



CHAPTER XLIII. JOVIAN TO THEODOSIUS

[363-395 A.D.]

ELECTION OF JOVIAN (FLAVIUS CLAUDIUS JOVIANUS)

THREE or four hours of the night had not passed away without some secret cabals ; and when the election of an emperor was proposed, the spirit of faction began to agitate the assembly. Victor and Arinthæus collected the remains of the court of Constantius ; the friends of Julian attached themselves to the Gallic chiefs, Dagalaiphus and Nevitta ; and the most fatal consequences might be apprehended from the discord of two factions, so opposite in their character and interest, in their maxims of government, and perhaps in their religious principles. The superior virtues of Sallust could alone reconcile their divisions, and unite their suffrages ; and the venerable prefect would immediately have been declared the successor of Julian if he himself, with sincere and modest firmness, had not alleged his age and infirmities, so unequal to the weight of the diadem.

The generals, perplexed by his refusal, showed a disposition to adopt the salutary advice of an inferior officer, that they should act as they would have acted in the absence of the emperor ; that they should exert their abilities to extricate the army from the present distress ; and, if they were fortunate enough to reach the confines of Mesopotamia, they should proceed with united and deliberate counsels in the election of a lawful sovereign. While they debated, a few voices saluted Jovian, who was no more than first of the domestics, with the names of emperor and augustus. The tumultuary acclamation was instantly repeated by the guards who surrounded the tent, and passed, in a few minutes, to the extremities of the line. The new prince, astonished with his own fortune, was hastily invested with the imperial ornaments, and received an oath of fidelity from the generals, whose favour and protection he so lately solicited. The strongest recommendation of Jovian was the merit of his father, Count Varronian, who enjoyed in honourable retirement the fruit of his long services. In the obscure freedom of a private station, the son indulged his taste for wine and women ; yet he supported, with credit, the character of a Christian and a soldier. Without being conspicuous for any of the ambitious qualifications which excite the admiration and envy of mankind, the comely person of Jovian, his cheerful temper and familiar wit, had gained the affection of his fellow-soldiers ; and the generals of both parties acquiesced in a popular election, which had not

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been conducted by the arts of their enemies. The pride of this unexpected elevation was moderated by the just apprehension that the same day might terminate the life and reign of the new emperor. The pressing voice of necessity was obeyed without delay; and the first orders issued by Jovian, a few hours after his predecessor had expired, were to prosecute a march, which could alone extricate the Romans from their actual distress.

SAPOR ASSAILS THE ROMANS

The welcome news of the death of Julian, which a deserter revealed to the camp of Sapor, inspired the desponding monarch with a sudden confidence of victory. He immediately detached the royal cavalry, perhaps the ten thousand *Immortals*, to second and support the pursuit; and discharged the whole weight of his united forces on the rear-guard of the Romans. The rear-guard was thrown into disorder; the renowned legions, which derived their titles from Diocletian and his warlike colleague, were broken and trampled down by the elephants; and three tribunes lost their lives in attempting to stop the flight of their soldiers. The battle was at length restored by the persevering valour of the Romans; the Persians were repulsed with a great slaughter of men and elephants; and the army, after marching and fighting a long summer's day, arrived, in the evening, at Samara on the banks of the Tigris, about one hundred miles above Ctesiphon. On the ensuing day, the barbarians, instead of harassing the march, attacked the camp of Jovian, which had been seated in a deep and sequestered valley. From the hills the archers of Persia insulted and annoyed the weary legionaries, and a body of cavalry, which had penetrated with desperate courage through the prætorian gate, was cut in pieces, after a doubtful conflict, near the imperial tent. In the succeeding night the camp at Carce was protected by the lofty dikes of the river; and the Roman army, though incessantly exposed to the vexatious pursuit of the Saracens, pitched their tents near the city of Dura, four days after the death of Julian. The Tigris was still on their left; their hopes and provisions were almost consumed; and the impatient soldiers who had fondly persuaded themselves that the frontiers of the empire were not far distant, requested their new sovereign, that they might be permitted to hazard the passage of the river. With the assistance of his wisest officers, Jovian endeavoured to check their rashness, by representing that if they possessed sufficient skill and vigour to stem the torrent of a deep and rapid stream, they would only deliver themselves naked and defenceless to the barbarians who had occupied the opposite banks.

