to fill their pages with eulogies of the foundations and timbers used by Nero in building his vast amphitheatre in the Campus Martius. Such themes may be left for the daily journals, since usage has pronounced³ it unworthy of the dignity of the Roman people that any but great events should be recorded in their annals.⁴

New amphitheatre in the Campus Martius.

2 The colonies of Capua and Nuceria were now strengthened by an addition of veterans; a bounty of four hundred sesterces per head was given to the

Various fiscal and other measures.

¹ Father of the consul of the present year (A.D. 56).

² I see no reason here for changing the reading of *Med. inoffensa tot imperatorum malitia*, if we take *fuisset* along with *spatium vivendi*, in spite of the intervening plural subject *praecipuae opes*. The meaning is "without striking against (*i.e.* without provoking) the hostile or malevolent feelings of all those emperors." The change by Lips. and Nipp. of *malitia* into *amicitia* seems unnecessary for the meaning; and to let the sentence end with a weak Nominative (whether we read *malitia* or *amicitia*) is altogether contrary to the style of Tacitus.

³ The phrase *reperitum sit* seems to refer to some accepted canon of criticism by which Tac. seeks to rebuke the author or authors to whom he is here alluding.

⁴ This sentence well illustrates our author's aristocratic view of history. It was beneath its dignity and that of the Roman people to concern itself with such petty matters as the construction of amphitheatres, which might suitably find a place in the *acta diurna*. This explains the omission from his pages of any allusion to whole departments of social and private life, and especially of provincial life, some notice of which would have thrown greater light on the condition of the ancient world than the doings of the high personages which so largely occupy his pages. His sarcastic remarks here are obviously a cut at some one, probably at the history of Pliny, of whom he speaks disparagingly in xv. 53, 5, and whose love for dwelling on small details would certainly have moved the contempt of our philosophical historian.

plebs; and a sum of forty million was paid into the Treasury to maintain the public credit. The tax of 3 four per cent. upon the sale of slaves was remitted; but as the tax was now laid upon the seller, and the purchaser found the amount added to the price, the remission was in appearance rather than in reality.¹ Nero also issued an edict forbidding magistrates and 4 Procurators to exhibit shows of gladiators or wild beasts, or any other kind of spectacle, within their provinces; for governors had oppressed the pro- 5 vincials by such entertainments as much as by direct exactions, using the favour thus acquired as a bulwark against the consequences of their own misdeeds.

Provision
as to
murders of
masters by
slaves.

The Senate also passed a measure alike of ven- 32 geance and security, providing that in the event of a master being murdered by his own slaves, any of them manumitted by the master's will, but remaining in the house at the time, should be punished with the rest.² The Consular Lurius Varus, condemned 2 for extortion some time before, was now restored to his rank; and a lady of distinction called Pomponia 3 Graecina, wife of the Aulus Plautius whose ovation over the Britons I have recorded,³ having been accused of some foreign superstition, was handed over for trial to her husband. So in accordance 4 with ancient practice, Plautius sat in judgment on his wife's status and reputation in presence of her relatives, and pronounced her innocent.

Case of
Pomponia
Graecina;

¹ Tacitus knew enough Political Economy to perceive that a tax nominally put on the seller or foreign producer would have to be paid by the home consumer. He would not have subscribed to the doctrine of the modern Fiscal Reformer that a tax can be put on a foreign article without raising its price.

² For an exemplification of this barbarous law, see xiv. 42-44.

³ Adopting a probable emendation (*quem ovasse de Britannis rettuli*) for the reading of Med. (*qui ovans se de britanniis rettulit*), which could only mean 'who returned in ovation from Britain.' The ovation of Plautius took place A.D. 47.

This Pomponia lived a long life of unbroken
 5 melancholy. For a period of forty years, from the day
 when Julia, daughter of Drusus,¹ was slain through
 Messalina's machinations, she never wore any but
 mourning clothes, never resumed her gaiety of spirits.
 For this no punishment had been inflicted on her
 during the reign of Claudius; and it redounded to
 her glory afterwards.²

her life of
 melan-
 choly.

33 The same year witnessed a number of prosecu-
 tions. Publius Celer³ was accused by the province of
 Asia; being unable to acquit him, Nero allowed the
 prosecution to drag on until he should die of old age.
 2 For Celer had killed the Proconsul Silanus, as above
 related; and the greatness of that crime served as
 3 a screen to his other enormities. Cossutianus Capito⁴
 was accused by the Cilicians. He was a man of foul
 and shameful life, and had imagined that he might
 conduct himself in his province with the same license
 4 as in Rome. But his accusers were resolute and
 bore him down: forced at last to abandon his defence,
 he was condemned under the law of extortion.

Various
 prosecu-
 tions.

¹ This Julia (wife of Rubellius Blaudus, and mother of the Rubellius Plautus mentioned chap. 19, 3) was daughter of Drusus, the only son of Tiberius by Vipsania. She was thus a descendant of Pomponius Atticus, the friend of Cicero, and was no doubt related to Pomponia Graecina. Julia had been put to death through the jealousy of Messalina in A.D. 43.

² The pathetic way in which the story of this Pomponia is told, coupled with the discovery of the name Pomponius on Christian inscriptions of a later date, has led to the supposition that she was a Christian. That her '*superstitio*' was a foreign one would naturally suggest the idea that she was a votary of some of the debased cults introduced from Syria or Egypt; that she attended secret meetings would suggest to her husband that she was taking part in the licence which often attended such worship; while the fact that she was

able to establish her innocence in the eyes of a suspicious husband and a *conseil de famille*, is a proof that she was able to disconnect herself from the evil 'superstitions' which they attributed to her. A similar case of inquisition held by a family council is given in ii. 50, 4. See F. on this passage and Marquardt Privatl. 5, 7.

³ The poisoner of M. Silanus (chap. 1, 3).

⁴ The notorious accuser of this period. See xi. 6, 5. He was the accuser of Thrasea, xvi. 28, 1. Juv. speaks of Capito and Numitor as *Piratae Cilicum* (viii. 92). It seems strange to be told that a governor dared to be as high-handed in his province as he had been in Rome: but Tacitus is probably making an exaggerated allusion to Capito's favoured position as an accuser. But see n. above on chap. 30, 2.

The Lycians claimed a sum in restitution from Eprius Marcellus;¹ but so powerful was the influence exerted on his behalf that some of his accusers were punished with exile for having put an innocent man in jeopardy.

A.D. 58. CONSULS NERO CAESAR III AND MARCUS VALERIUS MESSALA CORVINUS.

Grants to Messala and others.

Nero's colleague in his third Consulship was 34
Valerius Messala, great-grandson of the orator Corvinus, whom some old men still living could remember as having held that office along with Nero's great-great-grandfather, the Divine Augustus. And a new 2
distinction was conferred upon that illustrious house by an annual grant of half a million sesterces to enable Messala to support his blameless poverty.² Nero also assigned annual grants to Aurelius Cotta 3
and Haterius Antoninus, though both had dissipated their ancestral fortunes in luxurious living.

Renewed designs of the Parthians upon Armenia.

In the beginning of this year the war between 4
Rome and Parthia for the possession of Armenia, so feebly begun, so slowly dragged on, was vigorously resumed. Vologeses would not permit his brother Tiridates to give up the kingdom which he had bestowed on him, nor yet to hold it as a gift from a foreign power; while Corbulo considered it due to the greatness of the Roman people to recover the territories won long ago by Lucullus and Pompeius.³ Besides this, the Armenians, with wavering allegiance, 5
invited both armies to come in.⁴ The situation of

¹ Another notorious *delator* under Nero; he is mentioned in xii. 4, 5 as having filled the office of praetor for the last day of the year A.D. 48.

² See i. 75, 4 and n.

³ See n. on ii. 3, 2.

⁴ So again of the Armenians in ii. 56, 1: *ambigua ea gens antiquitus hominum ingeniis et situ terrarum.*

their country, a likeness of manners, and frequent intermarriages, inclined them rather to the Parthians; and knowing nothing of liberty they preferred Parthian to Roman masters.¹

35 But Corbulo found more difficulties in the slack-
 2 ness of his own troops than from the wiles of the
 3 enemy. Transferred from Syria, where they had
 become enervated by long peace, his legions could ill
 3 brook the labours of the camp. There were veter-
 ans² in the army who had never been on picket or
 night duty, to whom ditches and ramparts were novel
 and strange spectacles, and who possessed neither
 helmets nor breastplates—spruce money-making
 gentry, whose soldiering had been done in towns.³
 4 Corbulo accordingly discharged all who were unfit
 for service from old age or ill-health, and supplied
 their places by new levies raised in Galatia and
 Cappadocia, to which was added a legion from
 Germany⁴ with its complement of auxiliary horse
 and foot.

Corbulo
brings his
army under
discipline.

¹ F. holds that the narrative in chaps. 34-41 belongs to the years 57 and 58, and that in xiv. 23-26 to the years 59, 60. Corbulo had been appointed to his command at the close of the year A.D. 54 or beginning of 55; so that he had now had three years for bringing his troops into discipline, and for carrying out the various arrangements described in chaps. 7 and 8.

² The phrase *constitit* or *satis constitit* is often used by Tac. of a past fact sufficiently evidenced at the time to be accepted as true. The phrase practically amounts to 'It is an established fact that,' 'there is no doubt that.'

³ In chap. 51, 1 we are told that soldiers are to be relieved from paying excise duties 'except as regards articles in which they trafficked': their right to engage in trade on their own account being thus formally recognised. Small wonder that such permission should have led to a general relaxation of discipline, and to abuses of various

kinds such as would spring up during prolonged periods of peace.

The passage shows how easily under jealous and non-warlike emperors the discipline of Roman armies might fall away. An enterprising general might be dangerous to the emperor; a succession of slack, unenterprising generals would be no less fatal to the empire.

⁴ Either the 4th or the 12th; but as neither of these formed part of the expeditionary force, the legion was probably sent to Syria to make up for the detachment of the 10th sent thence to Corbulo. It is to be noted that Tac. gives no clue to the locality in which the troops suffered the severities indicated below; it must have been in the enemy's country, probably somewhere in the high ground of Armenia. It is probable that the account refers to hardships suffered all through the ensuing campaigns.

Intense cold of the winter under tents.

The whole army was kept in tents throughout the winter, when the cold was so intense, and the ground so covered with ice, that the stances for the tents had to be dug out with the spade: many lost their limbs from frost-bites, and some sentries perished at their posts. One man was noticed carrying a bundle of faggots with his hands so frozen that his finger-tips broke off, while still grasping their load, leaving only stumps behind. The General himself went about lightly clad, and uncovered, always moving among his men, whether on the march or at work, praising the good workers, comforting the sick, and showing an example to all. When the rigour of the climate and of the service caused much shirking and desertion, he sought a remedy in severity. He never pardoned first or second offences, as is done in other armies; a deserter paid at once the penalty with his life. And how wholesome this severity was, how superior to a system of indulgence, was soon apparent; for the desertions from his camp were fewer than from those in which leniency was the rule

Corbulo shares in every hardship, but shows no mercy to offenders.

He advances with caution;

Meantime Corbulo, keeping his legions within camp till the spring should be advanced,¹ posted his

¹ Tacitus follows his usual plan, in the case of foreign wars, of deserting the annalistic order, and giving the events of several years in conjunction. The events recorded in the present chapters, from 34 to 41 inclusive, are all given under the year A.D. 58; and when Tac. next returns to the subject in xiv. 23-26, he takes up the narrative in the year A.D. 60. The present chapters therefore would naturally seem to apply to the two years 58 and 59, and that is the opinion of Mommsen; but F. gives good reasons for supposing that the events recorded in this book all took place in 58. In that case Corbulo must have entered Armenia in the summer or autumn of 57, and the

spring here spoken of must be that of 58. According to this view, the narrative in xiii. 34-41 covers the years A.D. 57 and 58, that in xiv. 23-26 the years 59 and 60. See F. *Introd.* vol. ii. pp. 111, 112. Henderson takes the same view, p. 158. Entering Armenia with a force at last well seasoned, Corbulo completed their training by making them go through the rigours of an Armenian winter, pitching his camp probably in the famous plateau of Erzeroum, 6000 feet above sea level, 'the principal artery of traffic, and the chief strategic post of northern Armenia, and itself the most suitable base for his objective next year, Tiridates' capital city Artaxata.' See Henderson, pp.

auxiliary infantry at various suitable points with
 2 orders not to provoke an encounter. These out-
 posts he placed under the command of Paccius
 Orfitus, an officer who had served as First Centurion ;¹
 and though Paccius reported that the barbarians
 were observing no precautions, and offered excellent
 opportunities for attack, he was ordered to keep
 within his defences, and to await the arrival of rein-
 3 forcements. But when a few squadrons from the
 neighbouring forts came in, and ignorantly clamoured
 for battle, Paccius neglected his orders, engaged the
 4 enemy, and was defeated : the squadrons that should
 have supported him took fright at his repulse, and
 retreated hurriedly to their respective camps.

Paccius
 disobeys
 orders, and
 meets with
 a repulse.

5 Corbulo was highly incensed. He severely cen-
 sured Paccius, and ordered him to take up his
 quarters, with his officers and men, outside the camp ;²
 6 in which ignominious position they were kept until
 the intercession of the entire army procured their
 release.

Indigna-
 tion of
 Corbulo.

37 Tiridates being now supported by the forces of his
 brother Vologeses in addition to his own following,
 abandoned all concealment, and openly carried war
 into Armenia ;³ plundering all whom he thought

Tiridates
 invades
 Armenia ;
 his elusive
 tactics are
 well met by
 Corbulo.

166-7, and his whole interesting account
 of these campaigns. We see from chap.
 39, 1 that Corbulo's position enabled
 him to keep open his communications
 with Trebizond and the Black Sea.

¹ The phrase *primi pili* is used to
 denote the senior Centurion of the senior
 maniple of a legion. Each legion at
 this time contained ten cohorts ; each
 cohort contained one maniple (or two
 centuries) of *hastati*, one of *principes*,
 one of *pilani*. These terms now de-
 noted only difference of rank, not of
 equipment ; the *pilani* ranking first, the
hastati lowest. There were thus sixty
 Centurions in the legion, in an ascend-
 ing scale ; the commander of the first

century of the first maniple of the *pilani*
 ranked highest, and was called *centurio*
primi pili. He was an officer of much
 importance. See F., vol. i. pp. 123-124.

² This was an ancient form of punish-
 ment in the Roman army ; see Liv. x.
 4, 4.

³ The word *infensare* probably means
 more than 'ravages' (as given by F.),
 both here and in vi. 34, 1, the only other
 passage in which the word occurs. It
 means making the whole country the
 seat of war—carrying on a general
 guerilla warfare. The 'ravaging' of
 Tiridates is in the next words confined
 to those friendly to Rome.

loyal to us, eluding the forces sent out against him, flying from one place to another, and striking terror by his name rather than by his arms. Thus baffled² in his attempt to bring on an engagement, Corbulo was forced to follow the enemy's example, spreading the war and dispersing his forces, so that the commanders of the various detachments might attack different points at one time.¹ Antiochus was instructed³ to invade the districts on his own border. Pharasmanes,² who to show his good faith towards us had put to death his own son Radamistus as a traitor, prosecuted with much gusto his ancient hatred of the Armenians; while the Moschi, then first gained⁴ over to be the special friends of Rome, overran the remoter parts of the country.

The plans of Tiridates being thus upset, he sent envoys to ask in his own name and in that of the Parthians:—

How was it that, after having lately given hostages, and renewed friendship, so as to open the door to fresh acts of kindness, he was being pushed out of his old possession of Armenia? Vologeses himself had not⁵ moved as yet, because their wish was to rely on right rather than on force: but if war were persisted in, the Arsacidæ would not be found wanting in that bravery and good fortune which had so often proved disastrous to Rome.

In reply to this Corbulo, knowing well that Vologeses⁶ was occupied by the revolt of Hyrcania,³ advised

¹ Henderson well compares the tactics pursued in the second stage of the Boer war. Corbulo at first kept his men together, expecting to be met in fair fight; but when Tiridates eluded him and carried the war through the whole country, he started a policy of 'drives' conducted by separate columns.

² The word *nam* here seems to explain *proximas praeffecturas*. Pharasmanes,

King of Iberia, was already operating on the NE. frontier, while the hardy tribe of Moschi were moving on the NW.

³ This country, as we have seen, was at the SE. angle of the Caspian. Corbulo had been singularly fortunate during his years of preparation, since before the Hyrcanian revolt the hands of Vologeses had been tied by the

Tiridates seeks to negotiate;

Corbulo advises him to petition Nero.

Tiridates to approach the Emperor with a petition :—
*If he would but relinquish hopes for a distant future,¹ and
 seize the happier chances of the moment, he might save all
 bloodshed and make his throne secure.²*

38

As this interchange of messages did nothing to-
 wards establishing peace, it was resolved to fix a time
 and place for an interview between the two com-
 manders. Tiridates announced that he would have
 a thousand horse for his escort :—*Corbulo might bring
 as many men, and of as many kinds, as he pleased,
 provided only they came in peaceful guise, leaving their
 breastplates and helmets behind.*

An
 interview
 arranged.

3

No human being, much less a wary old general
 like Corbulo, could have failed to see that the cunning
 barbarian had a treacherous intent in proposing to
 limit the number on his own side, while permitting
 a larger number to Corbulo; for numbers would be
 of no avail to men without armour exposed to horse-
 men trained in the use of the bow. Corbulo, however,
 without appearing to understand, replied :—*It would
 be better for them to discuss matters of public concern in
 presence of their whole armies;* and he chose for the
 interview a spot on one side of which were gently
 rising slopes suited for infantry, while on the other
 was a plain with room for deploying cavalry.

Corbulo
 declines
 the
 conditions
 proposed;

6

On the appointed day, Corbulo was the first to
 appear. On his wings he placed the allied infantry, and
 the auxiliaries from foreign princes; in his centre the
 6th legion, with which he mixed up three thousand

a second
 interview is
 arranged,
 but fails to
 come off.

rebellion of his son Vardanes in A.D. 55 (chap. 7, 2), which was not put down till June, A.D. 58.

¹ The phrase *omissa spe longinqua et sera* seems a reminiscence of Hor. Od. i. 11, 6-7: *et spatium brevi = Spem longam rescies.*

² Thus Corbulo takes up a very

moderate position, offering to be content with the most modest of the three possible policies open to Rome in regard to Armenia short of entire abandonment, namely (1) annexation; (2) actual suzerainty; (3) nominal suzerainty. See Henderson, pp. 157-161.

men of the 3rd legion brought up from another camp during the night, the whole under one eagle so as to present the appearance of a single legion. Towards evening Tiridates took up his position at a distance, from which he could be seen rather than heard. Thus no interview took place; and the Roman General ordered his men back to their respective camps. 7

The King made a hasty departure, either suspecting treachery from the fact that our troops moved off in several directions at once, or because he wished to intercept our convoys that were coming by way of Trapezus and the Black Sea.¹ But he was unable to attack the convoys, as our troops held the passes by which they were coming; while Corbulo, to prevent the war dragging fruitlessly on, as well as to compel the Armenians to defend their own, prepared to storm their forts. For himself he selected the strongest post in that district, called Volandum; places of lesser importance he assigned to the Legate Cornelius Flaccus, and to Insteius Capito, Commandant of the camp. Having reconnoitred the defences, and made every preparation for an assault, he urged his soldiers *to drive out of his lair an elusive foe who would neither treat nor fight—a foe who confessed to treachery and cowardice by his flight—and to bethink themselves alike of fame and booty.* 39

Operations renewed.

Corbulo besieges Volandum.

¹ After the failure of his attempt to break Corbulo's line of communications with the Black Sea, Tiridates retires eastwards to his capital Artaxata, and Corbulo sets off in pursuit. See Henderson's excellent description of the geographical conditions. Corbulo had a march of some 300 miles before him, with two routes to choose from; one more northerly, through the Russian fortress of Kars, and descending thence on to the Araxes; the other more open,

to the S., would cross the Alashkert plain until it struck Mount Ararat, and then skirt its western base till it reached Volandum—a fortress in the Araxes Valley above Artaxata. This fort Henderson confidently identifies with the Russian fortress of Igdir, at which the two routes would join, and which now covers Erivar, just as the ancient fort of Volandum covered Artaxata, some forty miles distant.

4 He then divided his force into four parts. One party, close-packed in tortoise-formation, he brought up to undermine the rampart; a second was to apply ladders to the walls; others were to hurl spears and
 5 firebrands from engines, while positions were marked out from which stones and leaden balls might be discharged by slingers from behind. The attack being thus pressed on every side at once, no one quarter, if hard put to it, could get help from the
 6 others; and such was the fury of the assault that before a third of the day was gone the walls were bared of their defenders, the obstructions at the gates overturned,¹ the defences scaled and captured, and all males of full age slain: all this without the
 7 loss of a man, and with but few wounded. The non-fighting multitude were sold as slaves, the rest of the booty fell to the conquerors.

Volandum taken by storm;

all males slain.

The Legate and the Prefect of the camp were no less successful. They stormed three forts in one day; the remainder were surrendered, some through terror, some with the good will of the inhabitants.

Other forts captured.

8 These successes encouraged Corbulo to attack the capital Artaxata;² but instead of taking the direct route, he led the legions across the Araxes by a wide ford at some distance from the city: for as that river flows close under the city walls, they would have been exposed to be shot at by the enemy had they crossed by the bridge.

Corbulo marches against Artaxata.

40 Tiridates now wavered between shame and fear.

Tiridates prepares to stop him;

¹ Nipp. is probably right in supposing that this refers to special obstacles or barricades erected outside the gates to strengthen them.

² Artaxata was situated on the left bank of the Araxes, being surrounded by that river on all sides except the

E. Corbulo crosses the river at some distance above the city, and then advances in careful order down the left bank, his right upon the river, his left upon the first slope of hills rising to the E. of it.

To permit the siege to go on, would be to proclaim himself powerless; if he sought to stop it, he would entangle himself and his cavalry in difficult country. In the end he resolved to make a show of force, and either give battle, if opportunity offered, or contrive some stratagem by feigning flight. He therefore 2 suddenly enveloped the Roman army: but Corbulo, being aware of his design, had arranged his forces alike for marching and for battle. On the right 3 was the 3rd legion, on the left the 6th, with a picked body of the 10th in the centre. The baggage was brought within the lines, and the rear was covered by a thousand horse, who had orders to resist attack, but not to follow up the enemy if they fled.¹ The unmounted archers and the rest of the 4 cavalry were on the two wings, the left wing being extended along the foot of the hills in such a way that if the enemy should penetrate our lines, he would be met both in front and flank.

On the other side Tiridates charged up, but with- 5 out coming within striking distance: at one moment threatening attack, at another making as though he were afraid, in the hope that he might break up our formations and set upon each separately. But our men 6 warily kept their ranks. A single cavalry officer, advancing too boldly forward, was pierced through and through with arrows; but his example confirmed the rest in their obedience, and with the approach of darkness Tiridates withdrew.

Corbulo laid out his camp where he was; and 41 presuming that Tiridates had retreated to Artaxata, he debated whether he should push on that night

¹ The general was too wary to be caught by the well-known Parthian tactics of simulated flight.

but is
baffled by
Corbulo's
prudent
disposi-
tions.

Corbulo
declines
battle.

Tiridates
retreats,

- 2 with his light legions, and invest the city. But when his scouts reported that the King was off on a distant march, either for Media or Albania, he waited for the day, and then sent on his light-armed troops to surround the walls at once, and invest the city.
- 3 The inhabitants, however, threw open their gates of their own accord, surrendered themselves and their property to the Romans, and thus saved their lives. The city was burnt, destroyed, and levelled to the ground. The great length of wall could not have been held without a powerful garrison; and our forces were too weak to be divided between holding the town and taking the field. If again the city had been left intact and ungarrisoned, we should have gained no advantage and no glory from the capture.
- 4 Then occurred what seemed a divine portent; for while the sun was shining brightly outside up to the city walls, the space within was suddenly enveloped in a black cloud with flames shooting through it: as though the Gods in their wrath were handing over the city to destruction.¹
- 5 For these successes Nero was hailed as 'Imperator';² in addition to public thanksgivings, the Senate voted to him statues, arches and successive Consulships, and decreed that the day on which the victory had been gained, that on which it had been announced, and that on which these motions had been passed by the Senate, should all be ranked as feast-days. Other similar proposals were made, and of a kind

and
Artaxata
surrenders
to Corbulo.

Miraculous
cloud.

Extrava-
gant
jubilation
at Rome.

¹ Egli supposes this marvel to have been the eclipse of the sun which took place on April 30, A.D. 59, and which is mentioned by Pliny as having been seen by Corbulo. But F. points out that Corbulo could not have reached Artaxata as early as April; nor is the word *miraculum* suitable to an eclipse.

² A good example of the manner in which Tac. couples together in one sentence events distant from one another. The 'salutation' by the troops would be on the field of battle, as in ii. 18, 2.

so extravagant that Gaius Cassius,¹ while assenting to all the other honours, remarked:—*If the Gods were to be thanked for every favour of fortune, the whole year would not suffice for thanksgivings. Let holy days and days of business be so distributed that men might perform their religious duties without interruption to their human concerns.*

Then came the condemnation of Publius Suillius,² a 42
man who had known varied fortunes and had earned many enmities; yet his condemnation brought no little odium upon Seneca. Under Claudius, he had been a formidable and venal personage; the new reign had not brought him so low as his enemies desired, and he was a man who would rather be thought guilty than appear to cringe for mercy. For the 2
purpose, as was thought, of crushing this person, it was proposed to revive an old decree of Senate, together with the penalties imposed by the Cincian Law³ upon pleaders who pled for pay. Suillius was 3
not sparing of remonstrance and recrimination. Giving free rein in his old age to his naturally violent temper, he attacked Seneca for his hostility to the friends of Claudius,

*Under whom, he said, Seneca had been most justly condemned to exile. Engaged in profitless pursuits, associat- 4
ing with unfledged youths, Seneca was envious of all who could use a vigorous and virile eloquence in defence of their fellow citizens. He himself had served Germanicus 5
as Quæstor: Seneca had entered his household as an adulterer.⁴ Was it to be accounted a grosser offence to*

¹ The famous jurist of the old school (xii. 12, 1), who was Legate of Syria in A.D. 49, and who delivered in A.D. 61 the cruel speech insisting that the law which inflicted death upon all slaves in the house of a murdered master should be strictly enforced (xiv. 42-45).

² For Suillius, see xi. 1, 1; 2, 1; 4, 1; 5, 1 and 2; 6, 1 and 5.

³ See xi. 7-8, and xiii. 5, 1.

⁴ Seneca had been banished by Claudius at the instigation of Messalina on the charge of adultery with Julia, daughter of Germanicus; and Suillius

Trial of
Publius
Suillius;

he makes
a violent
attack on
Seneca.

receive payment for honourable services from willing clients than to violate the bed-chambers of princesses?

6 What sort of learning was it, what school of philosophy, that had taught Seneca how to amass a sum of three hundred million sesterces¹ during four years of imperial² favour? In Rome, he lured the childless and their inheritances into his toils: his exorbitant usuries were draining Italy and the provinces.³ His own modest competence had been earned by labour; and he would endure accusation, trial, everything, rather than suffer his established and self-made position to bow down before the prosperity of an upstart.⁴

43 There was no lack of persons to report these words, or exaggerated versions of them, to Seneca. Accusers were found who charged Suillius with having plundered the allies when governor of Asia, and of having embezzled public moneys; but as a whole year was granted for the collection of evidence,⁵ it was thought better to save time by beginning with the home charges, the witnesses to which were on

Various charges are brought against Suillius;

here assumes that the charge was true. But that is no evidence of the fact. Such charges formed part of the stock-in-trade of every accuser, whatever the other charges might be; and in this case Suillius was grasping at every handle within his reach. Nor can any weight be attached to an accusation brought by Messalina against a personal enemy. The only definite evidence against Seneca is that of Dio (lxi. 10, 1); but Dio is always hostile to Seneca, and he overdoes his case by asserting misconduct with Agrippina also. On the other hand, the use of the word *iniuria*, in xii. 8, 3, implies that Tac. supported the general opinion that Seneca had been wrongfully banished, and we may therefore with some confidence pass judgment in his favour.

¹ The fact that the wealth of Pallas is put at this same figure (xii. 53, 5), as also by Dio (lxi. 10, 3), suggests that the number is a round one.

² The word *regiæ* is used here in an

invidious sense. It is to be noted that while Roman writers could never use the term *rex* of the emperor himself, they had no objection to using the term *regius* of things pertaining to the emperor, when it was desired to convey an impression of royal high-handedness or magnificence. The word 'royal' would be a mistranslation.

³ This raises a better vouch and more likely charge against Seneca. We know how newly-won provinces were flayed by Roman capitalists; and though we must guard against the hostility of Dio, he distinctly tells us that before the great rising in Britain in A.D. 61 Seneca was rigorously calling up a loan of forty million sesterces which he had forced upon the people of that country (lxi. 2, 1).

⁴ The extreme gusto with which Tac. gives this speech shows that he had no desire to screen the weak parts of Seneca's character.

⁵ So in chap. 52, 2.

the spot. These asserted that Suillius, by his bitter 3
 accusations, had forced Quintus Pomponius¹ to em-
 bark in civil war, and had driven Sabina Poppaea²
 and Julia, the daughter of Drusus, to their end;
 they charged him with having been the ruin of
 Valerius Asiaticus,² of Lusius Saturninus, and Cor-
 nelius Lupus; and they laid at his door the con-
 demnation of a host of Roman Knights, and indeed
 all the cruelties of Claudius.

The defence of Suillius was that, *None of these 4*
things were of his own doing: he had but obeyed the
orders of the Emperor; but Nero stopped this line
of excuse by asserting, He had ascertained from his
father's papers³ that that Emperor had never insisted on
a single prosecution.

Suillius then alleged orders from Messalina; but 5
 this defence broke down also:—*How was it, his*
accusers asked, that no other voice than his had been
selected to serve the rancours of that abandoned woman?
No mercy should be shown to the instrument of cruelties
who, after reaping the reward of his crimes, threw the guilt
of them upon others.

And so Suillius was banished to the Balearic
 Islands. One half of his property was confiscated; 6
 the other half was left to his son and granddaughter,
 together with all the money which they had in-
 herited from their mother and their grandmother.
 But neither trial nor condemnation broke his spirit;
 and he is said to have made his seclusion tolerable

¹ This man, described as *moribus iniquis* (vi. 18, 2), seems to have joined the abortive rising of Furius Scribonianus Camillus in Delmatia in A.D. 42.

² See xi. 1, 1.

³ We have reference to such 'commentaries' at different times and by several authors; but they do not seem

to have formed a diary in the usual sense of that word. They were probably private memoranda and papers of all kinds relating to public affairs, but there is no evidence to show that Tac. made any use of them. See F., vol. i. Introd. p. 15, and Henderson, p. 427.

his
 defence
 breaks
 down;

he is
 banished
 with
 partial
 confisca-
 tion.

7 by a life of affluence and luxury. His accusers followed up their hatred of the father by charging his son Nerullinus with extortion; but the Emperor, deeming vengeance satisfied, interposed his veto.

44 About this same time occurred the case of Octavius Sagitta, a Tribune of the plebs. Madly in love with a married woman of the name of Pontia, he bought her over by costly gifts to become his mistress, and then offering her marriage, made her promise to
2 desert her husband and become his wife. But as soon as the lady found herself free, she made one delay after another, alleging her father's opposition; and finding the chance of a wealthier marriage, she
3 withdrew her promise. Octavius employed threats and remonstrances by turns; he protested that his good name was destroyed, his money gone, and that he was ready to place his life—the one thing left to
4 him—in her hands. Meeting nothing but rebuffs, he begged for a single night of her company as a solace and satisfaction to his passion, which he would keep
5 under control thenceforward. The night was fixed; Pontia put her chamber in charge of a maid who was in her confidence; Octavius arrived, attended by a single freedman, and carrying a dagger concealed
6 beneath his dress. Then began bickerings, entreaties, reproaches and reconciliations, as is the way when lovers quarrel. A portion of the night was given up to amorous intercourse; after which, Pontia suspecting nothing, Octavius, in a pretended rage, ran her through with his dagger, wounded and scared off the maid when she ran up to help, and rushed
7 out of the room. The morning disclosed the murder; and as Octavius was proved to have passed the night with the woman, there could be no doubt as to the

Gross outrage perpetrated by Octavius Sagitta;

he is found guilty of murder.

murderer. The freedman however declared that the crime was his, done to avenge his patron's wrongs; and many were touched by so notable an example. 8
But when the maid recovered from her wound and recounted the facts, an accusation was laid before 9
the Consuls by the father of the murdered woman; and Octavius, on vacating office, was condemned by the Senate under the Cornelian Law.¹

History
and
character
of Sabina
Poppaea.

A no less notable case of profligacy in this year 45
proved the beginning of great public calamities. There was in Rome a woman called Sabina Poppaea.² She was the daughter of Titus Ollius; but as Ollius had fallen a victim to his friendship for Sejanus before attaining to public office,³ she had assumed the name of her maternal grandfather, the famous Poppaeus Sabinus,⁴ so illustrious for his consular and triumphal honours. This woman was possessed of every 2
quality except virtue. From her mother,⁵ who was the most lovely woman of her time, she inherited alike beauty and distinction; her wealth was on a level with her birth. Charming in conversation, not deficient in wit, she led a life of license under a show of modesty. She seldom appeared in public; and when she did, she kept her face partly veiled, either

¹ The punishment under the *Lex Cornelia de Sicariis* would be deportation with confiscation of all property.

² Now comes upon the scene what proved to be perhaps the most fatal influence in the downward career of Nero. 'It was within this period, in the fourth year of his rule, that a new and overpowering influence took hold of him, that of the beautiful and abandoned woman who, adding judicious coyness to consummate profligacy, and combining within herself the characters of the intriguer, the wit, the devotee and the fatalist, was enabled during the seven remaining years of her life to keep a firm hold on his affections, and

to lead him on from crime to crime.' F., vol. ii. Introd. p. 61.

³ Ollius had held the quaestorship (Suet. Nero, 35), but the quaestorship was not held to be an *honor*. So in chap. 29, 2 we are told that Claudius had promised *honores* before the time to such quaestors as had served in the Treasury.

⁴ The famous proconsul of the reign of Tiberius, who had ruled various provinces wisely and well for twenty-four years, and who owed his continued prosperity to the fact that *par negotiis neque supra erat* (i. 80, 1; vi. 39, 3).

⁵ We have seen that the mother fell a victim to Messalina's jealousy (xi. 2, 5).

not to make herself too common,¹ or because she
 3 looked better so.² Indifferent to her good name, all
 lovers, married or single, were alike to her: in-
 capable of love herself, insensible to that of others,
 she bestowed her favours wherever advantage
 4 pointed. Thus while still the wife of Rufrius Crispinus,³
 a Roman Knight, to whom she had borne a son,
 she was won over by the youth and fervour of Otho,⁴
 knowing also that he stood high in Nero's favour;
 nor was it long before marriage followed on the
 adultery.⁵

6 Otho was for ever boasting to Nero of his wife's
 charms and beauty; whether out of mere lover's
 thoughtlessness, or because he wished to kindle his
 desires in the hope that the joint possession of
 Poppaea might be a bond to strengthen his influence
 2 with the young prince. He was often heard to say,
 on quitting the Emperor's table that, *He was going*
to Poppaea—a woman who had brought to him birth
and beauty: what all men pray for, and only the fortunate
 3 *enjoy.* Under incitements such as these, delay was
 short. Admitted to the Emperor's presence, Poppaea
 made her way at first by artful blandishments,
 affecting inability to withstand his love, and to be

Admitted
 by her
 husband
 Otho's
 facility to
 to Nero's
 presence,

¹ For the phrase *ne satiaret aspectum*
 cf. Henry IV., Pt. I. Act III. Sc. 2:

Thus did I keep my person fresh and
 new;

My presence, like a robe pontifical
 Ne'er seen but wondered at.

² Juv. refers to Pliny's story that she
 used cosmetics and asses' milk for her
 complexion: *Tandem aperit vultum et*
tectoria prima reponit: = Incipit agno-
sci, atque illo lacte fovetur = Propter
quod secum comites educit asellas (vi.
 467-9). See also Henderson, p.
 467.

³ Rufrius Crispinus had been Prefect
 of the Praetorians as colleague to Lusius
 Geta; both were deposed at the instance

of Agrippina to make room for Burrus
 in A.D. 61.

⁴ This is the M. Otho who after-
 wards became emperor, from January
 15 to April 16, A.D. 69.

⁵ In the Hist. (i. 13, 8) Tacitus gives
 a slightly different story, following the
 version given by Suet. (Otho, 3) and
 other writers. According to that version,
 Nero had been a lover of Poppaea's
 when married to Crispinus; Otho made
 her his wife in order to screen Nero's
 passion, and then fell in love with her
 himself. But Poppaea was not a person
 to sacrifice a Nero for an Otho; and
 the minuteness of Tacitus' narrative
 here shows that he desired to correct
 the inaccuracy of his earlier version.

she soon
fascinates
him.

enamoured of his beauty. After a while, as the Emperor's passion grew, she took a high hand with him if he detained her for more than a night or two,¹ telling him, *She was a married woman; she could not sacrifice her position as a wife, she was devoted to Otho, who eclipsed everybody in his manner of living: he was great in his ideas, and in his appointments; 4 everything about him was in the grand style. Nero, on 5 the other hand, she would say, had a waiting maid for his mistress; tied down to her company, what could he learn but what was low and mean from concubinage with a slave?*

Otho is
sent to
Lusitania.

Otho's former intimacy with the Emperor was now broken off. Before long he was excluded from his company and his suite; and in the end, to prevent his remaining in Rome as a rival, he was appointed to the province of Lusitania. That position he retained down to the time of the Civil Wars. Casting behind him the turpitude of his past, he there lived a strict and upright life: a wanton in his days of ease, he showed himself self-disciplined in command.

Story of
Cornelius
Sulla;

So far Nero had sought to throw a veil over 47 his crimes and his excesses. A special object of his aversion was a dull-witted man called Cornelius Sulla,² whose character he misread, taking him to be a false and crafty person. These suspicions were 2 greatly increased by the following lying tale fabricated by an old freedman called Graptus, a man well versed in the ways of the imperial household from the days of Tiberius onwards.

The Mulvian bridge³ was in those days a resort

¹ The reason for making a point of two nights was that absence for three nights would break the 'usus' of legal married life.

² See xii. 52, 1, and xi. 57, 4.

³ The famous *Ponte Molle*, on the great North Road (*Via Flaminia*), which spans the Tiber two miles N. of Rome.

much frequented for nocturnal adventures, by Nero amongst others, who would go there to indulge himself with greater freedom outside the city. It happened that in a youthful frolic, such as were common at that time, a false alarm had been raised among a party of Nero's attendants on their way
 3 back to the city. Graptus accordingly concocted a story that Sulla had devised a plot to waylay Nero on his way home by the Flaminian road; and that Nero had only escaped by the accident of his returning to the gardens of Sallust by a different route.
 4 No slave, no freedman, of Sulla's was identified; it was quite foreign to the contemptible and craven character of the man to have ventured on such an attempt: nevertheless he was dealt with as if he had been found guilty. He was sentenced to leave Rome, and to be confined within the walls of Massilia.

a case is trumped up against him.

48 In the same year, two opposing deputations from Puteoli were heard in the Senate; one from the City Council, the other from the plebs. The former complained of the unruly conduct of the populace; the latter of the cupidity of the magistrates and leading
 2 citizens. There had been a riot, with stone-throwing and threats of fire-raising; and to prevent fighting and bloodshed Gaius Cassius was appointed to find a
 3 remedy. His rule however proved too strict¹ for the inhabitants, and at his own request the duty was transferred to the two brothers Scribonii, who by the help of a Praetorian cohort, and a few executions, struck terror into the townspeople and re-established harmony.

Two embassies from Puteoli.

49 I should not mention an unimportant decree of

Decree as to shows at Syracuse.

¹ The 'severity' of Cassius (see n. on chap. 41, 5) is still further brought out in his famous speech about the slaves (xiv. 42-45).

Senate¹ permitting the people of Syracuse to exceed the prescribed number of combatants at a show of gladiators, were it not that the opposition of Paetus Thrasea² afforded his enemies an opportunity of criticising his action. They asked:—

If Thrasea thought that the Commonwealth needed² a free Senate, why did he take up matters of such slight importance? Why not give his opinion, one way or the other, on questions of peace or war; on matters of tariff or legislation, and other topics of imperial concern? Every Senator, when called upon to speak, was entitled to broach any subject he pleased, and to demand a motion on it.³ Was there nothing else calling for reform but³ the extravagance of the shows at Syracuse? Was every thing, in every part of the Empire, as well ordered as if a Thrasea, and not a Nero, swayed its destinies? And if matters of high moment were passed by unnoticed,⁴ how much more needful to leave trivialities alone?

In answer to this, when his friends demanded an⁵ explanation, Thrasea replied:—*It was not without heed to the present state of affairs that he had opposed a motion of that kind, but because he thought it due to the Fathers to indicate that those who paid attention to trifles were not likely to conceal their interest in matters of graver moment.*

A great outcry was raised in this year against the⁵⁰ extortions of the publicans; and Nero debated whether

¹ Such trifles Tacitus regards as beneath the dignity of history. See n. on chap. 31, 1.

² The first mention of this famous Stoic. He is now known from an inscription to have been consul some time in A.D. 56. The story here given shows the extreme difficulty in which that class of Stoic statesmen were placed who desired to take a useful and moderate course in public affairs with-

out openly flying in the face of the Government—a class in which Tacitus himself may be included. They were indeed 'between the défil and deep sea.'

³ There was thus no power in the Roman Senate to prevent a speaker, once called upon to speak, from making a motion on any subject, however irrelevant to the matter under discussion.

Attack upon Paetus Thrasea.

Thrasea's reply.

Nero proposes to abolish custom duties.

V

he should not confer a magnificent boon upon the human race by abolishing custom dues altogether.¹

2 But this generous impulse was restrained by his senatorial advisers, who after first lauding the grandeur of the idea, pointed out that, *A diminution of the revenues by which the State was supported would bring about the dissolution of the Empire; for if the customs were done away with, a demand would follow for the*
3 *abolition of tribute also. Many of the companies for collecting taxes had been formed by Consuls and Tribunes of the Plebs in the days of full popular freedom; since*
4 *which time every care had been taken to maintain a balance between the revenue and the expenditure. Some check, however, should certainly be put upon the cupidity of publicans, lest by new exactions they should rouse a feeling against taxes which had been so long and so patiently endured.*

Opposition of his advisers.

51 The Emperor accordingly ordained that the regulations for each tax,² hitherto kept secret, should be publicly posted up; that arrears should not be recoverable after one year; that suits against

He makes certain fiscal reforms.

¹ This chapter reads like an echo of the controversy now raging around us on the subject of so-called Tariff Reform. On the one hand we find universal Free Trade recommended in true Cobdenic language, as *pulcherrimum donum generi mortalium*; while it is denounced on the other as involving *dissolutionem imperii*. Henderson is indignant that the epithet 'mad' should have been lavished upon this beneficent scheme of Nero's; but no other epithet is applicable to the scheme as presented to us by Tacitus. It was evidently the result of a sudden burst of enthusiasm on the part of Nero, without any real examination of the incidence of taxation as then established, or any consideration of probable consequences. The plan was suggested by a desire to relieve the provinces of the exactions of the publicani; but to abolish the *portoria* would only have relieved Italy at the expense of the provinces. Hen-

derson supposes that part of the plan was to increase direct taxation, as of course must have been done had the proposal been a serious one; but so little was this in Nero's mind that the proposal was at once upset by the naïve suggestion that the abolition of indirect taxation would lead to an agitation for the abolition of direct taxation also. Some excellent financial edicts were certainly issued at this time; but Nero's suggestion of Universal Free Trade seems only to have been a wild idea thrown out casually, without knowledge or consideration, at a moment when public outcry had brought before him, more urgently than usual, the sins of the publicani.

² The word *publicum* denotes 'state revenue,' and *lex publici* is a law regulating a tax. In iii. 70, 4 (*egregium publicum*) the word means 'service to the State.'

publicans should be heard out of the ordinary course, at Rome by the Praetor, in the provinces by the Propraetor or Proconsul;¹ that soldiers should remain tax-free, except for articles in which they traded:² together with other excellent regulations which were observed for a time, and then evaded. The abolition² however of the two and a half per cent. and the two per cent. duties³ is still in force, as well as that of other illegal exactions for which pretexts had been devised by the publicans. Regulations⁴ were laid³ down for the conveyance of corn in transmarine provinces;⁵ and merchant vessels were exempted⁶ from assessment and the payment of property-tax.⁷

Two former Proconsuls of Africa, Sulpicius⁵² Camerinus and Pompeius Silvanus, were now tried and acquitted by the Emperor. Camerinus had been charged, not so much with extortion as with showing cruelty towards a few individuals; Silvanus was² attacked by a whole host of accusers, who demanded time to collect evidence: but he asked to be tried at

¹ This doubtless means that the finance officers, whether quaestors or procurators, were no longer to be judges in their own cause when they were accused of having acted illegally, but that such cases were to be tried before the ordinary judicial tribunals, and tried at once (*extra ordinem*).

² See above, chap. 35, 3 and n.

³ What these exactions were is not known. Or. supposes that the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. tax refers to a tax upon the value of property involved in law suits (Suet. Gaius, 40).

⁴ The word *temperata* here seems to mean 'brought under rules' or 'reduced to rule.' F. translates 'made easier.'

⁵ This reform we might naturally refer to the abuses connected with the land transport of corn for the use of the troops which are described by Tacitus in the *Agricola* (chap. 19, 4). He there tells us how money was extorted from natives who were bound to supply corn

for the legions by first requiring them to deliver the corn at distant or impossible places, and then exacting from them large sums in lieu of such deliveries. But in the case before us the boon is confined to transmarine provinces, and the reference must therefore be to some charges connected with the shipping of corn to Italy, or more probably, as the word *apud* seems to show, with the shifting of grain from one province to another.

⁶ The exclusion of ships from the property assessed for property-tax would seem to be founded on the same principle as that by which among ourselves certain articles used in production are exempt from assessment.

⁷ F.¹ here states that no *tributum* was paid by Roman citizens; but Henderson is of opinion that the *tributum* had to be paid by *negotiatores* in the provinces, though not in Italy (see his article in *Class. Rev.* 1897, pp. 253-4).

3 once. Being rich, old and childless, he gained the day, and outlived the men who had schemed to secure his acquittal.¹

53 Things in Germany had been quiet up to this time,² since the prodigality with which triumphal ornaments had been bestowed³ inclined our generals to look for greater glory by preserving peace. 2 The commanders of the army at this time were 3 Paulinus Pompeius and Lucius Vetus.⁴ Not wishing, however, to keep their troops idle, the former had completed the dam for keeping back the Rhine⁵ begun by Drusus sixty-three years before; while Vetus was preparing to connect the rivers Saone⁶ and Moselle by a canal. Such a canal would enable over-sea merchandise, after ascending the Rhone and the Saone, to pass by the Moselle into the Rhine, and so into the Ocean—a route which would do away with the difficulties of land transport, and render the Western and Northern coasts inter-navigable.⁷ But this work was regarded with jealousy 4 by Aelius Gracilis, the Legate of Belgian Gaul,⁸ who wished to prevent Vetus from bringing his legions

Affairs in Germany.