Yielding at length to their clamorous importunities, he consented that five hundred Gauls and Germans, accustomed from their infancy to the waters of the Rhine and Danube, should attempt the bold adventure, which might serve either as an encouragement, or as a warning, for the rest of the army. In the silence of the night they swam the Tigris, surprised an unguarded post of the enemy, and displayed at the dawn of day the signal of their resolution and fortune. The success of this trial disposed the emperor to listen to the promises of his architects, who proposed to construct a floating bridge of the inflated skins of sheep, oxen, and goats, covered with a floor of earth and fascines. Two important days were spent in the ineffectual labour; and the Romans, who already endured the miseries of famine, cast a look of despair on the Tigris, and upon the barbarians, whose numbers and obstinacy increased with the distress of the imperial army.

THE HUMILIATION OF THE ROMANS

In this hopeless situation, the fainting spirits of the Romans were revived by the sound of peace. The transient presumption of Sapor had vanished: he observed with serious concern, that in the repetition of doubtful combats, he had lost his most faithful and intrepid nobles, his bravest troops, and the greatest part of his train of elephants; and the experienced monarch feared to provoke the resistance of despair, the vicissitudes of fortune, and the unexhausted powers of the Roman Empire; which might soon advance to relieve, or to revenge, the successor of Julian. The Surenas himself, accompanied by another satrap, appeared in the camp of Jovian; and declared that the clemency of his sovereign was not averse to signify the conditions on which he would consent to spare and to dismiss the cæsar, with the relics of his captive army. The hopes of safety subdued the firmness of the Romans; the emperor was compelled, by the advice of his council, and the cries of his soldiers, to embrace the offer of peace; and the prefect Sallust was immediately sent, with the general Arinthæus, to understand the pleasure of the Great King. The crafty Persian delayed, under various pretences, the conclusion of the agreement; started difficulties, required explanations, suggested expedients, receded from his concessions, increased his demands, and wasted four days in the arts of negotiation, till he had consumed the stock of provisions which yet remained in the camp of the Romans. Had Jovian been capable of executing a bold and prudent measure, he would have continued his march with unremitting diligence; the progress of the treaty would have suspended the attacks of the barbarians; and, before the expiration of the fourth day, he might have safely reached the fruitful province of Gordyene, at the distance of only one hundred miles. The irresolute emperor, instead of breaking through the toils of the enemy, expected his fate with patient resignation; and accepted the humiliating conditions of peace, which it was no longer in his power to refuse.

As the price of his disgraceful concessions, the emperor might perhaps have stipulated, that the camp of the hungry Romans should be plentifully supplied; and that they should be permitted to pass the Tigris on the bridge which was constructed by the hands of the Persians. But if Jovian presumed to solicit those equitable terms, they were sternly refused by the haughty tyrant of the East whose clemency had pardoned the invaders of his country. The Saracens sometimes intercepted the stragglers of the march; but the generals and troops of Sapor respected the cessation of arms, and Jovian was suffered to explore the most convenient place for the passage of the river.^b

“But when the trumpets openly gave the signal for crossing the river,” says Ammianus, “it was dreadful to see with what ardour every individual hastened to rush into this danger, preferring himself to all his comrades in the desire of avoiding the many dangers and distresses behind him. Some tried to guide the beasts who were swimming about at random, with hurdles hurriedly put together; others, seated on bladders, and others, being driven by necessity to all kinds of expedients, sought to pass through the opposing waves by crossing them obliquely. The emperor himself with a few others crossed over in the small boats, which we said were saved when the fleet was burnt, and then sent the same vessels backwards and forwards till our whole body was brought across. And at length all of us, except such as were drowned, reached the opposite bank of the river, being saved amid our difficulties by the favour of the Supreme Deity.”^d

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As soon as the Romans had landed on the western bank, they were delivered from the hostile pursuit of the barbarians; but, in a laborious march of two hundred miles over the plains of Mesopotamia, they endured the last extremities of thirst and hunger. At Thilsaphata, the emperor most graciously received the generals of Mesopotamia; and the remains of a once flourishing army at length reposed themselves under the walls of Nisibis. The messengers of Jovian had proclaimed, in the language of flattery, his election, his treaty, and his return; and the new prince had taken the most effectual measures to secure the allegiance of the armies and provinces of Europe, by placing the military command in the hands of those officers who, from motives of interest or inclination, would firmly support the cause of their benefactor.