The dam of Drusus completed.

Canal from the Rhone to the Rhine.

¹ The meaning is that the persons who had helped Silvanus to get an acquittal had hoped thereby to gain a place in his will.

² Nothing has been heard of Germany since xii. 27-28 (A.D. 50). Tacitus as usual includes several years in his narrative, and some of the events mentioned in the following chapters must have occurred before the present year.

³ See xi. 20, 5 and xii. 3, 2.

⁴ Paulinus was Legate of the Upper Province, Vetus of the Lower. For the division of the provinces of Germany, see i. 31, 2 n.

⁵ This dam is mentioned in Hist. v. 19, 3; it was on the Gallic side of the river. As Drusus died in the year B.C. 9, the work of Paulinus must have been begun in A.D. 55. For the object of the dam, see Godley, Hist. v. 19.

⁶ The Latin name being *Araris*.

⁷ The Romans were great canal-makers as well as great road-builders. When Claudius joined the expedition in Britain he travelled all through France by waterways.

⁸ The Province of Belgica (properly Gallia Belgica) included the country between the Seine and the Rhine, except the parts on the left bank of the latter river which were included in the German provinces. Its capital was Durocor-torum Remorum (*Rheims*). In this, as in many other instances, the name of the modern French town is derived from that of the Gallic tribe of which it was the capital. So *Bourges* from the Bituriges, *Angers* from the Andecavi, etc.

into the neighbouring province, and so winning the favour of the Gauls. Using an argument which has put a stop to many an excellent undertaking, he declared that, *The project would be a menace to the Empire.*

Seizure of
land by the
Frisii;

The prolonged inactivity of the armies led to a 54
report that the Legates had been forbidden to embark
upon hostilities. Accordingly the Frisii¹ advanced to 2
the river bank² under the leadership of their own
kings Verritus and Malorix—if kings they can be
called³—their young men marching through swamps
and forests, their non-fighting population crossing
over the lagoons,⁴ and took possession of some un-
occupied lands reserved for our soldiers. Here they 3
had set up their houses and sowed their fields, and
were working the land as if their own, when Dubius
Avitus, who had succeeded to Paulinus, constrained
Verritus and Malorix to sue for terms, threatening
to use against them all the power of Rome if they
did not return to their old habitations, or obtain a
new settlement from the Emperor.

their kings
come to
Rome.

The two kings journeyed to Rome. While waiting 4
to see Nero, who was otherwise engaged, they
were taken to the theatre of Pompeius, among other
sights usually shown to barbarians, to behold the
vast number of the people. Having nothing to do— 5
for they were too ignorant to take pleasure in the
performance—they were enquiring about the public
seats and the various distinctions of rank, asking
where the Senators sat, and where the Knights, when

¹ The last we heard of the Frisii was in xi. 19, 2, when Corbulo confined them to certain lands, imposed on them a constitution, and built a fort to secure their obedience.

² Obviously the right bank of the Rhine.

³ Because German kings were not autocratic: *nec regibus infinita aut libera potestas* (Germ. 7).

⁴ These lakes would be parts of what is now the Zuider Zee, which was formed into a single lake by inundations in the 13th century.

they noticed some persons in foreign dress sitting in the senatorial seats. On asking who these persons were, and being informed that that privilege was accorded to the envoys of nations conspicuous for their valour, or for their friendship towards Rome, they remarked that, *No nation on earth was braver or more loyal than the Germans*; and straightway marching down, took their seats among the Senators.¹ This naïve and honest outburst of self-assertion delighted the spectators. Nero presented them both with the Roman franchise, and ordered the Frisii to vacate the occupied territory. But as the Frisii treated the order with contempt, a body of auxiliary cavalry quickly enforced obedience, capturing or slaughtering all who had the temerity to resist.

Incident in the theatre.

The Frisii have to retire.

55 The lands thus vacated were taken possession of by the Ampsivarii,² who were not only a more powerful tribe in respect of numbers, but also had the sympathy of the tribes round about, seeing that they had been driven out by the Chauci, and having no home of their own were now praying for a safe place of exile. Their cause was pleaded by Boiocalus, a man of distinction among those tribes, and a loyal friend to Rome. This man reminded Avitus that—

Their lands occupied by the Ampsivarii,

He had been thrown into chains during the Cheruscan rebellion by the order of Arminius; he had served first under Tiberius, and afterwards under Germanicus: and in addition to fifty years³ of faithful service, he had kept his tribe in obedience to Rome. Why leave so much land⁴ unoccupied for the flocks and herds of Roman

whose cause is pleaded by Boiocalus.

¹ Suet. tells this same story, but puts it in the reign of Claudius (Claud. 25).

² See ii. 8, 4; 22, 2; and 24, 5.

³ Counting evidently from the disaster of Varus in A.D. 9. See n. on i. 10, 3.

⁴ Most edd. (including F.²) adopt

here the reading of Lips. *quo tantam partem campi iacere*: 'for what purpose leave so much land unoccupied?' But there is no sufficient reason for giving up Med.'s *quotam partem*: 'What portion of the land lying there would ever

soldiers to be some day or other driven into it? Reserve, 4
 by all means, he added, retreats for cattle, while men
 are starving: only do not prefer wastes and solitudes
 to a friendly population. This territory belonged once 5
 to the Chamavi,¹ afterwards to the Tubantes, and last of
 all to the Usipi. The earth has been given to mankind,
 just as the heavens have been given to the Gods: lands
 not occupied are free to all.

Thereupon looking up to the sun, and calling
 upon the other heavenly bodies as if face to face
 with them, he asked:—*Did they wish to gaze upon
 an unpeopled earth? Let them rather pour in the seas
 upon the land-grabbers!*

These words made an impression upon Avitus. 56
Men must submit, he replied, *to be ruled by their betters.*
The Gods to whom they appealed had decreed that it lay
with the Romans to give or to take away; and the
Romans would endure none to be judges but themselves.
 This was his public reply to the Ampsivarii; but to 2
 Boiocalus himself he promised lands in remembrance
 of his old fidelity. Boiocalus however refused the 3
 offer as being the wage of treason, adding:—*We may*
lack land on which to live, but not on which to die.

They parted with feelings of mutual hostility. 4
 The Ampsivarii called on the Bructeri² and the
 Tencteri³ and even more distant tribes to join them
 in the war. Avitus wrote to Curtilius Mancina, the 5
 Legate of the Upper Army, to cross the Rhine and
 show a force upon the rear; while he himself led his
 legions into the territory of the Tencteri, threatening

be used for the herds and flocks of
 soldiers?'

¹ Supposed to have been a tribe of
 the Marsi. For the Tubantes and
 Usipi see i. 51, 4. These tribes had
 evidently been shifting about in the

lower country between the Ems and the
 Rhine.

² See n. on i. 51, 4.

³ Adjoining the Usipi on the Rhine,
 occupying the territory opposite to
 Cologne (Hist. iv. 64, 1).

Boiocalus
 refuses
 private
 terms for
 himself;

and
 after much
 wandering
 the Ampsi-
 variii are
 cut to
 pieces.

them with destruction if they joined the movement.

- 6 So the Tencteri stood aloof; the Bructeri were frightened off in the same way; and as all the others declined a quarrel not their own, the Ampsivarii found their way back again to the country of the
- 7 Usipi¹ and Tubantes. Driven out of these territories, they made first for the Chatti, then for the Cherusci, until at length, after long wandering on foreign soil, treated in turn as friends, mendicants, and foes, their whole youth was slaughtered, and those unfit for arms were distributed as booty.

57 During this same summer a great battle was fought between the Hermunduri² and the Chatti. Each tribe laid forcible claim to a river rich in salt³ which divided their territories. Besides their passion for settling everything by arms, they cherished a superstition that the locality was specially near to heaven:—

Battle between the Hermunduri and the Chatti.

- 2 *Nowhere, they pretended, did mortal prayer come closer to the ears of the Gods. It was through the divine bounty that the salt of their river and of their woods was produced; not, as in other countries, by the drying up of water which had overflowed from the sea, but by pouring it over piles of burning wood, whereby two opposing substances, fire and liquid, were fused into one.*⁴

- 3 Victory fell to the Hermunduri; a victory which was all the more disastrous to the Chatti that their threats against their enemies recoiled upon their own heads. For each side had devoted their antagonists to Mars and Mercurius in the event of victory

Victory of the Hermunduri.

¹ The Usipi or Usipetes had been driven across the Rhine by Caesar and seem to have dwelt after that on the banks of the Rhine and the Lippe.

² This people are mentioned in Germ. 41, 1 and 42, 1 as bordering on Rhaetia, between the Marcomani and the Chatti.

³ Several rivers in Germany compete

for the honour of identification with this stream. See F. and Nipp. What Tac. describes as a river can only have been salt springs.

⁴ Tac. follows both Varro and Pliny in imagining some marvellous method of obtaining salt from what seems only to have been a process of evaporation.

—a vow which consigns to destruction men and horses and every living thing.¹

Strange
fire in the
land of the
Ubii.

A sudden calamity now befell our allies the Ubii.² 4
A fire sprang out of the ground which devoured 5
houses, lands, and villages, and swept up to the
very walls of the newly founded colony. Nothing 6
availed to quench it: neither rain, nor river-water,
nor any other kind of liquid; till at last some of the
enraged rustics, finding all other remedies fail, took
up stones and cast them at the flames.³ As the
flames subsided, they went closer and closer up to
them, and beat them back, like wild beasts, with
sticks and other implements. Last of all, they tore 7
the clothes off their backs and threw them in: the
more worn and foul the clothes, the greater their effect
upon the flames.

Withering
and
reviving
of the
Ruminal
fig-tree.

In the same year it was accounted a prodigy that 58
the stem and branches of the Ruminal figtree⁴ in the
Comitium, which had sheltered the infants Romulus
and Remus eight hundred and thirty years before,
dried up and withered; but new shoots appeared and
the tree revived.

¹ The reading *viva* here is a conj. for the *victa* of Med.; it seems harsh to take the latter reading to mean 'every captured thing,' 'everything belonging to the conquered.' The occurrence of *victores* just before as the subject would naturally suggest *victa* as an antithesis.

² See i. 31, 3.

³ Nipp. sagely remarks that stone throwing might well put out a fire if only the stones could be thrown fast enough and in sufficient quantity. The

other methods of quenching the fire he admits to be fabulous; but heather fires on moors are regularly beaten out by means of long poles.

⁴ The 'Ruminal Fig-tree,' under which Romulus and Remus were suckled by the wolf on the Palatine Hill, had been miraculously transferred to the *comitium*, in the Forum, by the augur Attus Navius in the time of Tarquinius Priscus. The whole story is told by Pliny H. N. xv. 18, 77. He derives the word from *rumis*, a word signifying 'a teat.'

BOOK XIV.

A.D. 59. CONSULS GAIUS VIPSTANUS APRONIANUS
AND GAIUS FONTEIUS CAPITO.

- I NERO postponed no longer the crime which he had so long meditated. His hardihood had increased with his hold of Empire, and his passion for Poppaea grew more ardent every day; and as Poppaea had no hope of seeing Octavia divorced, and herself married to Nero, so long as Agrippina lived, she kept reproaching Nero and bantering him by turns, telling him that he was *a prince in leading strings, who had to do another's bidding; he was no Emperor: he was not even a free man. Else why this delay about her marriage? Had he fault to find with her beauty, or with her triumphal ancestry? With her fertility, or her devotion? Or was he afraid that if she became his wife, she would open his eyes to the outrages perpetrated on the Fathers, and to the popular wrath at his mother's greed and arrogance? If Agrippina could brook no daughter-in-law but one who was her son's enemy, let her return to the arms of Otho: nay, she would go to any spot on earth where she might hear of the insults heaped upon the Emperor, rather than have to see them, and be entangled in all his perils.*
- 6 Such an appeal, urged with tears and with all a wanton's arts, sank into the soul of Nero; and there was no one to counteract it. For while all desired the downfall of Agrippina's power, no one believed

Nero meditates his mother's death.

Reproaches of Poppaea.

that the son's hatred would steel his heart to the murder of his mother.

Horrible
story told
by Cluvius;

Cluvius¹ relates that Agrippina's desire to keep hold of power carried her so far that on several occasions at mid-day, when Nero was in his cups, flushed with feast and wine, she offered herself to him, beautifully attired, and prepared for incest; the company noted the lustful caresses and the endearments that boded nothing that was good: upon which Seneca, using a woman to defeat a woman's wiles, called in the freed-woman Acte, who being alarmed for herself, and jealous of Nero's good name, was to tell him that the infamy had been noised abroad through Agrippina's boasting of it, and that the soldiers would never tolerate an Emperor who was regardless of divine law.

other
versions of
the story.

Fabius Rusticus¹ asserts that the desire was not on Agrippina's part, but on Nero's: and that Acte cunningly diverted him from his purpose. Other writers, however, confirm the account of Cluvius, and tradition has inclined that way: whether it be that Agrippina did actually meditate a thing so monstrous, or that the idea of a new form of lust seemed more credible in one who, in her longing to gain power, had committed adultery with Lepidus² in her teens;³ had stooped, through a like ambition, to become the mistress of Pallas; and who, as her uncle's wife, was practised in all abominations.

Nero
resolves to
make away
with his
mother;

Nero accordingly⁴ avoided private meetings with

¹ On these authorities, see xiii. 20, 2 and 3, and n.

² This M. Lepidus had married Drusilla, Agrippina's sister, and had been put to death under Gaius as implicated in the rising of Lentulus Gaetulicus in A.D. 39.

³ This is an exaggeration. She had

been ten years married, and was over twenty-four years old at the time.

⁴ The *igitur* with which this chapter begins implies that Tacitus threw the blame on to the mother's side. But the manner in which this vile story is handled by Suet. and Dio, as well as the character of Agrippina herself,

his mother, and commended her for seeking repose by retiring to her gardens, or to her country villas² at Tusculum or Antium. But at last, convinced that wherever she might be, she would be more than he could put up with, he resolved to make away with her. The only question was, Should it be by³ poison, or by the sword, or in some other way? At first, he resolved on poison : but now that Britannicus had died in that manner, it would be impossible to ascribe the event to chance if the poison were administered at the imperial table ; it would be no easy thing to tamper with the attendants of one whose familiarity with crime kept her on the alert against plots ; and she had fortified her system by⁴ prophylactics. No secret method of slaying her with the sword could be devised ; and he was afraid that any one selected for so great a crime might refuse to obey the order.

but
hesitates
as to the
means.

At last an ingenious plan was proposed by the freedman Anicetus, commander of the fleet at Misenum. He had been Nero's attendant in boyhood ; and there was mutual hatred between him and Agrippina. This man suggested that a vessel might be so constructed as to collapse at one part when out at sea, and throw Agrippina unawares into the water :—

A plan
proposed
by
Anicetus

Nowhere, he urged, was there such room for accidents as at sea. If Agrippina lost her life by shipwreck, who would be so unreasonable as to attribute to crime the

suggest that the whole was the infamous concoction of a Court faction to whom no infamies were impossible, devised for the purpose of giving a finishing blow to the waning influence of Agrippina. The intervention of Acte implies as much : she was suborned to announce the existence of a rumour, not to protest against a crime. The atmosphere of

gross and unverified suspicion which may pervade a corrupt court is well illustrated by the memoirs of Elizabeth Charlotte, Princess Palatine, wife of Monsieur, the younger brother of Louis XIV., in which she indulges in the foulest and most reckless charges against every one who crosses her path.

offences of the winds and waves? The Emperor could set up¹ temples and altars to her after her death, and adopt all other modes of exhibiting his affection.

is approved
by Nero;

This cunning plan approved itself to Nero; it was 4
favoured also by the time of year, as Nero used to
go to Baiae for the Quinquatria.² So he enticed 2
Agrippina thither, declaring that, *A mother's temper
must be borne with; or that, He must curb his own:*
hoping thus to encourage rumours of a reconcili-
ation, and to induce Agrippina, with a woman's
readiness to believe what she desires, to welcome
them.

Nero
welcomes
Agrippina
on her
landing,

On her arrival by sea from Antium, he went down 3
to the shore to meet her, took her by the hand,
embraced her, and conducted her to Bauli, a villa 4
which stands close to the sea on a bay between the
point of Misenum and the lake of Baiae.³ Along 5
with other vessels, there was one more handsomely
equipped than the rest, as if in this too Nero was
paying honour to his mother; for she had been used
to sail in a trireme, with marines⁴ for oarsmen.

has her
brought to
Baiae,

That the deed might be done under cover of night, 6
Nero invited her to dinner. Some information as to
the plot, it seems, had reached her; and being in
doubt whether to believe it or not, she made her way
to Baiae in a litter.⁵ There her fears were allayed by 7

¹ The word *additurum* is here used as a term of honour, as in the passages quoted by Nipp. Somewhat similar is ii. 65, 4, *foederi convivium adicit*. The word has sometimes the opposite meaning of 'a scourge': *nec Teucris addita Iuno* (Virg. *Æn.* vi., 90), and *nequitiae additus custos* (Hor. *Od.* iii. 4, 79).

² This feast of Minerva was held from the 19th to the 23rd of March.

³ This must mean the innermost portion of the bay, between Baiae and Puteoli, not the inner Lucrine lake. See F.

⁴ The marines (*classarii*) seem to have been of a higher rank than the ordinary seamen.

⁵ The villa of the orator Hortensius, stood between Misenum and Baiae. On Agrippina's arrival there, a vessel was placed at her disposal, the original intention being that, on accepting Nero's invitation to dinner, she was to proceed to Baiae in that vessel. Alarmed, however, by the warning of approaching treachery, she declined the boat, and made her way to Baiae in a litter.

Nero's caresses; he received her graciously, placed
 8 her above himself at table, and talked much with her; sometimes in a tone of boyish playfulness, sometimes gravely, as though making serious communications to her. The banquet was prolonged to a late hour; he ushered her out when she departed, and clung closely to her, eye to eye, and breast to breast—either by way of adding the finishing touch to his hypocrisy, or because even that ferocious soul lingered over the last look of a mother so soon to die.

and entertains her affectionately.

5 The night was bright with stars and the sea unruffled, as though the Gods had provided for the
 2 exposure of the crime. Agrippina was accompanied by two of her intimate friends, Crepereius Gallus and Acerronia. The former was standing near the helm, the latter was bending over the feet of Agrippina as she reclined upon a couch, talking happily to her of the change in her son's mood, and her own restoration to favour, when at a given signal, before the ship had gone very far, down came the canopy, which had been heavily weighted with lead, crushing
 3 Crepereius and killing him on the spot. Agrippina and Acerronia were saved by the projecting sides of the couch, which were strong enough to resist the
 4 weight falling on it; the ship failed to go to pieces; while amid the general confusion the majority, who knew nothing, interfered with those who were in the secret.

She embarks on the prepared ship;

the scheme fails,

The sailors then attempted to upset the vessel by
 5 leaning over to one side; but in the scurry of the moment they failed to act together, some throwing

Nero's attentions and blandishments during the evening so entirely removed her suspicions that she raised no objection to the programme devised for her

return, and went on board the ship in a state of happiness and thankfulness at the renewal of kindly relations with her son,

their weight the wrong way, and so giving Agrippina the chance of falling gently into the water. Acerronia 6
 and Agrippina imprudently called out that she was Agrippina, crying
 escapes by *Help! Help! save the mother of the Emperor!* where-
 swimming. upon she was despatched by poles and oars and any
 naval weapons that came handy. Agrippina held 7
 her tongue, and thus escaping recognition, swam off,
 with nothing worse than a bruised shoulder: then
 falling in with some fishing boats, she was conveyed
 to the Lucrine lake¹ and thence to her own villa.²

She
 acquaints
 Nero with
 her escape,

6 She there pondered over the meaning of Nero's
 treacherous letter of invitation, and of the attentions
 paid to her: how the ship had broken down close
 to the shore, under no stress of wind, without striking
 on a rock, and only in its upper part, just as any
 machine on land might have done; how Acerronia
 had been killed, and she herself injured. Per-
 ceiving that her only protection against the plot
 would be to ignore it, she despatched her freedman
 Agerinus to inform her son that *by the mercy of the
 Gods, and his own happy star, she had escaped from
 a serious accident; and to beg him, however much
 alarmed he might be at his mother's danger, not to trouble*

¹ The Lucrine Lake, now reduced to the dimensions of a pool, had been made into a splendid inner harbour by Agrippa to form a base of operations against Sextus Pompeius in Sicily. It was connected with the outer bay by a well-built canal; while another canal connected it with the mysterious Lake Avernus within. The splendour of this 'Julian Harbour' has been celebrated by Virgil in one of his finest passages:—
*Cur memorem portus Lucrinoque addita
 claustra,
 Atque indignatum magnis stridoribus
 aequor,
 Iulia qua ponto longe sonat unda refuso,
 Tyrrhenumque fretis immittitur aestus
 Avernis?* (Geo. ii. 161-4.)

² This must refer to the villa at Bauli where she was to sleep; but a difficulty has been found in the fact that if she landed at the Lucrine Lake she would have to pass Baiae, possibly even Nero's villa, on the road to Bauli. But we know nothing of a villa of Agrippina's on the Lucrine Lake; the fact of her going to Bauli at all is against the supposition; and wherever it might be convenient for her to land, she would naturally go back to the villa where all was in readiness for her. The fact also that she at once sent her freedman Agerinus to inform Nero of the accident is proof that she had no intention of concealing her whereabouts.

himself just yet to come and see her: for the moment she had need of rest.

Meanwhile, assuming an air of security, she salved her wound, and applied restoratives; she ordered search to be made for Acerronia's will, and seals to be affixed to her effects—the one thing in which she did not dissemble.

and secures
the will of
Acerronia.

7 Nero was waiting for news of the accomplishment of the crime when word was brought to him that Agrippina had escaped with a slight injury, but that the danger had come too near to leave her in
2 any doubt as to its author. Half dead with terror, he kept repeating that, *She might be coming at any moment in haste for vengeance: she might arm her slaves, or inflame the soldiery: or would she appear before the Senate and the people to denounce him for the shipwreck, the wound, and the killing of her friends? How could he help himself? Had Burrus or Seneca anything to suggest?*¹ For he had summoned them both out of bed: whether they had any previous knowledge of the plot is uncertain.² Neither of them
3 spoke for a while. Attempts to dissuade Nero might be useless: possibly they thought it had come to this,

Consternation of
Nero;

he summons
Burrus and
Seneca for
consultation.

¹ In this difficult and uncertain passage I follow the reading given in F., placing a pause after the word *obiciendo*, and making *sive . . . obiciendo* depend upon *iam adfore*. This involves no change in Med. beyond reading *quos expergens* instead of *expergens quos*. The alternatives *sive-vel-sive* are given rapidly, as they presented themselves successively to the mind of Nero, the idea of instantaneous action on the part of Agrippina (*iam adfore*) fading off into other methods open to her for which time would be needed. In this way the sharp question *Quod contra subsidium sibi?* has its full dramatic force; corresponding exactly to the next clause, *nisi quid Burrus et Seneca*: the abruptness of the construction answering to

the agitation of the moment. To substitute *expedirent quos* (or with Halm. *experiens*) for the *expergens* of Med. would be very dull: *expergens* is in entire keeping with the idea of sudden dismay which dominates the passage. Nero pulled Burrus and Seneca out of their beds to decide at once what was to be done.

² Here again there is no necessity to change the *ignaros* of Med. into *gnaros*, with F. and other edd. There was no doubt that Seneca and Burrus were cognisant of the latest phase of the affair, and of Agrippina's escape; what was doubtful was whether or not they had known of the preparations made for her destruction.

that his life depended upon his being beforehand with Agrippina.

Seneca at last had the courage to look at Burrus, 4 and ask, *Should the soldiers be ordered to kill her?* Burrus replied that *the Praetorians were devoted*¹ 5 *to the whole house of the Caesars; they cherished the memory of Germanicus, and would do no act of violence against any child of his. Let Anicetus carry through what he had promised.*

Anicetus undertakes to complete the murder.

Without a moment's hesitation Anicetus asked 6 leave to complete the crime; on hearing which words Nero declared that, *That was his first real day of Empire; and he had to thank his own freedman for the boon. Let him be off at once, taking men who would do what they were told.*

Trick devised by Nero to inculpate Agrippina.

Being now informed that Agerinus had arrived 7 with a message from Agrippina, Nero had the face to get up a stage-scene on which to found an accusation against her. Throwing down a sword between the man's legs as he was delivering his message, he ordered him into chains as though caught in a criminal attempt: he could thus concoct a story that his mother had sought his life, and that she had made away with herself out of shame at being detected.

Excited crowds flock to the scene of the accident.

Meanwhile the news of Agrippina's danger and 8 the supposed accident had got abroad; every one, as he heard of it, ran down to the shore. Some 2 clambered on to the jetties, others on to the nearest boats; some waded out as far as their stature permitted: some flung out their arms: the whole shore

¹ The word *obstrictos* does not refer to the military oath of allegiance. It refers to the personal attachment of the soldiers to Germanicus and his family

which is brought out so strongly in Books i. and ii. See esp. ii. 76, 4 (*Apud quos penitus infixus in Caesares amor praevaleret*).

rang with prayers, shouts and lamentations, every one asking questions, none knowing what to answer. A great multitude came up with torches; on being assured of Agrippina's safety, they were setting out to offer their congratulations when they were dispersed by an armed and menacing force which appeared upon the scene.

- 3 Anicetus posted guards round Agrippina's villa. He then broke open the door, and hurried off such of the slaves as he met on his way to the door of her bed-chamber. Here a few were standing who had
- 4 not been frightened away with the rest. Inside there was a dim light, and a single female attendant. Agrippina was becoming more uneasy every moment at receiving no message from her son: even Agerinus had not returned:—*Had all been going well, she thought, things would have worn another face: the solitude, the sudden uproar, betokened some dire peril.* Then
- 5 the maid took herself off: *What?* she cried, *art thou too deserting me?* Hardly had she spoken when her eyes fell upon Anicetus, with whom were Herculeius, a Trierarch, and Obaritus, a Centurion of marines. *If he had come to visit her, she said, he might take back word that she had recovered; but if it were to commit a crime, she would not believe it of her son: he would never have ordered the murder of his mother.*

Anicetus
breaks into
Agrip-
pina's
villa;

she is
brutally
put to
death.

- 6 The assassins closed round the bed. The first blow came from the Trierarch, who struck her on the head with a bludgeon; and when the Centurion drew his sword for a death-stroke, *Strike me here!* she cried, thrusting out her womb:¹ and so perished, under a multitude of blows.

¹ Dio makes Agrippina say *παίε ταύτην ὅτι Νέρωνα ἔτεκεν* (lxi. 13, 5). These superfluous words 'because it gave birth

to Nero' were inserted first as a gloss, and then found their way in a Latinised form into the text of Tac. in many early

The body
burnt
without
ceremony.

So far all accounts agree. Some writers assert 9
that Nero looked at his mother's dead body, and
commended her beauty; but this is denied by others.
The body was burnt the same night, on a dining 2
couch, with scanty ceremony. No mound, no en-
closure, marked the spot as long as Nero reigned;
but afterwards the members of Agrippina's household 3
raised a low tumulus by the side of the road to
Misenum, on the eminence from which the Dictator
Caesar's villa looks out upon the bay below.

Suicide
of a
freedman.

After the pyre had been lit, one of Agrippina's 4
freedmen called Mnester ran himself through with a
sword; either out of affection for his patroness, or
because he feared for his own life.

Agrippina had for many years expected an end of 5
this kind; but she had made light of it. For when
she consulted the Chaldaeans about Nero, their reply
was that, *He would become Emperor, and slay his mother.*
—*Let him slay me*, was her word, *if only he become*
Emperor.

Nero's
horror at
the deed
when done.

Not until the deed was done did Caesar recog- 10
nise its enormity. The rest of the night he passed
partly in silent stupor; at other times he would
leap up in terror, waiting vacantly for the day, as
if it were to be his last. What first gave him con- 2
fidence were the compliments of the Centurions
and the Tribunes, who at the prompting of Burrus
seized him by the hand, and congratulated him on
his escape from the unlooked-for danger so wickedly
contrived for him by his mother. His friends flocked 3
to the temples; the towns of Campania followed

Congratu-
lations of
his guard
and Cam-
panian
towns.

MSS. and editions. But Tacitus would not have been Tacitus had he been capable of spoiling the end of this powerful narrative by so commonplace

a commentary. Never does he insult the intelligence of his readers by one word of superfluous explanation.

the example, and testified their joy by sacrifices and deputations.

⁴ Nero himself on the contrary affected grief, and as though distressed at his own escape, bewailed
⁵ his mother's death. But places cannot change their features as easily as men their faces; and as the grim aspect of that sea and shore was ever before his eyes—and some fancied that they could hear trumpet-blasts on the hills above, and lamentations over his mother's grave—he moved on to Neapolis; whence he sent a despatch to the Senate informing them, in brief, that an assassin Agerinus, one of Agrippina's favourite freedmen, had been discovered with arms on his person, and that she herself, conscious of having plotted the crime, had paid the penalty with her life. To this he added charges of old standing:—

He moves to Naples and writes to the Senate.

II *She had aimed at being his colleague in the Empire,¹ at making the Praetorian cohorts swear allegiance to a woman, and at subjecting the Senate and the people to a like ignominy: disappointed of that hope, she had wreaked her wrath upon the soldiers, the Fathers and the populace, opposing donatives and distributions, and plotting the deaths of illustrious men; he had with difficulty prevented her from bursting into the Senate-house, and giving answers to foreign nations.*

He rakes up charges against his mother,

He animadverted also indirectly upon the reign of Claudius, attributing all its scandals to his mother, and declaring that her death was a public blessing.

and repeats the ship-wreck story.

¹ As F. points out, it is clear that though the terms *consors* or *particeps imperii*; *collega imperii*; *consors tribuniciae potestatis* (i. 3, 3), etc., are used in a more or less vague sense of successors-designate to the empire, Agrippina had aimed at something more than this. She had aspired to

share the sovereignty with Nero in a more formal and explicit manner, and had desired the soldiers to take a special oath of allegiance to herself. Her proud spirit was not to be satisfied with possessing power merely through her influence over her son. She must exercise it openly in her own name.

He even¹ told the tale of the shipwreck; though 3
 who could be so dull of wit as to believe that that
 had happened by chance? Or that a shipwrecked
 woman could have sent a single man, armed with a
 sword, to force his way through the imperial fleets
 and body-guards? And so it was no longer Nero, 4
 whose monstrosities were beyond all censure, that
 public talk condemned, but Seneca: for it was he who
 composed this damning speech.²

Seneca gets
 the blame.

Votes of
 joy and
 congratulation.

And yet there was a marvellous eagerness among 12
 the leading senators to propose that thanksgivings
 should be offered at all shrines, and annual games held
 during the Quinquatria, when the plot was discovered;
 that a golden image of Minerva should be set up in the
 Senate-house, with a statue of the Emperor beside
 it; and that Agrippina's birthday should be ranked
 among days of evil omen. On this occasion Thræsea 2
 Paetus, who had been wont to let former flatteries
 pass in silence, or with a bare assent, walked out of
 the Senate-house: thus creating a cause of danger
 to himself without making a beginning of liberty for
 others.³

Vain
 prodigies.

There occurred also a number of prodigies; but 3
 nothing came of them. One woman was delivered of
 a snake; another was killed by a thunder-bolt while
 in her husband's arms; the sun was suddenly dark- 4
 ened, and all the fourteen regions of the city were
 struck by lightning. But so little were these portents 5

¹ The word *namque* here refers back to *publica fortuna*. 'Her death had been providential; he even went the length (*namque et*) of attributing the accident at sea to the care of the Gods for Rome.'

² *i.e.* these pretences were so hollow, and people had so entirely given up Nero 'as a lost soul,' that they now

turned their wrath against Seneca for putting such miserable excuses into Nero's mouth.

³ See above on xiii. 49, 1. Editors discover a note of censure in these remarks; but for a consular to walk out as a protest on such an occasion was a highly offensive act and showed great moral courage.

due to divine providence that Nero lived to carry on his reign and his crimes for a space of many years.¹

6 In order to aggravate the feeling against his mother, and to show that he had been softened by her removal, Nero recalled from exile two illustrious ladies, Junia and Calpurnia, and two men of Praetorian rank—Valerius Capito and Licinius Gabolus²—who had
7 been sent into banishment by Agrippina. He permitted also the ashes of Lollia Paulina to be brought home, and a tomb to be raised to her; and he pardoned Iturius and Calvisius,³ two men whom he
8 had himself lately relegated.⁴ Silana also had been the victim of Agrippina's animosity; but she was now dead, and after Agrippina's influence or rancour had abated she had been permitted to return to Tarentum from her distant place of exile.

Exiles recalled.

3 Nero still kept dallying among the towns of Campania. He was uneasy about his entrance into the city:—*Would the Senate be obsequious? would he be welcomed by the people?* But his advisers of the baser sort—and what Court ever so abounded in that tribe?—assured him that the people hated the name of Agrippina, and that their love for him had been
2 quickened by her death; craving permission to precede him, they urged him to go boldly in, and present himself for public veneration.

Fears of Nero; he ventures to enter Rome,

¹ Tacitus writes as if he were disappointed, almost irritated, that such prodigies should have been allowed, by the carelessness of the Gods (*adeo sine cura Deum*), to pass without their natural and proper result. Similarly in xvi. 33, 1 he speaks almost with bitterness of the indifference with which the Gods regard examples of good and evil conduct. F. interprets the present passage somewhat differently, as though

Tac. merely meant to assert that after all these things were not true portents, had no divine significance.

² For the banishment of Junia, see xii. 8, 1; for that of Calpurnia xii. 22, 3. Nothing is known of Valerius Capito or Licinius Gabolus. For Lollia Paulina's death, see xii. 22, 4.

³ Both banished along with Silana, xiii. 22, 3.

⁴ For *relegatio* see n. on iii. 17, 8.

All turned out even more favourably than had been promised. The tribes poured out to meet him; the Senate appeared in festal attire; there were crowds of women and children, arranged according to age and sex; tiers of seats were erected along his route, as for a triumphal show. Elated by this conquest over the servile city, Nero proceeded to the Capitol, presented his thanks, and then plunged into all the excesses which his regard for his mother, bad as she was, had hitherto in some sort held in check.

Nero had long entertained a desire to drive in a chariot race, and a no less disreputable fancy to sing to the lyre upon the stage. *Chariot-racing*,¹ he would say, *had been an ancient diversion for kings and generals; it had been extolled by poets, and practised in honour of the Gods. Song was sacred to Apollo: and that famous God of prophecy was represented in a musician's dress, not only in Greek cities, but in Roman temples also.*

There was now no holding him back; and Seneca and Burrus thought it better to give way on one of the two points, to prevent his insisting upon both. A space was enclosed in the Vatican Valley,² in which he was to drive a chariot before a select company. But soon the public were invited, and applauded lustily; for the mob delights in pleasures, and rejoices to see its rulers of the same mind. But this publicity of shame brought with it no satiety, as was hoped; it only fanned the flame: and thinking to lessen his own disgrace by besmirching others, Nero brought upon

¹ The reading here followed (*concertare equis*) is a brilliant if not certain emendation by Halm of Med.'s, *cum celaret qs.* A correction *cenaret* by some later hand has led edd. into supposing that the words refer to Nero's playing the *cithara* during or after dinner; but

the words which follow, *vatum laudibus celebre*, etc., show that the first part of the sentence must refer to chariot-eering.

² Nero's Circus, begun by Gaius near the present *Vatican*.

and is favourably received.

He plunges into new excesses.

His passion for charioteering.

He begins charioteering in private; the public soon admitted.

the stage men sprung from noble families whose poverty left them open to be bought. These persons being now dead, I deem it due to their ancestors not to give their names; for their disgrace is shared by the man who gave money to make them offend, rather than to keep them from offending.¹ Roman Knights also of good position were constrained by lavish gifts to proffer their services for the arena:² only when the pay comes from one who can command, it bears the character of compulsion.

15 Not wishing, however, as yet to disgrace himself upon a public stage, Nero instituted games called 'Juvenalia,'³ for which all kinds of persons gave in their names. Neither birth, nor age, nor official rank hindered any one from acting in Greek or Latin plays, including songs and gestures of an unseemly kind; even women of high station had to study shameful parts.⁴ Then in the grove which Augustus had planted round his naval pond⁵ booths and drinking shops were put up in which every stimulus to evil passion was exposed for sale; here sums of money were distributed, which respectable persons were forced to spend, and the vicious gloried in expending.⁶

He forces nobles, and even women, on to the stage.

Incitements offered to immorality.

¹ Note here the remarkable ellipse of the idea 'as he ought to have done.'

² The statement of Suet. that Nero placed on the gladiatorial arena no less than 400 Senators and 600 knights is quite incredible. Lips. reduces the number to 40 and 60, reading *quadragenos senatores sexagenosque equites*—a conj. approved by Gibbon, chap. 4, note 36.

³ Dio says that the original occasion of these festivities was to celebrate the first cutting of the beard (lxi. 19, 1), as was commonly done in Rome. Nero confined himself to the semi-privacy of these games until A.D. 64 (xv. 33, 1), when for the first time he appeared on a public stage at Naples. It was noted as a serious offence in Thræsea that he

absented himself from the *Juvenalia* (xvi. 21, 1).

⁴ Suet. says that at these games Nero *senes quoque consulares anusque matronas recepit ad lusum* (Nero, 11).

⁵ This is the scene of the *Naumachia* alluded to in xii. 56, 1.

⁶ Evidently small sums of money were distributed among the populace to be expended on the spot. Suet. gives a fabulous account of the prodigality with which articles of value were distributed among the mob on such occasions:—*Sparsa et populo missilia omnium rerum per omnes dies: singula quotidie millia avium cuiusque generis, multiplex penus, tesseræ frumentariæ, vestis, aurum, argentum, gemmæ, margaritæ, tabulæ pictæ, mancipia,*

Hence an outburst of unblushing immorality; corrupt 4
as morals had become, never were such facilities for
vice afforded as in those vile assemblages.¹ It is hard 5
to maintain purity amid the best surroundings: but
what room for shame or modesty or decency could
be left in such a Saturnalia of debauch?

Last of all,² Nero presented himself upon the stage; 6
attuning his lyre with great care, and giving the note
to the musicians beside him.³ A cohort of soldiers, 7
with Centurions and Tribunes, was in attendance;
Burrus also was there, distressed, but yet applauding.
It was then first that a body of Roman Knights was 8

iumenta atque etiam mansuctae ferae.
And the list actually closes thus: *novissime naves, insulae, agri* (Suet. Nero, 12). Dio supplies the key to the meaning of the word *missilia* above: they were a kind of raffle-tickets scrambled for by the mob (lxi. 18).

¹ The general meaning of this strange Tacitean phrase (*nec ulla moribus olim corruptis plus libidinum circumdedit quam ista colluvies*) seems clear enough, though I cannot find a satisfactory explanation in any commentary. *Circumdedit* seems to refer to the atmosphere, 'the surroundings,' so favourable to vice amid which the corrupt morals of the time here found themselves, 'Roman morals had long been corrupt; but never were there surroundings or opportunities so favourable to vicious indulgence as those afforded in these promiscuous assemblages.' The words *artibus honestis* in the next sentence are in antithesis to *plus libidinum circumdedit*, the words being used in their widest moral sense. 'However excellent the surroundings of a man's life may be, however innocent and honourable his occupations and pursuits, it is hard for him to maintain virtue; how could it be preserved in a scene where every form of vice was bidding for his patronage?' For *artes honestae*, see *Introd.* p. lxi.

² Halm follows Med. in reading *postremum*; but it appears that *postremus* is really a correction by the first hand (F.²). The meaning is the same with either reading; it brings out the peculiarly Tacitean, and indeed

Roman, view, that Nero's appearing on the stage was his last and crowning enormity. The passage, thus read, is an exact counterpart of the well-known lines of Juvenal in which he regards the climax of Nero's depravity as having been reached when he wrote an Epic upon Troy, and sang upon the stage: *In scena numquam cantavit Orestes = Troica non scripsit* (viii. 220-1). And nothing can be finer than the magnificent scorn with which Juvenal describes the Roman noble as disgracing himself on the stage or in the arena (ib. 183-210).

³ The word *phonascis* here is a very probable conj. suggested by a passage in Suet. (Nero 25), who says that Nero took such care of his voice that *neque quicquam serio iocove egerit nisi adstante phonasco, qui moneret parceret arteriis, ac sudarium ad os applicaret*. Thus it appears that the *phonascus* was a throat specialist, who instructed both in the use of the voice and in the treatment of it. Suet. describes the extraordinary methods pursued by these artists (*generis eius artifices*) to strengthen or clarify the voice (Nero 20). No satisfactory explanation has been given of the Med. reading *facies*, which may possibly itself be a corruption of *phonascis*. Persius satirises the care which dandy reciters expended on their voices, Sat. 1, 15-18:—

Scilicet haec populo. . .

Sede leges celsa, liquido cum plasmate guttur = Mobile collucris.

And Juv. speaks of the *vocem iucundam* of Statius (Sat. 7, 82).

formed under the name of 'Augustiani.' These men, conspicuous for their youth and strength, some being naturally wanton, others hoping to rise to influence thereby, would keep up a din of applause for whole days and nights, bestowing divine appellations upon Nero's voice and person, and conducting themselves as if they were high and mighty personages, engaged upon some solemn duty.¹

Institution
of the
'Augustiani.'

Not satisfied, however, with the fame of his theatrical accomplishments, Nero affected² a taste for poetry also, gathering round him persons with some as yet undistinguished poetic faculty. These men would sit down with him after dinner, and string together verses which they had either brought with them, or concocted on the spot; or they would fill up gaps in Nero's own slip-shod productions, as appears from the character of the lines themselves, which have neither the freshness nor the unity of original compositions. He would give some of his time also after a feast to the teachers of philosophy, and enjoy³ their wrangles over contradictory

Nero
affects
poetry

and
philosophy

¹ The art of organising artificial applause was never carried to greater lengths than by Nero; its full development was only reached by degrees. See xvi. 4, 4 and 5, 1. According to Suet. (Nero 20) and Dio (lxi. 20) the corps of 'Augustians' consisted ultimately of no less than 5,000 burly youths—most of them from Egypt—who were organised for this special purpose, being trained to use various kinds and degrees of applaudive sounds ('*bombos*' et '*imbrices*' et '*testas*' vocabant). These *claqueurs* acted in concert at the command of a leader; there were soldiers or others by who would compel the too listless spectator to join in the plaudits, or maltreat him if he declined (see xvi. 4, 4 and 5, 1).

² F. translates 'he made pretence of a taste for poetry': but the word *adfectare* does not usually carry with it the sense of 'affectation,' nor does the context require that meaning. It

is undoubted that Nero had some taste for poetry; and though Tacitus depreciates his poetical powers, he goes on to say that he took a great deal of trouble in cultivating them. As to the productions themselves, Suet. flatly contradicts what is here said of them. He had seen copies of Nero's verses, he tells us, written in Nero's own hand, the deletions and insertions of which made it plain that they were not *translatos aut dictante aliquo exceptos, sed plane quasi a cogitante atque generante exaratos* (Nero 52). Henderson's verdict is that 'Nero's artistic skill was, it seems, not a very mean skill. His poetry, music, and acting were all at least respectable. . . . Nero's artistic enthusiasms did little actual harm either to Rome or to the Empire, though in the West men fretted at their unworthiness' (p. 132).

³ I prefer with Nipp. to omit the *que* after *ut*. F.'s explanation (after

propositions. Nor were there wanting persons who loved to show off their own sour faces as part of the entertainment of the Court.¹

Riot at
Pompeii.

About this time a bloody conflict arose, out of a small beginning, between the inhabitants of Nuceria² and those of Pompeii at a gladiatorial show held by Livineius Regulus, whose expulsion from the Senate I have recorded.³ With a license common in provincial towns, the combatants assailed each other with insults, then with stones, and at last with swords. The victory lay with the people of Pompeii, where the show was being held. Many of the Nucerians were carried into the city maimed and wounded; many were the deaths lamented by parents or by children. The Emperor charged the Senate to take cognisance of the affair; the Senate remitted it to the Consuls,⁴ who reported back again to the Fathers; whereupon the people of Pompeii were forbidden to hold a similar entertainment again for ten years, and certain illegal colleges which they had formed were dissolved. Livineius and the other promoters of the disturbance were punished with exile.

Accusa-
tions by the
people of
Cyrene.

Pedius Blaesus was expelled from the Senate, on the accusation of the people of Cyrene,⁵ for rifling the

Spengel) of taking *que* with *post epulas* is far-fetched and unsatisfactory.

¹ This is intended as a gibe at the would-be philosophers who danced attendance on the Court while aping the dress and manners of Stoics. Juvenal is bitter on the baseness of the courtier-Stoic Egnatius in accusing his fellow-philosopher Soranus: *Stoicus occidit Baream, delator amicum*, Sat. iii. 116). See the story as given in xvi. 32, 2-3.

² A colony to the E. of Pompeii, now *Nocera*.

³ This must have been told in the lost books.

⁴ The procedure in this case does

not seem to come under the arrangement laid down by Nero in his opening speech (xiii. 4, 3), by which cases from Italy were to go first before the Consuls, and through them obtain access to the Senate. That rule was followed in the case of the petitions from Putcoli (xiii. 48), when C. Cassius was sent down by the Senate as Special Commissioner to deal with the trouble on the spot. In the present instance the conflict between the cities was probably regarded as so serious a matter that it had to be referred directly to the Emperor himself.

⁵ Cyrene and Crete were at this time joined together as one Senatorial Pro-

treasury of Aesculapius, and for being guilty of bribery and corruption in raising the military levy.

2 The same people brought an accusation against Acilius Strabo, who had been sent by Claudius with praetorian powers¹ to delimit certain territories which had formed part of King Apion's ancestral² domains, and had been bequeathed with the rest of his kingdom to the Roman people. These territories had been appropriated by the neighbouring landowners, who now claimed, as a matter of right and law, what they had so long occupied by fraud and usurpation.

3 Strabo's decision being adverse to their claims, he had become unpopular; the Senate declared that they knew nothing of the instructions given by Claudius, and that the Emperor's opinion must be

4 taken. Nero approved of Strabo's award; but wrote nevertheless that he would deal generously with the allies, and permit the occupation to continue.³

Decision
of the
Emperor.

9 Then came the deaths of two illustrious men— Domitius Afer⁴ and Marcus Servilius.⁵ Both had held high office; both were distinguished for their eloquence. The former was an able advocate; the latter, after long practice in the Courts, became famous for his History of Rome, and for his refined

Deaths of
Domitius
Afer and
Marcus
Servilius.

vince. Cyrene had been left to the Roman people by its last king Ptolemaeus Apion in B.C. 96; but as the province was not organised until B.C. 74, encroachments upon the state domains may have begun during that interval.

¹ The words may equally well mean that Strabo, having held the praetorship, was of praetorian rank.

² Reading *avitos*, a pretty certain correction adopted by most edd. for the weak *Med.*, reading *habitos*. The same mistake between these two words occurs xi. 35, 2, where see n.; also in xiii. 34, 3 and 56, 1.

³ A good instance of the manner in which the emperor might temper a

harsh though doubtless strictly legal decision arrived at by the Senate.

⁴ We have already heard of Domitius Afer as an accuser in iv. 52, 1 and 66, 1. Quintilian speaks of his oratory in the highest terms (x. 1, 118); but Tacitus could not forgive him for being a delator, and a flatterer of Gaius.