The minds of the people were filled with astonishment and grief, with indignation and terror, when they were informed that the unworthy successor of Julian relinquished the five provinces which had been acquired by the victory of Galerius, and shamefully surrendered to the barbarians the important city of Nisibis, the firmest bulwark of the provinces of the East. The deep and dangerous question, how far the public faith should be observed, when it becomes incompatible with the public safety, was freely agitated in popular conversation; and some hopes were entertained, that the emperor would redeem his pusillanimous behaviour by a splendid act of patriotic perfidy. The inflexible spirit of the Roman senate had always disclaimed the unequal conditions which were extorted from the distress of her captive armies; and, if it were necessary to satisfy the national honour by delivering the guilty general into the hands of the barbarians, the greatest part of the subjects of Jovian would have cheerfully acquiesced in the precedent of ancient times.

But the emperor, whatever might be the limits of his constitutional authority, was the absolute master of the laws and arms of the state; and the same motives which had forced him to subscribe, now pressed him to execute, the treaty of peace. He was impatient to secure an empire at the expense of a few provinces; and the respectable names of religion and honour concealed the personal fears and ambition of Jovian. Notwithstanding the dutiful solicitations of the inhabitants, decency, as well as prudence, forbade the emperor to lodge in the palace of Nisibis; but the next morning after his arrival, Bineses, the ambassador of Persia, entered the place, displayed from the citadel the standard of the Great King, and proclaimed, in his name, the cruel alternative of exile or servitude. The principal citizens of Nisibis, who till that fatal moment had confided in the protection of their sovereign, threw themselves at his feet. They conjured him not to abandon, or at least not to deliver, a faithful colony to the rage of a barbarian tyrant, exasperated by the three successive defeats which he had experienced under the walls of Nisibis. They still possessed arms and courage to repel the invaders of their country; they requested only the permission of using them in their own defence; and as soon as they had asserted their independence, they should implore the favour of being again admitted into the ranks of his subjects. Their arguments, their eloquence, their tears, were ineffectual. Jovian alleged, with some confusion, the sanctity of oaths; and, as the reluctance with which he accepted the present of a crown of gold convinced the citizens of their hopeless condition, the advocate Sylvanus was provoked to exclaim, "O emperor! may you thus be crowned by all the cities of your dominions!"

Jovian, who in a few weeks had easily learned to assume the habits

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of a prince, was displeased with freedom and offended with truth; and as he reasonably supposed that the discontent of the people might incline them to submit to the Persian government, he published an edict, under pain of death, that they should leave the city within the term of three days. The savage insensibility of Jovian appears to have aggravated the hardships of these unhappy fugitives. They were seated, however, in a new-built quarter of Amida; and that rising city, with the reinforcement of a very considerable colony, soon recovered its former splendour, and became the capital of Mesopotamia. Similar orders were despatched by the emperor for the evacuation of Singara and the castle of the Moors; and for the restitution of the five provinces beyond the Tigris. Sapor enjoyed the glory and the fruits of his victory; and this ignominious peace has justly been considered as a memorable era in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

After Jovian had performed those engagements, which the voice of his people might have tempted him to violate, he hastened away from the scene of his disgrace, and proceeded with his whole court to enjoy the luxury of Antioch.^b

Ammianus has left us a terse description of the personal traits of the emperor. "Jovian," he says, "was slow in his movements, of a cheerful countenance, with blue eyes, very tall, so much so that it was long before any of the royal robes could be found to fit him. He was anxious to imitate Constantius, often occupying himself with serious business till after midday, and being fond of jesting with his friends in public. He was given to the study of the Christian law, sometimes doing it marked honour; he was tolerably learned in it, very well inclined to its professors, and disposed to promote them to be judges, as was seen in some of his appointments. He was fond of eating and addicted to wine and women."^d

Jovian was educated in the profession of Christianity; and as he marched from Nisibis to Antioch, the banner of the cross, the *Labarum* of Constantine, which was again displayed at the head of the legions, announced to the people the faith of their new emperor. As soon as he ascended the throne, he transmitted a circular epistle to all the governors of provinces; in which he confessed the divine truth, and secured the legal establishment, of the Christian religion. The insidious edicts of Julian were abolished; the ecclesiastical immunities were restored and enlarged; and Jovian condescended to lament, that the distress of the times obliged him to diminish the measure of charitable contributions. The Christians were unanimous in the loud and sincere applause which they bestowed on the pious successor of Julian. But they were still ignorant what creed, or what synod, he would choose for the standard of orthodoxy; and the peace of the church immediately revived those eager disputes which had been suspended during the season of persecution. The episcopal leaders of the contending sects, convinced from experience how much their fate would depend on the earliest impressions that were made on the mind of an untutored soldier, hastened to the court of Edessa, or Antioch. The highways of the East were crowded with Homoöusian, and Arian, and semi-Arian, and Eunomian bishops, who struggled to outstrip each other in the holy race; the apartments of the palace resounded with their clamours; and the ears of their prince were assaulted, and perhaps astonished, by the singular mixture of metaphysical argument and passionate invective. The moderation of Jovian, who recommended concord and charity, and referred the disputants to the sentence of a future council, was interpreted as a symptom of indifference; but his attachment to the Nicene creed was at length discovered

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and declared, by the reverence which he, expressed for the celestial virtues of the great Athanasius. The intrepid veteran of the faith, at the age of seventy, had issued from his retreat on the first intelligence of the tyrant's death. The acclamations of the people seated him once more on the archiepiscopal throne; and he wisely accepted, or anticipated, the invitation of Jovian. Before his departure from Antioch, he assured Jovian that his orthodox devotion would be rewarded by a long and peaceful reign. Athanasius had reason to hope, that he should be allowed either the merit of a successful prediction, or the excuse of a grateful, though ineffectual, prayer.

The slightest force, when it is applied to assist and guide the natural descent of its object, operates with irresistible weight; and Jovian had the good fortune to embrace the religious opinions which were supported by the spirit of the times, and the zeal and numbers of the most powerful sect. Under his reign, Christianity obtained an easy and lasting victory; and as soon as the smile of royal patronage was withdrawn, the genius of paganism, which had been fondly raised and cherished by the arts of Julian, sank irrecoverably in the dust.

In the space of seven months, the Roman troops, who were now returned to Antioch, had performed a march of fifteen hundred miles; in which they had endured all the hardships of war, of famine, and of climate. Notwithstanding their services, their fatigues, and the approach of winter, the timid and impatient Jovian allowed only, to the men and horses, a respite of six weeks. The emperor could not sustain the indiscreet and malicious raillery of the people of Antioch. He was impatient to possess the palace of Constantinople; and to prevent the ambition of some competitor, who might occupy the vacant allegiance of Europe. But he soon received the grateful intelligence, that his authority was acknowledged from the Thracian Bosphorus to the Atlantic Ocean. By the first letters which the emperor had despatched from the camp of Mesopotamia, he had delegated the military command of Gaul and Illyricum to Malarich, a brave and faithful officer of the nation of the Franks; and to his father-in-law Count Lucillian, who had formerly distinguished his courage and conduct in the defence of Nisibis. Malarich had declined an office to which he thought himself unequal; and Lucillian was massacred at Remi [Rheims], in an accidental mutiny of the Batavian cohorts. But the moderation of Jovinus, master-general of the cavalry, who forgave the intention of his disgrace, soon appeased the tumult, and confirmed the uncertain minds of the soldiers. The oath of fidelity was administered, and taken with loyal acclamations; and the deputies of the western armies saluted their new sovereign as he descended from Mount Taurus to the city of Tyana, in Cappadocia. From Tyana he continued his hasty march to Ancyra, capital of the province of Galatia; where Jovian assumed, with his infant son, the name and ensigns of the consulship. Dadastana, an obscure town, almost at an equal distance between Ancyra and Nicæa, was marked for the fatal term of his journey and his life. After indulging himself with a plentiful, perhaps an intemperate, supper, he retired to rest; and the next morning the emperor Jovian was found dead in his bed.