⁵ This M. Servilius Nonianus was cos. A.D. 35. What portion of history he wrote is not known; Plin. says that Claudius attended one of his recitals (Epp. i. 13, 3). The elder Pliny calls him *princeps civitatis* (H. N. xxviii, 2, 5, 29); and Quint. calls him *vir elati ingenii*, his only fault being a want of conciseness (x. 1, 102).

mode of living—rendered all the more notable by the fact that while equal to Domitius in ability, he bore no resemblance to him in character.

A.D. 60. CONSULS NERO CAESAR IV AND CORNELIUS
COSSUS LENTULUS.

Institution
of Greek
games;

In this year a quinquennial contest¹ was instituted at Rome after the model of the Greek games, which, like all new things, called forth various comments.

hotly
condemned
by some,

Some recalled how *Gnaeus Pompeius had been censured by his elders for building a permanent theatre.*² *Up to his time, seats and stage had been put up for the occasion, when plays were acted; in earlier times, people had witnessed the games standing, for fear that, if provided with seats, they might pass whole days of idleness in the theatre.*³ *Games ought to be conducted as of old, when the Praetors presided, with no compulsion on anyone to compete. Our fathers' manners, disused by degrees, were now being entirely thrown over by a license imported from abroad, whereby everything that was corrupt and*

¹ The festival was called the *Neronia*; and the novelty consisted in its combining for the first time the three divisions of *musicum*, *gymnicum*, *equestre* (Suet. Nero 12), the contests in *musicum* comprising poetry and eloquence as well. In xvi. 4, 1 it is called *quinquennale lustrum*, showing that it was intended to correspond to the Roman *lustrum* of 5 years.

² Pompey's theatre was built in B.C. 55 in the Campus Martius, the first attempt at a permanent theatre in B.C. 155 having been destroyed by order of the Senate. This famous theatre is mentioned iii. 23, 1 and 72, 4; vi. 45, 3; and xiii. 54, 4.

³ It seems scarcely necessary to follow Lips. and other edd. (including F.²) in changing the reading of Med. *quotiens praetor sederet* into *quotiens praetores ederent*. The objectors were recalling the good old times when games were only

held annually, under the presidency of the praetor (see Juv. xi. 193), instead of frequently, as was now the custom, under specially chosen consuls. Suet. emphasises this point: *toti certamini praeposuit consulares sorte, sede praetorum* (Nero 12).

This is the first objection raised. The second is, that compulsion has been resorted to (§ 4); the third, that the effeminate exercises of the Greek Gymnasium had been introduced (§ 5), in place of the old martial Roman exercises, and apparently with demoralising consequences. Horace similarly declaims against the *Graecus trochus* (Od. iii. 24, 57). The fourth and final objection (§ 7) is to the introduction of singing contests, with the corruption of morals which these Roman purists regarded as their inevitable accompaniment.

5 *corrupting was exhibited within the city. These foreign
pursuits were ruining our young men, who were giving
themselves up to the indolent and shameful practices of the
gymnasium. In this the Emperor and the Senate had
led the way, having not only given a free rein to vice,
but even compelled Roman nobles, in the name of oratory
6 and poetry, to degrade themselves upon the stage. What
was left for them but to strip themselves naked, put on
boxing gloves, and practise fighting thus armed instead
7 of with the weapons of a soldier? Would the cause of
justice gain, would the decuries of knights fulfil better
their high functions as jurymen by giving learned attention
8 to voluptuous and indecorous music? Whole nights were
now given up to debauchery, that modesty might have no
time left to her, and that every reprobate might venture to
do amid a crowd, under cover of darkness, what he had
lusted to do by day.*

21 But the majority delighted in this license, though
putting forward respectable pretexts:—

2 *Our ancestors, they declared, were not averse to shows
and entertainments, so far as their means permitted, and
for that purpose they had introduced actors from Etruria,¹
and horse-racing from Thurii.² Since Achaia and Asia
had become ours, games had become more elaborate; and
yet during the two hundred years since the Triumph of
Lucius Mummius,³ who was the first to exhibit shows of
that kind in the city, no Roman of good birth had ever
3 demeaned himself by playing on the stage. Economy also
would be promoted by the erection of a permanent theatre,
instead of building and demolishing a new theatre at vast
4 expense every year. If the State bore the charge, the*

they are
defended
by others.

¹ In B.C. 341; see Livy vii. 2.

² Livy says horse-racing was introduced from Etruria in the reign of Tarquinius Priscus (i. 35, 10); and Thurii was not founded until B.C. 443.

³ The triumph of L. Mummius over Corinth was in B.C. 145, just 205 years before the present date.

magistrates would not exhaust their means as much as formerly; nor would the people have any excuse for calling upon them to provide Greek contests. The victories won in oratory and poetry would supply a stimulus to men's minds; nor could it be injurious to any juror to derive legitimate enjoyment from listening to works of merit. It was to merriment, rather than to debauchery, that the few evenings of the quinquennial festival were devoted; and that amid a blaze of light which permitted no improprieties to pass unnoticed.

The games pass off quietly.

And indeed the festival passed off without any notable scandal. There was no outbreak of partisan feeling among the populace; for though the pantomimic actors were again allowed upon the stage,¹ they were debarred from the sacred contests.² The prize for eloquence was not awarded; but it was announced that Caesar was the victor. The Greek style of dress, which had been generally worn during the games, passed out of fashion afterwards.³

Appearance of a comet; how interpreted.

About this time there appeared a brilliant comet; and as comets, according to vulgar belief, presage a change of sovereignty, people canvassed who should be chosen in Nero's place, just as though he were already deposed. The name that rose to every tongue was that of Rubellius Plautus,⁴ who was descended through his mother from the noble family

¹ They had been banished in A. D. 56 (xiii. 25, 4).

² 'Sacred,' because Nero affected to claim for his 'Neronia' the same character which belonged to the games of Greece, which were in truth religious and strictly national festivals. 'All foreigners were excluded from the privilege of competition. How should the Greeks admit to the festival of their supreme deity the worshippers of other Gods? Thus it was that in the primitive age of Greece the Olympic Games were invested with a peculiar solemnity,

which controlled the ambition of the athletes and made fair play an imperious necessity. At the first touch of rationalism the festival began to decline. Foreign invasion completed the ruin, and Nero's coxcombry put a crowning affront upon an august institution.' Blackwood's Magazine, August, 1908, p. 271.

³ The suggestion seems to be that out of compliment to Nero people wore Greek dress during the games, but that the fashion did not last.

⁴ See xiii. 19, 3 and n.

3 of the Julii. He was a man of the old school, grave in his demeanour, leading a blameless and secluded life: the seclusion which his fears imposed on him had only added to his reputation.

4 This kind of talk was accentuated by an equally foolish interpretation of a stroke of lightning: for while Nero was reclining at dinner near the Simbruine Lake, in the villa called Sublaqueum,¹ the dishes were struck and the table overturned. As this happened close to Tibur, to which town Plautus owed his paternal origin, the idea arose that Plautus must be the man marked out by divine providence; and court was paid to him by many of those persons whose restless and treacherous ambition lures them on to welcome some new and perilous cause before its
5 time. This greatly disturbed Nero; so he wrote to Plautus, bidding him, *To have regard to the peace of the city, and withdraw himself from his traducers: having an ancestral property in Asia, he might there enjoy the days of his youth in security and quietness.* Plautus retired thither accordingly, with his wife Antistia and a few private friends.

Nero's dinner-table struck by lightning.

He bids Plautus retire into exile.

6 About this same time, in a wanton freak, Nero bathed in the head-waters of the Marcian Aqueduct,² and so brought upon himself both danger and discredit. For he was deemed to have outraged the sanctity of the spot and of the waters by washing in them; and a sharp illness which supervened testified to the displeasure of the Gods.

Freak of Nero.

¹ Sublaqueum, whether a villa only, or a town also (the modern *Subiaco*), derived its name from three lakes in the hills above (*Simbruini colles*) which drain into the Anio, and from which the great Claudian aqueduct drew its water. See xi. 13, 2.

² This famous aqueduct, from the Sabine hills, was built originally in B.C. 149, and enlarged by Augustus. It still exists, and supplies Rome under the name of *Aqua Pia*.

Affairs in
Armenia.
Corbulo
marches
against
Tigrano-
certa.

After the destruction of Artaxata, Corbulo resolved at once to turn to account the panic thereby created by capturing Tigranocerta;¹ hoping either to strike terror into the enemy by its destruction, or to gain a reputation for clemency by sparing it. Refraining from actual hostilities so as not to preclude hope of pardon, he yet omitted no precaution, knowing that the fickle Armenians could be as treacherous, should occasion offer, as they were cowardly in the face of danger.

He deals
with the
various
tactics of
the enemy.

The barbarians met him in diverse ways, each after their character. Some submitted; some abandoned their villages and retired into the wilds; some hid themselves and their dear ones in caves. The General employed different methods against each: dealing gently with suppliants, he swiftly followed up those who ran away, but he showed no mercy to those who

¹ The chronology of chaps. 23-26 is very obscure, and has given rise to much controversy. An excellent statement of the main points of difficulty, and of the views held by different scholars in regard to them, is to be found in Furneaux, vol. ii. *Intro.* pp. 111-114; also in Henderson, pp. 170-177, with corresponding notes. F. adopts the view that the campaign ending in the capture of Artaxata occupied the year A.D. 58, that Corbulo wintered in or near that city, and that the great march to Tigranocerta formed a second campaign in A.D. 59. Henderson, on the contrary, holds that both the above campaigns were carried out in one and the same year, in what he calls 'The Campaign of Triumph,' A.D. 59. The latter view seems the more probable. We hear nothing in Tacitus of a wintering at Artaxata; Corbulo could scarcely have maintained himself there for a whole season with his communications cut off; the heat encountered on the march to Tigranocerta shows that it must have been undertaken in full midsummer; and the whole policy of Corbulo, which was to strike terror into the enemy by the extent and rapidity of his move-

ments, rather than to subdue and pacify the country, would have been frustrated had he remained for a whole season inactive in the Eastern capital of Armenia. See also Henderson in the *Classical Review*, 1901, pp. 204-213.

The brief manner in which Tacitus announces the decision of Corbulo scarcely suggests that he is about to describe one of the famous marches of the world, 'one which stands on record as one of the boldest in military history,' over some 300 miles of difficult mountain country, through hostile tribes, and totally cut off from all friendly communications. See *Intro.* p. xviii. The country, and the probable route followed, are well described by Henderson (pp. 174-6). Retracing their steps to Bayazid, the army would first have to ascend a mountain ridge, then to descend to the N.E. point of the great Lake Van (5,500 feet above the sea), skirt its E. and S. shores, pass through the great 'highland door' from Bitlis to Sert, cross the Upper Tigris, and then, after climbing the heights of Mount Masius, pour down upon Tigranocerta. For the position of Tigranocerta see xii. 50, 2 and n., xv. 4, 3 and 5, 2.

had gone into hiding, filling up the entrances of their caves with boughs and faggots, and then burning
 4 them out with fire. As he marched past the frontier of the Mardi,¹ he was set upon by that predatory tribe, who are protected from attack by mountains; but he let loose upon them his Hiberians,² and chastised their temerity without loss of Roman life.

Attack of the Mardi.

24 But though the General and his army suffered no losses in battle, they were worn out by fatigue and want of food, having nothing but meat wherewith to
 2 stave off their hunger.³ They suffered also from want of water, from the burning heat, and from long marches: hardships alleviated only by the patient endurance of the General, who bore all that
 3 the common soldiers bore, and more besides. After that they reached a cultivated country,⁴ where they cut the crops. Here the Armenians had taken refuge in two forts, one of which was carried by assault, while the other, after repulsing the first attack, was reduced by blockade.

A long and laborious march.

4 Passing on thence to the district of Tauraunitis,⁵
 5 Corbulo escaped an unsuspected danger. A barbarian of some rank was found near the General's tent with a weapon upon his person: on being put to the torture, he divulged the details of a plot,

Corbulo escapes assassination.

¹ This tribe (perhaps the ancestors of the present Kurds) seem to have inhabited the slopes of Mount Niphates (Ala Dagh), to the N., probably also to the E., of Lake Van. The incidents related in §§ 2 to 4 of this chap., and in §§ 1 and 2 of chap. 24 took place in crossing the mountain range on the way to Lake Van.

² The hostility of this people to the Armenians has been already mentioned (xii. 44, 1 and xiii. 37, 3). A contingent of their number must have been serving under Corbulo.

³ This passage is interesting as showing that the Roman soldier lived mainly on corn-food. Caesar's troops before Avaricum suffered in the same way (B. G. vii. 17, 3). The hardship of having to support life mainly on animal food would not be keenly resented by the British soldier.

⁴ This would be along the fertile shores of Lake Van.

⁵ Not known. The name suggests a district connected with the Taurus range, to the W. of Lake Van.

together with the names of his accomplices. All implicated in this treachery, concealed under the guise of friendship, were tried and put to death.

Soon after this, envoys from Tigranocerta informed 6
Corbulo that their gates were open, and that the people were awaiting his commands; they presented him also with a golden crown as a sign of friendship. This he graciously accepted, and hoping to secure 7
their good will by sparing their property, he permitted no plunder within the city.

The fortress of Legerda,¹ however, which was 25
held by a garrison of gallant youths, did not fall without a severe struggle. The defenders offered battle outside the walls, and when driven within their defences they only yielded when a mound had been raised, and an assault delivered. These successes 2
had been much furthered by the fact that the Parthians were detained by the Hyrcanian War.² The Hyrcanians had sent an embassy to the Emperor craving alliance with Rome; and as a proof of their friendliness, they pointed out that they were keeping Vologeses employed elsewhere. Fearing that these 3
envoys might be captured by the enemy on their way home if they crossed the Euphrates, Corbulo provided them with an escort as far as the shore of the Red Sea, whence they returned to their own country without entering Parthian territory.³

¹ Unknown. The text itself is uncertain. The Med. reading is *legerat*, for which some read *regium*, others *Legerda*, in consequence of the mention by Ptolemy of a place of that name between the high waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates.

² The existence of this Hyrcanian war, which kept the Parthians from interfering in Armenia so long as it lasted, furnished Corbulo with an extra

reason for hurrying on his great march, and makes it very improbable that he would remain in Artaxata one day longer than was necessary.

³ This passage is scarcely intelligible as it stands. It seems incredible that at such a moment Corbulo could have spared an escort sufficient to protect the Hyrcanian envoys on such a prodigious march as is here suggested.

Tigranocerta opens her gates.

The fort Legerda stormed.

Hyrcanian embassy.

26 Tiridates now entered Armenia on the far side through Media;¹ but Corbulo, sending on his Legate Verulanus² with the auxiliaries, and bringing up his light legions himself, compelled him to retire and abandon the campaign.³ Having then scourged with fire and sword all whom he knew to be hostile, he kept hold of Armenia until the arrival of Tigranes, the prince chosen by Nero to fill the throne. This Tigranes belonged to the royal house of Cappadocia, being the grandson⁴ of King Archelaus; but having lived so long in Rome as a hostage, he was of a
2 tame and servile spirit; and as there were some who still clung to the house of the Arsacidae, he failed to meet with a universal welcome. The majority, however, finding Parthian tyranny intolerable, preferred the king given to them by Rome.

Tiridates advances and retires.

Nero puts Tigranes on the Armenian throne.

3 A thousand legionaries, three allied cohorts, and two squadrons of cavalry, were given to Tigranes as a bodyguard; while to assist him in managing
4 his new kingdom, Pharasmanes, Polemo,⁵ Aristobulus

Corbulo gives Tigranes an escort and retires.

¹ *i.e.* from Media Atropatene.

² Verulanus is again mentioned as trusted with an important command by Corbulo in xv. 3, 1.

³ No sooner had the Roman army evacuated the Eastern half of Armenia, than Tiridates was ready to pour in; and a fresh campaign, apparently over the same ground, had to be undertaken to drive him out. Nowhere is the lack of chronological indications more provoking than in this chapter. The events recorded must have occupied considerable time. First Corbulo repels an incursion of Tiridates into the extreme E. of Armenia—an undertaking sufficient to occupy a whole campaign; he then undertakes the regular administration of the country, as if for a permanent occupation; Nero receives the news of Corbulo's successes, and resolves upon a new policy; the new puppet prince arrives and is left to do the best he can for himself with a small guard of Roman soldiers; and finally Corbulo retires

with his main force into Syria. All these events are compressed into a few sentences, as if they followed immediately one upon the other. What is clear is that Corbulo's successes had induced Nero and his advisers to withdraw their original offer to recognise Tiridates as the Roman nominee, and to fall back once more upon the miserable policy of setting up a Romanised prince, who was to be left to shift for himself without sufficient support from Rome to keep him on the throne.

⁴ This prince was great-grandson of Herod the Great. For Archelaus' see ii. 42. 2.

⁵ The names *Pharasmani Polemonique* have been restored with much probability for the corrupt reading of Med. Polemo was king of Pontus; and the idea seems to have been the preposterous one of helping Tigranes to maintain himself on the throne by subjecting the outlying portions of his kingdom to the princes on his frontier.

and Antiochus were each given authority over that part of Armenia which lay nearest to his own border. Corbulo retired into Syria, rendered vacant 5 and so open to him by the death of the Legate Ummidius.

In the same year Laodicea,¹ one of the famous 27 towns of Asia, was overthrown by an earthquake, and rebuilt out of its own resources without any help from Rome. In Italy, the ancient town of Puteoli 2 was granted the rank of a Colony, with a title from Nero's name.² Bodies of veterans³ were added to the 3 towns of Tarentum and Antium; but these did little to recruit the population of those places. Many of them returned to the provinces in which they had served; unused to marrying and rearing children, they left no families behind them. For colonies were 4 no longer composed, as in former days, of whole legions, marching out with their Tribunes and Centurions and soldiers of every rank, so as to found a community on mutual consent and affection; but of men unknown to each other, taken from different maniples, with no leader and no common feeling: a gathering suddenly brought together as if out of another world—a congeries rather than a colony.⁴

For Antiochus and Aristobulus see xii. 55, 3 and xiii. 7, 1 and 2.

¹ This was *Laodicea ad Lycum* on the borders of Phrygia and Caria. See iv. 55, 3.

² As Puteoli had been a colony since B.C. 194, Tacitus is scarcely accurate in his language. The colony was now reinforced, as it had previously been by Augustus, and perhaps granted some new privileges. The full name it now received was *Colonia Claudia Augusta Neronensis*. To make a town into a colony was part of the emperor's prerogative, like the granting of royal charters to cities in our own history. The paucity of free inhabitants through-

out Italy had become a crying evil, and soon proved a great source of weakness to the Empire.

³ These no doubt would be recruits raised in the provinces, who it appears could not be induced to settle in Italy even by the privilege of being enrolled as citizens of a *Colonia*. See n. on xii. 43, 4; also iii. 54, 6 and 7.

⁴ The disposing of the veterans of the huge armies raised during the civil wars had been the cause of much danger and trouble; hence the policy of dispersing the legionaries after discharge, as the best mode of destroying their *esprit de corps* and keeping them quiet.

Earth-quake at Laodicea.

Attempt to recruit Italian colonies.

Colonies not what they used to be.

28 Feeling ran high this year at the praetorian elections, which had usually been left to the discretion of the Senate, in consequence of there being three more candidates than vacancies;¹ but the Emperor calmed things down by appointing the extra
2 number to the command of legions. He also added to the dignity of the Senate by ordaining that litigants who appealed to that body² from the civil tribunals should deposit the same amount of caution-money as those appealing to himself;³ for up to that time appeals to the Senate had been open and free from penalty.

Praetorian elections.

Appeals to the Senate.

3 At the close of the year Vibius Secundus,⁴ a Roman Knight, accused of extortion by the Mauri, was condemned and expelled from Italy; and he would have been punished more severely still had it not been for the influence of his brother Vibius Crispus.

Vibius condemned for extortion.

A.D. 61. CONSULS LUCIUS CAESENNIUS PAETUS AND PUBLIUS PETRONIUS TURPILIANUS.

29 In this year a severe disaster was sustained in Britain.⁵ The Legate Aulus Didius, as I have already

Affairs in Britain.

¹ The ordinary number of praetors at this time was twelve. Of these Tiberius had been satisfied to 'commend' (for *commendatio* and *nominatio*, see n. on i. 14, 6) four only, leaving the other eight to an ostensibly free election by the Senate. On the present occasion there were fifteen candidates for twelve places; and Nero eased the situation by appointing three of these to be *legati*, with the promise of the praetorship afterwards. It thus appears that usually there were only as many candidates as vacancies: which can only mean that none professed themselves as candidates without the emperor's approval.

² *i.e.* instead of appealing to the emperor.

³ *i.e.* one-third of the value of the money at stake, which was forfeited if the appeal was unsuccessful.

⁴ He had been procurator in one of the two Mauretanian provinces. Nero offered no impediment to his own officers being brought to justice.

⁵ The narrative of affairs in Britain is here resumed from xii. 31-40, in which chapters, it would seem, it was taken down to the close of the year A.D. 58, under the Governorship of A. Didius. We now come to the story of the great Rebellion of A.D. 61, and of the magnificent campaign in which the province was saved by the cool and intrepid Suetonius. Doubts have been raised as to the date of this campaign. Some scholars are inclined to put it in

mentioned,¹ had done no more than hold his own. His successor Veranius had conducted some petty plundering expeditions against the Silures; but all further operations were cut short by his death. This man bore a high character for severity² during his lifetime; but his last words, as found in his will, betrayed a courtier-like spirit: for along with much flattery of Nero, he declared that in two years' time, should he live so long, he would lay the whole province at his feet. The present governor of Britain² was Paulinus Suetonius,³ an experienced soldier: popular talk, which suffers no man to be without a

the previous year, A.D. 60, partly on the ground of certain conjectural inferences from an inscription (see n. on chap. 39, 4), partly because elsewhere in the Annals, as we have seen, the events of more than one year are sometimes mixed up together; but no one who has any sense of what is due to the authority of Tacitus can hesitate to accept as decisive the positive statement here made, *Caesennius Paeto et Petronio Turpiliano consulibus gravis clades in Britannia accepta*.

¹ *i.e.* in xii. 40, 7, where, as well as in the Agric., the legateship of Didius is spoken of with similar contempt, as one in which no further progress was made than by advancing a few outposts for the mere name of the thing (*paucis admodum castellis in ulteriora promotis per quae fama aucti imperii quaerretur*, Agric. 14, 3). Didius is supposed to have been appointed in A.D. 52, and to have held the command for five years. Veranius held office only for one year (Agr. 14, 3)—the year A.D. 58—and Suetonius had held it for two years (the years 59 and 60) before the outbreak of the rebellion. Of these two years, as well as of the peaceful doings of Didius during his five years of office, Tacitus says nothing. He tells us nothing of what would have interested us most, the gradual civilising and Romanising of the acquired province which was going on all that time; his whole interest is in the forward policy, and in the fighting. His mind was perhaps full of the military feats of Agricola; and he seldom fails to

speak with contempt of those generals who confined themselves to the far more important work of administration and consolidation. Yet even under Didius and Veranius the progress made in advancing and strengthening the frontier on the difficult Welsh side had been by no means insignificant. At the beginning of Nero's reign (A.D. 54) the headquarters of the 14th and 20th Legions were at Viroconium (*Wroxeter*) in Shropshire; those of the 2nd had been pushed West from Glevum (*Gloucester*) to Isca Silurum (*Caerleon*) on the Usk; those of the 9th were at Lindum (*Lincoln*), where they long remained. But before Suetonius assumed the command, the 14th and 20th legions had been advanced along the E. face of Wales to Deva (*Chester*); so that 'the frontier now formed two sides of a great square, with the 2nd Legion at Isca, the 9th at Lindum, the 14th and 20th at the apex in their new camp at Deva' (Henderson, p. 206).

² The words *severitas* and *ambitio* are here used in antithesis. *Severitas* represents the ideal Stoic character: grave, earnest, unbending, averse to self-seeking, flattery or vanity; it is in respect of the two latter qualities especially that in this case it is contrasted with the *ambitio* displayed by Veranius in his will.

³ Here mentioned for the first time. All we know of Paulinus previously is that he had successfully put down a rising in Mauretania as Legate in that province in the years A.D. 41 and 42.

rival,¹ pronounced him to be jealous of Corbulo, and eager to achieve a conquest as glorious as the recovery of Armenia. He therefore prepared to attack the populous island of Mona,² which had become a refuge for fugitives, and built a fleet of flat-bottomed vessels suited for those shallow and shifting seas. The infantry crossed in the boats, the cavalry went over by fords: where the water was too deep, the men swam alongside of their horses.

30 The enemy lined the shore: a dense host of armed men, interspersed with women clothed in black, like the Furies, with their hair hanging down, and holding torches in their hands. Round these were the Druids, uttering dire curses, and stretching out their hands towards heaven. These strange sights terrified our soldiers. They stood motionless, as if paralysed, offering their bodies to the blows. At last, encouraged by the General, and exhorting each other not to quail before a rabble of female fanatics, they advanced their standards, bore down all resistance, and enveloped the enemy in their own flames. Suetonius imposed a garrison upon the conquered, and cut down the groves devoted to their cruel superstitions: for it was part of their religion to spill the blood of captives on their altars, and to inquire of the Gods by means of human entrails.

and over-
bears a
desperate
resistance.

31 But while Suetonius was thus employed, he received news of a sudden revolt in the province.

Revolt
of the
province

¹ Tac. seldom fails to express his contempt for the popular judgment. See xv. 64, 2 (*ut est vulgus ad deteriora promptum*); and iv. 64, 1 (*qui mos vulgo fortuita ad culpam trahentes*).

² The island of Anglesea. Anxious to push forward to fresh conquests, and like the other legates before him totally unconscious of any danger brewing

within the province—nothing shows this more clearly than the fact that even Camolodunum (*Colchester*), the seat of administration, was left unfortified—Suetonius resolves to attack the stronghold of British Druidism, just as Tiberius and Claudius had endeavoured to extirpate Druidism in Gaul (Plin. N. H. xxx. i. 4, 33, and Suet. Claud. 25).

Prasutagus,¹ King of the Iceni,² after a long and prosperous reign, had appointed Caesar his heir, along with his own two daughters, hoping by such an act of submission to save his kingdom and his family from molestation. But things turned out differently.² His kingdom was plundered by Centurions, and his private property by slaves, as if they had been captured in war; his widow Boudicca³ was flogged, and his daughters outraged; the chiefs of the Iceni³ were robbed of their ancestral properties as if the Romans had received⁴ the whole country as a gift; and the King's own relatives were reduced to slavery.

Stung by these insults, and fearing worse to come⁴ now that their country had been formed into a province, the people flew to arms, carrying with them the Trinovantes,⁵ and other tribes who not yet having been tamed by slavery⁶ had conspired secretly to recover their freedom. Their anger was hottest⁵ against the veterans recently settled in Camulodunum, who were ejecting the inhabitants from their homes,

¹ For the position of Prasutagus as 'a client king,' bound to Caesar by treaty, and for the disappointment of his hopes, see Pelham on this passage in F.²

² The powerful tribe of the Iceni occupied Norfolk and Suffolk. We have seen how they resented the act of disarmament in A.D. 50 (xii. 31, 3); and though they had submitted to Rome after their defeat by Ostorius, and remained friendly during the reign of Prasutagus, it is clear that they had retained a semi-independent position, and were powerful enough to resent the intolerable indignities put on them by the subordinate agents of the Roman administration. In the sentences which follow, Tacitus makes no attempt to conceal or palliate the enormities of the Roman civil government.

³ Thus, unfortunately, in obedience to MS. authority, must we write this famous name. 'It may be pedantic;

but, as it happens to be correct, a historian must deny himself the pleasure which a County Council may enjoy. For a similar reason Caratacus must supplant Caractacus' (Henderson, p. 477).

⁴ The abrupt change of subject from *accepissent* (the Romans) to *exuuntur* (the Iceni) would be inadmissible in English. See *Introd.* p. lix.

⁵ This people occupied the very heart of the Roman Province in the counties of Essex and Suffolk, with Camulodunum (*Colchester*) for their capital. They had formed an important part of the kingdom of Cunobelinus, and it was over them amongst others that the decisive victories under Claudius had been obtained.

⁶ The Regni in W. Sussex and Hampshire, under Cogidubnus (or Cogidumnus), were among those who remained loyal to Rome, and are never heard of in this rebellion.

behind
him, caused
by outrages
upon the
Iceni and
their queen
Boudicca.

The
revolted
tribes
march
upon
Camulo-
dunum.

and driving them from their lands, calling them slaves and captives; in which high-handed proceedings they were encouraged by the soldiers, whose lives were like their own, and who looked forward to a similar license for themselves. Besides all this, the temple put up to the Divine Claudius was regarded as a stronghold of ascendancy for all time;¹ while those chosen to be priests had to waste all their fortunes under pretence of religious service. And it appeared no difficult thing to destroy a colony which had no walls to protect it; for our Generals, having an eye to amenity rather than utility, had made little preparation for defence.²

32 Just at this time, from no ostensible cause, the statue of Victory at Camulodunum fell down, with its back turned, as if flying from the enemy. Frenzied women sang of coming destruction: outlandish cries had been heard in the Council-chamber, and weird howlings in the theatre: an image of the Colony in ruins had been seen in the estuary of the Thames; a blood-red ocean, and impressions of human bodies left by the receding tide, were interpreted as hopeful signs for the Britons, as omens of disaster for the veterans.

Various
evil omens.

3 Suetonius being far away, the colonists appealed for help to Catus Decianus the Procurator, who sent

The town
has no
sufficient
means of
defence,

¹ For an account of the astute policy of Augustus by which he had set up throughout the Empire the worship of himself and of Rome as a symbol of imperial unity, see n. on i. 57, 2. It was part of that policy to form colleges of priests to carry on the worship throughout the provinces, to attach privileges to those bodies, and thus attract to them provincials of means and position, who were expected to expend their wealth in works of various kinds undertaken for the public benefit.

Well might the institution of the temple to Claudius with its priesthoods be regarded by the Britons as *arx aeternae dominationis*.

² This want of caution in their civil arrangements—so extraordinary with a people who never suffered their armies to encamp for a single night without elaborate entrenchments—shows at once how readily the Britons had adopted Roman civilisation, and how incredulous the Roman officials were of any danger from within the province.

them a force of barely two hundred ill-armed men, with a sprinkling of regular soldiers. For defence, they relied upon the temple; but as their plans were interfered with and thwarted by men in the secret of the conspiracy, they dug no trenches and erected no palisades; they omitted to send the old men and the women away, so as to leave none but young men inside; and having taken no more precautions than if in a time of profound peace, they were surrounded by a multitude of barbarians.

and is
stormed.

Everything except the temple, in which the garrison had collected, was carried by assault or burnt; and the temple itself was stormed after a siege of two days. The victorious Britons went out to meet Petilius Cerialis, Legate of the 9th legion,¹ who was advancing to the rescue. They routed the legion and slaughtered all his infantry; Cerialis himself escaped with the cavalry, and found shelter behind the defences of his camp. Alarmed by this disaster, and by the animosity of the province, which had been goaded into war by his exactions, the Procurator Catus crossed hurriedly² over to Gaul.

Rout of the
9th legion.

Suetonius
marches
to London,

Meanwhile Suetonius, undaunted, made his way through a hostile country³ to Londinium, a town

¹ We have heard before of this legion (called *Hispana*) as quartered in Pannonia (i. 23, 6), and as sent over to Africa for a time as a reinforcement for the war against Tacfarinas (iv. 23, 2). It was now stationed at Lindum (*Lincoln*), as we have seen above, something like 150 miles from Colchester. With this legion cut to pieces, and Suetonius away in Anglesea with an available force of not more than one and a half legions, the Roman cause did indeed appear in a desperate condition. The Britons had yet to learn what a Roman General and a Roman army could do when both were of the highest mettle.

² The word *trepidus* here seems to

express three distinct things: (1) the haste of Catus' departure; (2) his consternation at the disaster; (3) his alarm at his own unpopularity among the provincials.

³ With his usual indifference to strategy, Tacitus makes no comment upon this splendid march from Anglesea to London through a country in rebellion, and gives us no idea of the route pursued. Suetonius had but two legions with him in Anglesea, the 14th and the 20th—and part of these must have been left at Deva to guard the frontier. He did not yet know that the 9th had been cut up; and he expected to meet on the road the 2nd from the West. His march would doubtless be along

which, though not dignified by the title of Colony, was
 2 a busy emporium for trade and traders.¹ For a while
 he hesitated whether to make his stand at that
 place; but having regard to his own weakness in
 numbers, and the clear proofs that Petilius had owed
 his defeat to rashness, he resolved to save the pro-
 vince as a whole by the sacrifice of that one city.²
 3 Unmoved by the tears and entreaties of the inhabi-
 tants, he gave the signal to march, receiving within
 4 his lines all that would come with him; those who
 remained behind, whether through weakness of sex
 or age, or from attachment to the place, were
 massacred by the enemy.

which he is
 obliged to
 abandon.

The inhabi-
 tants are
 massacred.

Watling St., through Wroxeter, Lichfield and St. Albans, a distance of not less than 180 miles. See Pelham's n. in F.²

¹ This passage is famous as containing the first mention of London. All probability points to the neighbourhood of London as being the spot at which the retreating Britons and the conquering Roman army under Claudius crossed the Thames in the campaign of A.D. 43. The lowest point at which the tide permitted the river to be crossed by ford or bridge would become an important point, alike for military and trade purposes, and would soon gather to itself a population. It has been conjectured that the river above Westminster Bridge may have spread itself out in marshes which would be fordable at low tide. On behalf of a lower point for crossing, it has been suggested that in those days the tide did not come within twenty miles of London. But this needs geological proof; and we may be quite sure that it was just the fact that the tide did go up to London that made it, even in those early days, a place of commercial importance. (See F. *Introd.*, vol. ii. p. 136.)

² Henderson's view (which is that of Pelham also in F².) of the march and strategy of Suetonius must be accepted. Mommsen, against all the evidence, supposes that Suetonius never left Chester, and awaited Boudicca's attack in that neighbourhood (vol. v. p. 181, *English Trans.*). 'The German might have stayed at Chester: the Roman did not, and had excellent reasons for

his activity,' Henderson, p. 479. It is evident that Suetonius did not lose a moment. He marched direct along Watling St. with an army of some 10,000 men, made up of the 14th Legion and part of the 20th, with auxiliaries. He summoned the 2nd Legion to meet him on the road, and expected to be met by the 9th on its way from Lincoln. The 2nd failed to join him: only on reaching London did he learn the fate of Petilius Cerialis. Possibly there also he learned the full particulars of the fall of Camulodunum, and with that the news that the victorious Britons were marching on London. The idea favoured by many edd. (see F¹., vol. ii. p. 145) and by Merivale (vol. vi. p. 54) that Suetonius marched from London towards Colchester to meet the advancing enemy is untenable. Suetonius knowingly abandoned London and its inhabitants to their fate; this can only mean that he adopted a policy of retreat. He suffered first London, and then Verulam, to be overwhelmed, drawing back to concentrate his forces, to admit of reinforcements joining him, and to allow the fury of the victorious army to expend itself, after the manner of conquering Celts, in plunder and disorganisation. He was thus able to lure on the enemy in pursuit, and choose his own time and place for battle; if provisions began to fail him, as Dio states, they would fail the Britons also. See Henderson, pp. 211-214, 478-9.

The same
fate befalls
Verula-
mium.

Number of
the slain.

Suetonius
retreats,
the Britons
pursue.

Suetonius
selects his
battle-
ground.

A like destruction befell the town of Verulamium ; for as the barbarians revelled in plunder, and were disinclined to effort, they passed by forts and military stations,¹ and fell upon places rich in spoil which had no garrisons to defend them. No less than 5
seventy thousand citizens and allies were slain in the above-mentioned places. For the barbarians would 6
have no capturing, no selling, nor any kind of traffic usual in war ; they would have nothing but killing, whether by sword, cross, gibbet or fire, as though hurrying to avenge themselves beforehand for the retribution which was to follow.²

And now Suetonius, having with him the 14th 34
legion, with the veterans of the 20th, and the auxiliaries nearest at hand, making up a force of about ten thousand fully-armed men,³ resolved to delay no longer, and prepared for battle. Selecting a position 2
in a defile closed in behind by a wood, and having made sure that there was no enemy but in front, where there was an open flat unsuited for ambuscades,⁴ he drew up his legions in close order, with 3
the light armed troops on the flanks, while the cavalry was massed at the extremities of the wings. The British host came wildly on, in masses of horse 4
and foot, and in numbers greater than ever : so full of confidence were they that they had brought their

¹ This shows, as suggested above, that there were strings of small forts or stations connecting the armies together and keeping up the communications with headquarters.

² See *Introd.* p. liii. for the construction of this passage.

³ The language of Tacitus implies that the army of Suetonius had only now reached a total of 10,000, having gathered in men, especially auxiliaries (*e proximis auxiliaries*), during his march.

⁴ The situation here is the reverse of

what it had been in the German campaigns of Germanicus. In that case, the choice of ground always lay with the Germans ; the Roman armies blundered, or were lured on, into carefully chosen battlegrounds, and fought their way through by sheer valour. Here all the advantages of position are on the Roman side. To identify the site of this battle is impossible ; it must have been fought somewhere on or near Watling St. on the way from St. Albans to Wroxeter.

wives with them to witness their victory, mounting them on waggons drawn up all round the field of battle.

35 Boudicca drove round each tribe in turn, with her daughters in front of her in the chariot, and harangued them thus:—

Britons had been wont to do battle under the leadership of women;¹ but she was not now fighting for throne and power, as one sprung from royal ancestors, but as one of the multitude, to avenge the loss of liberty, the stripes inflicted upon her flesh, and the outrages perpetrated on
 2 *her daughters. Roman lust had grown so rampant that it left nothing undefiled; not even the persons of their old*
 3 *men or their young maidens. But the Gods were there, to help on a just vengeance. The legion which had*
 4 *dared battle had been destroyed; the rest were skulking*
 5 *in their camp, or looking for a chance to flee: never would they endure the din and the clamour, far less the onset*
and the blows, of so many thousands. If they looked at the number of their armed men, and weighed well the causes of the war, they must conquer on that field or die. Such was a woman's resolve: men might live on and be slaves.

Boudicca
harangues
her host.

36 Nor was Suetonius silent at such a supreme moment. He was confident in his men's valour; yet he mingled entreaty with exhortation:—

Address of
Suetonius.

Let them disregard the clamour and empty threats of
 2 *the barbarians; there were more women than warriors in their ranks. Their unwarlike unarmed hosts would give way at once when they saw the swords and the valour of*
 3 *the conquerors before whom they had so often fled. Even with a force of many legions, the issue was decided by a few; what glory would be theirs if with their modest*

¹ Cp. Agr. 16, 1: *neque enim sexum in imperiis discernunt.* Yet see xii. 40, 5.

numbers they should win the fame of an entire army! Let them only keep in close order till they had discharged 4 their heavy javelins, and then go on felling and slaying with their shield-bosses and their swords, without thought of plunder: the victory once theirs, all else would be theirs also.

These words aroused such ardour, and the experienced veterans prepared themselves so eagerly to discharge their javelins, that Suetonius gave the signal for battle with full confidence in the result. 5

Complete
victory of
the
Romans.

The legion at first held its ground without moving, 37 clinging to the defile as a defence; but when the enemy came near enough, and our men, with sure aim, had expended on them their javelins, they dashed forward in a wedge-like formation. The auxiliaries 2 charged no less vigorously; while the cavalry, with spears couched, broke through all serious resistance in their way. The rest of the host fled as best 3 they could, the outlets being blocked by the ring of waggons behind. Our men gave no quarter, even 4 to the women; the very beasts of burden, riddled through with darts, added to the heaps of dead.

Boudicca
poisons
herself.

It was a glorious victory, fit to rank with those of 5 the olden days. Some say that little less than 80,000 Britons fell, our own killed being about 400, with a somewhat larger number wounded.¹ Boudicca poisoned herself. Poenius Postumus, Commandant of the camp of the 2nd legion, on hearing of the good fortune of the 14th and 20th legions, ran himself

Suicide of
Poenius
Postumus.

¹ These numbers are doubtless grossly exaggerated, as in similar cases; cp. the impossible statement in iv. 63, 2 that 50,000 persons were killed or maimed by the collapse of the amphitheatre at Fidena. It is scarcely credible that as many as

70,000 citizens or allies were massacred at the taking of Colchester, London and Verulam (chap. 33, 5); or that 80,000 Roman citizens were slain in Asia Minor by order of Mithradates in B.C. 88; see n. to iv. 14, 3.

through with a sword—having not only broken the rules of the service by disobeying his General, but also deprived his own legion of its share in the victory.¹

38 The whole army was now concentrated and kept under tents to finish up the war. Nero sent reinforcements over from Germany consisting of 2000 legionaries, eight cohorts of auxiliaries, and 1000 cavalry; these brought up the 9th legion to its full strength. The cohorts and the cavalry were put into new winter quarters; all hostile and doubtful tribes were harried with fire and sword. But what distressed the enemy most was the want of food; for as they had destined our supplies for themselves, and brought every available man into the field, they had left their own lands unsown.

Arrival of reinforcements.

4 Yet these wild tribes were but little inclined to peace; and all the less so that Julius Classicianus, who had been sent out to succeed Catus, was on bad terms with Suetonius, and permitted his private animosities to interfere with the public interest. He gave out that, *It would be well to wait for a new Legate, free from feelings of hostility or triumph, who would deal gently with our conquered enemies.* And with that he kept writing to the city that *no end to the war need be looked for until Suetonius was superseded; his reverses were due to his own folly, his successes to good fortune.*²

The new Procurator attacks the policy of Suetonius.

¹ It thus appears that it was because of the hesitation of this officer that the 2nd legion failed to obey the summons of Suetonius. As Postumus was only Prefect of the camp, it would seem that the commander of the legion, the *legatus legationis*, was absent; and it may well be that Postumus, being in temporary command, with perhaps only part of the legion with him, may have shrunk from the responsibility of

leaving his proper station without orders from his direct superior.

² The advice given by Classicianus would seem to have been sound. The province now needed to be soothed, and governed on lines of justice: and Suetonius, flushed with victory, and stung by the thought that he had all but lost the province, was not the man to inaugurate a policy of conciliation. The sarcasm of Tacitus seems ill-placed.

Mission of
Polyclitus.

Nero accordingly despatched Polyclitus, one of his freedmen, to look into the state of affairs in Britain, greatly hoping that his influence might not only restore harmony between the Legate and the Procurator, but also calm down the turbulent spirits of the barbarians.¹ Travelling with an immense retinue, Polyclitus did not fail to make himself a burden to Italy and to Gaul, as well as a terror to our soldiers after he had crossed the Ocean. But the enemy regarded him with contempt; for those ardent lovers of liberty had not yet learnt to understand how power could be wielded by a freedman. It was a marvel to them that a General and an army who had carried through a great war should yield obedience to a slave.

Suetonius
is super-
seded,

All this, however, was toned down in the reports transmitted to the Emperor. Suetonius was debarred from active operations;² but as he happened to lose a

He can brook no criticism of his hero; and his sympathies, as elsewhere, are with the policy of conquest and advance.

That there was good ground for impugning the government of Suetonius after the suppression of the rebellion as harsh and vindictive is admitted by Tac. himself in the Agricola: *ni quamquam egregius cetera adroganter in deditos et ut suae cuiusque incuriae ultor durius consuleret* (16, 2). His successor Turpilianus showed himself *exorabilior*, though sluggish in the field, while Trebellius Maximus, to whom Turpilianus handed over the province, inaugurated what has been happily translated 'a policy of conciliation' (*comitate quadam curandi provinciam tenuit*, Agr. 16, 4).

¹ Whatever we may think of Nero's choice of a Commissioner—and the selection of a freedman would be peculiarly galling to a general in the position of Suetonius—the policy of making an independent inquiry on the spot seems a very intelligible one. Nero had lost no time in sending out reinforcements; but he and his advisers

were now anxious that the work of repression should not be carried too far. He could hardly have sent out one consular to report upon another; to send Polyclitus was to send a confidential agent who could have no military ambitions of his own, and who would report personally to himself. A parallel to this employment of Polyclitus is to be found in the story related by Dio, lx. 19, 2 about Narcissus. When the Roman army under Plautius was unwilling to embark for Britain in A.D. 43, Narcissus ascended the tribunal with a view to urging them on; but he was howled down with cries of *Io Saturnalia!* Yet the very shame of being addressed by a freedman seems to have restored the courage of the army.

² I cannot agree with F. in taking this to mean 'was kept at his post for the conduct of affairs.' For (1) the essence of what follows is that Suetonius had been forbidden to undertake warlike operations; (2) the phrase *res gerere* is distinctively used of military exploits (*Res gerere et captos ostendere civibus hostes*, Hor. Epp. i. 17, 33);

few ships, with their crews, upon the coast, this was held to be an act of war, and he was ordered to hand over the army to Petronius Turpilianus, who had just vacated the Consulship.¹ Neither attacking nor attacked, this General dignified an inglorious inactivity with the honourable name of peace.

and Turpilianus takes his place.

40 This same year was marked by two audacious crimes committed in Rome; the one by a Senator, the other by a slave.

Domitius Balbus was a man of praetorian rank, whose great age, coupled with his wealth and child-
2 lessness, laid him open to fraudulent designs. A relative of his, Valerius Fabianus, a man destined for public office, forged a will in his name, with the assistance of two Roman Knights, Vinicius Rufinus
3 and Terentius Lentinus, while they again had called in Antonius Primus and Asinius Marcellus as associates. Antonius was a man of ready daring; Marcellus was distinguished as the great-grandson of Asinius Pollio,² and was regarded as a person by no means

Gross case of forgery in Rome.

and (3) it is quite consistent with Tac.'s habitual loose use of the Abl. to take *rebus gerundis* as an Abl., even without inserting the prep. *a* with Madvig.

¹ This is the passage which, together with an uncertain reference in an inscription, has induced some scholars, including Henderson, to place the rebellion and the campaign of Suetonius in the year A.D. 60 instead of 61. See n. on chap. 29, 1. Inferring from an inscription (C. I. L. vi. 1, 597) that Petronius Turpilianus had vacated his consulship by the month of March, A.D. 61, they further infer that he did so because he was sent out during his year of office to succeed Suetonius. If that were so, the campaign of Suetonius must be thrown back to the year A.D. 60 to allow time for the various events which occurred after the victory: the mission of Polyclitus, and so forth. But it was a most unusual thing to send out a consul to a command during his term of office; it was quite a usual

thing for the first pair of consuls in any year to give place to *consules suffecti*; and all such conjectures are of little value beside the positive statement of Tacitus that the rebellion took place in the year A.D. 61 (chap. 29, 1). And even if the campaign had been fought in A.D. 60, no successor could have been appointed so early as March, A.D. 61. The victory was not gained till late in the year; time would be needed for the news to travel to Rome, and for the burdensome mission to be prepared, go out, and report; and even after that it is clear that Suetonius was not superseded for some little time. We cannot therefore put the arrival of Petronius till late in the year A.D. 62. He remained but one year in Britain, being appointed *Curator Aquarum* in A.D. 63.

² C. Asinius Pollio, the distinguished orator, poet and historian of Horace's time (Od. ii. 1, 16).

despicable in character, except that he looked upon poverty as the greatest of all misfortunes. By the help of these and other persons of less note, Fabianus got the will signed.¹ All this having been proved in the Senate, Fabianus and Antonius were condemned under the Cornelian Law, together with Rufinus and Terentius. Marcellus owed his exemption from punishment, though not from infamy, to the memory of his ancestors and the Emperor's intercession.

On the same day Pompeius Aelianus also, a youth of quaestorian rank, was condemned as an accomplice in the crime of Fabianus. He was interdicted from Italy and Spain, in which latter country he had been born. A like degradation was inflicted upon Valerius Ponticus for having prosecuted certain persons before the Praetor, in order to remove their cases from the jurisdiction of the City Prefect.² His action had a semblance of legality about it at the time; but his intention had been to procure an acquittal by collusion. A clause was added to the senatorial decree³ providing that anyone who should buy or

¹ Reading with many edd. *tabulas sociis* instead of the Med. reading *tabulas iis*. But the correction is scarcely necessary; *iis* may be taken as an ablative along with *obsignat*: 'he got the document signed by their instrumentality and that of other less notable persons.'

² For the office of *praefectus urbi* see vi. 11, 2 and n. From the time of Tiberius onwards, the jurisdiction of this office, originally confined to matters pertaining to the peace and prosperity of the city, was gradually extended until in the third century *omnia omnium crimina praefectura urbis sibi vindicavit, non tantum ea quae intra urbem admittuntur, verum ea quoque quae extra urbem intra Italiam* (Ulpian Dig. i. 12, 1). The passage before us shows that at this time, as might be expected,

there was a conflict of jurisdiction between the praetor's court and that of the prefect's court. The accused persons (*reos*) were no doubt persons accused of the same offence—perhaps 'the less illustrious persons' (*aliis minus illustribus*) mentioned in chap 41—but who had not yet been tried; and Ponticus evidently hoped to obtain, by collusion, a more favourable verdict from the praetor's court than from that of the prefect. The word *interim* corresponds to *mox*. There was nothing illegal in entering the case in the praetor's court, and so far (*interim*) Ponticus was within his rights; but when the case came on (*mox*), he intended to gain it by *praevaricatio* (see next n.).

³ In reference to this decree of Senate (called *Turpilianum* from the consul of the year) the jurist Marcianus is

Punishment of the guilty men.

Punishment of Aelianus,

and of Valerius Ponticus.

sell such services should be liable to the same punishment as if he had been convicted in a criminal court of preferring a false accusation.

42 Soon after this Pedanius Secundus, Prefect of the City, was murdered by one of his own slaves; either because he had refused the man his liberty after agreeing upon a price for it,¹ or because the slave, being enamoured² of some youth, could not endure to have his master for a rival. The old rule³ in such cases was that all the slaves who were in the house at the time should be put to death; but a mob gathered, wishing to save so many innocent persons, and riotously besieged the Senate-house. The Senate itself⁴ contained a party who deprecated extreme measures; but the majority were for carrying out the law. Among the latter number was Gaius Cassius,⁵ who, when his turn for speaking came, discoursed as follows:—

Murder of Pedanius Secundus by his own slaves.

Debate in the Senate.

43 *I have many a time, Conscript Fathers, been present in this House when novel measures were called for, contrary to the customs and laws of our ancestors. I have never opposed such motions; not that I had any doubt that all matters had been better and more wisely ordered in days of old, and that any changes would be changes for the*

Cassius urges the maintenance of the existing law in all its severity.

quoted in the Dig. 48, 16 as defining *calumniari* 'to bring a false accusation'; *prævaricari* 'to conceal a true one'; and *tergiversari* 'to abandon a charge altogether.'

¹ A slave might save up money out of his *peculium* and buy his freedom from his master (Plaut. Rud. iv. 2, 23).

² There is no need, after Pich., F.² and other recent edd. to change the *infensus* of Med. into *incensus*. It was not merely affection for the youth, but passionate jealousy of his master, that is suggested as the motive for the murder.

³ In Cic. Fam. iv. 12, 3 we have a case of slaves fleeing in terror from the quarters of a murdered master.

⁴ The MS. reading here is corrupt. Med. reads *senatusque in quo ipso*. Or. and later edd. insert *obsessus* after *senatusque*; though it seems rather a strong measure to insert on conjecture a statement that the mob went so far as to besiege the Senate-house. After the unpopular decision of the Senate had become known, no doubt the mob became obstreperous and threatening; but one would hardly expect them to break out before the debate began. As the passage is corrupt, it seems safer to follow Lips. and Or. in reading *senatusque in ipso*.

⁵ The famous jurist lauded in xii. 12, 1, where see n.

worse, but because I did not wish to appear, by an excessive regard for ancient usage, to be exalting my own calling. I desired also not to destroy by constant opposition such influence as I possess, but to preserve it unimpaired should ² my country ever need my counsels.

Such a case has occurred this day. A Consular has ³ been murdered, in his own house, by his own slaves. Not one of them prevented, or betrayed, the plot: and that although the decree of Senate still holds good which condemns the whole establishment to death. Remove the ⁴ penalty, by all the Gods, if ye will: but who shall find safety in his position if the City Prefect has found none in his? ¹ What number of slaves will suffice if Pedanius ⁵ Secundus found no protection in four hundred? Which of us need look ² to his household for succour if even the fear of death leaves them indifferent to our danger? Or ⁶ is it, as some unblushingly pretend, that the murderer was avenging injuries of his own? that he had made some arrangement about his patrimony, or been ousted from an ancestral estate? Nay, better declare at once that the master was justly slain! ³

Would you have me hunt up reasons for a rule devised ⁴⁴ by men wiser than ourselves? Nay, suppose that we had now, for the first time, to lay down the law: do you

¹ This difficult passage, awkward at the best, may be left as it stands in Med.: (*decernite hercule impunitatem ut quem dignitas sua defendat cui praefectus non profuit*) with the simple alteration of *praefecto* for *praefectus* (Ardresen), and of *quae* (which I suggest) for *cui*. The false reading *praefectus* would naturally carry with it the change of *quae* into *cui* to suit *profuit*. With this reading, *quem* will be taken as the indefinite pronoun after *ut* (= *aliquem*); the weak change of *praefectus* into *praefectura* (Puteol., etc.) is not needed; and the indicative *profuit* has its full rhetorical force. To take *quem* as an interrogative (in a clause beginning with *ut*) with F¹, and others is

violent and unexampled; the passages adduced by Nipp. and others are not on all fours with this passage. Furthermore, the interrogative form of sentence is uncalled for and rhetorically premature in the sentence *decernite . . . profuit*: but the irony of that sentence leads up naturally to the interrogatives which follow. F², and the new Oxford Text read *at quem* (interr.) *dignitas sua defendet, cum praefecto urbis non profuerit?*

² Med. reads *ferat*, a variety quite in the Tac. style.

³ These words of course are spoken in bitter irony, as a slave could have no wrongs, as he had no rights, either of property or otherwise.

imagine that a slave could have resolved to kill his master
 2 without letting fall one angry or incautious word? Grant
 that he kept his own counsel; that he had secretly provided
 himself with a weapon: could he have passed through
 the watch, opened the chamber-door, carried in a light,
 3 and accomplished the deed, unknown to everybody? Crime
 betrays itself in divers ways: if slaves tell what they
 know, we may live in safety, guarded by their fears,
 though there be but one of us among a multitude; and
 in fine, if we have wicked men around us and have to die,
 we shall not die unavenged.¹

4 Our ancestors mistrusted their slaves,² though they were
 born on the same ground, and in the same house, with
 themselves, and had become objects of affection from their
 5 birth; but now that we have all nations in our households
 —men whose rites are not our rites, who worship foreign
 Gods, or no Gods at all—no power but fear can hold down
 6 these offscourings of humanity.³ But some innocent men,
 you say, will suffer? Yes, and in a defeated army, when
 every tenth man is beaten to death, the brave man draws
 7 the lot with the rest. Some inequality there must be in

¹ The commentators have raised much unnecessary difficulty over this passage: see F.'s note. They do not always remember that Tacitus wrote for intelligent readers. The language is highly compressed, but the thought is neither ambiguous nor contradictory. The words '*servi si prodant*' do not mean 'if slaves actually betray plots,' in which case there would be no point in saying that the master would be safe; but 'if we can depend upon their doing so,' 'if it is their custom to do so,' 'if the law encourages or secures their doing so, then we can live in safety.' And there is no real contradiction between *si pereundum sit* and *agere*, though there is a confusion of time. The sense is, 'And, if we have to perish in the end, we can live on meanwhile among our guilty household as persons not unavenged,' i.e. 'as persons who will

not be unavenged when the time comes': or 'with the certainty that we shall be avenged.' The condition of being *non inulti* is attributed to them, as a permanent condition, during their lives, instead of as one that could only attach to them after death. A modern writer would have said 'with the consciousness that we shall be avenged'; but here, as elsewhere, with his usual indifference to tenses, Tacitus makes his statements absolutely, without regard to time, and draws no distinction between the fact and the consciousness of the fact.

² Festus (p. 261 Müller) gives the motto *quot servi, tot hostes*.

³ Seneca speaks of *agmina exoletorum per nationes coloresque descripta* (Epp. 95, 24): a nomenclator had to be employed to tell their master their names (Plin. H. N. xxxiii. 1, 6).

every notable punishment; but what is hard for the few is compensated by the benefit to the whole.

No single speaker ventured to oppose Cassius; 45
but he was met by cries of dissent, excited by pity
for the number or age or sex of the victims, and by
the undoubted fact that the majority were innocent.
Nevertheless the party voting for capital punish- 2
ment prevailed. The order, however, could not be
obeyed because of the mob, who had armed them-
selves with stones and torches;¹ whereupon Nero 3
issued an edict rebuking the people, and lined with
soldiers the whole route along which the condemned
men had to pass to execution.

Cingonius Varro had proposed in addition that 4
the freedmen who had been in the house at the time
should be deported from Italy; but this was vetoed
by the Emperor. He had resisted appeals to mercy;
but he would not increase the severity of the old law.

Tarquitius Priscus was condemned for extortion 46
in this year at the instance of the Bithynians. This
greatly delighted the Fathers, who remembered how
Tarquitius had accused his own Proconsul Statilius
Taurus.²

The census of the Gallic Provinces was carried 2
out by Quintus Volusius, Sextius Africanus and
Trebellius Maximus. The two former, being both
of noble families, looked down upon Trebellius; but
their jealousy of each other served to exalt him
above them both.

¹ This certainly lends some support to the conjecture *obsessus* in chap. 42, 2; but there is a difference between a mob besieging the Senate itself during a debate, and impeding outside the execution of an obnoxious resolution.

² The story of this accusation is given

on xii. 59. Statilius Taurus was condemned; but the Senate punished the accuser by expulsion, in spite of the influence of Agrippina, in disgust at his treachery in accusing a proconsul under whom he had served as *legatus*.

In spite of some dissent, and a popular outburst, all the slaves are executed.

Condemnation of Tarquitius Priscus.

Census of Gaul taken.

47 This year saw the death of Memmius Regulus, a man of high influence, character, and reputation, and as illustrious as a man may be under the shadow of Imperial grandeur; so much so that when Nero fell ill, and the flatterers around declared that, if anything happened to him, the Empire would end with him, he replied that, *The State had a reserve behind*: and on their asking to whom especially he referred, he gave the name of Memmius Regulus.¹ And yet Regulus lived on after that, protected by his unobtrusive life, and by the fact that his nobility was new and his wealth not such as to excite cupidity.

Death of
Memmius
Regulus.

3 A Gymnasium² was opened in this year by Nero, when a distribution of oil was made, on a scale of Greek lavishness, both to Knights and Senators.

A Gymna
sium
opened.

A.D. 62. CONSULS PUBLIUS MARIUS AND
LUCIUS AFINIUS.

48 In this year the Praetor Antistius, whose presumptuous conduct during his Tribunate I have already mentioned, wrote some libellous verses upon the Emperor which he read aloud at a large banquet in the house of Ostorius Scapula. For this he was accused of Majesty by Cossutianus Capito,³ who had recently been raised to senatorial rank on the entreaty of his father-in-law Tigellinus.⁴

Antistius
accused of
Majesty.

¹ Memmius had been consul 31 years before (A.D. 31).

² This splendid gymnasium, situated on the Campus Martius, was intended for use during the Neronian Games.

³ The notorious accuser, who ultimately accused Thrasea and his friends (xvi. 28, 1 and 33, 4). See also xi. 6, 5.

⁴ This is the first mention of this notorious favourite of Nero's: he had become *praefectus vigilum*, and was soon to be promoted to the command

of the Praetorians. See below chap. 51, 5 and 6. He is quoted by Juvenal as the typical instance of a corrupt favourite whom none might dare to attack (*Pone Tigellinum, taeda lucebis in illa*, etc. Juv. i. 155); and Tac. outdoes himself in describing his career and character in Hist. i. 72: *Sofonius Tigellinus, obscuris parentibus, foeda pueritia, impudica senecta, praefecturam vigilum et praetorii, et alia praemia virtutum, quia velocius erat vitiis adeptus,*

In spite of conflicting evidence, he is condemned to death.

This law of Majesty¹ was now for the first time 3 revived; not so much, it was supposed, for the ruin of Antistius, as to gain for the Emperor the credit of using his tribunician veto² to save a man condemned by the Senate. Ostorius deposed that he had not 4 heard anything; but credit was given to the hostile witnesses, and Junius Marullus, Consul-designate, moved that Antistius should be deposed from his Praetorship and put to death after the ancient fashion.³ To this motion everyone assented but Paetus Thrasea; 5 who after many compliments to Caesar, and severe censure of Antistius, declared himself as follows:—

Paetus Thrasea appeals for a lighter sentence;

*Under a Prince so gracious, and in a Senate free from any compulsion, there was no need to inflict all the punishment which the crime deserved. The hangman 6 and the halter were things of the past; the law had now provided punishments which could be inflicted without cruelty on the part of the judges, and without leaving a stain upon the present generation. Let Antistius suffer 7 confiscation and be put upon an island, where the longer he should spin out his guilty life, the greater would be his misery, the more signal the example afforded of the public clemency.*⁴

he carries his motion;

Thrasea's freedom broke down the servility of 49 others; and when the Consul put the question to the vote, his motion was carried with but few

crudelitatem mox, deinde avaritiam, et virilia scelera exercuit, corrupto ad omne facinus Nerone.

¹ For the law of *Maiestas* see nn. on i. 72, 3 and 73, 1. This potent engine of despotism, so cruelly used by Tiberius, had been allowed to slumber since his time; Gaius had even pretended to abolish it (Dio, lxi. 15, 3).

² The *tribunicia potestas* gave the emperor power to put his veto on any act of any magistrate or of any court of justice or other public body. He thus could use it either to pardon or to

condemn. See iv. 30, 1 and nn. in vol. i. pp. 3 and 4.

³ *i.e.* by scourging to death: see ii. 32, 5.

⁴ This speech of Thrasea's is very similar in tone to that delivered by M. Lepidus in defence of C. Lutorius in A.D. 21 (iii. 50). The argument in the concluding sentence is the same as that advanced by Caesar when opposing a death sentence on the Catilinarian conspirators. To prolong their life, he said, would be to prolong their punishment, whereas death would end it.

dissentients. Among these, none equalled Aulus Vitellius¹ in adulation: he poured abuse upon all the best men in the house; but as is the way with craven souls, he never answered back when
 2 challenged. The Consuls, however, did not dare to confirm the decree, and wrote to inform Caesar of
 3 the general opinion. After a struggle between shame and vexation, Nero at last replied as follows:—

*Antistius, he wrote, unprovoked, had grossly insulted the Emperor; the Fathers had been called upon to punish that offence, and they should have applied an adequate
 4 penalty. He would not disallow their leniency; nay, he would not have permitted them to be severe. Let them decide as they thought best; they might have acquitted Antistius had they so chosen.*²

5 Clearly as these and similar phrases betrayed Nero's annoyance, they neither induced the Consuls to withdraw their motion, nor Thræsea to give up his opinion, nor yet the rest to go back upon their resolution. Some did not wish to appear to be placing the Emperor in an odious light; the majority felt safe in their numbers; but Thræsea was supported by his own dauntless soul, and the resolve to live up to his reputation.³

50 A similar charge proved fatal to Fabricius Veiento,⁴ who in a document which he styled a will had inserted

to which Nero gives a reluctant assent.

Condemnation of Fabricius Veiento.

¹ The future Emperor Vitellius. He was son of the L. Vitellius of whom we have heard so much as the vigorous commander in the East under Tiberius (vi. 32, 5-7, etc.), and as a sycophantic courtier under Claudius (xi. 2, 4, etc.). He had been consul in the year 48 (xi. 23, 1).

² Nero treats the Senate with greater forbearance than Tiberius did; and the Senate maintains its opinion with greater tenacity than it would have ventured to show with that emperor. See v. 5, 1-2.

³ These words were probably not intended to convey any censure upon Thræsea for vanity. On the contrary, Thræsea was acting up to the highest Stoical ideal in caring more for his future reputation than for his present safety. That is the idea which runs through the whole account given by Tacitus in Book xv. of the deaths of Seneca, Lucan, and others after the Pisonian conspiracy.

⁴ Probably the same person who became infamous as an accuser under Domitian (Juv. iv. 113; iii. 185).

many gross attacks upon the Fathers and the priests.¹ His accuser Tullius Geminus added that he had trafficked in the Emperor's favours, and sold promises of public office. This induced Nero to take up the case himself.² He found Veiento guilty, expelled him from Italy, and ordered his books to be burnt. These were eagerly run after and read, so long as it was dangerous to possess them: the prohibition removed, they were forgotten.³

Death of Burrus;

But while the state of public affairs grew worse every day, the means of alleviation diminished. For now Burrus died; whether from disease or poison was uncertain. The fact that there was a swelling in his throat, and that his breathing was difficult at the last, pointed to illness; but most persons affirmed that Nero had ordered his throat to be smeared with a poisonous drug by way of remedy; that Burrus detected the crime; and that when Nero came to see him, he turned his face away, and made no other answer to his inquiries but this:—*With me, all is well.*

some thought he was poisoned.

He is profoundly lamented.

His death created a profound and abiding regret among the citizens; they remembered his merits, and contrasted them with the blameless inertia of one, and the notorious evil living of the other, of his two successors. For Nero now put the Praetorians under

¹ It had apparently become a custom, which Augustus refused to prohibit (Suet. 56), for persons to give vent in their wills to pent-up hatreds against the princeps or others whom they would not have ventured to attack during their lives (vi. 38, 2). In this case F. is no doubt right in supposing that the will was fictitious, circulated for the sole purpose of ventilating the libels it contained.

² This was apparently a violation of

what Nero had promised in his opening speech (xiii. 14, 2).

³ These words recall the splendid epigram of Cremutius Cordus, *namque spreta exolescunt; si irascere, agnita videntur* (iv. 34, 8); as well as the comment of Tacitus upon the burning of the books of Cremutius, *nam contra punitis ingenii gliscit auctoritas* (iv. 35, 7).

⁴ The emphasis of course is laid upon the *ego*: 'I am well enough.'

two commanders, Faenius Rufus¹ and Sofonius Tigellinus;² choosing the former because he had gained the popular favour by managing the corn supply without profit to himself, the latter because of the scandalous profligacy of his past life. Each lived up to his established reputation. Tigellinus gained the greater hold over Nero, and was admitted to share his most private debaucheries; whereas Rufus earned his displeasure by gaining favour with the soldiers and the people.

Division of the Praetorian command between Faenius and Tigellinus.

52 The death of Burrus destroyed the influence of Seneca. Good counsels lost half their strength now that one of their champions was gone; and Nero stooped to advisers of a baser sort. These persons attacked Seneca with various charges:—*His wealth was immense,*³ they said, *too great for any private station,*⁴ *and was increasing every day; he was bidding for popular favour; his gardens were more beautiful, his villas more magnificent, than those of the Emperor himself.*

Seneca's influence declines;

3 They accused him also of claiming for himself alone the gift of eloquence:—*And ever since Nero had taken a fancy for poetry, he was for ever writing verses.*
4 *He openly condemned the prince's favourite recreations, depreciating his dexterity as a charioteer, and deriding his performances when he sang. How long was Rome to be devoid of all distinction save what was conferred on her by Seneca? Nero's boyish days were over; he had come to man's estate. Let him shake off his pedagogue; and look to his own accomplished ancestors for instruction.*

he is attacked by his enemies.

¹ See xiii. 22, 1. Faenius joined in Piso's conspiracy, but met his death feebly, 'carrying his lamentations even into his will' (xvi. 68, 2).

² See on chap. 48, 2.

³ On the wealth of Seneca, see xiii. 42, 6, where Suillius taunts him with possessing 300 million sesterces; he

was among those who received extravagant presents from Nero after the death of Britannicus (xiii. 18, 1). See n. of Mayor on Juv. x. 16.

⁴ The word *privatus* was usually applied to any one not a magistrate, as in iv. 19, 2; here it is used in contrast to the princes, as in xi. 31, 3.

He seeks
an inter-
view with
Nero.

Seneca was not ignorant of these indictments. 53
They were reported to him by men who had still
some sense of honour left; and as Nero avoided his
company more and more, he sought and obtained an
interview, when he thus began:—

He prays
for retire-
ment,

*It is now fourteen years, Caesar, since I was brought 2
into touch with your fortunes; it is eight since you assumed
the sovereignty. During these years you have heaped upon
me such distinctions, such wealth, that nothing is wanting
to my happiness save moderation in the use of it.*

*May I cite great examples, taken not from my station,
but from yours? Your great-great-grandfather Augustus 3
allowed Marcus Agrippa to retire to Mytilene;¹ he per-
mitted Gaius Maecenas to enjoy as it were the repose of
travel within the city.² The former as his comrade in
arms, the latter after being tossed on that sea of troubles at
Rome, had received great rewards, though none too great
for their deserts. In return for your bounty, what else 4
could I offer you but learning?—learning reared indeed
in the shade, so to say, but which has brought me fame,
and the high recompense of being deemed to have borne
my part in the training of your early years.*

*You have poured favours upon me without number, 5
and wealth untold; so that I often thus ponder within
myself:—‘Can it be I—I of equestrian and provincial
birth³—that am counted among the first men of the State?’*

¹ This refers to what happened in the year B.C. 23, when the young Marcellus was being brought forward with a view to the succession. Agrippa had been given an important Eastern command, with proconsular power; but instead of exercising it in person, he left it to his legate, and retired to Mytilene; possibly in dudgeon, possibly to remove causes of suspicion against himself. Whatever the cause, he returned to public life on the death of Marcellus during the course of the same year.

² The retirement of Maecenas from public affairs during the last years of his life seems to have been due to offence on the part of Augustus at his having communicated to his wife Terentia his knowledge of the plot of her brother Terentius Varro Murena (Suet. Aug. 66). See Hor. Od. ii. 10, 1, and Verrall's *Studies on Horace*, pp. 11–86.

³ At Corduba: his father was a rhetorician, and became an *eques* on migrating to Rome.

Harvey!

Has my new blood gained distinction out among nobles
 6 who have long rolls of honour to display? Where is that
 former spirit of thine, content with little? Is it thou—
 Seneca—that art laying out these gardens?¹ that walkest
 so proudly through these suburban domains, revelling in
 thy broad acres and in wealth invested everywhere?—
 One excuse only comes to me: it was not for me to stand
 out against gifts of yours.

54 But we have now filled up the measure, you, of what
 a prince can give to a friend; I, of what a friend may
 accept from his prince; anything more augments ill-will.
 2 And though ill-will, like all else that is human, reaches
 not to your high place, it lies heavy upon me, and I need
 3 help to bear it. Were I weary from war or wandering, I
 should crave a staff to support me; and so now that I
 have grown old in this journey of life, and am unequal to
 the lightest of labours: now that I can no longer bear the
 4 burden of my riches, I ask for succour. Bid your Pro-
 curators take charge of my fortune, and count it as part
 of your own. Not that I need subside into poverty:
 but that, giving up the things which now dazzle me with
 their glare, I may restore to my spirit the hours set apart
 5 for care of gardens or of villas. You have strength and
 to spare; you have approved yourself as supreme ruler all
 these years;² we older friends may ask for³ rest. And

and to be
 allowed to
 give up his
 fortune to
 Nero

¹ Juv. speaks of Seneca's magnificent gardens: *magnum Senecae praedivitis hortos* (x. 16).

² The text of Med. *tot per annos visum imperii regimen* is difficult; Halm and others insert *summi* before *fastigii*, which seems unnecessary; others change *visum* into *nixum*. But *visum* may mean 'you have seen, you have observed, the management of supreme power all these years'; and it may also mean 'has been watched,' *i.e.* 'has been seen and approved.' Analogous to this are such phrases as *tumulum iterare haud visum*, 'it was

not thought good' (ii. 7, 4); *Senecae et Burro visum alterum concedere* (xiv. 14, 3).

³ I read with Halm and others *quietem reposcere*, instead of the Med. reading *quietem respondere*. Or. retains that reading, and attempts to explain it; 'we make a return to you of quiet': *i.e.* 'we can guarantee our living quiet peaceful lives, not joining in any intrigues.' But leaving aside the doubtful Latinity, it would be a very bold return for past favours received from supreme power to promise to abstain from agitation.

this too shall go to swell your fame, that you have raised to the highest places men who could tolerate the lower.

Nero gives
a crafty
and evasive
reply,

To this Nero replied as follows:—

55

That I can respond on the instant to your studied discourse, is the first of your gifts to me : it was from you that I learnt how to express, not only the prepared thought, but also that of the moment. My great-great-grandfather 2 Augustus did indeed grant to Agrippa and to Maecenas a rest after their labours ; but it was when he had reached the age, and the position, which could assure to them every-thing, of whatsoever kind, that he had given them : and he never deprived either of them of benefits once bestowed. Their services had been rendered in the wars and perils 3 amid which Augustus had passed his youth ; and had I been a man of war, your valour and your arms would not have failed me. You gave me what my needs at the 4 time demanded : you nurtured my boyhood, and then my youth, with your wisdom, your counsels and your maxims.

Your benefits to me will last as long as life itself ; the 5 gardens, the money, the villas I gave you, are at the beck and call of fortune. Great as these gifts may seem, many 6 have reaped greater for services not equal to your own. I feel shame to tell of freedmen who are wealthier than 7 you ; I even blush that you, the dearest of my friends, do not surpass all in fortune.

professes
the highest
esteem for
Seneca, but
declines his
offer.

You are still in the vigour of life, fit for the business 56 of State and its rewards, and my days of rule are but beginning : unless perchance you rank yourself below Vitellius, who has thrice been Consul, or put my bounty below that of Claudius, as though it could not confer upon 2 you as much as Volusius¹ amassed by a life of parsimony. Why not still hold me up if I stumble on the slippery

¹ Remarkd upon in xiii. 30, 4 as having lived unmolested to a ripe old age in spite of his great wealth.

paths of youth? or with yet deeper devotion support and
 3 guide my manhood? ¹ If you give back to me this wealth;
 if you desert your prince: it will not be your moderation,
 or your longing for ease, that will fill men's mouths, but
 4 my avarice, and your dread of my cruelty. And though
 all praise were given to you for moderation, yet it benefits
 not the wise man to reap glory for himself from that which
 brings dishonour to his friend.

5 These words Nero followed up with kisses and
 embraces; being formed alike by nature and by habit
 to veil his hatred under treacherous caresses.
 6 Seneca closed the interview, as all colloquies with
 rulers are closed, by an expression of thanks; but
 he gave up the habits of his former greatness. He
 put an end to his crowded levees; he dismissed his
 suite of followers, and he seldom showed himself in
 the city, as though he were kept at home by ill-health,
 or by his studies in philosophy.²

7 The downfall of Seneca paved the way for that of
 Rufus Faenius, who was accused of friendship with
 Agrippina. Tigellinus grew more powerful every

Seneca
 changes his
 mode of
 life.

Tigellinus
 poisons
 Nero's
 mind
 against
 Plautus
 and Sulla.

¹ A remarkable passage from its somewhat harsh combination of metaphors. 'The slippery time of youth' (*lubricum adolescentiae*) is said 'to swerve' (*declinat*: *i.e.* from what is right) instead of the more natural idea 'to stumble.' 'Quin revocas,' 'Why do you not call me back?' *i.e.* from error or declension: the natural idea suggested by *lubricum* would rather be 'Hold me up.' *Ornatum* is taken by F. and other edd. along with *subsidio*; it seems better to take the words *ornatum robur* as one idea, in antithesis to *lubricum adolescentiae*, *robur* meaning 'the strength or age of manhood,' which is *ornatum*, 'fully equipped,' or 'furnished,' *i.e.* no longer immature. Cp. *Cymbeline*, i. 5, 10: 'You speak of him when he was less furnished than now he is, with that which makes him both without and within.' *Impensius* means 'with still greater care or earnest-

ness': as *tanto impensius pro Tiberio niti* (i. 34, 1), and *eo impensius precor ne* (iii. 16, 6). Lastly, taking *subsidio regis* together, we have a new metaphor, 'Guide by your help.' The whole sense will run thus: 'Why not still help to hold me up on the slippery paths of youth, or with greater care than ever support and guide (me in) my maturer years?' F. takes *ornatum* with *subsidio*, and translates: 'Why not yet more zealously direct my manhood, furnished with your support in reserve (*i.e.* resting on your support as an army on its reserves)?' But *ornatum* in this sense, of something in the background, seems less appropriate.

² In speaking of the will of Seneca (xv. 64, 6), Tac. says that he made it 'in the days of his great wealth': which implies that he had been stripped of some of it before his death.

day; and believing that evil counsels, wherein his sole strength lay, would be more acceptable to Nero if he could secure a hold over him by partnership in crime, he made a study of his fears. So having discovered that the men whom he dreaded most were Plautus¹ and Sulla, the former of whom had lately been removed to Asia, the latter to Gallia Narbonensis, he kept dwelling on their illustrious birth, pointing out how the one was close to the armies of the East, the other to those of Germany:—

He himself, he would say, had no divided aims² like Burrus; he had no thought but for Nero's safety. Vigilance at home might in some sort protect him from plots within the city; but how crush risings at a distance? The name of the Dictator Sulla² had put the two Gauls³ into a ferment; the people of Asia were no less excited³ by the presence of one who had the illustrious Drusus⁴ for his grandsire. Sulla's poverty lent a spur to his ambition; his air of sluggishness was but assumed till he should find an opening for enterprise. Plautus, with his great wealth, made no pretence of longing for retirement. He professed himself an admirer of the ancient Romans; he had adopted the insolent airs, and joined the sect, of the Stoics—those breeders of meddlesome and seditious citizens.

Without loss of a moment, assassins were despatched to Massilia. Arriving there on the sixth day, before Sulla had received any hint of danger, they slew him whilst reclining at table. His head

Sulla assassinated at Marseilles.

¹ For this Rubellius Plautus see chap. 22, 2-5, and xiii. 19, 3. For Sulla (cos. A.D. 52) see nn. on xii. 52, 1 and xiii. 47, 4.

² *i.e.* of the Dictator Sulla.

³ The reading of Lips. *suspensos Asiae populos* has generally been adopted for Med.'s *suspectos*. But if we take the past part. to be equivalent,

as so often in Latin, to an adj. in *bilis*, *suspectos* might well mean 'open to suspicion,' 'to be regarded with suspicion,' on account of the influence which the illustrious name of Drusus might have upon them.

⁴ Drusus, son of Tiberius, whose daughter Julia was the mother of Plautus.

was brought to Rome: Nero scoffed at it as *disfigured by baldness before its time*.

58 To compass the death of Plautus secretly was not so easy. He had many friends anxious for his safety; and the length of the journey over land and sea gave time for rumours. A story was made up that he had fled to Corbulo, who was at that time in command of great armies, and who would be in the forefront of danger if everyone who was alike blameless and illustrious was to be put to death. It was even reported that *the province of Asia had risen in arms to support Plautus; the soldiers sent to commit the crime were too few, and had no stomach for the work: finding themselves unable to carry out their orders, they had joined in the revolt*.

Various rumours about Plautus;

3 Indolent credulity added its wonted exaggeration to these vain rumours. Helped by favouring winds, a freedman of Plautus outstripped the Centurion, and brought him the following message from his father-in-law Lucius Antistius: ¹—

his father-in-law urges him to resist.

4 *Let him escape an inglorious end while there was still a resource open. Compassion for his great name would attract good men, and bring bold spirits to his side. Meanwhile let him neglect no means of safety. If he could beat off the sixty soldiers (for that was the number coming), many things might happen, eventuating possibly in war, before the news could get back to Nero and another force be sent out. And finally, if he failed thus to save his life,*
5 *he would have nothing worse to suffer by taking the bold course than by playing the poltroon.*

59 But these counsels made no impression upon Plautus: whether it was that, unarmed and exiled as he was, he felt helpless; or that he was worn out by

Plautus declines to act, and is slain by the Centurion.

¹ Cos. A.D. 55 (xiii. 11, 1).

the suspense; or that love of wife¹ and children led him to hope that Nero would deal gently with them if his fears were not aroused. Others say that he received a second message from his father-in-law telling him there was no cause for alarm; while his philosophic preceptors, the Greek Coeranus and the Etruscan Musonius, advised him rather to face death bravely than live a life of hazard and anxiety. He was found at mid-day stripped for exercise. The Centurion slew him as he was, in the presence of the eunuch Pelago; a person whom Nero had put in command of the Centurion and the maniple, just as a slave might be set over some Sultan's satellites. The head was brought to Nero: when he saw it he exclaimed—and I give his very words—‘*Why [did no one tell me that Plautus had so big a nose?]*’²

The terrors which had caused Nero to put off his marriage with Poppaea being thus allayed, he prepared now to hurry it on, and to put away his wife Octavia, whom he hated, in spite of her excellent conduct, both on her father's account, and because of her popularity with the people. He informed the Senate by letter of the deaths of Sulla and Plautus; not acknowledging that they had been killed, but describing both men as agitators, and dwelling on his own ceaseless solicitude for the welfare of the Commonwealth. On that pretext, a thanksgiving was decreed—as well as the cruel but harmless mockery of removing Sulla and Plautus from the Senate.

¹ Her name was Antistia Pollitta (see chap. 22, 5).

² There is here a manifest loss of words in Med. after the words ‘*Cur inquit Nero*’: but the substance of Nero's brutal speech can be recovered as above from Dio (lxii. 14, 1).

³ The difficult Tacitean phrase *gra-*

vioribus iam ludibriis quam malis must, I think, be explained as above: ‘more grievous as a mockery than from the injury which it inflicted.’ F. thinks this weak: but it surely gives a more natural sense than to speak of ‘the mockery of this vote being “more revolting” than the murder itself.’

He puts away Octavia on a false charge.

60 On receiving this decree of the Fathers, and finding that all his crimes were accounted virtues, Nero put away Octavia on the plea of barrenness, and then married Poppaea. Having long exercised an ascendancy over Nero, first as his mistress, and now as his wife, this woman incited one of Octavia's attendants to accuse her of an amour with a slave. The victim fixed upon was an Alexandrian, called Eucærus, an accomplished flute-player. Some of Octavia's maid-servants, on being put to the torture, were overcome by the pain and confirmed the false accusation; but the majority stood firm in asserting the innocence of their mistress. One of these, on being pressed by Tigellinus, told him that *there was nothing in Octavia so unchaste as his own mouth.*

5 Nevertheless she was put away, at first under the form of an ordinary divorce,¹ the house of Burrus and the estates of Plautus—ill-omened gifts—being presented to her; she was afterwards sent down under military custody to Campania. Hence a loud and open outburst of indignation from the populace, who little reck what they do, and find safety in their insignificance. Professing to be turned from his shameful purpose by this demonstration, Nero recalled Octavia.²

An outburst of popular indignation makes Nero hesitate;

¹ That is, she was to have an ordinary legal divorce, without any charge of adultery being raised against her. In the case of a member of the Imperial family, such a charge, as we have seen (ii. 50, 1), would have rendered her liable to a prosecution for *maiestas*. The house of Burrus (perhaps left to Nero by will) and the confiscated property of Plautus would be given her in lieu of the dowry (*dos*) due to her on divorce.

² This final sentence cannot be satisfactorily constructed from the reading of Med. *his . . . quamquam Nero paenitentia flagitii coniugem revocavit Octa-*

viam. Halm and most edd. read *tamquam* for *quamquam*, and there is evidently a lacuna after *his*, either of a word agreeing with *Nero*, such as *motus* or *commotus*; or of some word agreeing with *his*, indicating some measures taken by the populace. In the next chap. § 4, the words *arma illa adversus principem sumpta* suggest something more than mere 'complaints' (*questus*). Nipp. and F. change *revocavit* to *revocavit*, to go with *tamquam*, on the ground that the words in chap. 61, 3 (*ne . . . Nero mutaretur*), show that Nero never did actually recall Octavia. But those very words show that Poppaea

Thereupon joyous crowds climbed the Capitol, 61
and revered the Gods once more. They over-
turned the statues of Poppaea, and carried those of
Octavia shoulder-high, crowned with flowers, and set
them up in the Forum and in the temples. Praise 2
was poured upon the Emperor for taking her back: 1
a clamorous mob invaded the Palatium, till they were
hustled and driven out at the point of the sword by
a company of soldiers. Everything that had been 3
overthrown in the riot was put back in its place, and
Poppaea was restored to her honours. Implacable
as ever, and now maddened by the fear of mob
violence, or of Nero's giving way before it, she
threw herself down at his feet:—

*It was no question now, she said, of contending for
her marriage, though that was dearer to her than life:
but even her life was in danger from the clients and slaves
of Octavia, who had taken to themselves the name of the
people, and had dared to do in peace what might scarce be
done in time of war. Those arms had been taken up 4
against the Emperor. Nothing but a leader had been
wanting: and that would readily be found once a move
was made, if only the woman whose nod could raise
tumults from afar should leave Campania, and come in
person to the city. And what had been her own crime? 5
What wrong had she done to any? Was it that she was*

thought that Nero was hesitating; *revocavit* may well refer to a pretended or temporary recall, to his house or otherwise, to gain time with the mob; and finally *revocavit* would not be the natural tense after *tamquam*. It is best, therefore, reading *tamquam*, which has some MS. authority, to suppose that the word *Nero* has got cut out of its place—perhaps inserted as a gloss—and that the meaning is 'moved by these demonstrations Nero sent a message of recall to Octavia as though he repented of his wickedness.' There would be no occasion for

the joyful demonstration mentioned in the words that follow unless Nero had taken some step interpreted as the restoration of Octavia.

¹ There is no necessity for changing the text of Med. *itur etiam in principis laudes repetitum venerantium*. But a not impossible emendation for *repetitum* is *repetitam* (Heins.): 'praising or thanking (him for) her recall: the fact that she had been recalled being the object of their praise or congratulation. This would get rid of the unknown substantive *repetitus*.

the riot
sup-
pressed.

Passionate
appeal of
Poppaea
to Nero.

about to present a true heir to the house of the Caesars? Or would the Roman people prefer to see the offspring of an Egyptian flute-player thrust into imperial grandeur? 6 In fine, if Nero's needs so required, let him take Octavia back to lord it over him of his own free will, rather 7 than perforce; or else let him see to his own safety. Just punishments and gentle remedies had quelled the commotion at its beginning; and if all hope of Octavia's becoming Nero's wife were gone, some other husband would be found for her.

62 Such language, so blended as to appeal alike to his anger and to his fears, inflamed and alarmed Nero. Nothing came of the insinuations about the slave; they had been frustrated by the evidence of 2 the maid-servants. It was resolved therefore to extort a confession of adultery from some person upon whom could be foisted a charge of treason also. 3 The man thought best for this purpose was Anicetus, the slayer of Agrippina, and Commandant, as above mentioned, of the fleet at Misenum. Received into some slight favour after the commission of that crime, he had become the object of a deadly hatred afterwards: for the sight of one who has been the minister in one's evil deeds is a perpetual reproach.

Nero accordingly summoned Anicetus to his presence, and reminded him of his former services:—

He was the one man, he said, who had saved his prince from the plot laid for him by his mother: he had now the chance of conferring on him an equal favour 5 by relieving him of a hated wife. No violence, no weapon, need be used; he had only to confess to adultery with Octavia. His reward should be great, though for the moment secret; and a pleasant retreat would be provided for him. To refuse was death.

A fresh false accusation is trumped up against Octavia,

to which Anicetus lends himself.

Devoid of natural feeling,¹ all wickedness made 6
easy to him by his past, Anicetus concocted a story
which went even beyond his orders, and which he
related to a conclave of Nero's friends. He was then
banished to Sardinia, where he lived in affluent exile
and died in course of nature.

Nero issued an edict announcing, as ascertained 63
facts, that Octavia had tampered with the Prefect, in
the hope of bringing the fleet over to her cause; and
that being conscious of misconduct she had procured
abortion—forgetting that not long before he had
accused her of sterility. He then shut her up in the
island of Pandateria.²

Never did exile excite greater compassion in those 2
who came to see her. Some still remembered how
Agrippina³ had been put away by Tiberius, and
more recently Julia by Claudius; and yet those ladies 3
were of full age; they had both had some joy in
life, and could relieve their present sufferings by
the recollection of a happier past. But Octavia's 4
wedding day had been to her a day of mourning. She
had been taken into a home in which she had found
nothing but woe; in which first her father, and
then her brother, had been carried off by poison:⁴

¹ The phrase *insita vaecordia* is difficult; the words *vaecordia* or *vaecors* occur nowhere else in Tac. with exactly the same meaning. The particle *vae* (or *ve*) has either an intensitive or a negative force; and *vaecors* is usually employed of some excited state of the brain (the Romans said 'of the heart'), as in xiii. 44, 2 (*amore vaecors* 'madly in love'); ii. 46, 1, *vaecordem Arminium*). In i. 39, 3 (*avidos et conscientia vaecordes*) and Hist. ii. 22, 6 (*scelere et metu vaecordes*) it seems to mean 'stupefied'; in ii. 30, 1, of the books of Libo, 'senseless' or 'silly'; in the present passage *vaecordia* denotes an inborn 'senselessness' as much moral as intel-

lectual; a natural derangement or deficiency in the sense of right and wrong. We might call it a want of conscience; only the ancients had no 'consciences' in our sense of the term. The Greek ἀγνωμοσύνη has a very similar meaning.

² It was in this island that Julia the daughter of Augustus was imprisoned (i. 53, 1).

³ *i.e.* Agrippina the elder, mother of the Empress Agrippina.

⁴ Her father Claudius having been murdered in the year after her marriage, her brother Britannicus in the year after that.

Octavia
banished
to Panda-
teria;

her pitiable
condition
there.

a home in which the maid had been preferred to the mistress, in which Poppaea had been wedded only to compass the destruction of the wife, and she herself, last of all, subjected to an accusation more grievous than death itself.

64 And thus the poor girl, in her twentieth¹ year, found herself among soldiers and Centurions; and though her present plight presaged that her days were numbered, she could not yet resign herself to die. Not many days afterwards the fatal order came. In vain she protested that she was no wife now, but
 2 only Nero's sister; in vain she called upon their common kinsmen that bore the name Germanicus,² and at last even on Agrippina, during whose lifetime her married days had passed without happiness
 3 indeed, but without danger to her life. She was bound with cords, and all her veins were opened; but as terror arrested the flow of blood, and it trickled too slowly out, she was put into a heated
 4 bath, and suffocated. An atrocity more cruel still was added: her head was cut off, carried to Rome, and exhibited to Poppaea.

She is put to death.

5 What boots it to tell how thank-offerings for these things were voted to the temples? For whoever shall learn what happened in those times, whether from me or from any other writer, may rest assured that whensoever banishments or executions were ordered by the Emperor, thanks were offered to the Gods; and that the things which once had betokened joy were now the signal of calamities.

Thanks-givings offered, as in all such cases.

¹ This is a round number, as Octavia was certainly more than twenty years old. She was older than Britannicus, and he was born in A.D. 41.

² *i.e.* Drusus, the father of Claudius, to whom the cognomen of Germanicus

was decreed *ipsi posterisque eius* (Suct. Claud. 1), and Claudius himself, who inherited it; but we are only accustomed to apply the name to his younger brother, the father of Agrippina.

Nevertheless I shall not fail to record such decrees 6
of Senate as devised new forms of adulation, or
reached the lowest depths of servility.

In the same year Nero was believed to have 65
poisoned two of his chief freedmen—Doryphorus, for
having opposed his marriage with Poppaea; Pallas,
for keeping him out of his immense wealth by living
over-long. Seneca was accused secretly by Romanus¹ 2
of being intimate with Piso;² but Seneca retorted
the same charge with more effect upon Romanus.
This alarmed Piso; hence the origin of a vast but
unsuccessful conspiracy against Nero.

¹ Not known; probably himself a freedman.

² As Piso's conspiracy was not yet afoot, his independent character must already have caused his intimates to be looked upon with suspicion.

Dorypho-
rus and
Pallas
poisoned.

BOOK XV.

I DURING this time Vologeses, the Parthian King, on learning the movements of Corbulo, and how the foreign-born prince Tigranes had been imposed upon Armenia, was distracted by opposing considerations. He desired to avenge the insult offered to the majesty of the Arsacids by the expulsion of his brother Tiridates; but the power of Rome, and his respect for the standing treaty with her, held him back. Irresolute by nature, he was hampered also by the revolt of the powerful Hyrcanian people,² and the many wars arising therefrom. While thus wavering, he was roused by the news of a fresh outrage; for Tigranes had issued from Armenia, and was harrying the adjoining tribe of the Adiabeni both longer and further than for purposes of plunder.² This was more than the heads of the tribes could endure:—

Had they fallen into such contempt, they asked, that they were to be invaded, not even by a Roman General,

Indignation in Parthia at the aggression of Tigranes.

Vologeses is urged to take up arms.

¹ The narrative of Eastern affairs is here resumed from xiv. 26, when after his arduous campaign of A.D. 60 Corbulo had left the Roman puppet Tigranes in Armenia, under the protection of a small Roman force, while he himself retired to Syria as governor of that province, the province having been left open to him by the death of Ummidius (xiv. 26, 4).

² What induced Tigranes to make this offensive movement into Adiabene

(for which see xii. 13, 1) is not apparent. He evidently over-estimated the strength of his own position; perhaps he was anxious to show off his prowess to the dissentients of his own country. Vologeses apparently did not desire war; but the pressure of the Hyrcanian revolt was now over, and he could no longer withstand the combined appeals of Monobazus, his own satraps, and his brother Tiridates.

but by an insolent hostage who for all these years had been counted as a slave?

Their indignation was further inflamed by Monabazus, King of the Adiabeni, who asked:—*Where now were they to look for protection, and to whom? Armenia was gone; the border land was going; if Parthia gave no help, Rome's yoke would lie less heavily on a surrendering, than on a conquered, foe.*

More urgent still were the silent or subdued reproaches of the dethroned Tiridates:—*Great empires were not held together by inaction, but by the conflict of men and arms; in affairs of state might was right; a private house might be proud to hold its own, but a King's glory was to fight for what was another's.*

He summons a council,

Moved by these appeals, Vologeses summoned a Council, and having placed Tiridates by his side, spoke as follows:—

When this my brother, born of the same father, yielded to me the highest place because of my years, I put him on the throne of Armenia, which ranks third among our seats of power: for Pacorus¹ had already taken possession of Media.² And methought I had done well to arrange the affairs of our house thus peacefully, rather than keep up our old fraternal feuds and contests. But the Romans will not have it so; and though they have never broken the peace without disaster, they are breaking it again to their own destruction now. I could have wished—I deny it not—to keep by right what my fathers won, rather than by shedding of blood; to gain by the strength of my cause rather than by arms. But what I have lost by tarrying I will make good by valour. Your strength, your renown,

¹ His other brother: mentioned below in chaps. 14, 1 and 31, 1.

² Never before had a Parthian king assumed so overbearing a position as

to claim both Media and Armenia as appanages of the royal Parthian house.

are unimpaired;¹ to these you have added a name for moderation also—a virtue which not the loftiest of men may disregard, and which is held in honour by the Gods.

5 With that he bound the diadem round the head of Tiridates; and giving over to the noble Monaeses a body of horse that were ready to hand—being the customary royal escort—together with an auxiliary force of Adiabeni, he ordered him to expel Tigranes from Armenia, while he himself, after settling his differences with the Hyrcani,² called out his reserves and his whole warlike resources for an attack upon the Roman provinces.

resolves to reinstate Tiridates, and prepares for war with Rome.

3 No sooner did Corbulo receive certain intelligence of these events, than he despatched two legions³ under Verulanus Severus and Vettius Bolanus⁴ to the support of Tigranes; but as having a war to wage was more to his liking than to wage it,⁵ he gave them secret instructions to act deliberately and not
2 hurry matters. To Nero he wrote that, *Armenia needed a General of her own for her defence; in the event*

Corbulo prepares at once to succour Tigranes and to defend Syria.

¹ The Parthians had in fact looked on, biding their time, while Corbulo had been wearing out the Roman Army, and weakening the Armenians, by his triumphal campaigns through Armenia.

² This suggests that he would have had no difficulty in settling matters with the Hyrcanians had he so desired.

³ Thus the Roman policy in Armenia had already broken down. It had been based on the idea that Parthia would leave that country unmolested: but no sooner does Corbulo hear of a movement in that quarter than he is obliged to despatch two legions to reinforce the slender garrison left with Tigranes.

⁴ Both these men were officers of distinction. Verulanus had been a trusted officer of Corbulo's (xiv. 26, 1); and Bolanus was subsequently Legate in Britain and Proconsul of Africa. Thus Corbulo seems to have sent his best officers to help Tigranes.

⁵ As we have seen in the case of Britain (xii. 40, 7; xiv. 29, 1 and 39, 5) Tacitus always exhibits a preference for a bold forward policy. It is not necessary to interpret these words as implying a censure of Corbulo, as though he was jealous of any military successes to be gained by others; or as if it were his aim to prolong his command as long as possible without bringing things to a conclusion. Corbulo's career shows that he never failed to act with vigour when vigour was needed. The advice he gave to Tigranes was the best possible advice under the circumstances, and his excellent advice to Nero to appoint a separate commander for Armenia shows no trace of jealousy. If Parthia really meant war, no single army could at once hold Armenia and defend the frontier of the Euphrates, and as Parthia held the inner circle, she could strike at either point as she thought best.

of a Parthian invasion, the more immediate danger would be for Syria. The rest of his legions he posted for the present on the banks of the Euphrates, and raising a tumultuary levy of provincials, he secured all the points of possible hostile ingress. And as water is scarce in those parts, he built forts to protect the wells, and concealed some of the water-courses by heaping them up with sand.

The Parthians under Monaeses besiege Tigranes in Tigranocerta,

While Corbulo was thus preparing for the defence of Syria, Monaeses hurried on so as to arrive before the news of his approach. But he found Tigranes neither uninformed nor unprepared. That prince had occupied Tigranocerta,¹ a city which had a strong garrison, as well as high walls for its defence: besides which the Nicephorius, a stream of no mean width, runs round one part of the walls, while the other part, where there was no river to trust to, was protected by a deep fosse. Within was a Roman force, with stores of supplies; and although in bringing these up, a few of our men, advancing too eagerly, had been surprised and cut off, this mishap had enraged rather than cowed the rest.

but without success.

But the Parthians had no stomach to press home the siege. An occasional discharge of arrows failed to terrify the garrison, and produced no effect. And when the Adiabeni proceeded to bring up scaling-ladders and engines, they were easily driven off, and lost heavily by a sally from within.

¹ For the position of Tigranocerta at the south point of Armenia most accessible to the Parthians, see n. on xii. 50, 2 where see also F.'s n. The definite statement of Tac. in chap. 5, 2 (very probably taken from Corbulo himself) that the city was 37 miles from Nisibis—which still retains its ancient name—makes it certain, if accepted, that the Nicephorius was a tributary of

the Euphrates, and not, as Pliny asserts, of the Tigris. The city 'lay on the Nicephorius river, which is to-day the Zergan, tributary to the Khabur, and so to the Euphrates. . . . Holding that city, Tigranes could defy Vologeses to find entrance into Armenia, and would close the great southern gate of the kingdom to Vologeses,' Henderson, p. 174.

5 These successes notwithstanding, Corbulo thought it well to take his good fortune moderately, and sent an embassy to Vologeses to protest against his attack upon the province:—*The Parthians were besieging the ally and friend of Rome and a garrison of Roman*
 2 *soldiers. If Vologeses did not raise the siege, he would himself advance into the enemy's country.* For this mission the Centurion Casperius was selected, who found the King in the town of Nisibis, distant thirty-seven miles from Tigranocerta, and delivered his message to him with much spirit.

Corbulo sends a mission to Vologeses,

3 Now it had long been a fixed principle with Vologeses to avoid a conflict with Rome; and things
 4 were not going well with him at present. The siege had failed; Tigranes had enough men and supplies for his defence; the attempted assault had been repulsed; one legionary force had been sent into Armenia, another was ready to break in on the Syrian frontier, while his own cavalry were out of condition for want of provender, an invasion of locusts having
 5 eaten up every grassy and leafy thing. Keeping therefore his fears to himself, he professed a conciliatory attitude:—*He would send an embassy to the Roman Emperor to discuss his claims on Armenia and conclude a lasting peace.* He then ordered Monaeses to abandon Tigranocerta, and retired.¹

who withdraws from Armenia,

¹ It is evident from these chapters that Corbulo's original dispositions were excellent. With a sufficient Roman army in Armenia, under an able commander, Armenia was safe. Vologeses was obliged to retire from the siege of Tigranocerta: Corbulo was ready to meet him with the pick of his seasoned army on the Euphrates. What induced Nero or his advisers, just at this juncture, to withdraw the Roman forces from Armenia, we know not. Corbulo's critics (chap. 6, 2) threw the blame on him; more probably

the Roman Government were anxious to withdraw at the earliest opportunity, and imagined that Tigranes would be able to hold his own. But whether Corbulo negotiated the arrangement himself, or acted under orders from Rome, it is evident from the haste with which the Roman force evacuated Armenia that the retirement must have been carried out (as suggested in chap. 6, 1) as part of a bargain with Vologeses. Corbulo no doubt calculated that should the negotiations fail, the reinforced Cappadocian army,

Corbulo's
action is
criticised.

Many thought this a glorious result, due to the 6
fears of the King and the bold attitude of Corbulo ;
others surmised that a secret bargain had been made, 2
whereby hostilities were to cease on both sides, while
Tigranes was to retire from Armenia so soon as
Vologeses should take his departure :—

*Else why had the Roman force been withdrawn from 3
Tigranocerta? Why abandon in peace what had been
maintained in war? Was it better for the troops to have
wintered¹ in the far borders of Cappadocia, in huts
hurriedly set up, than in the capital of a kingdom that
had just been saved? Was it not evident that the conflict 4
had been postponed in order that Vologeses might have
some other General than Corbulo to fight with, and that
Corbulo might run no risk of losing the glory which he
had won through all those years?*

Caesennius
Paetus
appointed
to the
Armenian
command.

For Corbulo, as already mentioned, had asked for 5
a separate commander for the defence of Armenia ;
and Caesennius Paetus² was now reported to be on his
way. On his arrival, the troops were divided between 6
the two Generals. The 4th and 12th legions, as well
as the 5th, which had recently been brought over
from Moesia, were put under the command of Paetus,
together with the auxiliaries from Pontus, Galatia
and Cappadocia ; while the 3rd, the 6th, and the 10th,
together with the former Syrian army, were to remain
with Corbulo. The rest of the troops were to be
divided between the Generals, or used in common,
as occasion might require.

Division of
the forces

But Corbulo was not a man who could brook 7
a rival ; and Paetus, who might well have been

under its new commander, could be
first in the race for Armenia in the
spring.

¹ The tense of *hibernavisse* shows

that these comments were not made till
the following year.

² No doubt the consul of A.D. 60
(xiv. 29, 1).

content to hold the second place, made little of what had been accomplished:—*There had been no slaughter, he kept saying, no plunder; the storming of cities had been in name only: he would impose tribute and conditions on the vanquished, and instead of a phantom king, he would put them under the rule of Rome.*

Boasting
of Paetus.

7 About the same time¹ the envoys of Vologeses, whose mission to the Emperor I have recorded, returned without result, and the Parthians openly
2 took up arms. Paetus accepted the challenge, and entered Armenia with two legions, the 4th being at that time under the command of Funisulanus Vettonianus,² the 12th under Calavius Sabinus. But
3 the omens were unfavourable.³ In crossing the river Euphrates by a bridge, the horse that carried the consular insignia took fright without apparent cause,
4 and bolted to the rear; a victim that was standing by while the winter quarters were being constructed, broke loose when the work was only half done, and
5 leapt over the rampart; and lastly, the soldiers' javelins took fire—a portent which was all the more notable from the fact that our Parthian foe fights with missile weapons.

He enters
Armenia
with two
legions.

The omens
unfavour-
able.

8 Paetus, however, took no account of these omens. Without fortifying properly his winter quarters, and without laying in supplies of corn, he hurried his army across Mount Taurus for the recovery, as he

Ill-advised
strategy of
Paetus.

¹ The events above recorded took place in the year A.D. 61. The envoys returned from their bootless mission in the spring of A.D. 62. Disgusted apparently with the failure of Tigranes, Nero had now resolved, just too late, upon the boldest policy of all—the policy of annexation; and the task of carrying it out was unfortunately entrusted to the new and incompetent Cappadocian commander, Caesennius Paetus.

² See F. for an inscription (C. I. L. iii. 1, 4013) showing the extraordinary number of public offices subsequently held by this person.

³ The crossing of the great frontier river Euphrates would naturally excite emotion; hence the omens mentioned by Plutarch in the crossing of that river by Crassus (Crass. 19, 554), by Tacitus on the crossing by Vitellius (vi. 37, 2 and 3), and in this passage.

proclaimed, of Tigranocerta, and for the devastation of the country which Corbulo had spared.¹ A few ² forts were captured; and some credit and booty would have been gained had Paetus only taken his success modestly, or carefully kept his plunder. But ³ while he was making long marches over country which he could not hold, all the corn which he had captured was spoilt; the approach of winter compelled him to withdraw his army; and as though the war had been brought to a close, he sent a despatch to the Emperor full of fine words, but with nothing to show for them.

Corbulo
secures the
Euphrates
frontier.

Meantime Corbulo placed himself on the Euphrates, ⁹ strengthening the guard always kept upon that river; ² and lest the building of a bridge should be interfered with by the enemy's cavalry, which kept making a great show of force on the plain below, he put upon the river a number of big boats fastened together with planks, and furnished with towers carrying engines and catapults which drove back the barbarians, as the stones and spears which they discharged reached further than the arrows from the opposite side. The ²

¹ The operations of Paetus are almost unintelligible in the curt narrative of Tacitus, who as usual gives no geographical details. Dio is more helpful; and Henderson gives an excellent and probable account of the campaign. Paetus crosses the Euphrates from Cappadocia near Melitene, without waiting for his Moesian legion (the 5th), intending to march on Tigranocerta. He has first to establish his base in order to keep open his communications with Cappadocia; and Henderson considers that Paetus made a strategic blunder in placing his camp at Rhandaia, a spot 40 or 50 miles distant from the crossing over the Euphrates, upon the N. side of the river Murad-Su, instead of in the Kharpuz plain to the S. of it. Leaving his camp behind him only half fortified, he pushed on through the mountain pass that leads

to the upper Tigris, plundering as he went, intending thence to turn S. over the Rubbut Pass to Tigranocerta. But he wore out his troops with a long and ineffectual march; and as winter was approaching he had to return to his quarters at Rhandaia without having accomplished anything. See Henderson, pp. 183-5.

² Corbulo was watching the Euphrates in force with the army of Vologeses before him; and so effectually did he block the passage of that river by establishing himself upon the left bank, that Vologeses changed his whole plans, just as Napoleon did in 1805 when he marched off his entire army across Europe from Boulogne to Austerlitz. Taking advantage of his position on the inner circuit, he marched straight for Armenia, and made for the camp of Paetus at Rhandaia.

bridge was then completed, and the hills on the opposite side were occupied, first by some auxiliary cohorts, and afterwards by a legionary camp: all being done so swiftly, and with such a show of strength, that the Parthians gave up their preparations for invading Syria, and turned all their hopes towards Armenia.

The Parthians turn off to Armenia.

Paetus knew nothing of the coming danger. He had left one of his legions—the 5th—far away in Pontus, and he had weakened the other two by an indiscriminate granting of furloughs, when news arrived that Vologeses was approaching with a large and formidable army.¹

Paetus unprepared;

10 Paetus now called up the 12th legion; but instead of his gaining credit thereby, as he had hoped, for having reinforced his army, this only disclosed its weakness. It was still strong enough, however, to hold the camp; and if Paetus had only stood firmly by his own counsels, or by those of other people, he could have baffled the Parthians by spinning out the war.

2 But instead of that, when his military advisers had screwed up his courage to meet the immediate danger, he again changed his plans for the worse, just for the sake of showing that he needed no man's

3 advice but his own. Protesting that he had not been given ditches and ramparts, but arms and men, wherewith to meet the foe, he quitted his winter quarters

his feeble and vacillating tactics.

¹ Thus Paetus had not even yet brought up all his army, and his force was weakened by furloughs; nevertheless, leaving his camp still unfortified, he went out to meet Vologeses. That king, as Henderson supposes, left Tigranocerta on his right, and made for Diarbekr, crossing the hills which separate the upper Khabur waters (tributary of the Euphrates) from the Upper Tigris. Between Diarbekr and Kharput he would have to cross the

pass of Arghana: this is the pass which Tac. calls Taurus (*Tor* meaning mountain), on the top of which Paetus placed his 3,000 picked infantry. His Pannonian horse he massed on the Kharput plain, that is, on his own side of the pass; then leaving his non-combatants in the neighbouring town or fort of Arsamosata, he himself retired with his main force to his camp at Rhandaia, 25 miles away (see Henderson, pp. 186-7).

and marched out the legions as if intending to give battle; but on losing a Centurion and a few soldiers whom he had sent on to reconnoitre, he lost heart and turned back. Then filled with vain confidence because Vologeses did not press on at once, he posted three thousand picked infantry on the nearest pass over Mount Taurus to stop the King's passage, placing the Pannonian horse, which constituted the main strength of his cavalry, on the adjoining plain. His wife¹ and son he shut up in a fort called Arsamosata with one cohort for their protection: thus dispersing the forces which, if kept together, might well have held their own against the desultory attacks of the enemy. Not until the last moment, they say, did he let Corbulo know that he was hard pressed. But Corbulo made no hurry: the greater the peril, the greater would be the credit of the rescue. Nevertheless he ordered a thousand men from each of his three legions, with eight hundred cavalry, to be ready to march, together with an equal number of auxiliaries.

Vologeses knew that Paetus had beset his line of march with infantry on one side, and with cavalry on the other;² but that made no change in his plans. He frightened off the cavalry by a threat of force, and utterly defeated the legionaries, only a single Centurion, Tarquitiuſ Crescens by name, having the courage to defend the tower which he had to guard. After many sallies, in which all the barbarians who

¹ Thus Paetus did not observe the rule laid down by Valerius Messalinus in iii. 34, 4 that generals in campaigns should not be accompanied by their wives (*bella plane accinctis obeunda*).

² The words of Tac. do not quite suit Henderson's explanation. They

imply that the horse and foot respectively were on either side of the pass, rather than that the cavalry were in the plain below it. If the cavalry were in the plain behind the pass, all they could do would be to cover the retreat of their own infantry if defeated.

He occupies a pass on Mount Taurus,

but his force is utterly defeated.

came to close quarters were slain, he was overwhelmed
 2 by showers of fire-brands. Such of the infantry as
 were unhurt fled to distant wilds;¹ the wounded
 made their way back to the camp, where their stories
 of the valour of the King, and of the number and
 fierceness of the tribesmen, all exaggerated by fear,
 found ready credence among men filled with a like
 3 terror for themselves. Even the General failed
 to struggle against his difficulties. He abandoned
 every military duty, and wrote a second time to
 Corbulo, imploring him, *To come with all speed to save
 the standards, the eagles, and what yet remained of his
 ill-starred army: he and his men would hold out as long
 as life should last.*

He im-
 plores
 help from
 Corbulo.

12 But Corbulo was undismayed. Leaving part of
 his forces in Syria to hold the defences on the
 Euphrates, he took the shortest route on which he
 could find supplies, through Commagene and Cappa-
 2 docia, and so on to Armenia. In addition to the
 other usual accompaniments of war, he took with
 him a great number of camels laden with provisions,
 3 to ward off famine as well as foe. The first of the
 defeated soldiers whom he encountered was Paccius,
 a Centurion of the first grade; then came many more,
 each offering different excuses for their flight. These
 he bade return to their standards, and throw them-
 selves on the mercy of Paetus, *For he would show no
 mercy to beaten men.*

Corbulo
 marches to
 the rescue,

meets
 sternly the
 defeated
 men,

4 He then addressed and encouraged his own
 legions, reminding them of their former achievements,
 and holding out to them the hope of new laurels:—
The object and prize before them, he said, was not the

and en-
 courages
 his own
 army.

¹ These words show that the position on the pass was at a considerable distance from the camp at Rhandeia.

Some of the defeated force fled straight towards Cappadocia (chap. 12, 3).

villages or towns of Armenia, but a Roman camp, with two legions within it. If a single private soldier could receive from the Emperor's hand the high honour of a crown for saving a citizen's life, what and how great would be their glory when the number of the rescuers should be seen¹ to be no greater than that of the rescued!

Words like these aroused the enthusiasm of the whole force. Some had the peril of brothers or kinsmen to goad them forward; and the march was hurried on continuously by night as well as by day.

Vologeses pressed on the siege all the more vigorously on this account. Attacking by turns the defences of the camp, and the fort² containing the women and the children, he came closer up than is the Parthian wont, in the hope that such temerity might lure the enemy out to battle. But our men could scarcely be dragged out of their tents; they would do nothing more than man the defences: some in obedience to the General's orders, others because they were cowards at heart, and awaited Corbulo's arrival. The idea of an assault brought up visions of Caudium and Numantia³ before their eyes:—

¹ reading *aspiceretur* with Lips. for the Med. *apisceretur*. Unnecessary difficulties have been raised about this passage. Whichever reading be adopted, the passage contains a flight of rhetoric, not strictly logical, but quite in the 'magnificent manner' of Corbulo (xiii. 8, 4). If we read *aspiceretur*, the idea will be 'what glory would be theirs when it should be seen that the number of the rescuers was equal to that of the rescued,' i.e. when the honour of saving a citizen's life would be gained by every individual member of the rescuing army. *Aspiceretur* is thus rhetorical, as though the eyes of the world were upon them. But the *apisceretur* of Med. is by no means hopeless, if we take *qui adtulissent salutem* to refer to *eorum* as antecedent, and *et qui accepissent* to be in explanation of the word *par*. 'If the number of rescuers who gained the

honour should be (only) equal to that of those who had been rescued.' Logically, the point would be a false one; but rhetorically, addressed to an entire army, it would mean 'If every individual soldier in your ranks should gain the honour of saving a citizen's life.' No doubt an ordinary writer would have written *ac* for *et* after *par*; but Tacitus is not an ordinary writer.

² i.e. the fort of *Arsamosata* (chap. 10, 6). The narrative of Tacitus rather suggests that this fort was in the neighbourhood of the camp, so that Vologeses could attack the two alternately, rather than that they were so far separated from one another as is supposed by Henderson.

³ The disaster of the Caudine Forks in the Samnite War was in B.C. 321 (Liv. ix. 1-6); the capitulation of Mancinus to the Numantines in B.C. 137.

Paetus hardly pressed in his own camp.

Demoralisation of his army.

3 Yet how different, they thought, was the power of
 a single Italian tribe like the Samnites from that of the
 4 Parthians—rivals of Rome herself! Even in the brave
 and vaunted days of old, men had bethought them of their
 lives when fortune went against them.

5 The faintheartedness of his men broke down their
 commander; yet his first letter to Vologeses was in
 a tone of remonstrance rather than of supplication.
 He complained that the King *should be fighting for
 the Armenians,¹ who had always been subject to Rome,
 or subjects of a king chosen for them by the Emperor.
 Peace would advantage both sides alike; let Vologeses
 6 look beyond the present moment. He had brought out
 the whole strength of his kingdom against two Roman
 legions; the Romans had all the rest of the world from
 which to sustain the war.*

He
 addresses
 a remon-
 strance to
 Vologeses,

14 To this Vologeses returned no direct reply:—

*He must wait for his brothers, Pacorus and Tiridates.
 They had fixed upon that place and that time to decide
 the fate of Armenia; the Gods had also granted them,
 as befitted their royal house, to determine that of the
 Roman legions.*

who gives
 an ambigu-
 ous reply.

2 Paetus then sent envoys to crave a meeting with
 the King; and the King ordered Vasaces, his com-
 3 mander of the horse, to meet him. Paetus dwelt on
 all that Lucullus and Pompeius² and the Caesars had
 done in the way of occupying or disposing of
 Armenia; Vasaces maintained that such occupations
 and assignments had been a matter of form, the real

Paetus
 meets the
 king, and
 agrees to
 evacuate
 Armenia.

¹ It was vain for Paetus to pretend to speak for the Armenians. Corbulo had dealt tenderly with the inhabitants in his marches (*ne spem veniæ auferret*, xiv. 23, 1); whereas Paetus had come to seize the country, and in his first campaign had devastated what Corbulo had spared (chap. 8, 1).

² The reference is to the victories gained by L. Lucullus over Tigranes in his famous campaigns of B.C. 69, when he captured Tigranocerta, and 68; and to the campaign of Pompey in B.C. 66.

power lying with the Parthians. After long mutual 4
discussion, Monobazus,¹ chief of the Adiabeni, was
called in next day to witness an agreement to the
effect that the siege of the legions should be raised; 5
that the Roman forces should evacuate Armenia,
and the strong places and stores be handed over to
the Parthians: all which being done, Vologeses was
to be permitted to send an embassy to Nero.²

Paetus in the meantime threw a bridge over the 15
river Arsania,³ which flows past the walls, under
pretence of facilitating his retreat; but in reality
the Parthians had ordered him to build it as a
monument of their victory. For the bridge was 2
for their use, our army marching off by another
way. Rumour added that the legions passed under
the yoke, and that other similar indignities were
inflicted on them by the Armenians. For they entered 3
the camp before the Romans quitted it; they crowded
round them on the march, laying hold of any slaves or
cattle that they recognised as having been looted;
they tore off the men's clothes and seized their arms, 4
the cowed soldiers not venturing to resist lest they
should give occasion for a battle. Vologeses piled 5
up the arms and bodies of the slain as a memorial of
our defeat, but refrained from looking at the legions
as they retired: his pride being now satisfied, he 6

¹ This is the first indication that Monobazus and his army have been taking part in the campaign (see chap. 1, 3).

² These words are either ironical, as Nipp. suggests, or were inserted by Paetus to cover the disgrace of the surrender; Vologeses was to be 'permitted' to send envoys to Nero after everything in Armenia had been surrendered to him!

³ There can be little doubt that this river, which was of considerable size

(§ 6), was the Murad-Su, the great Southern tributary of the Euphrates, having its source to the W. of Mount Ararat; as the Kara-Su, pursuing a similar course from E. to W., is the Northern tributary. It appears from the narrative that the camp of Paetus at Rhandaia was on the N. side of the river; and Henderson severely criticises the strategic blunder which Paetus made in placing his fortified base in a situation where he could be cut off from his communications with Cappadocia.

desired to gain a name for moderation. He himself crossed the Arsania on a camel, while his immediate attendants dashed across on horseback, a rumour having got wind that the bridge had been craftily built so as to give way when a weight was put upon it. Those who ventured on it, however, found it firm and trustworthy.

16 It turned out that the besieged were so well supplied with corn that they had to set their barns on fire; while according to Corbulo's statement, the Parthians were short of supplies, their forage was exhausted, and they were on the point of abandoning the siege when he himself was no more than three
2 marches distant. He adds that Paetus had sworn before the standards, and in presence of witnesses appointed by the King, that no Roman should enter Armenia until an answer came back from Nero to
3 say whether he agreed to the peace. And even if these tales were invented to add to the disgrace of Paetus, there is no doubt about the rest of the story: that he covered a distance of forty miles in one day's march,¹ dropping his wounded as he went along, and that the hurried flight of his force was as inglorious
4 as if they had run away in battle. Corbulo and his army met them on the banks of the Euphrates, but with no such show of arms or decorations as might
5 reproach them by the contrast. Filled with grief and compassion for the lot of their comrades, the maniples could not refrain from weeping, and were scarce able

Corbulo asserts that there was no reason for the surrender.

Disgraceful retreat of Paetus.

He meets Corbulo on the river bank.

¹ This passage bears out what the military writer Vegetius (i, 9) tells us of the splendid marching qualities of the Roman soldier. He says that the ordinary march per day was twenty Roman miles accomplished, at the ordinary pace, in five hours. This corresponds with Caesar's account of the

march from Dyrrachium to the river Genusus, which he calls *iustum iter* (B.C. iii. 76, 1); while he calls a march of forty miles (as in the text) a *duplucatum iter*. This enables us to understand the celerity of Caesar's movements in Gaul. For modern parallels, see n. on xi. 8, 4.

to salute them for their tears. The spirit of emula- 6
tion and the thirst for glory, which move men in
success, were gone: the one feeling that prevailed
was pity, and that was felt most in the lowest ranks.

A short colloquy followed between the Generals. 17
Corbulo complained that, *All his efforts had been to no
purpose; and that the war ought to have ended in the
rout of the Parthians.* The other rejoined:—*Nothing
was as yet lost for either of them; let them join forces, and
turn their eagles against Armenia, now weakened by
the retreat of Vologeses.* To this Corbulo replied, *He 2
had no such orders from the Emperor; it was only the
peril of the legions that had induced him to quit his
province; the intentions of the Parthians being uncertain,
he must return to Syria. Even as it was, they must 3
pray to favouring Fortune that their own infantry, worn
out by long marches, might keep up with that nimble
cavalry that outstripped them so easily over the plains.*¹

Paetus wintered in Cappadocia. Vologeses sent 4
a message to Corbulo asking him to pull down the
forts he had built on the far side of the Euphrates,
and to let the river be the boundary as before;
Corbulo insisted that Armenia also should be freed 5
of hostile foreign garrisons. In the end, the King
gave way; the forts built by Corbulo beyond the
Euphrates were demolished, and the Armenians were
left to their own devices.²

At Rome, meanwhile, a trophy was being set up 18

¹ Corbulo was not afraid that Vologeses would pursue; but he feared that the Parthians might repeat their march across Mesopotamia on the inner line, and so reach before himself the point on the Euphrates which he had secured.

² Corbulo must have agreed with very bitter feelings to these terms, by which all the results of his previous campaigns were forfeited, and the whole

Armenian question was once more left open. Things could not rest as they were, unless Rome was to abandon all claim to have a voice in the affairs of Armenia. Corbulo gained at least a diplomatic success in securing the evacuation of that country by the Parthians in return for his concession on the Euphrates.

Corbulo declines to march back into Armenia.

Agreement made with Vologeses.

Vain rejoicings at Rome.

over the Parthians, together with an arch in the middle of the Capitol. These had been voted by the Senate while the war was still going on; and the work was continued now, without regard to the facts, to save appearances.¹ With a view also to concealing the critical state² of foreign affairs, Nero threw into the Tiber a quantity of the people's corn which had gone bad with keeping, in order to prevent anxiety as to the supply; and although some two hundred corn-ships had been lost during a storm when actually in port, and another hundred were accidentally burnt on their way up the Tiber, no addition was made to the price. Nero then appointed three Consulars³—Lucius Piso, Ducenius Geminus, and Pompeius Paulinus—to be Commissioners of Public Revenue, casting blame upon the extravagance of previous Emperors who had anticipated the income of the year, whereas he himself made an annual present to the public exchequer of sixty million sesterces.⁴

Nero conceals the true state of affairs.

At this period a pernicious practice had come into vogue whereby childless persons, on the eve of an election,⁵ or before a balloting for provinces,

Evil practice of fictitious adoptions.

¹ F. translates 'inasmuch as appearances are consulted, sense of truth despised.' I take *spretā conscientia* somewhat differently, to mean 'paying no regard to their knowledge of the facts.'

² The word *curis* seems to refer to the anxious or troublous state of foreign affairs, rather than to Nero's own anxiety about them. But cp. *militaribus curis*, xiii. 2, 2.

³ See xiii. 29. It is probable that these consulars were appointed not as a special commission of inquiry, but as regular officers, in continuation of the policy explained in xiii. 29. According to that plan, Nero ultimately put the public Treasury in charge of praetors chosen by himself; here, finding things still going wrong, he appoints consulars.

The words *vectigalibus publicis* here used probably include all revenues, from whatever source, which flowed into the *aerarium*.

⁴ This seems to mean that there was an annual deficit in the accounts of the *aerarium*, and that the deficiency had been met out of the Emperor's *fiscus* to the extent of sixty millions a year. In xiii. 31, 2 a similar grant of forty million sesterces is mentioned; and Augustus gave grants in the same way. See i. 37, 3 and n.

⁵ Although magistrates were no longer elected by the comitia, and though the lot now played only a subordinate part in the allocation of provinces and jurisdictions, Tac. still uses the old words *comitiis* and *sortiti* which had been applicable in republican days.

would fictitiously adopt sons, and after having had Praetorships or Provinces allotted to them as fathers of families, at once enfranchise the sons thus adopted. The Senate was besieged¹ with complaints from² parents who indignantly asserted the claims of nature, and dwelt on the trouble of rearing families in contrast to the trickery of these fraudulent and short-lived adoptions:—

Remonstrances of fathers.

Men without children had advantages enough as it was: without cares or burdens, they found influence, public office,² everything, ready to their hand. The benefits promised by the law,³ and so long expected, were turned into a mockery and a delusion when a father, with his long-cherished hopes, found himself suddenly on an equality with one who had achieved paternity without anxiety, and who suffered bereavement without sorrow.

Decree passed.

A decree was passed accordingly that fictitious adoptions should not avail in any branch of the public service, or even for the acquisition of inheritances.

Charge against a wealthy Cretan.

After this a Cretan named Claudius Timarchus, among other charges such as are often brought against provincials whose wealth and importance enable them to lord it over their inferiors, was accused of making a remark which amounted to an insult to the Senate:—*It lay with him, he had boasted, to determine whether votes of thanks should be offered to Proconsuls who had governed Crete.*

Pætus Thræsea

Turning this opportunity to the public good,

¹ There is nothing 'harsh,' as F. thinks, or at least un-Tacitean, in making 'they,' the complainers, the subject to *adeunt*. The use of *saxere* in chap. 22, 1 is very similar.

² Though *honores* is sometimes used generally, in the sense of distinctions (see i. 14, 2 and iv. 37, 2), there can be no doubt from the context that the word here includes its more usual sense of

'public offices.' The complaint is that, directly or indirectly, all good things, magistracies included, came to the childless.

³ This refers to the Papia-Poppæan Law, under which preferences were given to candidates who had children, or more children than other competitors. See ii. 51, 2 and F.'s excursus on the subject, vol. 1, pp. 439-444.

after moving that the accused should be banished from Crete, Paetus Thrasea spoke as follows:—

denounces
the prac-
tice of
provincial
testimo-
nials.

Experience has shown, Conscript Fathers, that all good laws, all examples of good conduct¹ approved by good men, have sprung out of the misdoing of others. It was the greed of orators that produced the Cincian Law;² the Julian Laws³ arose out of the corrupt practices of candidates, the Calpurnian⁴ out of the rapacity of magistrates: for fault comes before punishment, correction after crime.

To meet, therefore, this new-born insolence of provincials, let us take up a position that befits the honour and the dignity of Rome: whereby without abating aught of the protection which we extend to our allies, we may discard the notion that any but a Roman can pronounce upon a Roman's character.

In days of old, not only Praetors or Consuls, but private citizens also, were commissioned to inspect provinces, and to report upon the loyalty of individuals; nations tremblingly awaited the verdict of one man. But now we pay court to foreigners, and flatter them: one man,⁵ of his own good pleasure, may secure a vote of thanks; another may as readily bring about an accusation. And let them so resolve; let provincials retain the right of thus exhibiting their power: only let panegyrics that are false, and have been extorted by entreaty, be put down as sternly as cruelty or malicious accusation.⁶ For in general, more sins are committed from the desire to

¹ Prof. Holbrooke takes *exempla honesta* to mean 'proper penalties.' But there is no question of punishments here, as in xiv. 44, 7 (*omne magnum exemplum*); nor does the idea of punishment suit either of the words *honesta* or *gigni*.

² For the Cincian Law see xi. 5, 3 and xiii. 14, 2.

³ This seems to refer to a law passed by Augustus in B.C. 8 (Dio, liv. 16 and Suet. Aug. 34).

⁴ The famous *Lex Calpurnia*, B.C. 149, under which the criminal courts (*quaestiones perpetuae*) were constituted.

⁵ The word *alicuius* is contemptuous: 'some individual or other.'

⁶ It is interesting to find Tac. thus castigating one of the sins of modern times—the giving of false or overcharged testimonials. The epigram which follows (*plura saepe peccantur dum demeremur quam dum offendimus*) shows a profound knowledge of human nature.

*please than from a wish to injure; nay, some virtues themselves are hated: the strictness that never relaxes, the strength of soul that never yields to favour. Hence our magistrates mostly do better at the beginning; in the end, when hunting up votes like candidates, they fall away. Prevent these practices, and the provinces will be more fairly and more firmly governed; for just as rapacity was put down by the fear of the Extortion Courts, so will this hunting for popularity be checked by forbidding votes of thanks.*¹

A decree passed accordingly.

These views were hailed with great approval; but no decree of Senate could be carried as the Consuls ruled that the subject was not before the House. Soon afterwards, however, on the motion of the Emperor, a decree was passed forbidding anyone in a provincial assembly² to propose that thanks be offered in the Senate either to Pro-praetors or Proconsuls, or to undertake a mission for such a purpose.

Fire in Rome; earthquake at Pompeii.

In this same year the gymnasium was struck by lightning and burnt down, a statue of Nero within being melted into a shapeless mass; a great part of the populous town of Pompeii in Campania was overthrown by an earthquake;³ the Vestal Laelia died, and Cornelia, from the family of the Cossi, was chosen in her place.

¹ These two chaps. (20 and 21) are interesting not only as giving us an insight into the manner in which wealthy provincials could put pressure, corrupt or otherwise, upon the governors of provinces, but also as exhibiting the high-handed Imperial spirit with which provincials were regarded by the Senate, even when a Stoic philosopher was the spokesman of that body.

² 'A diet of this kind, called also the

commune, or τὸ κοινόν, existed in all the provinces, and appears usually to have met once a year. On its constitution and functions see Marquardt, Staatsv. i., p. 369 foll.' F.

³ This earthquake is mentioned by Seneca as having taken place on the 5th February, *Regulo et Virginio consulibus* (Nat. Quaest. vi. 1, 1), that is in A.D. 63, not as stated by Tac. in 62.

A.D. 63. CONSULS GAIUS MEMMIUS REGULUS AND
LUCIUS VERGINIUS RUFUS.

3 In this year Nero welcomed with something more than human transports the birth of a daughter by Poppaea. He bestowed on the child the name of
2 Augusta, and the like title upon Poppaea; the place of her lying-in was the Colony of Antium, where Nero himself had been born. The Senate had com-
mended Poppaea and her hopes to the Gods, and undertaken public vows, which were discharged with
3 amplifications. A public thanksgiving was added; a temple was decreed to Fecundity, with a contest after the model of the sacred games at Actium;¹ golden
images of the two Goddesses of Fortune² were to be set up on the throne of the Capitoline Jupiter, and
Circensian games were to be held at Antium in honour of the Claudian and Domitian families, like
4 those held at Bovillae³ in honour of the Julii. But all these honours came to nothing, as the infant died before she was four months old. Then followed a
fresh outburst of flattery: the honours of a Goddess were voted to her, with a shrine, a temple and a
5 priest, Nero himself being as extravagant in his grief as he had been in his delight.

Nero's joy at the birth of a daughter;

extrava-
gant
honours
paid to
her.

The child
dies.

When the Senators flocked out to Antium immediately after the birth, Paetus Thrasea had been forbidden to accompany them; and people noticed that he took the affront, which was an augury of im-
6 pending death, with perfect composure. Afterwards, they say, Nero boasted to Seneca that *he had made*

Ominous
insult to
Paetus
Thrasea.

¹ These were quinquennial games, instituted by Augustus at Nicopolis, the town founded by Augustus opposite Actium in honour of his great victory.

² These goddesses were worshipped at Antium as two sisters; see F.

³ For the worship of the Julii at Bovillae, see ii. 41, 1 and F.'s n.

his peace with Thræsea; on which Seneca offered Nero his congratulations.¹ Thus grew alike the glory and the dangers of these illustrious men.

Arrival of
envoys
with letter
from
Vologeses.

During these events, in early spring, the Parthian envoys arrived with the message of Vologeses, and a despatch to the same effect:—

*He would say nothing of his claim to Armenia, which had been so often advanced before, seeing that the Gods, who are the arbiters of nations, however great, had handed over that country to the Parthians, not without disgrace to Rome. He had lately besieged Tigranes; he had afterwards suffered Paetus and his legions to depart unharmed, when he might have destroyed them. He had sufficiently shown his power; he had given proof of clemency also. Nor would Tiridates have refused to come to Rome to receive the diadem, had he not been detained by his priestly duties;*² but he would present himself before the standards and the images of the Emperor, and inaugurate his reign before the legions.

Nero's eyes
opened as
to the state
of affairs in
Armenia.

As the tone of this letter did not agree with the despatch of Paetus, who wrote as if the whole situation were still open, Nero asked the Centurion who accompanied the mission, *What was the state of affairs in Armenia?* The Centurion replied that, *All the Roman forces had retired.* Perceiving the irony of the barbarians in asking for what they had already taken, Nero took counsel with his advisers whether to resolve on an uncertain war, or accept a dishonourable peace. They pronounced unhesitatingly for war; and the command was given to Corbulo,

War de-
cided on.

¹ The point of Seneca's remark was that Nero, rather than Thræsea, was to be congratulated on the reconciliation. It was a daring remark for Seneca to make.

² This may be explained, as F. thinks,

by Pliny (N. H., xxx. 2, 6, 16), who says that Tiridates, being a Magian, was not permitted to cross the sea; but as he eventually did come to Rome this seems hardly a sufficient explanation.

who had been familiar with the army and the enemy for so many years, lest the inexperience of any other general should lead to a fresh disaster: for they had had enough of Paetus.

4 The envoys were accordingly dismissed with
nothing more than presents, which were given to
encourage the hope that Tiridates might succeed with
5 his petition if he presented it in person.¹ The civil
government² of Syria was entrusted to Gaius Cestius,
the troops were put under Corbulo, with the addition
6 of the 15th Legion, now marching from Pannonia
under Marius Celsus. Instructions were sent to the
Tetrarchs,³ Kings,⁴ Prefects, and Procurators, as well
as to the Praetors of the adjoining provinces, to obey
Corbulo's orders, while his powers were enlarged so
as to be about equal to those bestowed on Gnaeus
Pompeius by the Roman people for the Piratical
War.⁵

The
Eastern
command
given to
Corbulo
with
extended
powers.

¹ Thus Nero practically offered the same terms as those which were ultimately accepted. But he rightly determined that if there was to be concession it must come from the side of Parthia, not from that of Rome. There was all the difference in the world between accepting a nominal submission on the part of Tiridates after the shameful capitulation of Paetus, and after the Roman arms had once more asserted themselves.

² The word *executio* here is a very probable conj. for the *executio* of Med., though there is no exact parallel to the use of that word in the sense here needed for 'the civil administration of the province.'

³ The term *tetrarcha* or *tetrarches* (τετράρχης) was properly used to denote the governor of the fourth part of a country. Thessaly was thus divided into four districts called 'tetrarchies.' The Romans misapplied the term; and when Galilee was subdivided into three portions, the governor of each was styled a 'tetrarch.' Thus the word came to be used to designate those

minor Oriental princes who were not important enough to be styled kings (Cic. Att. ii. 9, 1; Hor. Sat., i. 3, 12, etc.).

⁴ Such as Agrippa and Antiochus, mentioned in xiii. 7, 1, or Pharasmanes, Polemo and Aristobulus mentioned in xiv. 26, 3.

⁵ That is, he was to exercise the *imperium maius* throughout the Eastern provinces, similar to that which had been conferred upon Germanicus: *maiusque imperium quoquo adisset quam iis qui sorte aut missu principis obtinerent* (ii. 43, 2). Powers not dissimilar had been conferred upon Pompey for the suppression of the pirates by the Gabinian Law in B.C. 67, *imperium aequum in omnibus provinciis cum proconsulibus usque ad quinquagesimum milliarium a mari* (Vell. ii. 31, 1). Plutarch describes these powers as amounting to monarchy; and it was this vote, followed as a precedent by similar and more comprehensive votes in favour of Pompey himself, Brutus and Cassius, etc., that paved the way for the Caesarian empire.

Paetus feared severe treatment on his return, but Nero contented himself with a gibe:—*He would pardon him at once, he said, lest one so quick to take fright might fall ill with prolonged anxiety.*¹

Corbulo re-arranges his forces, and concentrates at Melitene.

Corbulo transferred to Syria the 4th and 12th² 26 legions, which from the loss of their best men and the demoralization of the rest seemed scarcely fit to take the field, and took into Armenia the 6th and the 3rd, composed of fresh troops trained in long and successful service. To these he added the 5th, which having been stationed in Pontus had escaped the disaster, and the 15th, which had recently arrived,³ with detachments of picked troops from Illyricum and Egypt. These forces, together with his auxiliary horse and foot, and the contingents supplied by foreign princes, he concentrated at Melitene,⁴ the point at which he proposed to cross the Euphrates.⁵ Having 3 then duly purified the army, he summoned an assembly, and delivered a grand oration upon the auspices of the Emperor and his own achievements, attributing the recent disasters to the incompetence of Paetus, and speaking in that accent of command which in a soldier's mouth takes the place of eloquence.

Corbulo advances into Armenia.

He then advanced along the road first opened up 27 by Lucius Lucullus,⁶ clearing away the obstructions with which time had blocked it. Encountering envoys despatched by Tiridates and Vologeses to treat for

¹ Unsuccessful generals had little to fear from imperial wrath. It was the successful general that was in danger.

² These were the legions which had surrendered under Paetus. See chap. 6, 5. No mention is here made of the 10th.

³ They had been brought from Pannonia (chap. 25, 5).

⁴ The point at which Paetus had crossed in the previous year.

⁵ With these four legions and their

complements of auxiliaries Corbulo must have entered Armenia with a force of 40,000 men.

⁶ *i.e.* in B.C. 69. The route would be to Tigranocerta, and the same doubtless, as far as Diarbekr, as that recently taken by the Parthian army in its advance against Paetus (chaps. 10 and 11). But it is evident that Corbulo had done little more than enter the country when Vologeses showed himself ready to treat.

peace, he received them graciously, and sent back with them some Centurions with a message by no means uncompromising in its terms:—

Things had not gone so far that they must needs fight it out to the end. The Romans had had many successes, the Parthians had had some—a lesson against over-confidence. It would be for the interest of Tiridates to receive a gift of his kingdom undevastated; and Vologeses would do better for the Parthians by an alliance with Rome than by a course of mutual reprisals. He knew what dissensions Vologeses had to face at home, how untamed and unruly were the nations under him; whereas his own Emperor was enjoying peace everywhere, disturbed only by this single war.

His moderate reply to the Parthian envoys

These counsels he supplemented by forcible action. He drove out of their habitations the Armenian magnates who had begun the revolt from Rome, destroyed their fortresses, whether on plain or hill, and struck terror into strong and weak alike.

is backed up by vigorous action.

Now the barbarians had no angry or hostile feeling against Corbulo, and for that reason trusted his advice. Vologeses therefore did not push things to extremities; he asked for a truce in certain districts, while Tiridates requested to have a day and a place named for an interview. An early time was fixed. As for the place, the barbarians, in memory of their triumph,¹ chose the spot where Paetus and his legions had been besieged; to which Corbulo raised no objection, thinking to augment his own glory by the contrast with his present fortune. Nor did he distress himself about the disgrace of Paetus, as was made very clear by the fact that he ordered that

He arranges an interview with Tiridates.

¹ Reading with F². *laetioris ibi*, which appears to be a correction by the first

hand of Med, rather than the usual reading *laetioris sibi*.

General's son, who was a Tribune, to take some companies of soldiers and conceal the traces of the ill-omened battle.

On the appointed day, Tiberius Alexander,¹ an illustrious Roman Knight, who had been appointed as an adjutant to Corbulo, with his own son-in-law Vinicianus Annius, who though not yet of senatorial age² had been given the command of the 5th legion, arrived in the camp of Tiridates: these men being chosen both as a compliment to the King, and as a pledge against treachery. Then each of the Generals took with him twenty horsemen. On seeing Corbulo, the King hastened to dismount; Corbulo at once followed his example; and each advancing on foot, the two joined hands.

Meeting of
Corbulo
and Tiri-
dates.

Corbulo commended the young prince for giving up desperate counsels and taking a safe and salutary course. Tiridates, after a long exordium upon the nobility of his race, spoke reasonably on the other points:—

He would go to Rome, and confer on Caesar the unwonted honour of receiving the homage of an Arsacid—and that after no Parthian reverse.

It was then arranged that Tiridates should place the ensign of royalty beneath the image of Caesar, and only receive it again from the hand of Nero. The interview ended with an embrace. A few days afterwards, there was a grand review of the two armies. On one side were the Parthian cavalry, drawn up in their squadrons, and under their national ensigns;

Terms
agreed
upon.

¹ This man was born a Jew, renounced his creed, was Procurator of Judaea in A.D. 46, Prefect of Egypt in 67, and had high command (πάντων τῶν στρατευμάτων ἐπάρχων, Jos. B. J., vi. 4, 3) under Titus in his campaign of A.D. 70.

² As a man might not hold the quaestorship till he was twenty-five years old, the 'senatorial age' may be fixed at twenty-six.

on the other stood the Roman legions, with their eagles and standards glistening, and with the images
 5 of their Gods set up as in a temple. Between the two armies was a tribunal, supporting a curule chair ;
 6 on the chair was the effigy of Nero. The customary sacrifices having been offered, Tiridates advanced, took the diadem off his head, and laid it at the feet of the effigy.

Tiridates places his diadem beneath Nero's effigy.

All present were greatly impressed ; and the more so that the vision of Roman legions besieged or
 7 slaughtered was still imprinted on their eyes. The position was now reversed ; Tiridates was going to Rome to be a gazing-stock to the nations : how far short of being a captive ?

30 Corbulo's courtesy and hospitality added to the grandeur of the occasion. When the King asked the reason of each new thing that he noticed, such as the announcement of each watch by a Centurion, the bugle note to close the banquet,¹ and the kindling by torch of the altar which stands in front of the augural tent,² Corbulo answered in a grandiose fashion, filling the King with admiration for our ancient usages.
 2 Next day Tiridates asked for time to visit his brothers and his mother before undertaking so long a journey, giving his daughter meanwhile to Corbulo as a hostage, together with a suppliant letter to Nero.

Grand manner of Corbulo.

31 Departing thence, Tiridates found Pacorus³ in Media ; at Ecbatana⁴ he found Vologeses, who was by

Vologeses makes some further stipulations.

¹ There is reason to suppose (see F.) that a bugle was sounded at the beginning as well as at the end of dinner. But the emphasis on *dimitti* shows that what struck Tiridates was that the businesslike and well-disciplined Romans, instead of prolonging their principal meal indefinitely, brought it to an end by word of command.

² Though the expression of Tac. is

peculiar, as though the altar itself was burnt, the reference is doubtless to the sacrifices offered on the ordinary camp altar.

³ The brother of Vologeses mentioned in chap. 2, 1.

⁴ For the site of Ecbatana, see Dict. Geog. This passage shows it was not in Media Atropatene. Dio asserts that Vologeses also came to Corbulo ; but

no means indifferent to his brother's affairs. He had sent envoys of his own to Corbulo demanding that Tiridates should go through no semblance of subjection; that he should retain his sword; that he should not be refused the salutation of Governors of provinces, or be kept waiting at their doors; and that he should receive at Rome all the honours paid to a Consul. Accustomed as he was to barbaric 2 pomp, he knew nothing of us Romans, who hold the reality of rule to be everything, its trappings of no importance.¹

In the same year Nero conferred the Latin 32 franchise² upon the tribes of the Maritime Alps.³ He assigned places in the Circus to Roman Knights in front of the seats for plebeians; for up to that time 2 there had been no separate place for them, as the Roscian Law⁴ applied only to the first fourteen rows. A gladiatorial exhibition was held during the year 3 on the same magnificent scale as before; but a still greater number of illustrious women and senators disgraced themselves by appearing in the arena.⁵

the account of Tacitus is circumstantial, as well as more picturesque, and better fitted to the pretensions of the Parthian Monarch.

¹ With this fine sentence, so truly Roman and imperial in its ring, ends the narrative of Parthian affairs as given in the Annals.

² The privileges of the *ius Latii*, a valuable half-way house to the full Roman *civitas*, was often granted as a special boon both to individuals and to provinces.

³ This was the name of a small province under a Procurator formed by Augustus in the year B.C. 14, comprising the mountainous district N. of the Italian frontier on the Var.

⁴ The well known *Lex Roscia* of B.C. 67, which assigned the first fourteen rows of the *consessus* to the knights, immediately behind the senatorial seats in the orchestra, applied only to the theatre. Nero now extended the privilege of the knights to the Circus, Claudius having already given front seats there to the Senators (Dio, lx. 7, and Suet. Claud. 21).

⁵ Borne out by Dio, xli. 17. Tacitus has already spoken of Nero forcing *nobilium familiarum posteros* to appear upon the stage. As to the scandal of appearances by women, see Mayor on Juv. i. 22; also Sat. ii. 53 and vi. 246-267.

Latin franchise conferred on Alpine tribes.

A.D. 64. CONSULS GAIUS LAECANIUS BASSUS AND
MARCUS LICINIUS CRASSUS FRUGI.

33 Nero was now becoming more impatient every day to exhibit himself publicly upon the stage. Up to this time he had sung in private houses, or in gardens at the feast of the Juvenalia;¹ but he despised the audiences in such places as too small, and affording no scope for a voice like his.² Not venturing however to make his first appearance in Rome, he fixed on Neapolis as being a Greek city:—

Nero resolves to appear upon the public stage.

Beginning there, he thought, and passing on to Achaia, he might establish his reputation by winning the sacred and time-honoured crowns of victory, and so excite enthusiasm at Rome.

3 And so a mob of towns-people was collected, with persons from the neighbouring colonies and municipal towns who were attracted by the noise of the affair; others attended on the Emperor out of compliment, or for service of various kinds; whole companies also of soldiers were brought in, and the theatre was completely filled.

Theatre at Naples packed.

34 Then occurred what most persons took as an evil omen, but which Nero himself regarded rather as a happy incident, due to the kindly providence of the Gods: for scarcely had the people left the house empty when it collapsed, without inflicting injury on a single person. To celebrate the fortunate issue of this incident, Nero composed an ode of thanks to the Gods; and on his way to the passage of the Adriatic, he stopped at Beneventum for a gladiatorial exhibition which was being held there by one Vatinius.³

An evil omen occurs.

Gladiatorial show of Vatinius.

¹ Instituted in A.D. 59 (xiv. 15, 1).

² In spite of the compliments paid to Nero's voice, and the offerings made

pro caelesti voce (xvi. 22, 1), Suet. says it was weak and husky (Nero 20).

³ This 'cobbler of Beneventum,' as

This person was one of the most hideous monstrosities of the Court at that time. Bred in a cobbler's booth, deformed in body, and scurrilous of wit, he was taken up at first as a butt; but in course of time he so ingratiated himself by accusing distinguished persons that he became pre-eminent, even among evil men, in influence, in wealth, and in the power of inflicting injury.

But even amid the pleasures of this man's show, Nero could not keep himself from crime. For it was just then that Torquatus Silanus¹ was driven to his death; his offence being that, in addition to his nobility as one of the Junian family, he could count the Deified Augustus as his great-great-grandfather. His accusers were ordered to charge him with making donations on so lavish a scale² that he could have no hope save through a change of government, and with having among his freedmen³ some whom he styled his 'secretaries,' 'draughtsmen,' and 'accountants'—terms suggestive of preparation for exalted functions. His confidential freedmen were arrested and laid in chains. Condemnation thus staring him in the face, he opened the veins of his arms; upon which there followed a speech of the regulation type from Nero:—

Juv. calls him (Sat. v. 46), seems to have been originally selected as a court butt and buffoon, on the ground of his personal deformity, like Paelignus under Claudius (xii. 49, 1). The shape of his nose gave its name to a particular kind of jug made of coarse ware with a peculiar nozzle (*Vatinianum*: see Juv. above and Mart. xiv. 96, 1). His wealth and rapacity are spoken of in the Hist. (i. 37, 8).

¹ This was the man who was cos. in A.D. 53 (xii. 58, 1). His full name was D. Junius Silanus Torquatus; he was a great-great-grandson of Augustus.

² F.'s explanation of *prodigum*, 'that he had wasted his fortune,' is scarcely sufficient. The offence of Torquatus was that his expenditure was on a scale and of a kind (employment of secretaries, etc.) to suggest ambitious and treasonable designs. The same charge is made against Silanus in xvi. 8, 1.

³ Reading *quin inter libertos habere* for the corrupt *quine innobiles* of Med. This is one of those passages in which a somewhat violent emendation of the text (as F. terms it) may be accepted from the certainty that it expresses the true sense.

Guilty as Torquatus was, and justly distrustful as to his defence, his life would have been spared¹ had he only awaited the clemency of his judge.²

36 Not long after this, giving up for the present, for some unknown reason, his journey to Achaia, Nero returned to Rome, though he still secretly nursed the project of visiting the provinces of the East, and especially Egypt. After proclaiming in an edict that his absence would not be long, and that all public matters would go on smoothly and without change, he proceeded to the Capitol to consult about his journey. Having there worshipped the Gods, and entered the Temple of Vesta³ also, he was seized by a trembling in all his limbs; and whether it was that he was terrified by the deity, or that the recollection of his crimes left him always a prey to terror,⁴ he abandoned his purpose, declaring that—

Nero gives up his projected trip to Achaia.

The love of his country was the first of his solitudes. He had seen the sad faces, and heard the private murmurs, of his fellow-citizens at his meditating so long a journey; even his short absences were more than they could bear, accustomed as they were to take comfort, in any chance calamity, from a sight of their prince's face. Just as in private life the nearest ties were the strongest, so with him, the voice of the Roman people stood first, and he must obey their call to stay.

His edict to the people.

6 Words like these delighted the populace. They loved their diversions; and they were afraid that⁵

¹ Cp. the asseveration of Tiberius on the suicide of Libo (ii. 31, 4).

² Meaning himself.

³ The recently discovered temple of Vesta in the Forum. As she was the Goddess of the 'Altars and hearths' of the Roman people (Cic. de Nat. Deorum, ii. 27, 67), Prof. Holbrooke is doubtless right in supposing that Nero went there

to bid farewell to the Penates of Rome.

⁴ It is possible that Nero's change of plan may have been due to some suspicion of the Pisonian conspiracy.

⁵ Exactly to the same effect says Juvenal of the Roman people: *atque duas tantum res anxius optat = Panem et circenses* (x. 80-1).

the corn—their chief subject of anxiety—might run short if Nero was away. As for the Senate and men 7 of leading, they doubted whether he were more terrible in absence or in presence; but afterwards, as happens with all great terrors, they thought that which happened was the worst.

That he might gain credit for thinking himself 37 nowhere so happy as at Rome, Nero laid out feasts in the public thoroughfares, using the whole city as if it were his own house. The most notorious and 2 profigate of these entertainments were those given by Tigellinus, which I shall take as an example to avoid further description of such extravagances. A 3 banquet was set out in Agrippa's basin¹ upon a barge built for the purpose. This barge was towed about 4 by vessels picked out with gold and ivory, and rowed by debauched youths who were assorted according to their age and their proficiency in libidinous practices. Birds and beasts had been collected from distant 5 countries, and sea-monsters from the Ocean. On 6 the banks of the pond were brothels, filled with ladies of high rank; over against these were to be seen prostitutes, stark naked, indulging in indecent gestures and language. As night came on, the grove 7 and booths around rang with songs, and were ablaze with lights. Nero disgraced himself by every kind 8 of abomination, natural and unnatural, leaving no further depth of debauchery to which he could sink: except that a few days afterwards he went through a regular form of marriage with one of that contaminated crew called Pythagoras. He put on 9 the bridal veil; soothsayers were in attendance; the

¹ This was apparently a pond constructed by Agrippa in connection with the *Aqua Virgo* and the canal called

Euripus in the neighbourhood of the Pantheon. See Pelham in F.²

dowry, the marriage bed, the nuptial torch were all there, with everything exposed to view—even the things which night conceals as between man and wife.¹

38 And now came a calamitous fire²—whether it was accidental or purposely contrived by the Emperor, remains uncertain: for on this point authorities are divided³—more violent and destructive than any that
2 ever befell our city. It began in that part of the Circus which adjoins the Palatine and Caelian hills.⁴ Breaking out in shops⁵ full of inflammable merchandise, it took hold and gathered strength at once; and being fanned by the wind soon embraced the
3 entire length of the Circus, where there were no mansions⁶ with protective walls, no temple-enclosures,
4 nor anything else to arrest its course. Furiously the destroying flames swept on, first over the level ground, then up the heights, then again plunging into the hollows, with a rapidity which outstripped all efforts to cope with them, the ancient city lending itself to their progress by its narrow tortuous streets and its
5 misshapen blocks of buildings. The shrieks of panic-stricken women; the weakness of the aged, and the helplessness of the young;⁷ the efforts of some to

Calamitous
fire in
Rome.

¹ Compare this with the similar piece of debauched acting gone through by Messalina and Silius, xi. 27.

² It can hardly be without a view to moral and dramatic effect that Tac. has put in immediate juxtaposition his scathing account of the personal debaucheries of Nero and the story of the greatest disaster that befell Rome in his time, and which through all ages has been associated with his name. There was no particular reason for giving us these ill-savoured details in this particular place; but the account of the personal depravity followed so closely by the external calamity prepares the reader's mind to believe any evil of Nero, and recalls the retribution which befell Sodom and Gomorrah.

³ It stands to the great credit of Tacitus that he alone among the ancient historians declines to pronounce Nero guilty of having set fire to the city. See this subject discussed in the *Introd.* pp. xxiv.-xxviii.

⁴ This would be in the N.E. corner of the Circus, where the valley is narrow, and where the three hills—the Palatine, the Caelian, and the Aventine—approach most closely to each other.

⁵ These booths or shops may very probably have formed part of, or been attached to, the Circus on its outer side. See Dio, iii. 38.

⁶ For *domus*, see n. on chap. 41, 1.

⁷ Here reading and construction are alike uncertain (*Med.* has *fessa aetate aut rudis pueritiae aetas*) but the meaning

save themselves, of others to help their neighbours ; the hurrying of those who dragged their sick along, the lingering of those who waited for them—all made up a scene of inextricable confusion.

Many persons, while looking behind them, were 6 enveloped from the front or from the side ; or having escaped to the nearest place of safety, found this too in possession of the flames, and even places which they had thought beyond their reach in the same plight with the rest. At last, not knowing where to 7 turn, or what to avoid, they poured into the roads or threw themselves down in the fields: some having lost their all, not having even food for the day; others, though with means of escape open to them, preferred to perish for love of the dear ones whom they could not save. And none dared to check the flames; for 8 there were many who threatened and forced back those who would extinguish them, while others openly flung in torches, saying that *they had their orders*;—whether it really was so, or only that they wanted to plunder undisturbed.

At this moment Nero was at Antium. He did not 39 return to the city until the flames were approaching the mansion which he had built to connect the Palatine with the Gardens of Maecenas; nor could they be 2 stopped until the whole Palatine, including the palace

is clear. The conj. *senum* for *actate* may certainly be rejected as spoiling the Tacitean brevity of the phrase *fessa aetas*. In such pictorial passages, in which Tacitus crowds together a number of striking ideas without pausing to connect them grammatically, it is scarcely worth while to enquire what particular construction he had in view. Thus again below in § 7 (*quidam amissis fortunis* down to *interiere*) there is no complete construction. The verb *interiere* obviously applies only to the subject of the second half of the sen-

tence *alii caritate suorum*. The first part of the sentence, *quidam amissis fortunis, diurni quoque victus*, has no verb, and in fact no construction. Tacitus does not mean that the persons who had lost their all, or had not food for the day, perished; he uses just enough words to indicate these two elements of misery, and then, leaving these persons to their fate, and the construction unfinished, he hurries on to add the most pathetic case of all, that of those who died rather than desert their friends.

Sufferings
of the
people.

Nero
arrives
from
Antium,
and pro-
vides relief
for the
people.

and everything around it, had been consumed. Nero assigned the Campus Martius and the Agrippa monuments for the relief of the fugitive and houseless multitude. He threw open his own gardens also, and put up temporary buildings for the accommodation of the destitute; he brought up provisions from Ostia and the neighbouring towns; and he reduced
 3 the price of corn to three sesterces the peck. But popular as these measures were, they aroused no gratitude; for a rumour had got abroad that at the moment when the city was in flames Nero had mounted upon a stage in his own house, and by way of likening modern calamities to ancient, had sung the tale of the sack of Troy.¹

Rumour of his singing the Tale of Troy.

40 Not until the sixth day was the fire got under, at the foot of the Esquiline hill, by demolishing a vast extent of buildings, so as to present nothing but the ground, and as it were the open sky, to its continued fury. But scarcely had the alarm subsided,
 2 or the populace recovered from their despair, when it burst out again in the more open parts of the city; and though here the loss of life was less, the destruction of temples and porticoes of pleasure
 3 was still more complete. And the scandal attending this new fire was the greater that it broke out in property owned by Tigellinus, in the Aemilian quarter;² the general belief being that Nero had the

The fire is got under on the sixth day,

but breaks out again in the Aemilian quarter.

¹ Here, again, Tac. will commit himself to nothing more than the existence of a rumour.

Suet. and Dio, of course, give this story as a fact, not as only a rumour. Their version of it makes Nero declaim from the roof of his palace on the Palatine, or from a high tower in the Esquiline. This version, being the more dramatic and sensational of the two, is that which has naturally got

hold of the popular mind and been incorporated in ordinary histories.

² This same quarter, in the Campus Martius, just outside the walls, had suffered from a severe fire in the time of Claudius. That emperor, we are told, spent two nights on the spot urging the populace to help in extinguishing the flames, and paying the helpers with his own hand (Suet. Claud. 18).

ambition to build a new city to be called after his own name.¹ For of the fourteen regions into which Rome was divided only four remained intact. Three were burnt to the ground; in the other seven, nothing remained save a few fragments of ruined and half-burnt houses.²

To count up the number of mansions, of tenements,³ and of temples that were destroyed would be no easy matter. Among the oldest of the sacred buildings burnt was that dedicated by Servius Tullius to the Moon,⁴ and the Great Altar⁵ and fane raised by Evander to the Present Hercules. The temple vowed by Romulus to Jupiter, the Stayer of Flight;⁶ the

¹ Such an ambition was in entire accord with the character of Nero; and though he added to the odium against himself by the splendour of the Golden House which he built upon the ruins, he took every care in the rebuilding of Rome to provide not only for the appearance of the new city, but also for the security and comfort of its inhabitants. See below chap. 43.

² The four regions saved are supposed to have been the 14th, or *Trans-tiberina*, across the Tiber; the 1st or *Porta Capena*, which lay to windward of the flames; and probably the 5th (*Esquiliae*) and the 6th (*Alta Semita*) in the high N.E. quarter of the city. Of the three totally destroyed, two must have been the *Circus* and the *Palatium* (the 11th and the 10th); but even in these the account of the damage done must be exaggerated, as remains of buildings older than the Neronian period are still preserved in them. As regards the other seven, we know that the public buildings in the Forum, the Capitol, and even the Campus Martius, were practically intact; so that the statement of Tacitus, that in these regions there only survived *pauca tectorum vestigia lacera et semivsta*, must be accepted with considerable reservation.

³ The *domus* and the *insulae* were two different classes of buildings. The *domus* was a large self-contained mansion, belonging to one owner, standing apart, with courts, grounds, and boundary walls of its own; the *insulae*

were blocks of buildings, like the 'tenements' or 'lands' in Scotch towns, often of huge size and badly built, belonging to one proprietor, but containing a large number of apartments or suites of rooms separately let, in which a vast number of persons and families might be huddled together. Mr. Warde Fowler delivered an interesting lecture to the Classical Association in October, 1907, upon the degeneracy introduced into Roman life, and the destruction of its old family instincts, by the substitution of these vast human warrens for the simple and separate country homes of the early Roman yeomen. Precisely the same remarks may be made of the huge tenements, the warehouses for families, which are being erected in our big towns to accommodate families by the score, instead of the simple and homelike dwellings for single families which were usual in less 'advanced' times.

⁴ On the Aventine (Liv. xl. 2, 2).

⁵ The dedication of this famous altar, the *Ara Maxima* (*quae maxima semper = Dicitur nobis, et crit quae maxima semper*), on the occasion of the visit of Hercules to Evander, is described in Virgil, *Aen.* viii. 179 foll. See above xii. 24, 2.

⁶ Vowed by Romulus to 'Jupiter the Stayer of Flight' in the heat of his battle with the Sabines under Titus Tatius (Liv. i. 12, 6). It stood at the highest or S.E. end of the Forum, close to the Palatine, near where the Arch of Titus now stands. In connection with

Extent of the damage.

Temples and property destroyed.

Royal Palace of Numa;¹ the Temple of Vesta, with the Household Gods of the Roman people, were all
 2 destroyed; added to these were the treasures won in numerous battles, and masterpieces of Greek art, as well as ancient and genuine monuments of Roman genius² which were remembered by the older generation amid all the splendour of the restored city, and which
 3 could never be replaced. Some noted that the 19th of July, the day on which the fire began, was also the day on which the Senonian Gauls had taken and burnt
 4 the city; others were so curious in their calculations as to discover that the two burnings were separated from one another by exactly the same number of years, of months, and of days.³

Coincidence of July 19th.

42 Nero profited by the ruin of his country to erect a palace⁴ in which the marvels were not to be gold

Nero's new palace.

recent excavations upon this site, Signor Boni has suggested that *Jupiter Stator* was not 'Jupiter the Stayer of Flight,' but 'Jupiter the Establisher,' in honour of the settlement for the first time in a regular city of what had hitherto been a wandering pastoral population.

¹ The *Regia* (the official residence of the Pontifex Maximus), built by Numa, adjoined the Temple of Vesta, which contained certain holy figures supposed to be the Household Gods of Rome. The sites of these buildings have been discovered in recent years, under the Palatine, at the same SE. end of the Forum. Horace connects the two in the well-known passage where the Tiber is said *Ire deiectum monumenta Regis = Templaque Vestae* (Od. i. 2, 15).

² F. and other edd. interpret this phrase of the works of great authors, burnt perhaps in the Palatine Library; *antiqua et incorrupta* referring to genuine copies, as distinguished from others interpolated or falsified. But the context makes it clear that Tac. is referring to the architectural remains of old Roman times, before imitation of Greek art became the vogue. The following words (*quamvis . . . nequibant*) cannot refer to anything but buildings.

³ This somewhat enigmatical, and wholly unmeaning, calculation is as

follows:—The period of 454 years from July 19th, B.C. 390 to July 19th, A.D. 64 may be as nearly as possible (though not quite exactly) divided into 418 years, 418 months and 418 days. There is no sense in such a calculation; and it is obvious that if rigorous exactness, as in this case, is not demanded, almost any period might be similarly broken up into parts numerically equal. Such calculations were doubtless suggested or encouraged by the arithmetical lucubrations of the astrologers.

⁴ This was the marvellous 'Golden House' of Nero, which by means of arcades and galleries extended from the Palatine to the Esquiline, filled the hollow between those hills now occupied by the Colosseum, and spread itself up the heights of the Esquiline so as to occupy something like a square mile of ground, in the very heart of the city. Suet. tells us that the decorations were of gold, gems, and pearls; that the ceilings were of ivory; and that there were two colonnades, each a mile in length. There was a huge lake; there were lawns and vineyards and woodlands stocked with wild animals; while finally, in the fore-court (*vestibulum*), stood a monster statue of Nero himself, 120 feet in height, called 'the Colossus.' Hence the name of the Colosseum;

and jewels, the usual and common-place objects of luxury, so much as lawns and lakes and mock-wildernesses, with woods on one side and open glades and vistas on the other. His engineers and masters-of-works were Severus and Celer; men who had the ingenuity and the impudence to fool away the resources of the Empire in the attempt to provide by Art what Nature had pronounced impossible.

For these men undertook to dig a navigable canal, along the rocky shore and over the hills, all the way from Lake Avernus to the mouths of the Tiber. There was no other water for supplying such a canal than that of the Pontine marshes; and even if practicable, the labour would have been prodigious, and no object served.¹ But Nero had a thirst for the incredible, and traces of his vain attempt to excavate the heights adjoining Lake Avernus are to be seen to this day.

The parts of the city unoccupied by Nero's palace² were not built over without divisions,³ or indiscrimi-

for the frugal Vespasian swept all this magnificence away, and filled up the site of Nero's pond with his amphitheatre, while his son Titus built the splendid baths that bear his name right over the site of the Golden House itself. See Mart. Spec. ii.; Plin. N. H. xxxiii. 54 and xxxvi. 111-113; Henderson, pp. 243-6, and Merivale, vol. vi. pp. 172-6.

¹ This work, however preposterous in design, was intended to serve a useful purpose by connecting the famous Julian harbour with Ostia. The corn-ships would thereby have a safe refuge secured for them, and escape the dangers of 125 miles of open coast. How dangerous this coast might be is shown by the disaster which befell the fleet in attempting to round the promontory of Misenum, when it obeyed Nero's order to shift from Formiæ to Campania in bad weather (chap. 46, 3). A bit of the tunnel near Cumæ still survives, known as 'Grotta di pace;' and Pliny tells us that the canal managed to ruin the

vineyard which produced the famous Caecuban wine so loved by Maecenas (N. H., xiv. 61).

² Such is the reading of Med. (*quæ domui supererant . . . erecta*). But although Suet. (Nero 39) and Mart. (de Spec. ii. 4) both record the witticism that Rome had now become a single house, it is somewhat hard to believe that the grave Tacitus should have indulged in such exaggerated irony. Nor does the subject *quæ supererant* quite correspond to the verb *erecta*, which means not 'built upon' but 'built.' If we read *quæ domibus supererant* with Ritt. that might mean either 'the spaces clear of houses' or 'the space left for buildings'; either of which meanings might refer to the widening of the streets and inter-spaces mentioned in the same sentence.

³ The word 'division' is used in a similar way in Scotland. If you are told, in a street, that a particular shop or house 'is in the next division,' it

Proposed canal from Lake Avernus to Ostia.

Careful regulations for the rebuilding of the city.

nately, as after the Gallic fire, but in blocks of regular dimensions, with broad streets between. A limit was placed to the height of houses;¹ open spaces² were left; and colonnades were added to protect the
 2 fronts of tenements, Nero undertaking to build these at his own cost, and to hand over the building
 3 sites,³ cleared of rubbish, to the proprietors. He offered premiums also, in proportion to the rank and means of owners, on condition of mansions or
 4 tenements being completed within a given time; and he assigned the marshes at Ostia for the reception of the rubbish, which was taken down the Tiber in the same vessels which had brought up the corn. Certain parts of the houses were to be built without beams,³ and of solid stone, Gabian or Alban,⁴ those stones being impervious to fire. Then as water had often been improperly intercepted by individuals, inspectors were appointed to secure a more abundant supply, and over a larger area, for public use; owners were required to keep appliances for quenching fire in some open place; party walls were forbidden, and every house had to be enclosed within walls of its own.⁵

means 'in the next block of houses,' *i.e.* beyond the next side street on the same side.

¹ This limit must have been pretty high, as it was reduced by Trajan to 60 feet.

² The word *areae*, occurring twice in the same context, can hardly be used except in the same sense; but in the first case F. explains it of 'court-yards inside the *insulae*,' left open to prevent the spread of fire; in the second, of 'building-sites'—a totally different thing. The word occurs only once elsewhere in Tac., and is there used of a site occupied by a building (Hist. iv. 53, 11). In this passage the word must bear a larger sense. *Patefactis areis* probably means that the sites allotted to building as a whole were made larger,

so as to admit of open ground, unbuilt on, between the houses; while Nero undertook to clear these larger spaces of all unneeded rubbish.

³ *i.e.* the lower parts of the houses were to be vaulted in stone.

⁴ Both of these stones were varieties of the volcanic *peperino* so much used in ancient Roman buildings. Though less handsome than the limestone 'travertine' from Tivoli, which came into use towards the end of the republic, these stones were safe against fire.

⁵ Nothing could be more business-like than the manner in which Nero and his government set to work instantly, not only to rebuild the burnt quarters, but to do so under regulations which should provide as far as possible for the safety, the health and the beauty

Doubts
as to the
healthiness
of the
broader
streets.

These useful provisions added greatly to the appearance of the new city; and yet there were not wanting persons who thought that the plan of the old city was more conducive to health, as the narrow streets and high roofs were a protection against the rays of the sun, which now beat down with double fierceness upon broad and shadeless thoroughfares.¹ 5

The Gods
propiti-
ated.

Such were the measures suggested by human counsels; after which means were taken to propitiate the Gods. The Sibylline books were consulted, and prayers were offered, as prescribed by them, to Vulcan, to Ceres, and to Proserpine. Juno was supplicated by the matrons, in the Capitol first, and afterwards at the nearest point upon the sea,² from which water was drawn to sprinkle the temple and image of the Goddess; banquets to the Goddesses³ and all-night festivals were celebrated by married women. 44

Nero shifts
the blame
of the fire
on to the
Christians.

But neither human aid, nor imperial bounty, nor atoning-offerings to the Gods, could remove the sinister suspicion that the fire had been brought about by Nero's order. To put an end therefore to this rumour, he shifted the charge on to others,⁴ and 3

of the future city. And the work was accomplished, or nearly accomplished, in the short four years that remained of Nero's reign; that it was not quite accomplished appears from Suet. Vesp. 8: *Deformis urbs veteribus incendiis ac ruinis erat; vacuas areas occupare, et aedificare, si possessores cessarent, cui-cunque permisit.*

¹ Not less loud in recent times have been the lamentations of those who regret the picturesqueness of the Rome of Pio Nono, and condemn the broad blazing boulevards of the modern monarchical city. And it is a fact that the most densely inhabited quarters of the city have commonly been reputed to be the healthiest.

² *i.e.* from Ostia.

³ As it was the custom at Rome for women to sit at dinner, while men reclined, so Goddesses were provided with sitting couches (*sellisternia*) for their banquets, while the Gods had couches of full length (*lectisternia*).

⁴ As Tac. declines to assert that Nero was guilty of causing the fire, so here by using the word *subdidit* he definitely exonerates the Christians from that charge. That word, as used by Tac., means a wrongful or fraudulent substitution; and what he asserts, by using it here, is that Nero falsely fixed the blame upon the Christians in order to divert the popular outcry from himself. See this point fully discussed in *Introd.*, p. xxviii.

inflicted the most cruel tortures upon a body of men detested for their abominations, and popularly known
 4 by the name of Christians. This name came from one Christus, who was put to death in the reign of Tiberius by the Procurator Pontius Pilate; but though checked for the time, the detestable superstition broke out again, not in Judaea only, where the mischief began, but even in Rome, where every horrible and shameful iniquity, from every quarter of the world, pours in and finds a welcome.¹

Origin of that sect ;

5 First those who acknowledged themselves of this persuasion were arrested; and upon their testimony a vast number were condemned,² not so much on the charge of incendiarism as for their hatred
 6 of the human race. Their death was turned into a diversion. They were clothed in the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs; they were fastened to crosses, or set up to be burned,³ so as to serve the
 7 purpose of lamps when daylight failed. Nero gave

cruel persecution of its members.

¹ Every kind of abomination was charged against the early Christians: unholy rites of all kinds were attributed to them. The Roman moralists of the school of Tacitus and Juvenal mixed up all the Orientals who flocked to Rome, and all Oriental practices, in one common hatred; *iam pridem in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*, says the Satirist (iii. 62). Hence the religion and the rites of Jews and Christians alike were confounded with those of other imported Eastern cults, many of which were of the most immoral kind; and though Pliny, after making careful investigation for the information of the Emperor Trajan, could find no evidence of such evil practices among the Christians, but quite the contrary, the prejudice against them was not to be beaten down. The Romans turned against the Christians all their hatred of the Jews, and more, as though they were the most Jewish of the race; and the deadly Jewish sin, which the Romans could neither tolerate nor understand, was their exclusiveness, their intense pa-

triotism, and above all their refusal to admit the divinity of any God except their own. Hence in this chapter the charge of 'hatred against the human race'; which is but a repetition of the charge brought against the Jews as a whole in Hist. v. 5, 2: *apud ipsos fides obstinata, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium . . . inter se nihil illicitum . . . transgressi in morem eorum idem usurpant, nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere* (Hist. v. 5). The last words (*exuere patriam*, etc.), so inconsistent with the charge of exclusive patriotism so constantly urged against the Jews, seem evidently to point to the habits of the early Christian communities, and of converts from other nations.

² *Convicti* is read here by all edd. in place of the Med. *coniuncti*, which gives no satisfactory sense.

³ The construction of the reading of Med. here followed is anomalous, but not too anomalous for Tacitus.

up his own gardens for this spectacle; he provided also Circensian games, during which he mingled with the populace, or took his stand upon a chariot, in the garb of a charioteer. But guilty as these men 8 were and worthy of direst punishment, the fact that they were being sacrificed for no public good, but only to glut the cruelty of one man, aroused a feeling of pity on their behalf.

Italy and the provinces ransacked for contributions for rebuilding the city.

Meanwhile Italy was ransacked for contributions. 45 The provinces ¹ and allied peoples were rifled, as well as the states which are called 'free.' Even the Gods 2 had to submit to being plundered. The temples in the city were despoiled, and emptied of the gold consecrated at triumphs, or vowed by past generations of Romans in times of panic or prosperity. As for Asia 3 and Achaia, not offerings only, but the very images of the Gods were carried off by Acratus² and Secundus Carrinas,³ who were sent out to those provinces for the purpose. The former was a freedman ready for 4 any kind of villainy; the latter was a man whose lips were tinged with Greek learning, but who had no real culture in his heart.

Seneca seeks retirement.

We are told that Seneca craved leave to withdraw 5 to a remote country retreat to avoid the odium of such sacrilege; on this being denied him, he pretended to be suffering from some muscular ailment, and shut himself up in his own chamber.⁴ Other 6

¹ The term *provinciae* here refers to the ordinary provincials, who were subject to *stipendium* or tribute; by 'the allied peoples' are probably meant the *civitates foederatae*, including states under vassal princes; while the *liberae civitates* would include both those that were called *liberae*, as well as those that were both *liberae* and *immunes*.

² We hear of this man again in xvi. 23, 1 as having attempted to carry off

statues and pictures from Pergamum in some year not later than A.D. 62. This shows that these official plunderers must have been at work collecting art treasures for Nero before the Golden House was thought of.

³ Supposed to be the son of a Greek rhetorician exiled by Gaius (Dio, liv. 20, 6), and mentioned by Juv. vii. 205.

⁴ Dio says that Nero permitted Seneca to resign to him his property,

accounts say that Nero ordered poison to be administered to him by one of his own freedmen, called Cleonicus; but that Seneca escaped the trap, either by the man's avowal, or by his own precaution in adopting a simple diet of natural fruits, and slaking his thirst from running water.

46 Just about this time a body of gladiators in Praeneste attempted to break out, but were over-
 2 powered by the military guard just as the people, who are always desiring or dreading some new thing, were beginning to talk of the rising of Spartacus¹ and similar ancient troubles. Not long afterwards there occurred a naval disaster; not indeed in war—for never was peace more profound—but in consequence of an order given by Nero that the fleet was to return to Campania, irrespective of weather, on a particular
 3 day. The captains, therefore, loosed from Formiae in spite of a tempestuous sea; but in the attempt to round the promontory of Misenum they were caught by a south-western gale² off Cumae, and a number of triremes and smaller vessels were dashed upon the shore and lost.

47 At the close of the year much noise was made over prodigies portending evil. Never was lightning more frequent; and there was a comet for which Nero offered expiation in his usual way—by the

Outbreak
of gladiators.

Naval
disaster.

List of
prodigies.

or part of it, before his death (lxii. 21, 3), and it may have been on this occasion. See n. on chap. 64, 6.

¹ The leader in the terrible Servile War which ravaged the S. of Italy B.C. 73-71, and was at last put down by Pompey. One of the scourges of Italy under the later Republic, and not yet put down under the early Empire, were the vast estates cultivated by slaves who were usually confined in compounds (*ergastula*), but often kept under no efficient control. Hence the dread of

servile risings like those recorded in ii. 39 and 40, and iv. 27.

² This SWS. wind, which the Greeks called $\Delta\psi$ from its moist character, was the terror of Italian sailors. See Hor. Od. i. 14, 5. It is not impossible that it was the experience of this storm which gave Nero the idea of cutting a canal which might avoid the dangers of Cape Misenum, just as Xerxes cut through Mount Athos because the Persian fleet had been wrecked upon that point. See n. above on chap. 42, 3.

shedding of noble blood. Two-headed births, both 2
of men and animals, were flung upon the streets, or
discovered in those sacrifices in which it is customary
to offer pregnant victims. A calf was born on the 3
roadside, in the district of Placentia, with the head
attached to one of its legs: this was interpreted by
the soothsayers to mean that there was a movement 4
preparing to provide a new head for the human
race; but that the attempt would neither succeed
nor be kept secret, seeing that the head had been
malformed in the womb, and had been put forth by
the wayside.

A.D. 65. CONSULS AULUS LICINIUS SILIUS NERVA
AND MARCUS VESTINUS ATTICUS.

Conspiracy
formed to
raise Piso
to the
Empire.

No sooner had the new Consuls entered upon 48
office than a conspiracy was started and gathered
strength at once for which Senators, Knights, soldiers,
and even women, eagerly gave in their names: partly
from hatred of Nero, partly out of favour for Gaius
Piso.¹ Born of the Calpurnian gens,² connected 2
through his father with many noble and illustrious
families, Piso enjoyed a great reputation among
the populace for his virtues, or for qualities which
bore the semblance of virtue. For he employed his 3
eloquence in defending his fellow-citizens; he was
generous to his friends, gracious in speech and

Character
of Piso.

¹ It would appear from xiv. 65, 2 that
Piso had become an object of suspicion
as early as the year A. D. 62; and that
it was fear arising therefrom that drove
him into forming the conspiracy.

² Piso's exact pedigree is unknown.
Belonging to one of the oldest and
noblest of Roman families, undistin-
guished in war or administration, mag-

nificent in his outward appointments,
corrupt in his private life, and with no
special ambition or strength of character
to excite the jealousy of his order, he
was a typical representative of that false
and hollow idea of Republican liberty
which was still cherished by the great
patrician houses.

4 address even to strangers; he had also the adventitious advantages of a fine person and a handsome face. But he had no earnestness of character; he knew no moderation in his pleasures; he was frivolous and ostentatious, and occasionally gave way to sensuality. But these faults were a merit in the eyes of many who in a world of vicious indulgence have no desire to see strictness and austerity occupying the supreme place.

49 The conspiracy did not spring out of Piso's own ambition; nor can I indeed easily say who started it, or who gave the impulse to a movement taken up by 2 so many persons. That Subrius Flavus, a Tribune of the Praetorian Cohort, and Sulpicius Asper, a Centurion, were among the foremost, was proved by 3 the firmness with which they met their end; the poet Lucanus Annaeus, and Plautius Lateranus,¹ were 4 led into it by their deadly hatred of Nero. Lucanus was moved by reasons of his own; for Nero depreciated his poetic talent, and in a spirit of vain-glorious rivalry² had forbidden him to display it; Lateranus, the Consul-designate, had no wrong to avenge, 5 but joined from patriotic motives. The Senators Flavius Scaevinus and Afranius Quintianus belied their previous reputation in becoming leaders in 6 so great an enterprise; for Scaevinus was a man whose mind had been weakened by debauchery, and who led an indolent, listless life; while Quintianus

Names
of the
principal
conspirators.

¹ This Plautius was nephew of Plautius Silvanus the conqueror of Britain. He had much to sacrifice; and was one of the few high-minded conspirators who seem to have acted from real political conviction.

² The poet Lucan turned against Nero like a spoilt child. Besides the panegyric on the emperor which Lucan recited at the Neronian Games in A.D.

60, the first three books of the *Pharsalia*, despite their theme, are full of flattery; but the later books, after Nero's jealousy forbade him to publish verse, 'are brimful of the angry poet's hatred of the Empire, of the longing for the Republic and its heroes' (Henderson, p. 264). Dio says that Lucan was forbidden even to write poetry (lxii. 29, 4).

was notorious for effeminate practices, and having been grossly lampooned by Nero, thirsted for revenge.

Many men
of position
join the
movement,

These men, between themselves or with their 50 friends, would talk over the Emperor's crimes, saying that the reign was approaching its end, and that some one should be chosen to save their unhappy country. They thus gathered to themselves Claudius Senecio, Cervarius Proculus, Vulcacius Araricus, Julius Augurinus, Munatius Gratus, Antonius Natalis and Marcius Festus, all Roman Knights. Senecio was one of Nero's particular intimates,¹ and having still to keep up a show of friendship with him, was in a very perilous position; Natalis had been admitted to all Piso's secrets; the rest built their hopes upon a change of government. 2

including
military
officers.

In addition to Subrius and Sulpicius, whom I have already mentioned, the following officers were taken into the plot: Gavius Silvanus and Statius Proximus, Tribunes of the Praetorian Cohorts, with the Centurions Maximus Scaurus and Venetus Paulus. But the mainstay of the movement was Faenius 3 Rufus, the Praetorian Prefect,² a man of exemplary life and character, whom Tigellinus had outstripped in Nero's favour by reason of his cruelty and licentiousness, while he kept Rufus in a constant state of alarm by accusing him of having been Agrippina's lover, and of being resolved to avenge her death.

Various
proposals
made.

As soon as the conspirators were satisfied by 4

¹ One of the two young friends (Otho being the other) mentioned as confidants of Nero's early attachment to Acte (xiii. 12, 1).

² Faenius Rufus had been promoted

to the joint command of the Praetorians, along with Tigellinus, on the death of Burrus in A.D. 62. He had previously gained a good reputation as *praefectus annonae* (xiv. 51, 5).

repeated assurances, out of his own mouth, that the Commander of the Praetorian Guard had come over to their cause, they began eagerly to discuss the time and place for the assassination. Subrius Flavus is said to have conceived the project of attacking Nero when singing on the stage, or when he was running hither and thither during the night, unattended,¹ while his palace was burning. In the one case, the opportunity of solitude; in the other the very thought of so great a company witnessing so glorious a deed, fired his soul; but he was held back by that anxiety to escape punishment which is the ruin of all great enterprises.²

51 While they were thus hesitating, and protracting their hopes and their fears, a certain woman called Epicharis, who had got wind of the plot, no one knew how—for she had never before interested herself in any good thing—kept urging and upbraiding the conspirators, until at last, disgusted by their procrastination, she attempted to tamper with the officers of the marines at Misenum—for she happened to be staying in Campania—hoping to involve them in the conspiracy. She began with a captain in the fleet, Volusius Proculus by name, who had had a hand in the murder of Nero's mother, and who considered that he had not received advancement in proportion to the greatness of that crime. Whether as an old acquaintance, or as a new-made friend, this man poured out

Attempt of Epicharis to gain over the fleet through Volusius Proculus.

¹ This passage shows that Nero had exerted himself actively at the time of the fire, without any regard for his own safety. That fact alone would add to the suspicions against him when once aroused, as though he were desperately trying, when too late, to stop a mischief of his own creation.

² These words, and the opening sen-

tence of the next chapter, show that Tacitus' whole sympathies were with the conspirators. Hence the inordinate length at which he narrates the details of what was at best a poor and spiritless plot, with no worthy end in view, and with scarcely a worthy person among the participants.

his grievances to Epicharis: how great had been his services to Nero, how ill-requited, and how he was resolved on vengeance if he got the chance. This raised a hope that he might be moved to join the plot, and bring others into it: the fleet would be of great service in affording opportunities, as Nero was fond of the sea, and was often afloat off Puteoli and Misenum.

So Epicharis rehearsed at length the tale of the Emperor's enormities:—*The Senate*, she said, *had now nothing left to it:*¹ *but means had been found to punish Nero for the ruin of the country. If Proculus would but bestir himself, and bring over some of his best men, he might be sure of his just reward.*

Proculus reports all to Nero.

Proculus reported what he had heard to Nero; but as Epicharis had revealed none of the conspirators' names, the information came to nothing. For when Epicharis was summoned and confronted with Proculus, he had no witnesses to support his story, and she had no difficulty in rebutting it. She was kept in custody nevertheless, as Nero suspected that the story might not be false, though it was not proved to be true.

Piso objects to his Baian villa as the scene of the assassination;

Alarmed by the fear of betrayal, the conspirators resolved to hurry on the assassination in Piso's beautiful villa at Baiae, which was a favourite resort of Nero's, and to which he would often go for bath and banquet without escort or any of the state belonging to his rank. Piso, however, refused his consent, alleging that, *However bad the Emperor*

¹ This reference to the loss of power by the Senate, and to the *eversa res publica* in the next clause, betrays the purely senatorial origin and aims of the whole conspiracy. It sprang from no real horror of Nero's crimes; there was

no thought for the good of the people in it, or for the better government of the Empire: nothing but the old jealousy of the nobility at 'the rise of one House at the expense of all the rest' (Henderson, p. 258).

might be, it would be an odious thing to stain the sacred board, and the Gods of hospitality, with his blood: better carry out the patriotic deed which they had undertaken inside the city, either in some public place, or in the hateful palace which he had built out of the spoils of the citizens.

3 So said Piso to the others; but in his heart he was afraid that Lucius Silanus¹ might seize the empire: a man of illustrious birth, who under the training of his master Gaius Cassius² had been fitted for the most exalted destiny, and who would be readily supported by persons innocent of the conspiracy who might feel sorry for Nero as the victim of a crime.

the real reasons for this refusal.

4 Many believed that Piso was also afraid that the Consul Vestinus, with his ardent temperament, might pronounce for a Republic; or by setting up some one else as Emperor, get all power into his own hands.

5 For indeed Vestinus had taken no part in the conspiracy, although Nero was able to make use of that charge to gratify his old hatred of an innocent man.

53 It was finally resolved to carry out the project on that day of the Circensian games which is dedicated to Ceres;³ for although Nero seldom went abroad, and confined himself to his own house or gardens, he always attended the games, and was more easy of approach during the festivity of such occasions. The plan arranged was as follows:—

It is resolved to do the deed during the Circensian games.

Lateranus was to prostrate himself before the Emperor's knees on pretence of praying for an addition to his means; and then, being a big man and resolute, he was to take Nero unawares, throw him to the ground and hold him down. Before Nero

¹ Son of M. Junius Silanus ('the Golden Sheep,' whose death was brought about by Agrippina, xiii. 1), and therefore great-great-grandson (*adnepos*) of Augustus.

² See xii. 12, 1.

³ These games lasted from the 12th to the 19th of April.

could rise and free himself, the Tribunes, the Centurions and the rest, each according to his degree of daring, were to run up and slay him: the leading part being claimed by Scaevinus, who had taken down a dagger from the temple of Safety in Etruria—others say that of Fortune at Ferentinum¹—and was carrying it about as though dedicated to some mighty deed. Piso, meanwhile, was to be waiting at the temple⁴ of Ceres,² whence he was to be summoned by Faenius and the rest, and carried off to the camp; while to win the favour of the multitude he was to be accompanied by Antonia,³ the daughter of Claudius Caesar.

Pliny's
account
seems im-
probable.

Such is the account of Plinius; and whether true⁵ or false, I have thought it well to give it. But it seems absurd to suppose either that Antonia could have lent her name to so hopeless and perilous an enterprise; or that Piso, whose love for his wife was notorious, could have pledged himself to a new marriage—unless indeed it be that the lust for rule is the most unquenchable of human passions.

Incautious
behaviour
of Scaevi-
nus.

How perfectly the secret was kept among persons⁵⁴ of different birth, rank, age and sex, rich and poor alike, was a marvel; but at last betrayal came from the household of Scaevinus. On the day before the intended attempt, Scaevinus had a long conversation with Antonius Natalis. From that he returned home, signed his will, took the above-mentioned dagger from its sheath, and complaining that it had become blunt through time, charged his freedman Milichus to

¹ Supposed to be the town of Ferentinum (Forento) near Orvieto in Etruria; not the Hernican town of the same name near Anagnia.

² This temple was in the Circus Maximus.

³ This Antonia was the daughter of Claudius by his wife Paetina (xii. 1, 1). She was afterwards put to death on some pretext by Nero (Suet. 35).

have it ground, polished and sharpened. He had his table furnished more sumptuously than usual; he liberated some of his favourite slaves, to others
 3 he gave presents of money; but though he talked on at random and affected gaiety, he looked anxious and was evidently deep in thought.

4 Finally, he ordered the aforesaid Milichus to provide bandages for dressing wounds and staunching blood. Now whether it was that Milichus had been privy to the plot, and had been faithful so far; or, as most writers have supposed from the sequel, that he had known nothing about it before, and that his suspicions were then for the first time aroused:
 5 certain it is that when he reflected in his slave-like soul upon the rewards of treachery, and when the idea of wealth and power rose before him, all thought of duty and of his patron's safety, all recollection of
 6 the gift of freedom, vanished from his mind. For he had also taken to heart the base and woman-like counsels of his wife, who played upon his fears by telling him that, *Many freedmen and slaves had been standing by, and had seen what he saw; the silence of one man would profit nothing: the reward would go to the man who should be first with the information.*

55 Accordingly, with the early dawn, Milichus made his way to the Servilian gardens.¹ He was at first thrust from the gate; but on his insisting that he was the bearer of important and shocking intelligence, he was conducted by the door-keepers to Epaphroditus,² one of Nero's freedmen, and by him to

His freed-
 man
 Milichus
 betrays his
 suspicions
 to Nero.

¹ The site of these gardens is not known; Nero took refuge in them from the Palatine, when he was meditating flight to Ostia (Suet. 47).

² This man was one of Nero's secre-

taries (*a libellis*). He assisted Nero in his last moments to put an end to himself (Suet. 49); and was for that reason put to death by Domitian (Suet. Dom. 14).

Nero. To him he disclosed the urgency of the peril, the formidable character of the conspiracy, and all else that he had heard or conjectured. He produced also the weapon which had been provided for the assassination; and urged that the accused should be sent for. Scaevinus was at once brought in by soldiers, and thus defended himself:—

Scaevinus denies the whole story;

The dagger, he declared, about which he was accused, was an old and sacred family relic which had been kept in his bed-chamber, and stolen by his freedman. As to the will, he had frequently signed codicils without making any note of the day; he had often before presented slaves with their freedom, or with sums of money, but he had done so more freely just then, because with means reduced, and creditors urgent, he could not trust to a will. He had always kept a good table: he had lived luxuriously, and in a style little approved by rigid moralists. As for the appliances for wounds, he had ordered nothing of the kind; but the charges as to patent facts being baseless, his accuser had thrown in this extra accusation in regard to which he was to be informer and witness in one.

Natalis is sent for.

These assertions Scaevinus backed up by boldly denouncing his accuser as a perjured scoundrel; and that with such assurance of voice and look that the story of Milichus would have broken down had he not been reminded by his wife that Antonius Natalis had had long private conversations with Scaevinus, and that both of them were on intimate terms with Gaius Piso.

Under threat of torture, Natalis reveals the plot;

Natalis accordingly was summoned, and the two men were questioned separately as to the character and subject of their conversation. The discrepancy between their answers excited suspicion, and they were put into chains. The threat and the sight

of torture¹ proved too much for them. Natalis was the first to confess. Having more knowledge of the conspiracy as a whole, and being more skilled in accusation, he named Piso first, and then Annaeus Seneca: whether he had really been an intermediary between Seneca and Piso, or that he wished to curry favour with Nero, who hated Seneca, and was searching for any device to bring about his ruin.

3 On learning that Natalis had turned informer, Scaevinus, with equal weakness, gave in the names of the others: perhaps he thought that a complete disclosure had been made, and that nothing could be
4 gained by reticence. Of these, Lucanus, Quintianus, and Senecio long persisted in a denial; but on a promise of pardon they gave way, and in order to make up for their hesitation, Lucanus denounced his own mother Acilia, while Quintianus and Senecio named Glitius Gallus and Annius Pollio,² their most intimate friends.

Scaevinus also turns informer.

57 Meanwhile Nero recollected that Epicharis was in custody on the information of Volusius Proculus; and thinking that no woman could hold out against pain,
2 he ordered her to be put to torture. But neither stripes, nor fire, nor the fury of her torturers at being defied by a woman, could wring a confession from her. Thus the first day of her examination went for
3 nothing. Next day, on being dragged once more to the torture in a chair—for her limbs were so racked that she could not stand—she took the band off her breast, fastened it in a kind of noose to the arched

Epicharis put to the torture: her heroic fortitude.

¹ The application of torture to free citizens was absolutely illegal; but it seems to have been applied by an act of autocracy in cases of alleged attempts upon the emperor's life.

Tac. puts the sight of the torture

first, and the threat after; but it seems more natural to reverse the order.

² This man's young wife was a daughter of Barca Soranus the Stoic: the pathetic story of her trial is narrated in xvi. 30 and 31.

canopy of the chair, put her neck into the loop, and then throwing her whole weight against it, squeezed out the feeble life that still remained to her. And so this freedwoman, subjected to dire agony, gave the noblest of all examples by protecting men who were strangers and almost unknown to her, while men of free birth, Knights and Senators of Rome, were betraying, untortured, their nearest and their dearest. For Lucanus and Senecio and Quintianus kept hand- 4
ing in, one after another, the names of their con-
federates; while Nero's terror, in spite of the multiplied
guards hedging in his person, was increasing every
moment.

The city was now put as it were into a state of 58
siege. The walls were manned with troops; even
the river and the sea were guarded. Bodies of horse 2
and foot, with Germans among them, whom Nero
specially trusted because they were foreigners,
patrolled the forums, and invaded private houses,
both in Rome and in the neighbouring towns.
Strings of men in chains were dragged along, and 3
halted at the gates of the Servilian gardens: when
they were brought in for trial, a smile bestowed
upon one of the conspirators, a chance word, or a
casual meeting—to have been present at the same
entertainment or the same spectacle—was regarded
as a sign of guilt. In addition to fierce questionings
by Nero and Tigellinus, they were roughly pressed by
Faenius Rufus;¹ for as he had not yet been named by
the informers, he endeavoured to establish his own
innocence by browbeating his associates. And when 4
Subrius Flavius, who was standing by, made a sign
to ask whether he should draw his sword, and do the

The city
in a state
of siege.

Savage ex-
amination
of the
accused.

¹ See above chap. 50, 4.

deed there and then, Rufus shook his head and checked his impulse as he was in the act of putting his hand upon the hilt.

59

After the plot had been betrayed, while Milichus was telling his story, and Scaevinus still hesitating, there were some who urged Piso to go to the camp or ascend the rostra, to try the temper of the soldiery and the people:—

Piso is urged to make a bold stroke;

2 *If those who had been in the plot rallied round him, those outside would follow: once set in motion, the affair would make a noise—a matter of great importance in new*
3 *movements. Nero was unprepared for such an attempt. The bravest of men were daunted by sudden peril: much less would the stage-player Nero, or Tigellinus with his*
4 *troop of concubines, take up arms against them. Many things were accomplished in the trying which the timid deemed impossible. It were vain to look for silence and staunchness in the souls or bodies of such a host of conspirators: reward or torture would find a way*
5 *everywhere. Piso himself would be bound, and put to*
6 *death with ignominy; how much nobler to perish for love of country, with a call to Liberty on his lips! Better let the soldiery fail him, better be abandoned by the people, and die before his time, if only his death commended itself to his ancestry and his descendants!*

7 But this appeal made no impression upon Piso. He showed himself for a while in public; he then retired to his own house to fortify himself for the end, and awaited the arrival of the soldiers. These Nero had himself selected from among the recruits, or from such as were new to the service; for he was afraid that the older men might be well inclined
8 to Piso. Piso died by opening the veins of his arms. Love for his wife made him fill his will with

but declines.

He opens his veins.

disgusting flatteries of Nero; yet she was a person of mean birth, and with nothing to recommend her but her beauty. The woman's name was Satria 9
Galla; Piso had carried her off from her former husband, Domitius Silus, a friend of his own; and he had reaped as much dishonour from the complaisance of the one as from the wantonness of the other.

Death of
Plautius
Lateranus,

The next death ordered by Nero was that of 60
Plautius Lateranus,¹ Consul-designate, which was carried out with such haste that he was not permitted to embrace his children, or even granted the short interval for choosing his own mode of death. Hurried off to the place set apart for the execution 2
of slaves,² he was there killed by the hand of the Tribune Statius. He met his fate with firmness and in silence, not even casting up against the Tribune that he was as guilty as himself.³

and of
Seneca,

Then came the death of Annaeus Seneca, which 3
gave great joy to Nero: not that he had any clear evidence of his guilt, but because he could now do by the sword what he had failed to do by poison. The sole witness against him was Natalis, and his 4
evidence only came to this, that he had been sent to see Seneca when ill, and to complain of his refusing 4
to see Piso:—*It would be better, he had said, for such old friends to keep up their habits of intercourse.* To 5
this Seneca had replied:—*Frequent meetings and conversations would do neither of them any good: but his own welfare depended on Piso's safety.*⁴

Evidence
of Natalis
against
him;

¹ Juv. quotes Lateranus as an example of fallen wealth: *egregias Lateranorum obsidet aedes = Tota cohors* (10, 17). The palace was in the fashionable Caelian quarter; it became imperial property, and Constantine erected on the site the famous church of St. John Lateran.

² This spot is mentioned as *extra portam Esquilinam* (ii. 32, 5), inside the present *Porta Maggiore*.

³ Arrian relates how calmly, on the first stroke not proving mortal, Lateranus laid his head on the block a second time (Epict. i. 1, 19).

⁴ The difficulty of rendering this

6 Gavius Silvanus, Tribune of a Praetorian Cohort, was ordered to take the report of this incident to Seneca, and to ask him, *Whether he admitted the correctness of the question of Natalis, and of his own answer*
 7 *to it?* Either by chance or purposely, it happened that Seneca was returning on that day from Campania, and had halted at a suburban villa four miles from
 8 Rome. Thither, towards evening, the Tribune proceeded; and having surrounded the house with soldiers, he delivered the Emperor's message to Seneca when he was at table with his wife Pompeia Paulina and two friends.

61 Seneca's reply was:—*Natalis had been sent to complain on behalf of Piso that he was not permitted to visit him; and he had tendered in excuse the state of*
 2 *his health and his love of quiet. As to his reason for regarding the welfare of a private individual as of more value than his own safety, he had had none. He was not*
 3 *a man addicted to flattery:*¹ *and that no one knew better than Nero himself, who had more often found him too free than too servile in his utterances.*²

Seneca's reply.

phrase is that the two words *salus* and *incolumitas* mean the same thing; and the use of the two together, both suggestive of some danger, would seem to imply something more than an ordinary expression of friendship. It has not been observed by edd. that Seneca in his reply (chap. 61, 2) while acknowledging that he made the remark, inverts these two words. The speech as reported to Nero, was that 'Seneca's *salus* depended on the *incolumitas* of Piso'; but what Seneca acknowledges having said is that 'he had preferred the *salus* of Piso to his own *incolumitas*.' Tac. thus regards the two words as interchangeable.

¹ F.'s explanation of these words is 'nor could he have said so without meaning it, out of flattery to Piso, for he was never inclined to flatter, as Nero himself had cause to know.' But this explanation is hardly adequate. If

there was anything suspicious in the words used, to say that 'he would not have said so without meaning it' would not be an excuse, but rather the contrary. What Seneca means is that the words of his message were to be taken in their natural courtesy meaning, and that they were not intended to convey any special compliment to Piso, as though his safety were a matter of particular consequence to himself.

² However much Seneca may be censured for being gradually led on to conniving at, or assisting in, some of Nero's excesses, no language of inordinate flattery is attributed to him. See his outspoken remark to Nero in chap. 23, 6. Addressing Nero in the De Clem. ii. 2, he says *non ut blandum tuis auribus: nec enim hic mihi mos est*. It must be remembered, however, that the subtlest form of flattery is to affect its opposite.

Nero orders his death.

On receiving this report from the Tribune in the presence of Poppaea and Tigellinus, who formed the Emperor's inner council of cruelty, Nero asked, *Was Seneca preparing to put an end to himself?* The Tribune declared that, *He had observed no sign of alarm or dejection in Seneca's face or language.* He was therefore ordered to go back and tell him he must die.

Account of Fabius Rusticus.

Fabius Rusticus¹ states that the Tribune did not return by the same road by which he had come, but that he went out of his way to see Faenius the Prefect; and having shown him Caesar's order, asked him, *Should he obey it?* and that Faenius, with that fatal weakness which had come over them all, told him *to execute his orders.* For Silvanus himself was one of the conspirators, and he was now adding one more crime to those which he had conspired to avenge. But he spared his own eyes and tongue, sending in one of the Centurions to announce to Seneca that his last hour was come.

Noble behaviour of Seneca;

Seneca, undismayed,² asked for his will;³ but this the Centurion refused. Then turning to his friends, he called them to witness that, *Being forbidden to requite them for their services, he was leaving to them the*

¹ See xiii. 20, 2, and F. vol. i. Introd. p. 13.

² The calm way in which distinguished Romans received, and obeyed, a death sentence conveyed by a simple message from the emperor, is paralleled by a story told by Lord Cromer in his 'Modern Egypt,' p. 18. The Turkish Admiral whose desertion had helped Mehemet Ali to assert his independence fell into disfavour after living four years at Cairo 'under his protection.' Mehemet Ali 'sent one of his confidential agents to visit the Admiral. . . . The agent merely said, "Life, O Admiral, is uncertain." . . . The Admiral took the hint. . . . He asked for time to say his prayers . . . and drank without complaint or remonstrance the poisoned

cup of coffee which was offered to him.'

³ The Latin might equally mean 'tablets for making a will,' and 'tablets of a will already made'; but it is obvious that the latter is meant, as allusion is made in chap. 64, 6 to the provisions of a will made before this time. We are to suppose that at the last moment Seneca wished to make some extra provision for his faithful friends. Why the centurion should have refused the permission is not evident. Possibly he thought that Seneca wished to revoke provisions already made in the emperor's favour: though in other similar cases men willed part of their property to the princeps in the hope of preserving the remainder for their families.

sole, and yet the noblest, possession that remained to him—the pattern of his life. If they bore that in mind, they would win for themselves a name for virtue as the reward
 2 of their devoted friendship.¹ At one moment he would check their tears with conversation; at another he would brace up² their courage by high-strung language of rebuke, asking, *Where was now their philosophy? Where was that attitude towards the future which they*
 3 *had rehearsed for so many years? To whom was Nero's cruelty unknown? What was left for one who had murdered his mother and his brother but to slay his guardian and teacher also?*

he solaces and rebukes his sorrowing friends.

63 Having discoursed thus as if to the whole company, he embraced his wife, and abating somewhat of his tone of high courage, he implored her to moderate her grief, and not cling to it for ever:—*Let the contemplation of her husband's life of virtue afford her noble solace in her bereavement.*

His wife insists upon sharing his fate

2 She, however, announced her resolve to die with him; and called on the operator³ to do his part.
 3 Seneca would not thwart her noble ambition; and he loved her too dearly to expose her to insult after he was gone. *I have pointed out to thee, he said, how thou*

¹ There is no necessity for Halm's conjecture of *fructum* (ed. F.²) instead of *tam* of Med. The sentence with *tam* has no more than ordinary Tacitean brevity: *bonarum artium famam tam constantis amicitiae laturos*. The Genitive *tam constantis amicitiae*, standing alone, is no more anomalous than *diurni quoque victus* (chap. 38, 7) and many more. But if it be deemed necessary to bring Tacitus under the ordinary rules of grammar, the Genitive *tam constantis amicitiae* may be considered to stand independently, = 'in the matter of,' 'in regard to,' and so 'because of'; or *famam* may have a double office, governing both Genitives; or the second Genitive as a whole (*tam constantis amicitiae*) may be regarded as dependent on the first (*bonarum—famam*). But

such explanations are over-refined, and would probably have brought a smile to the lips of Tacitus himself. For *bonae artes* see *Introductio*, p. lxi.

² The word *revocat* here is used exactly in the same sense as in xiv. 56, 2, *quin, si qua in parte lubricum adulescentiae nostrae declinat, revocas*.

³ Tac. here uses for 'operator' the sensational word *percussor*, 'stabber' or 'murderer': used in xvi. 10, 4 of the men who slew Plautus. The person here meant is no doubt the physician, as we see from chap. 69, 3 at the suicide of Vestinus (*praesto est medicus*). But the word is perhaps designedly used to convey the idea of 'executioner'; for Suet. says that in such cases Nero would speak ironically of putting his victims under medical treatment (Nero, 37).

mayest soothe thy life ; but if thou prefer a noble death, I will not begrudge thee the example. Let us both share the fortitude of thus nobly dying : but thine shall be the nobler end.

and the veins of both are opened.

A single incision¹ with the knife opened the arm of each ; but as Seneca's aged body, reduced by spare living, would scarcely let the blood escape, he opened the veins of his knees and ankles also. Worn out at last by the pain, and fearing to break down his wife's courage by his suffering, or to lose his own self-command at the sight of hers, he begged her to move into another chamber.² But even in his last moments his eloquence did not fail ; he called his secretaries to his side, and dictated to them many things which being published in his own words I deem it needless to reproduce.³

Seneca's eloquence in his last moments.

Paulina's death stayed by Nero's order.

Nero however had no personal dislike to Paulina ; and not wishing to add to his character for cruelty, he ordered her death to be stayed. So at the bidding of the soldiers, the slaves and freedmen tied up her arms, and stopped the flow of blood ; perhaps she was unconscious. But with that alacrity to accept the worst version of a thing which marks the vulgar, some believed that so long as she thought Nero would be implacable, she clutched at the glory

¹ Tac. uses words (*eodem ictu*) which seem to imply that one cut of the knife opened the veins of two persons. Evidently all he means is that the incisions were made at the same time and by the same person (cp. *eodem ferro*, xvi. 11, 4).

² Dio's version of this incident affords a good instance of his tendency (like Suet.) to put the worst version on a story. He says that Seneca forced his wife to open her veins with him, and that her life was only saved by his dying first. But as F. remarks, Dio is always unfriendly to Seneca ; and Tacitus contemptuously dismisses a similar though

less malignant version in the next chapter (§ 2) with the words *ut est vulgus ad deteriora promptum*.

³ The word *invertere* seems here to be used of the method by which Tacitus reproduces in his own words and style the speeches which he records. The best example of this is the speech of Claudius about the Gallic franchise given in xi. 24, as compared with the version of the speech actually delivered, as recorded on the bronze tables found at Lyons. See n. on that passage, and Introd. p. liv.

of sharing her husband's death; but that when the hope of a reprieve presented itself, the attractions of life proved too strong for her. She lived on for a few years more, worthily cherishing her husband's memory; but the pallor of her face and limbs showed how much vitality had gone out of her.

3 Meanwhile Seneca, in the agonies of a slow and lingering death, implored Staius Annaeus, his tried and trusted friend and physician, to produce a poison with which he had long provided himself, being the same as that used for public executions at Athens.¹ The draught was brought and administered, but to no purpose; the limbs were too cold, the body too
4 numb, to let the poison act. At last, he was put into a warm bath; and as he sprinkled the slaves about him he added:—*This libation is to Jupiter the*
5 *Liberator!*² He was then carried into the hot vapour-bath,³ and perished of suffocation. His body was
6 burnt without any funeral ceremony, in accordance with instructions about his end which he had inserted in his will in the heyday of his wealth and power.⁴

65 Report had it that Subrius Flavus⁵ had made a secret plot with some Centurions, not unknown to Seneca, to slay Piso himself so soon as he should have assisted in the assassination of Nero, and offer the Empire to Seneca, as though selected for the sovereignty by men innocent of the murder, on the
2 score of his eminent virtues. And indeed a saying

Seneca at last calls for hemlock;

and finally perishes in a warm bath.

Story that Subrius had intended to make Seneca emperor.

¹ *i.e.* hemlock, as used in the famous case of Socrates.

² This title (*Jupiter Liberator*) is a Graecism, used here and also by Thrasea in xvi. 35, 2 as the equivalent of *Zeus ἰλευθέρσιος*. The idea is supposed to be derived from the Greek practice of guests after a banquet offering a libation to Zeus the Preserver (*Zeus Σωτήρ*).

³ The hot vapour bath known as

Laconicum. Octavia (xiv. 64, 3) and Vestinus (chap. 69, 3), were suffocated in the same way.

⁴ The expression implies that Seneca had given up some part of his wealth before his death (see above, chap. 46, 5). It is to be noted that Juv. uses the same epithet *praedives* of Seneca (*Senecae praedivitis hortos*, x. 16).

⁵ Mentioned above, chap. 49, 2.

of Flavus got abroad that *as for the disgrace of the thing, it would make but little difference to remove a lyrist and put a tragedian in his place*: for as Nero sang to the lyre, so did Piso sing in tragic character.¹

The share of the military in the plot could be concealed no longer. Unable to tolerate Faenius Rufus in the two-fold character of conspirator and inquisitor, the informers were burning to betray him; so when he browbeat and threatened Scaevinus, Scaevinus retorted with a sneer that, *None knew more about the business than Faenius himself*; and urged him, *To do a good turn, of his own free will, to their most excellent Emperor*. In reply to this challenge, Faenius could neither speak nor hold his tongue: he stammered out something which betrayed his alarm. The other witnesses, especially Cervarius Proculus, a Roman Knight, used every effort to press the charge home; upon which Nero ordered Faenius to be seized and bound by a soldier called Cassius, who had been put in attendance because of his prodigious strength. 66

The same evidence soon proved fatal to the Tribune Subrius Flavus. At first he defended himself on the ground of difference of character:—*Never would a soldier like himself have joined in such an enterprise in company with a set of emasculated civilians*. On being pressed, however, he confessed his guilt, and gloried in it. Nero asked him, *For what reasons had he forgotten his military oath?—Because I hated you*, was his rejoinder. *Never was soldier more true to you so long as you deserved to be loved. I began to hate you* 67

¹ Nipp. points out that the performance here alluded to is not that of a regular tragedy, but one in which a single singer performed a piece in character, as in a mime, supported perhaps by a chorus, and by others

acting in dumb show. This is what Suet. means when he says of Nero *Tragoedias quoque cantavit personatus* (Nero, 21), giving as instances *Orestem matricidam, Oedipum occacatum, Herculem insanum*, etc.

Faenius Rufus is betrayed,

and also Subrius Flavus,

Flavus boldly acknowledges the charge,

when you murdered your mother and your wife : when you became a charioteer, an actor and an incendiary.

4 I have given his exact words, because they have not obtained publicity like those of Seneca ; and yet a soldier's blunt and forcible expressions deserve
5 no less to be recorded. Nothing that fell on Nero's ears during this conspiracy stung him like this speech ; for ready as he was to commit crimes, he was little used to being reminded of them.

Flavus was handed over to the Tribune Veianius
6 Niger for execution. Veianius ordered a hole to be dug in an adjoining field : Flavus complained to the soldiers standing by that it was neither deep enough nor wide enough :—*Even this*, said he, *is contrary to*
7 *the regulations.* And when bidden to thrust his neck bravely out, *I only hope*, he rejoined, *that you may be*
8 *as brave in the striking !* The man trembled exceedingly, and could scarcely sever the head from the body with two strokes ; but to Nero he boasted of his brutality, saying, *It had taken him a stroke and a half to do the job.*

and no less bravely meets his end.

68 The next example of fortitude was afforded by the Centurion Sulpicius Asper ; for when asked by Nero, *Why had he conspired to murder him ?* he curtly replied, *There was no other mode of curing his iniquities.*¹
2 He then suffered the prescribed punishment. The rest of the Centurions met their doom no less stoutly ; but no such courage was shown by Faenius Rufus, who filled even his will with lamentations.

Fortitude of Sulpicius Asper and other Centurions.

3 Nero was waiting for the Consul Vestinus to be incriminated with the rest, regarding him as a

Nero fails to get evidence against the Consul Vestinus,

¹ The ambiguous phrase *non aliter tot flagitiis eius subveniri potuisse* must be explained ironically ; 'his many

enormities could not be remedied in any other way.' So Dio, lxi. 24, 2 and Suet. Nero, 36.

hot-headed and disaffected person. But in truth none of the conspirators had taken him into their counsels: some had old quarrels with him; the majority thought him headstrong and impracticable. Nero's fear and hatred of him had sprung out of their close intimacy, during which Vestinus had learnt to appreciate and despise his contemptible character. Nero had often quailed before the rough jests of his outspoken friend; for when gibes have much that is true in them, they leave a rankling memory behind. And Vestinus had added a fresh cause of offence by marrying Statilia Messalina,¹ though well aware that Nero was among the number of her lovers.

But neither accuser nor accusation were forthcoming; so as Nero could not assume the part of a judge, he had recourse to his own autocratic power. He ordered the Tribune Gerellanus to take a cohort of soldiers and anticipate the Consul's designs, bidding him seize what he called the 'citadel' of Vestinus, and overpower his 'body-guard of picked young men'—this because Vestinus lived in a house overlooking the Forum,² and kept an establishment of young and handsome slaves. Vestinus had performed all his consular duties for the day, and was holding a feast, fearing nothing, or concealing his fears, when the soldiers marched in, and told him he was wanted by the Tribune. He rose at once, and hurried on all his arrangements. He retired to his bedchamber, summoned his physician, had his veins opened, was

¹ The Schol. on Juv. vi. 434 says that this person was the blue-stocking derided by the satirist in that famous passage, 434-456. He says she was wealthy, beautiful, learned, and that she married Nero as her fifth husband. (See Suet. Nero, 35).

² As though such a position was too imposing for the house of a private citizen. Cp. iii. 9, 3 where Tac. says of Piso that his *domus foro imminens* was among the *irritamenta invidiæ* against him.

and so orders his death without reason.

carried, while still in full life, to a bath, and plunged into the hot water, without permitting one word of weakness to escape him. The friends who had dined with him were meanwhile put under guard, and detained till far on in the night. Nero chuckled at the idea of the terror-stricken guests looking for death after their dinner, saying, *They had been sufficiently punished for their consular entertainment.*¹

70 The next death he ordered was that of Annaeus Lucanus. As the poet's hands and feet grew cold from loss of blood, and he felt the life ebbing away from his extremities, while still alert in mind and in full possession of his senses, he recalled a passage from one of his own poems describing how a wounded soldier had died by a death similar to his own. This he recited, verse by verse, as his last and dying utterance.²

Next came the death of Lucan,

2 After him perished Senecio and Quintianus and Scaevinus, in a manner that accorded little with the effeminacy of their past lives; and then the rest of the conspirators, without doing or saying anything worthy of being recorded.

of Senecio, Quintianus, and Scaevinus.

71 During this time the city was filled with funerals, the Capitol with victims;³ one man whose son had been slain, another who had lost a brother, a kinsman, or a friend, offered thanks to the Gods, decked their houses with laurel,⁴ threw themselves at Nero's feet, and wore out his right hand with kisses. Taking

Others variously punished, pardoned, or rewarded.

¹ A grim joke quite in the imperial manner. When Nero had ordered his victims to die, he would send physicians to them *qui cunctantes continuo curarent* (Suet. Nero, 37).

² Lucan had behaved shamefully in betraying his own mother (chap. 56, 4): and it is to be noticed that Tacitus lets drop no word of admiration in recording his death. The passage referred to is

supposed to be from the *Pharsalia* iii. 635-646, in which is described the gradual bleeding to death of a man wounded by a grappling-iron.

³ There is obviously some exaggeration here; cp. vi. 19, 2-5 and n.

⁴ So when Sejanus fell: *Pone domi laurus, duc in Capitolia magnum = Cretatumque bovem* (Juv. x. 65).

these as signs of joy, Nero rewarded the timely information of Antonius Natalis and Cervarius Proculus with a pardon; Milichus was handsomely remunerated, and took to himself for a surname the Greek word signifying 'Saviour.'¹ Of the Tribunes, Gavius Silvanus, although acquitted, fell by his own hand; Staius Proximus rejected the pardon granted him by Nero, and died vaingloriously.² After that the Tribunes Pompeius, Cornelius Martialis, Flavius Nepos and Staius Domitius were deprived of their rank—not indeed for hating the Emperor, but for being thought to hate him. Novius Priscus was exiled for being Seneca's friend; Glitius Gallus and Annius Pollio, who were calumniated rather than convicted, were let off with the like punishment. Priscus and Gallus were accompanied into exile by their wives Artoria Flaccilla and Egnatia Maximilla. The latter's large fortune was at first left to her entire, and then confiscated:³ both circumstances alike adding to her reputation.

Advantage also was taken of the conspiracy to banish Rufrius Crispinus, whom Nero had long hated for having once been Poppaea's husband. Verginius Flavus and Musonius Rufus owed their exile to their illustrious names: Verginius⁴ having roused the enthusiasm of our youth by his eloquence, Musonius⁴

¹ With his usual objection to Greek words, Tac. gives the Latin for the Greek σωτήρ. He only uses Greek words of a technical kind which have no proper Latin equivalent. See the list given by Nipp. on xiv. 15, 6. When Juv. introduces Greek words, it is always with an air of contempt.

² The phrase *vanitate exitus corrupti* is difficult. As Silvanus is not blamed for committing suicide after being acquitted, there would seem to have been some element of bravado or ostentation in the manner in which Staius died.

But *vanitate exitus* may mean nothing more than that the suicide was unnecessary, inflicted without due cause. The modern reader sees a good deal of *vanitas* in these self-inflicted deaths. *Corrupti* here seems to mean 'wasted.' Cp. Hist. iv. 34.

³ Apparently because they had made themselves too popular in Andros, their place of exile. See C. I. G. quoted by F.

⁴ Verginius Flavus was a teacher of the poet Persius; Musonius is mentioned in xiv. 59, 2 as a philosophic friend of Plautus.

10 by his teaching of philosophy. Cluvidienus Quietus,
 Julius Agrippa, Blitius Catulinus, Petronius Priscus,
 and Julius Altinus, condemned in one batch as if to
 complete the list, were allowed to retire to islands
 11 in the Aegean; while Caedicia, the wife of Scaevinus,
 and Caesennius Maximus were forbidden Italy—their
 punishment first discovering to them that they had
 12 been accused. Acilia, the mother of Annaeus Lucanus,
 was ignored: unpardoned, but unpunished.

72 All this done, Nero assembled the soldiers, and
 distributed among the privates two thousand sesterces
 apiece, with the free gift of as much corn as they had
 previously been allowed to buy at the market price.¹

Gifts to the
 soldiers;
 honours to
 others.

2 Then as if he had some warlike exploit to recount,
 he summoned the Senate, and conferred Triumphal
 honours upon the Consular Petronius Turpilianus,
 upon Cocceius Nerva,² Praetor-designate, and Tigel-
 linus, Prefect of the Praetorians: the two latter he
 specially distinguished by setting up their images in
 the Palatium, in addition to triumphal statues in the
 Forum.

3 On Nymphidius he bestowed the consular orna-
 ments; and as this man's name occurs now for the
 first time, I will tell briefly who he was: for he too
 in his own person will become one of the calamities
 4 of Rome. His mother was a freedwoman of great
 beauty, who had made herself common among the
 slaves and freedmen of the imperial household; and
 as he happened to be of commanding stature, and to
 have a forbidding expression, he gave out that he was

Case of
 Nymphidius.

¹ We have seen that in times of difficulty the price of corn for the *plebs* was occasionally lowered (chaps. 18, 3; 39, 2). In the present case, it would seem that Nero, for the first time, gave the

praetorians gratuitous rations of corn, as had been for some time the custom with the legions. See Suet. Nero, 10.

² The future emperor—quite a young man at this time.

the son of Gaius Caesar. And it is not impossible that Gaius, who was not particular in his love affairs, may have taken his pleasure with the mother.¹

Nero publishes the details of the conspiracy.

Nero now summoned the Senate and addressed 73
the Fathers; he also issued an edict to the people, and published, in book form, a record of the evidence taken, along with the confessions of the condemned conspirators;² for he was stung by the common talk 2
of the town that fear or jealousy had prompted him to put illustrious and innocent men to death. That 3
the conspiracy was indeed formed, matured, and brought home to the conspirators, was doubted by no one at the time who cared to learn the truth, and was admitted by those of them who returned to Rome after Nero's death. In the Senate, where 4
all were abject in their adulation—those most who had most cause to mourn—Seneca's brother, Junius Gallio,³ who was alarmed by his brother's death, and was a suppliant for his own life, was denounced as an enemy and a parricide by Salienus Clemens; but the latter was forced⁴ to desist by the unanimous prayer of the Fathers, who implored him, *Not to take advantage of the public misfortunes to gratify personal animosity, nor to bring up again for fresh severities matters which had already been set at rest or put out of sight by the clemency of the Emperor.*

Gallio denounced but spared.

¹ The very short notice given of this Nymphidius after the promise of a full account (*pauca repetam* § 3) has led edd, to suppose that there must be a lacuna here. But after promises of this sort Tac. is often shorter than we would expect him to be.

² It appears from chap. 58, 3 that the conspirators had been tried privately in Nero's Servilian villa (*agmina trahi ac foribus hortorum adiacere*). Hence it was now necessary for him to publish the proceedings and show the evidence on which they had been condemned.

³ This brother of Seneca's is the famous Gallio who 'cared for none of these things' (Acts, 18, 12). His original name was *Annaeus Novatus*. He was adopted by the declaimer Junius Gallio (mentioned in vi. 3, 1), after which he became 'L. Annaeus Junius Gallio.' He was proconsul of Achaia in A.D. 52.

⁴ 'He was frightened from'; the clause *ne videretur* giving the considerations urged upon him by the *consensus patrum*.

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Gifts and thanksgivings to the Gods were then decreed, with special honours to the Sun,¹ whose ancient temple stands in the Circus where the deed was to have been done, and whose divine rays had disclosed the secret of the plot. Votes were passed that additional horse-races should be held at the Circensian games of Ceres; that the month of April² should take the name of Nero; and that a temple should be built to the Goddess Safety in the place³ from which Scaevinus had taken the dagger. Nero himself dedicated the dagger in the Capitol, with an inscription to 'Jupiter the Avenger': little noticed at the time, this was interpreted after the revolt of Julius Vindex³ as a presage of the coming vengeance.

I find in the records of the Senate that Cerialis Anicius, Consul-designate, proposed that a temple should be set up at once⁴ to the Deified Nero at the public expense. But this Nero vetoed; for though Anicius only meant to signify that the Emperor's greatness was more than human, and that he deserved⁵ the veneration of mankind, Nero himself was afraid that some one would twist the proposal into an omen portending his own death. For divine honours are not paid to an Emperor until his career among men has ended.⁶

¹ 'As Jacob suggests, the sun was no doubt worshipped in this place as the great charioteer.' F.

² The month in which the plot was discovered (chap. 53, 1). The decree for calling the month *Neroneus* is mentioned in xvi. 12, 3.

³ In allusion to the rising of C. Julius Vindex, legatus of Gallia Lugdunensis, who was the first to revolt against Nero in A.D. 68 (Hist. i. 51, 6 and iv. 17, 5).

⁴ *i.e.* during his lifetime.

⁵ Halm's reading *merito* is here taken with the addition of the words *sed ipse*

prohibuit ne interpretatione. The whole passage is corrupt in Med. and has not been satisfactorily restored. See F.'s note. There is a blank which must have contained Nero's name (as shown by *sui*) and doubtless some verb.

⁶ As F. points out, this principle would only apply to formal deification by the Senate. As we have seen in the earlier books, the emperor was worshipped along with Rome or the Senate in the provinces, and also privately in Italy—to say nothing of the divine epithets constantly applied to him.

Various adulatory votes are passed;

Nero declines a temple to himself.

BOOK XVI.

Nero befooled by promise of a concealed treasure, seen in a vision.

SOON after this Nero was befooled by Fortune and I his own credulity into believing the promises of a Carthaginian Caesellius Bassus, a man of disordered brain, who interpreted a vision of the night with entire faith in its reality. The man journeyed to Rome, bought admission into the imperial presence, and divulged to Nero that, *He had discovered on his property a cave of immense depth containing a vast amount of gold, not in the form of coined money, but in rude and antique masses. There were weighty ingots on 2 the floor ; part was stacked in pillars : the whole having been stored away ages before, for the enrichment of the present generation. Conjecture, he added, pointed¹ to 3 Dido, the Phoenician Queen, having hidden away this treasure, after her flight from Tyre and the founding of Carthage : either to prevent her new people from waxing wanton from excess of wealth, or for fear that the Numidian princes, hostile to her at any rate, should be fired by the lust of gold to make war upon her.*

He sends off messengers to Africa to secure it,

And so without having assured himself of the 2 credibility of the informant or of his story, without sending out persons to ascertain its truth, Nero himself magnified its importance, and sent off

¹ There is no need to follow Halm and F. in changing *demonstrat* (Med.) into *demonstrabat*. Tac. allows himself great freedom in using the historical

present side by side with past tenses. In chap. 2, 1, he has *mittitque qui . . . adhaerent* and in 4, 1 *offert . . . ut decus averteret*.

messengers to bring the spoil to Rome, as if it were lying ready to his hand.¹ To ensure dispatch, they were sent in triremes with picked rowers, and nothing else was talked of for the time: the populace drinking it all in, wiser persons discussing it in various keys.

It happened just then that the quinquennial games² were being celebrated for the second time, and orators seized upon the event as their chief theme for the laudation of the Emperor:—*The earth, they proclaimed, not content with bearing her accustomed fruits, or with bringing forth gold commingled with other metals,*³ *was now teeming with a new form of richness; the Gods were pouring treasure into our hands*—with other inventions as servile as they were eloquent, assured of the ready credulity of their hearers.

Flattery of the orators.

These empty hopes led to fresh extravagance, Nero expending his existing resources as though means enough for many years' prodigality had been put into his hand. He even drew upon this source for largesses;⁴ so that the expectation of new riches became a cause of impoverishment to the State.⁵

As to Bassus, he dug up his own field and the fields round about, affirming that this spot, or that spot, was the site of the promised cave; followed about, not by soldiers only, but by a gang of countrymen taken on to do the work. But at last he recovered his senses; and marvelling how his dreams had always

The man Bassus fails to find the treasure, and kills himself.

¹ Here again there is no necessity to follow the edd. in changing *partam* (Med.) into *paratam*. *Partam* is in fact more appropriate to *praedam*, 'booty already won.'

² These were the games instituted in A.D. 60 under the name of Neronia (xiv. 20, 1).

³ The meaning obviously is 'gold mixed with other metals,' or as we would rather say, 'with other sub-

stances.' The addition of *aliis* (with Nipp.) is unnecessary. I cannot accept F.'s suggestion that *metallis* is an Abl. of place 'in the mines.'

⁴ See Hist. i. 20, 2.

⁵ Suet. describes Nero as being thus reduced to the direst straits for money, and as resorting to all kinds of exactions on the principle *Hoc agamus, ne quis quicquam habeat* (Nero, 32).

come true before, and that he should now for the first time have been deluded, he sought escape from shame and terror in a voluntary death. Some authorities say that he was imprisoned and released soon afterwards, his property being confiscated to make up for this Royal Treasure.

The Senate vainly attempts to keep Nero from the stage.

As the day of the quinquennial games was now 4 approaching, the Senate attempted to veil the scandal of Nero's degrading himself on the stage by offering him the prize of victory for song, adding thereto the crown for eloquence. Nero, however, 2 gave out that, *This was no case for favour, or for the exercise of senatorial authority; he could hold his own against all competitors, and trust the conscience of the judges to award him what honour he deserved.*

He appears as a harp-player;

He began by reciting a poem on the stage; and when the populace shouted to him *to display all his accomplishments*¹ (these were the very words they used), he entered the theatre as a harp-player, observing all the etiquette of the profession: not sitting down when tired, using only his harper's dress wherewith to wipe off the perspiration, and letting no droppings from his mouth or nose to be seen.²

the city mob applauds;

Last of all, on bended knee, and with a gesture of 3 deference to the assembly, he awaited with assumed diffidence the verdict of the judges. The city mob, 4 accustomed to cheer the performances of actors, greeted him with rounds of measured and modulated applause. You would have thought that they were delighted; and, as they cared nothing for the public scandal, perhaps they were.

¹ *i.e.* he first recited his poems, and then, on a call from the populace, sang the parts in character.

² Cp. Suet. Nero, 24: *In cantando*

ita legi obtemperabat ut numquam exscreare ausus, sudorem quoque frontis brachio detergeret.

5 But the spectators from remote towns, or from the still sober-minded and old-fashioned parts of Italy,¹ as well as persons from distant provinces who had come to Rome as envoys or on private business, being unused to such license, were unable to endure the spectacle, or to keep up the inglorious exertion. Their unaccustomed hands grew tired; they disconcerted the trained applauders,² and not infrequently were struck by soldiers stationed among the benches for the purpose of preventing any momentary irregularity or slackness in the plaudits. Many Knights were trampled underfoot in the struggle to force their way up to the narrow and crowded entrances; others, keeping their seats night and day, actually fell ill and died.³ For it was a deadly offence to absent oneself from the show; there were men on the watch, some openly, a greater number secretly, to take down the names of the spectators, and scan their faces for signs of pleasure or disgust. Humble offenders were punished at once; persons of distinction had nothing said to them at the time, but they encountered Nero's hatred afterwards. The story goes that Vespasian was rebuked by a freedman called Phoebus for going off in a doze: it needed powerful intercession to protect him, and nothing but his high destiny⁴ saved him from immediate destruction.

but spectators from a distance are less enthusiastic.

Compulsion applied to enforce attendance and applause.

¹ So in iii. 55, 4 Tacitus speaks of the greater simplicity and frugality of life in the provincial towns of Italy. The reading *severaque . . . retinente Italia* (instead of *severam retinentes Italiam*) is one of the few certain emendations of Med. The reading *retinentes* would destroy the peculiar Tacitean flavour of *retineo*—one of the historian's favourite words.

² These were the professional applauders described in xiv. 15, 9. See

also Suet. Nero, 20, Dio lxi. 20, Juv. viii. 43; and for applause in the law courts Plin. Epp. ii. 14, 4.

³ Suet. improves upon this. Children, he says, were born during the performances; and as all egress by the doors was forbidden, some threw themselves down from the walls, others pretended to be dead, and were carried out as if for burial (Nero, 23).

⁴ The words *maiore fato* are surely fatalistic: see Hist. i. 10, 7; ii. 78, 1.

Death of
Poppaea.

The games were just over when Poppaea died in 6
consequence of a kick which Nero, in a fit of passion,
had given her when pregnant. That she was poisoned,
I do not believe,¹ although some writers, out of hatred
rather than from evidence, have so asserted; for Nero
was longing for children, and was devoted to his wife.

Her body is
embalmed.

Her body was not burnt, in accordance with the 2
Roman custom, but was filled with spices and em-
balmed, like those of foreign kings, and laid in the
Julian mausoleum. But she received a public funeral, 3
and Nero himself pronounced a laudation upon her
beauty before the rostra, dwelling on her having
given birth to a child that had been deified, and on
her other gifts of fortune—which he described as
virtues.

Nero
denounces
Gaius
Cassius,

The death of Poppaea was mourned in public; but 7
it gave joy to those who remembered her shameless-
ness and her cruelty, and Nero filled up the measure
of ill feeling against himself by a new outrage, for-
bidding Gaius Cassius² to attend the funeral. This 2
first hint of coming trouble was not long in being
followed up by an accusation against Silanus also:
their only offences being that Cassius was dis-
tinguished for his ancestral wealth and grave cha-
racter, Silanus for his noble blood and well-ordered
youth. Nero sent a message to the Senate requiring 3
that both should be removed from public life; he

F. supposes them to mean that Vespasian was kept out of harm's way at home by receiving some higher appointment.

¹ Such a charge could only have arisen from mere wantonness of suspicion, and this instance should serve as a caution against accepting the more evil versions of occurrences which were current in the gossip of the day, and are so often recorded by Dio and Suet.

History shows that whenever poisoning has been in vogue, suspicions of poisoning have been thrown broadcast. See n. on iv. 11, 4. At this time no crime was too senseless or too ghastly to be charged against Nero.

² For C. Cassius, the famous jurist, see xii. 11, 4 and 12, 1 and 2; also xiv. 42-44 and nn. L. Junius Silanus Torquatus was the disciple of Cassius so praised in xv. 52, 3.

charged Cassius with *having paid honour to Gaius Cassius by including his image among those of his ancestors, with the inscription 'Leader of the Cause'; hereby sowing the seeds of civil war,¹ and stirring up*
⁴ *disaffection towards the Caesarian house. And that he might have something more than the memory of a hated name to breed disloyalty, he had associated with himself Lucius Silanus, a noble but hot-tempered youth, who was to be put forward for treasonable designs.*

⁸ He then attacked Silanus himself, as he had previously attacked his uncle Torquatus,² for as it were already discharging imperial functions by having freedmen to manage his accounts, his papers and correspondence. All false and groundless: for Silanus had been most circumspect, his uncle's death having
² frightened him into taking precautions. After that, so-called informers were brought in who pretended that Lepida,³ the wife of Cassius and aunt of Silanus, had committed incest with her brother's son, and
³ had taken part in unholy rites. The Senators Vulcaci^{us} Tullinus and Marcellus Cornelius, with Calpurnius Fabatus,⁴ a Roman Knight, were dragged in as accomplices; but they eluded immediate condemnation by appealing to Caesar, and ultimately, Nero's attention being engrossed by more serious offences, they were saved by their insignificance.

⁹ Decrees of exile were pronounced against Cassius and Silanus; it was left to Nero to determine about
² Lepida. Cassius was deported to the island of

and
Silanus.

Both are
exiled;

¹ The *zeugma* in *semina belli civilis . . . quaesitam* is intolerably harsh. 'It was a case of sowing civil war, and of seeking to create disaffection against the house of the Caesars.'

² The accusation and death of the uncle are recorded in xv. 35, 1-3.

³ Sister of Lepida Calvina mentioned xii. 8, 3, both being descendants of Augustus.

⁴ This man's granddaughter Calpurnia was married to Pliny the younger.

Sardinia, where old age was to do the rest.¹ Silanus was first taken to Ostia, as if bound for Naxos; then he was confined in Barium, a municipal town in Apulia. 3 While there enduring his undeserved ill fortune without a murmur, he was surprised by a Centurion sent to slay him. When the Centurion advised him to open his veins, he replied:—*He was prepared to die, but he would not excuse*² *his assassin from performing so glorious a duty.* Perceiving his great strength, and 4 that, unarmed as he was, Silanus was more full of fury than of fear, the Centurion ordered his men to make an end of him. But Silanus failed not to 5 resist and strike back, though he had nothing but his bare hands to fight with; until at last he fell under the Centurion's blows, face foremost, as if in battle.

With no less alacrity did Lucius Vetus,³ with his 10 mother-in-law Sextia, and his daughter Pollitta, meet their end; all three were hateful to Nero, since the mere fact of their being alive seemed a reproach to him for killing Rubellius Plautus, the son-in-law of Lucius Vetus. The opportunity for disclosing his 2 cruel purpose was afforded by the freedman Fortunatus, who, after embezzling his patron's money, went on to bring an accusation against him in concert with Claudius Demianus, a man who had been imprisoned for his crimes by Vetus when Proconsul of Africa, and who was now released by Nero as a reward for preferring the accusation.

¹ *Senectus eius* is an early and convincing emendation for the *senatus eius* of Med.

² The tempting reading *remittere*, here adopted, is a correction by the first hand of Med.'s *permittere*. The more obvious correction is *fermittere*, which would give a satisfactory though tamer meaning.

³ This man's full name was L. Antistius Vetus. He was cos. in A.D. 55 (xiii. 11, 1), and is represented in xiv. 58, 3 as suggesting counsels of bravery to his son-in-law Plautus. The full name of the daughter was Antistia Pollitta (xiv. 22, 5).

a Centurion is despatched to kill Silanus.

Accusations against L. Vetus, Sextia, and Pollitta.

3 As soon as Vetus heard this, and discovered that he was to be pitted against his own freedman on equal terms, he retired to his estates at Formiæ, where he was placed under a secret guard of soldiers.

Vetus re-tires to Formiæ.

4 He had his daughter with him, who in addition to the immediate danger was exasperated by the long grief she had endured since she saw her husband Plautus murdered. She had thrown her arms round his bleeding neck, and had preserved his blood-stained clothes; she still held to her grief and to her widow's garb, and refused all food save what was needed to support life. At her father's bidding she now travelled

5 to Neapolis. Denied access to Nero, she beset him on his way out, imploring him to give a hearing to an innocent man, and not sacrifice to a freedman one who had been his own colleague in the Consulship. Now pleading in tones of feminine lamentation, now raising her voice in anger till all that was womanly had gone out of it, she discovered at last that the Emperor was insensible alike to entreaty and to reproach.

The widowed Pollitta appeals in vain to Nero.

II So she brought back word to her father that, *He must abandon hope, and make the best of the inevitable*; and with that came the news that there was to be a trial in the Senate, and a severe sentence.

2 Some advised Vetus to name Nero as his chief heir, so as to secure the residue for his grand-children;¹ but he refused to mar a life which had been so near to a life of liberty by an act of servility at its close. What ready money he had, he distributed

Pathetic death of all three together

¹ A principle frequently acted on. Suet. pretends that Nero claimed for the *fiscus* property left by persons so ungrateful as not to remember the princeps in their wills. Tacitus caustically remarks upon Domitian's pleasure

at being left co-heir in Agricola's will, that he did not know that *a bono patre non scribi heredem nisi malum principem*. But the emperors as a rule were probably not more exacting than our own Death Duties.

among his slaves, and bade them each take for himself such articles as he could carry off, reserving only three couches to be kept for the end. Then in the same chamber, and with the self-same knife, they opened their veins, and each wearing a single garment for decency's sake, were in all haste carried into the bath: the father looking on the daughter, the grandmother on the granddaughter, and she again on both; all three praying for a speedy end to their ebbing lives, that they might leave their dear ones still surviving, and still to die. And Fortune kept for them the due order: the elder dying first, and then the younger.

They are sentenced after death.

They were accused after their burial, and sentenced to die after the ancient fashion.¹ But this Nero vetoed: the deed having been done, he added the mockery of letting them choose their own form of death.

Banishment of Publius Gallus.

Then Publius Gallus, a Roman Knight, was forbidden fire and water as an intimate friend of Faenius Rufus, and for being on good terms with Vetus. The freedman who acted as accuser was paid for his services by having a seat assigned to him in the theatre among the attendants of the Tribunes.

Names of months changed.

The names of the months following upon April (also called 'Neroneus') were now changed; that of May to 'Claudius,' and that of June to 'Germanicus.' The proposer of this motion, Cornelius Orfitus, explained that the reason why the name of 'Junius' was to be disused was that the execution of the two

¹ See ii. 32, 5 and xiv. 48, 4. When Nero was told that he had been pronounced a public enemy by the Senate, and that there was a demand that he should be punished *more maiorum*, he

asked what that meant; and was informed, *nudi hominis cervicem inseri furcae, corpus virgis ad necem caedi* (Suct. Nero, 49).

Torquati¹ for their crimes had rendered that name ill-omened.

- 13 The Gods themselves marked this crime-stained year by storms and pestilence. Campania was devastated by a hurricane which overthrew houses, woods, and crops, in every direction, and whose fury reached almost to the city; while in Rome persons of every grade were carried off by a plague, though the eye could discover no signs of distemper in
 2 the air. The houses were filled with dead bodies, the streets with funerals; no sex, no age, escaped the
 3 scourge; among the common people, slaves and free-born alike perished amid the lamentations of wives and children, who were themselves in many cases burnt on the very same pyre beside which they had
 4 wept and watched.² The deaths of Knights and Senators, though no less indiscriminate, seemed less to be lamented, as though the common lot of humanity were but forestalling the cruel purposes of the Emperor.

Storms and pestilence.

- 5 During this year levies were held throughout Gallia Narbonensis, Africa, and Asia, to replace the aged or invalid soldiers of the legions of Illyricum who were discharged from the service.

Fresh levies held.

- 6 Some solace was afforded to the people of Lugdunum by a gift from Nero of four million sesterces to repair the losses of their city: a sum equal to that previously contributed by the citizens for the calamity at Rome.³

Handsome gift to Lyons.

¹ *i.e.* the two Iunii Silani Torquati (xv. 35, 1 and xvi. 8, 1).

² A good instance of how Tacitus, in his desire for shortness, gives the reader credit for being able to supply the gaps necessary to make sense. Read literally, the passage before us would mean 'were burnt on the same pyre while sitting beside their friends.'

³ It is manifest that the fire at Lyons must have taken place after the Roman fire, and that Lyons had had time to subscribe for the Roman disaster before her own occurred. A statement of Seneca's (Epp. 91, 14) that Lyons was burnt down 100 years after its foundation would seem to give A.D. 58 as the date; but round numbers of this kind

A.D. 66. CONSULS GAIUS SUETONIUS PAULINUS¹
AND GAIUS LUCCIUS TELESINUS.

In this year a prosecution was instituted by **14**
Antistius Sosianus, the man whom I have above
mentioned as exiled for writing scurrilous verses
upon Nero.² Perceiving the high honour paid to
informers, and the Emperor's readiness to shed blood,
being himself too of a restless temper and prompt
to seize an opportunity, this man made friends
with an exile in the same place and in like condition
with himself called Pammenes. The reputation of
Pammenes as an astrologer had brought him a large
circle of acquaintances; and Sosianus guessed that it **2**
was not for nothing that messengers were for ever
coming to Pammenes for advice. He discovered
also that Pammenes received an annual sum of money
from Publius Anteius.³

Now Sosianus was aware that Nero hated Publius **3**
Anteius because of his attachment to Agrippina; and
as so many persons had been put to death for their
money, he knew that the great wealth of Anteius
would appeal to the Emperor's cupidity. He there- **4**
fore intercepted the letters of Anteius, stole some
papers about his horoscope and destiny which
Pammenes kept in his private repositories, and

are often loosely given by ancient authors. We have seen what miscalculations might be made, perhaps knowingly, even in such an important matter as the proper date for celebrating the secular games. And quite recently among ourselves, at the close of the year 1899, it was amusing to note what a vast number of people did not understand how many years were needed to make up a century.

¹ This is the celebrated General Suetonius Paulinus who put down the British insurrection. The consulship

here mentioned was probably his second, though we have no record of his first; the command in Britain is not likely to have been given to any but a consular. See xiv. 29, 2. Telesinus is spoken of as a philosopher. See F.

² See xiv. 48, where it is recorded how boldly Thrasea pleaded for Antistius.

³ This man had been appointed to Syria in A.D. 55 (xiii. 22, 2); but Nero had not allowed him to proceed to his province—no doubt because of his friendship with Agrippina.

The exiled
Antistius
informs
against
Anteius
and
Ostorius.

having also discovered some memoranda on the birth and life of Ostorius Scapula,¹ he wrote to the Emperor that, *If he were granted a short respite from exile, he could convey to him important information touching his own safety: Anteius and Ostorius were menacing the Empire, and prying into their own and Caesar's destiny.*

5 Swift galleys were at once despatched to bring Sosianus with all speed to Rome; and no sooner did the news of his accusation get abroad, than Anteius and Ostorius were treated as condemned, rather than
6 as accused, persons; so much so that Anteius could find no one to attest his will² until Tigellinus had given his permission—warning Anteius to lose no time in getting the deed executed. Anteius first tried poison; but impatient of its slow action, he hastened on death by laying his veins open.

Anteius anticipates his condemnation;

5 Ostorius was at that time living in a remote estate on the Ligurian border, and a Centurion was de-
2 spatched thither to put him to death at once. The reason for this hurry was that Nero, who was always a coward, and had lived in greater terror than ever since the discovery of the recent conspiracy, was afraid of personal violence at the hands of Ostorius, who had a high military reputation, having won a civic crown in Britain; he was also a powerful man,
3 and expert in the use of arms. Having closed all egress from the villa, the Centurion informed Ostorius of the Emperor's order. Ostorius then exercised upon

Ostorius kills himself rather than be killed.

¹ Ostorius Scapula had gained the *corona civica* in Britain when serving under his father in A.D. 55 (xii. 31, 7); and he was an object of suspicion because it was in his house that Antistius had recited his lampoon against Nero (xiv. 48, 1).

² *i.e.* to sign as witnesses: a Roman will had to be attested by seven witnesses, all of whom must be Roman citizens (Gaius ii. 119, 147). See xiv. 40, 4.

himself the courage which he had so often proved before the enemy; and because his veins, when cut, were slow in letting out the blood, he made use of a slave's hand so far as to hold a dagger firmly up, and then pressed the man's right hand against his own throat.¹

If I were telling of foreign wars, and of men dying for their country in ways thus like each other, I should even so be surfeited, and expect my readers to feel weariness and disgust at this long sad tale of citizens coming, however nobly, to their end; but the story of all this servile endurance, all this blood wasted wantonly at home, wears out the mind and wrings the soul with melancholy. Nor can I ask my readers to accept any other plea than this—that I cannot blame the men who perished thus ingloriously.² For these things came of the wrath of the Gods against Rome—a wrath that may not be passed over,

These horrors that I have to relate came of the wrath of the Gods against Rome.

¹ It would have been inglorious to suffer himself to be actually killed by a slave; but he might use the slave's hand as an auxiliary. So when Nero put an end to himself he permitted his secretary to assist him: *ferrum iugulo adegit, iuvante Epaphrodito* (Suet. Nero, 49).

² Construction and meaning here are both uncertain. F. explains thus: 'Nor will I demand of my readers that they shall excuse me otherwise than by the plea that I need not hate (and therefore condemn to total oblivion) those who died so tamely.' This gives a good meaning to *oderim*, as equivalent to 'condemn' or 'blame'; but it leaves the construction unexplained. Apparently *oderim* is taken as potential. Or. takes the *ne* as final, leaving a gap in the sense after *quam*: 'I offer no excuse (*i.e.* for recording these deaths) but that (I do so) lest I should hate (*i.e.* seem, or be thought to hate) those who perished so ingloriously': as though his omitting to mention them might be put down to personal animosity. But the construction is very awkward; and to guard against a charge of personal

animosity is quite foreign to the attitude of Tacitus, who has pronounced, once for all, at the beginning of the Annals that he writes *sine ira et studio* (i. 1, 6). I would suggest that *ne* here may be the negative of *ut* definitive = 'the fact that I do not': 'my only excuse is (the fact) that I do not condemn or blame these men for dying so ingloriously.' The meaning thus given to *oderim* is somewhat analogous to that in *adulationem oderat* (ii. 87, 3), and *vitia oderat* (i. 80, 3). It is to be noted that this is the only passage in which Tac. acknowledges the cowardly nature of these deaths; though the fine speech which he puts into the mouth of those who urged Thrasea to appear in the Senate and defend himself (chap. 25) shows how justly he appreciated their true moral aspect. It is also worth noting that his attribution of these calamities to the wrath of the Gods against Rome is in direct contradiction to his despairing utterance about the *aequitas* of the Gods *erga bona malaque documenta* in chap. 33, 1.

as when armies are routed or cities captured, with a single mention. Let this tribute at least be paid to these illustrious men in the after time:¹ that as in their burial they were divided from the common herd, so in the record of their end they may receive an abiding monument of their own.²

17 For within a few days of one another Annaeus Mela,³ Cerialis Anicius, Rufrius Crispinus⁴ and Gaius Petronius⁵ perished in one batch; of whom Mela and Crispinus were Roman Knights with senatorial rank.

Death of Seneca's brother Annaeus Mela, and of others.

2 The latter had once been Prefect of the Praetorian guard, and had received the Consular insignia; he had been banished to Sardinia not long before as concerned in the conspiracy, and receiving now the order to die, he made away with himself.

3 Mela was full brother to Gallio and Seneca. He had abstained from seeking public office, out of an absurd ambition⁶ to acquire a Senator's influence

Cause of the accusation against Mela.

¹ The word *posteritas* does not mean 'posterity' in our sense of the word, *i.e.* 'descendants.' The word means literally 'their after-ness,' 'their after-existence,' *i.e.* what people think of them after death, their reputation. For a similar use, see Propertius, iii. 1, 34.

² This chapter should be compared with iv. 32-33, where Tacitus lays it down, with the same emphasis as here, that the highest topic for the historian is the narration of warlike exploits, and bemoans his own task in having to tell of noble blood ingloriously shed, and cruel deaths tamely endured, as the result of judicial tyranny in Rome. But in this book he seems to revel in depicting ignoble deaths, which he himself acknowledges would naturally excite feelings of contempt and loathing; while at the same time, to say nothing of his omitting to express any recognition of the excellent administration of the Empire, even during the reign of Nero, he so curtails the space allotted to the most brilliant feats of arms accomplished by Roman armies and generals abroad that we can scarce follow with intelligent interest the progress of their campaigns.

³ Father of the poet Lucan.

⁴ This was the man who had been colleague of Lusius Geta in the command of the Praetorians (xi. 1, 3), and had been removed by Agrippina to make way for Burrus (xii. 42, 1). He had been the first husband of Poppaea (xiii. 45, 4).

⁵ There is a doubt as to the praenomen of Petronius. Most edd. here read C. for the *ac* of Med., and the praenomen C. occurs again in chap. 18, 1. Pliny, however, calls him T. Petronius (N. H. xxxvii. 2, 7, 20). This Petronius is doubtless the famous author of the *Satyricon*, though this has been disputed. The great preponderance of modern opinion is in favour of the identification (see Henderson, pp. 489-490). The single argument against it is that Tac. does not speak of him as a writer; but the *Satyricon* is just the kind of book that Tacitus would have deemed beneath the notice of an historian. He speaks with scarcely veiled contempt of the *levia carmina* and *faciles versus* which Petronius listened to when dying (chap. 19, 3).

⁶ Note the aristocratic prejudice of

while still remaining a Knight; he hoped also to find a shorter road to wealth by holding procuratorships for the Emperor's private affairs. The fact that he was father of the poet Lucanus had greatly helped him to distinction; but he was too exacting in calling in his son's estate after his death, and thus brought down upon himself an accusation from Fabius Romanus, one of the poet's intimate friends. This man pretended, on the evidence of a forged letter from Lucanus, that both father and son had been equally cognisant of the plot. Nero examined the letter; and being athirst for Mela's money, ordered the letter to be shown to him. Mela resorted to what was then thought the readiest form of death, opening his veins; having first made a will in which he left large sums to Tigellinus and his son-in-law Cossutianus Capito,¹ in the hope of saving the remainder.

Mela added a codicil, by way of remonstrance against the injustice of his death, to the effect that, *There were no reasons for his own punishment; whereas Crispinus and Anicius Cerialis, who were both ill-disposed towards the Emperor, were still alive.* The name of Crispinus is supposed to have been inserted because he was dead already; that of Cerialis, to bring about his death.² Cerialis laid violent hands on himself not long afterwards; but his fate excited less pity than that of the rest, men remembering how he had betrayed the plot against Gaius Caesar.³

Tacitus which denounces as *præpostera* the *ambitio* of the equestrian order to take part in the administration of the Empire. We have seen already how necessary to the Civil Service that body had become. See n. on xii. 60, 3.

¹ See xiv. 48, 2.

² Some read *additur . . . scripsisse* as though the codicil were a forgery. Its motive is obvious. Professing to have

been written before, but in reality after, the death of Crispinus, the words coupling the two names together would suggest that both were guilty of the same crime; Crispinus having been found guilty before the will was opened, the suggestion would naturally follow that Cerialis ought to be put to death also.

³ This refers to some conspiracy as to which we have no certain knowledge.

18 In regard to Gaius Petronius a brief retrospect must be taken. He passed his days in slumber, his nights in business and enjoyment. As others achieve fame by energy, so did Petronius by indolence; yet he was not looked upon as a glutton, or as a spendthrift, like other men who run through their means, but as a man who made a science of pleasure.

2 The air of unconventionality and self-abandonment which distinguished everything that he said or did was relished all the more for wearing an appearance

3 of simplicity. And yet as Proconsul of Africa, and afterwards as Consul,¹ he proved himself a man of

4 vigour, and one capable of affairs. After that, resuming a life of vice, or what affected to be vice, he was admitted into the circle of Nero's most intimate friends, and became his authority on matters of taste:² Nero not thinking that anything had attained to the supreme point of charm or luxury unless it had been

5 recommended to him by Petronius. This brought on him the hatred of Tigellinus, as being his rival, and indeed his superior, in the arts of enjoyment. Addressing himself therefore to Nero's cruelty, which was the strongest of all his passions, Tigellinus accused Petronius of having been the friend of Scaevinus;

Strange character of Gaius Petronius.

Tigellinus, out of jealousy, accuses him of friendship with Scaevinus.

¹ Bithynia was one of those provinces which could be governed by a man of praetorian rank, who might be styled *proconsul* though he had not yet held the consulship. See i. 74, 1.

² This famous appellation (*elegantiae arbiter*) was so appropriate to the character of Petronius that the title *Arbiter* has descended to posterity as if it were a real cognomen. Prof. W. Ramsay has well suggested that the title may have been given to Petronius by some grammarian merely for the purpose of identifying him as the person named by Tac. (*Dict. Biog.*). Compare with this account of Petronius what Saint Simon says of M. Langlée: 'He esta-

blished himself as an authority on entertainments and fashions to such an extent that, from the Princes of the Blood downwards, no one gave a *fête* without asking his advice, and no one built or bought a house without consulting him on its arrangement, its decoration, its furniture. If a marriage was to be celebrated, it was Langlée who designed the dresses and selected the presents; if a love affair was developing, it was Langlée who was called in as confidant; for he was discreet, secret as the grave, and ready to help a friend with his purse or his counsel' (G. F. Bradby, *The Great Days of Versailles*, pp. 116-117).

and having bribed one of his own slaves to give evidence against him, he hurried the greater part of his establishment into prison, thus depriving him of all means of self-defence.

It happened just then that Caesar had gone into 19
Campania, and Petronius had got as far as Cumae, when he was ordered to proceed no further.¹ But he would brook no dallying between hope and fear; and 2
yet he was in no hurry to fling his life away; for after his veins had been opened, he had them bound up again, and then re-opened, as the fancy took him. Meanwhile he chatted to his friends, not on any serious subject, nor with any view to gain a name for fortitude; while they, instead of discussing the 3
immortality of the soul, or the conclusions of philosophers, recited pieces of light and playful poetry. To some of his slaves he gave handsome presents; 4
to others he administered castigations. He then set himself down to a feast, and indulged in a nap, that his death, compulsory as it was, might seem to have come in the ordinary way. Even in his will he made 5
no flattering mention of Nero, or of Tigellinus, or of any one else in power, as did most people on their death-beds; but he wrote out a list of Nero's acts of lechery, with the names of the youths and women whom he had debauched, detailing all the lustful novelties of each case: this list he sealed and sent to Nero. He then broke his signet-ring, to prevent its being used afterwards to bring others into trouble.

While Nero was wondering how all the refine- 20
ments of his midnight orgies could have become known, he bethought him of Silia. This woman,

¹ Petronius was evidently going down to join Nero in Campania as part of his suite.

He opens his veins at the first hint of danger;

and dies as cheerfully and fastidiously as he had lived.

Nero banishes Silia for revelations made in the will of Tigellinus.

being a Senator's wife, was a person of some consequence; she had been associated with Nero in every kind of vicious practice, and had been on intimate terms with Petronius. So she was exiled for not having kept silence about all she had seen or suffered; and having thus gratified his own resentment, Nero surrendered Minucius Thermus, an ex-Praetor, to that of Tigellinus. One of this man's freedmen had made some offensive charges against Tigellinus, for which the freedman had to pay the penalty by torture, the unoffending patron with his life.

21 After slaughtering so many distinguished men, Nero at last sought to destroy Virtue herself¹ by putting Thræsea Paetus² and Barea Soranus³ to death. He had long hated them both; and was especially indignant with Thræsea for having walked out of the Senate-house, as above mentioned, on the occasion of

He at last assails Virtue herself in the person of Thræsea Paetus.

¹ With this famous phrase begins the final episode of the Annals, recording the deaths of these two Stoic philosophers. To their trial and last moments Tac. devotes no less than eighteen chapters; whereas he finds that eleven chapters suffice for the whole career of Suetonius Paulinus in Britain during the eventful years A.D. 60 and 61.

² This distinguished philosopher may be regarded, in a special sense, as the hero of Tacitus, embodying alike in his life and in his death: the ideal which he had already found in his son-in-law Helvidius Priscus—that of one who embraced the tenets of the Stoic philosophy *non, ut plerique, ut nomine mag-nifico segne otium velaret, sed quo firmior adversus fortuita rem publicam capesseret.* (Hist. iv. 5.) His full name was P. Clodius Thræsea Paetus; he was a close friend of the poet Persius, who was a relation of his wife Arria; and he is known to have written a book on the congenial topic of the life of Cato of Utica. All that Tac. has hitherto recorded of Thræsea is that he opposed a motion for giving extra gladiatorial

facilities to the Syracusans, and that he was censured on that occasion (no doubt by brother Stoics) for not intervening in more important matters (xiii. 49, 1-5); that in A.D. 59 he walked out of the Senate on the occasion of the decrees concerning Agrippina being proposed (xiv. 12, 2); that in A.D. 60 he delivered a powerful speech, in high Roman style, on the necessity of curbing the pretensions of provincials (xv. 20 and 21); and that in the year following he received with equanimity an ominous affront from Nero (xv. 22, 5). These notices do not suggest very important action; but when Vitellius gives as a proof of his being able to endure opposition *solutum se etiam Thræseae contradicere* (Hist. ii. 91, 5), he implies that Thræsea's opposition must have been frequent and formidable. See chap. 22, 1.

³ Mentioned once previously as Consul-designate in xii. 53, 2, when he appears making a motion little in accordance with the Stoic character for giving an immense grant of money to the freedman Pallas.

the motion about Agrippina, and because he had taken little visible interest in the Juvenalia¹—an offence which rankled all the more seeing that in his own native town of Patavium he had sung in tragic costume at certain games instituted by the Trojan Antenor.² Then on the day when the Praetor Antistius was on the point of being condemned to death for his scurrilous verses on the Emperor, Thrasea had proposed and carried a milder sentence; he had purposely absented himself when Divine honours were being voted to Poppaea; and he had not appeared at her funeral.

These things Capito Cossutianus would not suffer to be forgotten; for in addition to his own readiness to commit iniquities, he bore Thrasea a grudge for having helped³ the Cilician envoys to convict him of extortion.⁴ He added these further charges:—

Thræsea, he said, had shirked taking the statutory oath of allegiance at the New Year; though a member of the College of Fifteen, he had absented himself from the solemn prayers for the safety of the state; he had never offered sacrifice for the Emperor's health,⁵ or for his god-like voice; although in former days he had been constant and unwearied in his attendance on the Senate, coming forward to support or oppose motions on everyday matters,

¹ The occasion is not known. The point that Thræsea despised the accomplishments (*artes*) of Nero is made much of by Capito in his speech, chap. 22, 4.

² No satisfactory explanation has been given of the word *cetastis* which occurs in this passage. Antenor was the supposed founder of Patavium (*Padua*).

³ It is remarkable that in narrating the condemnation of Capito (xiii. 33, 3) Tac. makes no mention of Thræsea's intervention in that trial.

⁴ The reasons which determined Nero to attack the Stoic philosopher are thus summed up by Henderson, p. 295:—

'It was a combination of three causes which induced Nero to declare war upon the philosophers in A.D. 66. The first was their Cosmopolitanism; the second their very "Quietism"; the third their Republican sympathy. Combined with their pride and self-satisfaction, these produced dislike, dislike suspicion, and suspicion persecution.'

⁵ It would seem that the first of the prayers mentioned refers to the vows 'for the safety of the Roman people,' offered on the 1st of January; the second to those for the Emperor's personal safety on the 3rd of the same month.

Thræsea is accused by Capito Cossutianus

for various sins of omission.

he had not entered the Curia for three years; and quite recently, when all were eagerly hurrying thither to put down Silanus and Vetus,¹ he had preferred to devote his
 2 leisure to the private business of his clients. This was to make himself a seceder; it meant the forming of a party: if many dared the like, it would mean war.

Just as in former days, he proceeded, men talked of Gaius Caesar and Marcus Cato, so to-day, Nero, in its
 3 Thrasea has his followers, or rather his satellites; men who copy his demeanour and his looks, if not as yet the insolence of his votes in the Senate; men whose unbending and gloomy faces are intended as a rebuke to your frivolity.

Thrasea alone has no regard for your welfare, pays no
 4 homage to your accomplishments, holds your successes in contempt.³ Can it be that even your griefs and sorrows do not satisfy him?

To disbelieve in the Divinity of Poppæa comes of the
 5 same spirit as to refuse to swear to the acts of Augustus or of the Divine Julius. Thrasea scouts religion; the laws
 6 are no laws to him; in every province, in every army, men scan the journals of the Roman people to discover what duty Thrasea has left unperformed.

Let us then either adopt these new principles, if they
 7 be better; or else let us put away the instigator and champion of innovation. His is the school that bred the Tiberones and the Favonii⁴—names hateful even to the
 8 old Republic. These men raise the cry of Liberty in order to destroy Authority: Authority destroyed, they will attack

He has become a public danger;

an enemy to religion,

to the laws,

and to the principle of authority.

¹ See chap. 7, 2 and 3; 10, 1.

² *i.e.* the names of Caesar and Cato were coupled together as representing the two extremes of political opinion—republican and imperial.

³ Med. reads *prospera principis respertit*, for which most edd. give *prosperas res spernit*. But Mr. Fisher in

F.² makes the very probable correction to *prospera principis respuit*, quoting Dial. 9, 2 (*licet aures tuæ respuant*).

⁴ Alluding to Q. Aelius Tubero and M. Favonius, both severe Stoics; the former in the time of the Gracchi, the latter in that of Cicero.

Liberty herself. In vain, Caesar, hast thou removed Cassius, if thou art to suffer those who take the Bruti¹ for their model to wax in strength and number. And lastly: send no message to us thyself about Thræsea; leave all to the arbitrament of the Senate.

Nero fanned the ready wrath of Cossutianus, and associated with him Eprius Marcellus,² a man of acrid eloquence.

Barea Soranus also is accused of treason.

The impeachment of Barea Soranus had already been claimed by Ostorius Sabinus, a Roman Knight, for matters arising out of his Proconsulship in Asia,³ during which he had increased the Emperor's wrath against him, not only by his integrity and energy, and by the pains which he had expended upon opening up the harbour of Ephesus, but also because he had not punished the people of Pergamum for forcibly preventing Acratus, a freedman of Caesar, from carrying off statues and pictures. The charges advanced against him were that he had been a friend of Plautus, and that he had courted the favour of the provincials with treasonable intent.⁴ The moment chosen for his condemnation was that when Tiridates was arriving in Rome to be invested with the Armenian crown. Nero hoped that the domestic crime might be thrown into the shade by talk about foreign affairs; or perhaps he desired to show off his imperial grandeur by slaying distinguished personages in truly royal⁵ fashion.

¹ 'Brutus was their model, not only as a tyrannicide, but also as a Stoic,' says Arrian (Epict. i. 1, 26); see Mayor on Juv. v. 36.

² The famous delator: see xii. 4, 5.

³ The date of the proconsulship of Soranus has been fixed for the year A.D. 61-62 (see F.); hence it is evident that the predatory excursions of Acratus for

the purpose of carrying off statues must have begun before the year 64, when he is first mentioned by Tac. (xv. 45, 3).

⁴ Plautus had resided in Asia from A.D. 60 to his death in A.D. 62 (xiv. 22, 2 and 59, 1).

⁵ The contrast in the Roman mind between the 'imperial' and the 'royal' is well illustrated by the juxtaposition

24 Accordingly, when all Rome had poured out to welcome the Emperor, and get a sight of the King, Thrasea was forbidden to appear. Undismayed by the prohibition, he wrote to Nero asking of what he was accused, and affirming that he could clear himself if he were allowed to know and answer the 2 charges brought against him. Nero seized the letter eagerly, hoping that Thrasea had been frightened into writing something which would exalt the Emperor's 3 glory, and be dishonouring to himself. As the letter contained nothing of the kind, Nero was alarmed by the boldness and independence of his innocent victim, and ordered the Senate to be convoked.

Thrasedemands the cause of his accusation.

25 Thrasea then took counsel among his intimate friends whether he should enter upon a defence, or treat the charges with contempt. Conflicting advice was offered. Some thought he should appear before the Senate, telling him that, *They had no fear that his strength of mind would fail him; he would say no word but what would enhance his glory. The cowardly and the 2 poor-spirited might shroud their end in secrecy; but let the people see how a true man met his death: let the Senate listen to a voice above the human, as though issuing from a God. Nero himself might be moved by the very marvel 3 of it. And if nothing could stay his cruel purpose, posterity would mark the difference between the memory of a brave man's death, and the silent perishing of the coward.*

Some of Thrasede's friends advise him to appear in the Senate;

26 Those again who advised Thrasea to await death in his own house used the same language about himself, but dwelt upon the affronts and the ridicule which awaited him:—

of *magnitudinem imperatoriam* and *regio facinore* in this passage—the one

word being used *in bonam partem*, the other *in malam*.

others offer
the con-
trary
advice.

*He should let no taunts, no insults, fall upon his ears. There were others ready to commit outrage besides Cossu- 2
tianus and Eprius; there were some perhaps brutal enough
to dare raise their hand for a blow: even good men, out of
fear, might do the same. Let him save the Senate, which 3
he had adorned, from so gross an infamy; let him leave
it uncertain what decree the Fathers would have passed
had they seen Thrasea before them. It was vain to hope 4
that Nero would feel shame for his iniquities; much more
had they to fear his cruelty to Thrasea's wife, his daughter,
and his other dear ones. Let him therefore, while still 5
un-outraged and unstained, choose an end which would
bring honour¹ on those whose footsteps and whose
teaching had been his guide through life.²*

Enthu-
siasm of
Rusticus
Arulenus,

Among his counsellors was one Rusticus Aru- 6
lenus,³ an enthusiastic youth, who in his thirst for
glory, being a Tribune of the Plebs, offered to put
his veto upon the decree of Senate.⁴ But Thrasea 7
restrained his ardour, forbidding him to essay an
intercession which would be fatal to himself, and of
no benefit to the accused:—

¹ The loose Ablative *eorum gloria* has not been satisfactorily explained. It can hardly mean as suggested by Nipp. and by G. and G., 'after the glorious example of.' I take it as = *cum eorum gloria*; which might mean either (a) 'Let him so die as to do honour to the teachers who have been his guides through life'; or (b) 'Let him so die as to have the same glory as,' 'so as to share the glory of' those who, etc. The Ablative is one of the many in Tac. which cannot be exactly classed.

² Amid the many points of superficial resemblance between Stoicism and Christianity, nothing could present a more absolute contrast to Christian teaching than the spirit in which this truly Stoical advice was given, and, as the sequel shows, acted upon by Thrasea. The Stoical doctrine that the philosopher's highest duty was to keep his personal dignity *intemerata, impolluta*; to shrink from jeers and buffets,

as in themselves degrading, rather than to face and endure them, if need be, in the cause of right and truth, is the very opposite of the Christian ideal, and of the teaching of the great Christian exemplar. And the cowardice of Thrasea in forbearing to 'make his testimony' publicly in the Senate seems to rob his life of half its nobility, and his end of all its merit as an example.

³ This man wrote a biography of Thrasea for which he was put to death by Domitian (*Agri*, 2, 1). In this he had described Thrasea and Helvidius as *sanctissimos viros* (*Suet. Dom.* 10).

⁴ Thus even under the emperors a tribune of the plebs might exercise his veto; but it was always liable to be overridden by the superior *potestas tribunicia* of the emperor. We have seen how the independent action of a tribune might be resented by the Senate (*xiii.* 28, 1 and 2).

His own days were over; he must not forsake the way of life which he had followed for so many years. But Arulenus was entering on his career; he had an open course before him. Let him ponder well, in days like these, what path it beseemed him to tread in public life.

But what he should himself do—whether he should appear before the Senate or not—that Thrasea reserved for his own consideration.

27 Next day two Praetorian Cohorts under arms occupied the temple of Venus Genetrix.¹ The approaches to the Senate were beset by a body of civilians² armed with swords which they made no effort to conceal. Companies of soldiers were scattered about the forums and the basilicas, and cast threatening looks upon the Senators as they passed into the Curia. A speech from the Emperor was there read out by his Quaestor. No name was mentioned; but Nero reprovèd the Fathers for neglecting their public duties:—*Their example was begetting a like remissness among the Knights. What wonder that men from distant provinces would not attend, if many who had held Consulships and priesthoods cared for nothing but the adornment of their gardens?*

The city occupied by troops.

Message from Nero to the Senate.

28 The accusers eagerly seized the weapon thus put into their hands. Cossutianus opened the attack; Marcellus followed with still greater vehemence:—

Attack upon Thrasea and Helvidius by Marcellus.

The highest interests, he said, of the Empire were at

¹ The famous temple of Venus, as ancestress of the Julian gens, which stood in the centre of the *Forum Iulium*. Whether Tac. means that the Senate on this occasion met inside the temple is not clear. So large a force as two Praetorian Cohorts could scarcely be needed in the place of meeting itself; F. presumes that they were placed there in reserve, in case of need, and that the meeting was held in the usual place close by, the *Curia Julia*.

² The emphatic use of the word *togati*, followed by *non occultis gladiis*, makes it certain that the persons so designated were civilians. The use of such a body was ominous and unconstitutional; but we may recall how in B.C. 63 a body of armed youths rallied round Cicero when consul, to protect him against a possible assault from the Catilinarians.

stake. The Emperor's disposition to clemency was being checked by the contumacy of those beneath him.¹ Too long had the Fathers meekly suffered themselves to be mocked. Too long had they left unpunished the treason of Thrasea, and the similar madness of his son-in-law, Helvidius Priscus :² too long that of Paconius Agrippinus, the inheritor of all his father's hatred of Emperors, and that author of infamous lampoons, Curtius Montanus.³ He⁴ demanded of a Consular that he should be seen in the Senate ; of a priest, that he should join in public prayers ; and of a citizen, that he should take the oath of allegiance—unless indeed Thrasea had renounced the customs and usages of their ancestors, and proclaimed himself a traitor and public enemy. In fine, let the man who had been wont to play the Senator, and to champion the Emperor's detractors, come amongst them now, and declare what it was that he wished to see amended or reformed : they could more readily endure a voice railing at things one by one than a silence which excepted nothing from its condemnation.

Does Thrasea object, he proceeded, to a peace which embraces the entire world?⁵ or to the bloodless victories of our armies? Do not satisfy the evil ambitions of a man who mourns over the prosperity of his country, who counts our forums, our theatres, our temples, as waste places,

¹ The word *inferiores* refers obviously to the Senate.

² For an account of this man see Hist. iv. 5, where we are told that his father had been a centurion *primi pili* ; and that *ingenium illustre altioribus studiis iuvenis admodum dedit*. After his return from exile, he rose to the praetorship in A.D. 70 ; and Tac. commends him for his constant attacks upon the *delator* Eprius Marcellus. But in time he made himself so offensive to even so merciful an emperor as Vespasian that he was again exiled and soon after put to death.

³ Paconius and Montanus were both

Stoics. The former is described by Arrian as receiving news of his condemnation with extraordinary coolness (see Mayor on Juv. iv. 107) ; the latter appears actively in the Senate under Vespasian (Hist. iv. 40, 2).

⁴ The pronoun *se* refers of course to the speaker, Marcellus. The want of the reflexive pronoun in English makes it often impossible to avoid ambiguity in translating passages of *Oratio Obliqua*.

⁵ Nero is said to have closed the temple of Janus (Suet. Nero, 13) after the Armenian war.

and who is for ever threatening to betake himself into
 6 exile. Our decrees are no decrees to him ; our magistrates
 no magistrates ; Rome itself is not Rome. Let him be
 cut off from a country which he has long ceased to love,
 and which he now refuses to behold !

29 While Marcellus bellowed out sentences like these
 in his savage and blustering manner, his eyes and face
 a-flame, the familiar look of dejection which had so
 often come over the Senate in those perilous times
 gave way before a terror of a new and deeper kind as
 their eyes fell upon the drawn swords of the soldiers.
 2 The noble figure of Thræsea himself rose before their
 minds ; some felt pity also for Helvidius, who was to
 suffer for that blameless alliance :—

3 *And what, they asked, was the offence of Agrippinus
 but his father's¹ unhappy fate ? for he too, though no whit
 less innocent than his son, had fallen a victim to imperial
 4 cruelty under Tiberius. And Montanus, a blameless youth
 —no scurrilous versifier—why was he being driven into
 exile but because he had given some proof of genius ?*

30 Then Ostorius Sabinus, the accuser of Soranus,
 entered the Senate-house, and took up the tale of the
 friendship between Soranus and Rubellius Plautus,
 declaring that, *Soranus had fostered disaffection among
 the allies during his Proconsulate in Asia, subserving his
 2 own glory rather than the public good.* These were
 stale charges : but he had a fresh charge by which he
 involved the daughter in her father's peril—that she
 3 had expended large sums upon astrologers. And
 in truth Servilia (for that was the girl's name), out
 of love for her father, and in girlish thoughtlessness,
 had put some questions to the astrologers, though

Consternation of the
 Senate.

Sabinus
 denounces
 Soranus
 and his
 young
 daughter
 Servilia.

¹ M. Paconius (father of Agrippinus) is mentioned as an accuser in iii. 67, 1. He seems to have been thrown into

prison by Tiberius—perhaps as an accomplice of Sejanus—and executed some time afterwards (Suet. Tib. 61).

only as to the welfare of her family:—*Would Nero relent? Would anything dreadful come of the trial before the Senate?*

And so the girl was summoned before the Senate; 4 and there the two stood apart, before the consular tribunal. On one side was the aged father; on the other, not yet in her twentieth year, the desolate widowed daughter—for her husband, Annius Pollio,¹ had been lately driven into exile. She would not even cast a glance upon her father, to whose burden of peril she seemed to be adding one peril more.

The accuser then asked, *Whether she had parted 31 with her marriage ornaments, and sold the necklace off her neck, to find money for magical rites?* At first she threw herself on the ground weeping, and for a time made no answer; then grasping the altar and the altar-steps,² *Never, she cried, never, did I call on evil spirits, never utter incantations; nor have I prayed for aught else in my luckless prayers but this, that thou, O Caesar, and ye, O Senators, might keep my beloved father safe from harm. I gave my jewels, my dress, and 2 the tokens of my rank, as I would have given my life's blood had they asked it of me. Let these men, unknown 3 to me before, see to it themselves what name they bear, what arts they use; I never spoke of Nero but as one of the Gods. What I did, I did unknown to my hapless father: if fault there be, it is mine alone.*

Scarcely had she ceased when Soranus took up 32 the word, and declared that, *His daughter had not gone with him to his province; she was too young to have known Plantus; she had not been mixed up in the charges*

¹ Banished as one of the Pisonian Conspirators (xv. 71, 6).

² The distinction between the words *ara* and *attaria*, often coupled as here,

is not very clear. But *ara* usually stands for the main altar, *attaria* for other and smaller erections placed upon it.

Servilia is questioned as to having resorted to magical rites;

her piteous answer.

Soranus vainly pleads for her.

against her husband. His own lot he would bear, whatever it might be; but guilty only as she was of an affection
 2 all too fond, let her fate be kept apart from his. So saying, he would have rushed into his daughter's arms had not the lictors interposed.

The witnesses were then heard; when the appearance of Publius Egnatius¹ among the number aroused an indignation no less vehement than the pity excited by the barbarity of the accusation.

3 This man was a client of Soranus who had been bought over to ruin his friend; he made a display of Stoic principles, and had schooled himself in countenance and demeanour to present a semblance of virtue; but his heart was full of treachery and cunning, of avarice and sensuality. These vices were brought to light through his greed for money; and his example warns us to be on our guard against those who under a show of philosophy are false and treacherous in friendship, no less than against men wrapped in perfidy, or notorious evil-doers.

33 And yet the same day witnessed a noble example set by Cassius Asclepiodotus, one of the wealthiest men in Bithynia, who having paid all observance to Soranus in his prosperity, would not desert him in
 2 his fall. He was now stripped of his property and banished: so unconcernedly do the Gods regard examples of good and evil.²

P. Egnatius appears as a hostile witness.

Noble conduct of Asclepiodotus.

¹ P. Egnatius Celer, a native of Berytus, is best known to us by the withering lines of Juv. in reference to this accusation:—*Stoicus occidit Baram, delator amicum = Discipulusque senem, ripa nutritus in illa = Ad quam Gorgonei delapsa est pinna caballi* (Sat. iii. 116-118). He was himself impeached and exiled in A.D. 70 (Hist. iv. 40, 4).

² These bitter words suggest that indignation at the death of Thræsea

had for the moment wrung out of Tacitus all belief in the providential agency of the Gods. His words *acquitate deum erga bona malaque documenta* express epigrammatically the same creed as that expressed so often in the famous lines of Lucretius, and adopted by Horace from him: *namque deos didici securum agere cœvum* (Sat. i. 5, 101).

Thrasea,
Soranus,
and Ser-
vilia are
con-
demned.

Thrasea, Soranus, and Servilia were permitted to³ choose their mode of death. Helvidius and Paconius were expelled from Italy. Montanus was spared for his father's¹ sake; but was enjoined to keep away from public life. The accusers Eprius and Cossutianus⁴ received five million sesterces apiece; Ostorius was given twelve hundred thousand sesterces, together with the Quaestorian ornaments.

Thrasea
receives the
message in
his garden,
discussing
on the im-
mortality
of the soul.

Thrasea was in his garden when the Consul's³⁴ Quaestor² reached him at the fall of day. He had been holding a thronged reception of distinguished persons, both men and women, paying special attention to Demetrius,³ a teacher of the Cynic school. To judge by the earnestness of his expression, and from what could be heard of their conversation, he was discussing the nature of the soul, and the separation of mind and body, when Domitius Caecilianus, one of his intimate friends, arrived, and informed him of the decision of the Senate. Thrasea begged the² weeping and wailing company to depart at once, and not endanger themselves by mingling their lot with that of a condemned man; and when Arria⁴ sought to share her husband's fate, after the example of her own mother of the same name, he counselled her to retain her life, and not deprive their daughter of her one and only stay.

He bids the
company
depart,

¹ Who the father was is not known: he has been identified with the epicure and court favourite in the time of Domitian described by Juv. (iv. 107 and 131).

² The quaestor was a sort of aide-de-camp to the consul, each consul having originally one (later two) attached to him. The emperor's message to the Senate is read aloud to it by a quaestor.

³ A Cynic philosopher, often quoted with the greatest respect by Seneca. He afterwards defended Egnatius Celer

(Hist. iv. 40, 5), and was banished along with other philosophers by Vespasian A.D. 71 (Suet. Vesp. 13).

⁴ Daughter of the famous Arria who insisted on sharing the death of her husband Caecina Paetus, condemned to death by Claudius A.D. 42. The story of how she fortified her husband by plunging the dagger first into her own breast, with the words *Paete, non dolet*, has been immortalised by Pliny (Epp. iii. 16, 6) and by Martial (i. 14).

35 He then passed into the colonnade, where the Quaestor found him more in joy than in sorrow because he had learnt that his son-in-law Helvidius was only
 2 to be forbidden Italy. On receiving the decree of Senate, he took Helvidius and Demetrius into his chamber, where he presented the veins of both arms to the physician. As soon as the blood began to flow, he poured some of it on to the ground, and calling to the Quaestor to come near :—

has his veins opened, and offers the blood as a libation to Jupiter the Liberator.

*This libation, he said, is to Jupiter the Liberator.*¹

3 *Look well to this, young man; for though I pray the Gods to avert the omen, thou hast been born into a time when it may be well for thee to brace up thy soul by examples of fortitude.*

After that, as the grievous pains of a lingering death came on, he turned [his eyes] towards Demetrius.² . . .

¹ So Seneca, in nearly the same words (xv. 64, 4).

² Here, unhappily, the MS. of the 16th Book breaks off, in the middle of a sentence; and the concluding words *obversis in Demetrium* are the last words of the historian that have come down to us. A pathetic interest attaches to the fact that these his last chapters (21-36) should have been taken up with the story of the accusation, trial, and death of his hero Thrasca. In record-

ing that story Tacitus finds an opportunity of putting before us his ideal of how a philosopher should bear himself in public or in private life, and how meet his end; and so it happens, by a curious harmony of circumstance, that this elaborate picture of a stoical death may be regarded in a sense as the historian's dying message to posterity, reflecting his last ideas on human life and human duty.



ARMENIA

English Miles
0 20 40 60 80 100

Kilometres
0 20 40 60 80 100

Corbulo's March -----
Frontiers Roads



The Edinburgh Geographical Institute

London John Murray, Albemarle Street.

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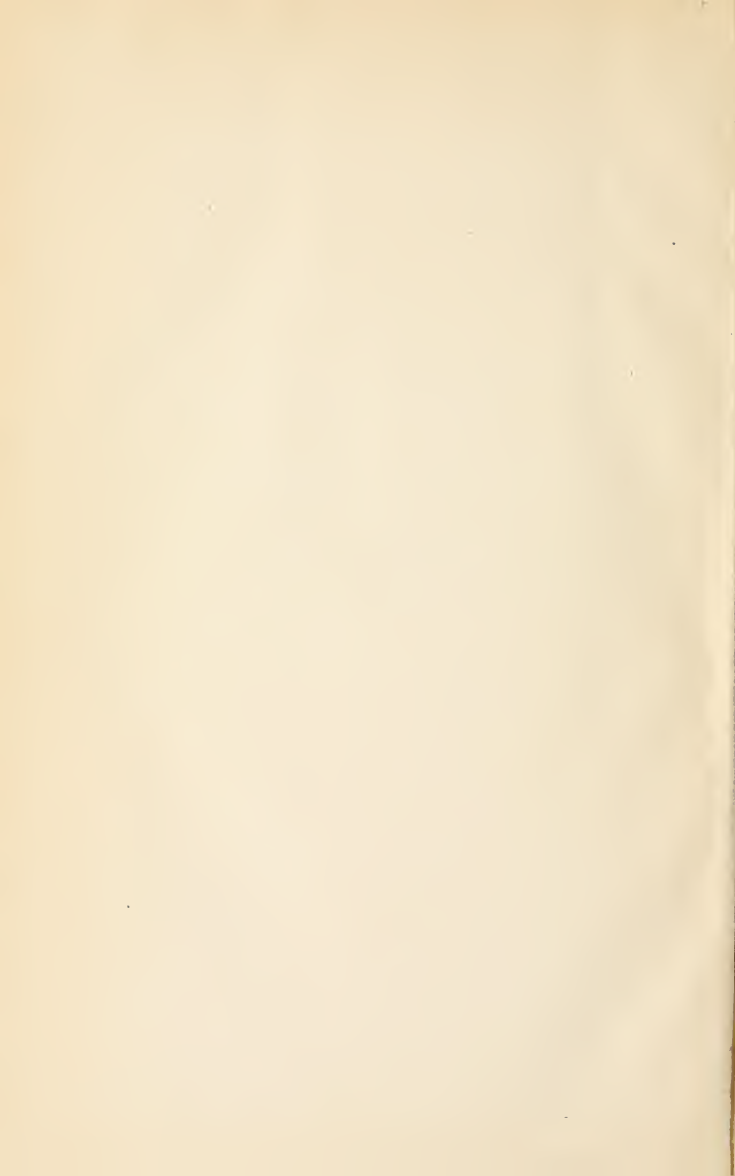
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