The cause of the sudden death of Jovian was variously understood. By some it was ascribed to the consequences of an indigestion, occasioned either by the quantity of the wine, or the quality of the mushrooms, which he had swallowed in the evening. According to others, he was suffocated in his sleep by the vapour of charcoal, which extracted from the walls of the apartment the unwholesome moisture of the fresh plaster. The body

of Jéviau was sent to Constantinople, to be interred with his predecessors'; and the sad procession was met on the road by his wife Charito, the daughter of Count Lucillian; who still wept the recent death of her father, and was hastening to dry her tears in the embraces of an imperial husband. Her disappointment and grief were embittered by the anxiety of maternal tenderness. Six weeks before the death of Jovian, his infant son had been placed in the curule chair, adorned with the title of *Nobilissimus*, and the vain ensigns of the consulship. Unconscious of his fortune, the royal youth, who, from his grandfather, assumed the name of Varronian, was reminded only by the jealousy of the government, that he was the son of an emperor. Sixteen years afterwards he was still alive, but he had already been deprived of an eye; and his afflicted mother expected, every hour, that the innocent victim would be torn from her arms, to appease with his blood the suspicions of the reigning prince.

VALENTINIAN AND VALENS

After the death of Jovian, the throne of the Roman world remained ten days without a master. The ministers and generals still continued to meet in council; to exercise their respective functions; to maintain the public order; and peaceably to conduct the army to the city of Nicæa in Bithynia, which was chosen for the place of the election. In a solemn assembly of the civil and military powers of the empire, the diadem was again unanimously offered to the prefect Sallust. He enjoyed the glory of a second refusal; and when the virtues of the father were alleged in favour of his son, the prefect, with the firmness of a disinterested patriot, declared to the electors, that the feeble age of the one, and the inexperienced youth of the other, were equally incapable of the laborious duties of government. Several candidates were proposed; and, after weighing the objections of character or situation, they were successively rejected; but as soon as the name of Valentinian was pronounced, the merit of that officer united the suffrages of the whole assembly, and obtained the sincere approbation of Sallust himself.

Valentinian was the son of Count Gratian, who was a native of Cibalis in Pannonia, and who, from an obscure condition, had raised himself, by matchless strength and dexterity, to the military commands of Africa and Britain; from which he retired with an ample fortune and suspicious integrity. The rank and services of Gratian contributed, however, to smooth the first steps of the promotion of his son, and afforded him an early opportunity of displaying those solid and useful qualifications, which raised his character above the ordinary level of his fellow-soldiers.

The person of Valentinian was tall, graceful, and majestic. His manly countenance, marked with the impressions of sense and spirit, inspired his friends with awe, and his enemies with fear; and, to second the efforts of his undaunted courage, the son of Gratian had inherited the advantages of a strong and healthy constitution. By the habits of chastity and temperance, which restrain the appetites and invigorate the faculties, Valentinian preserved his own and the public esteem. The avocations of a military life had diverted his youth from the elegant pursuits of literature; he was ignorant of the Greek language, and the arts of rhetoric; but as the mind of the orator was never disconcerted by timid perplexity, he was able, as often as the occasion prompted him, to deliver his decided sentiments with bold and ready elocution. The laws of martial discipline were the only

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laws that he had studied ; and he was soon distinguished by the laborious diligence and inflexible severity with which he discharged and enforced the duties of the camp. In the time of Julian he provoked the danger of disgrace by the contempt which he publicly expressed for the reigning religion ; and it should seem from his subsequent conduct that the indiscreet and unseasonable freedom of Valentinian was the effect of military spirit, rather than of Christian zeal. He was pardoned, however, and still employed by a prince who esteemed his merit ; and in the various events of the Persian War, he improved the reputation which he had already acquired on the banks of the Rhine. The celerity and success with which he executed an important commission recommended him to the favour of Jovian, and to the honourable command of the second school, or company, of targeteers, of the domestic guards. In the march from Antioch, he had reached his quarters at Ancyra, when he was unexpectedly summoned, without guilt, and without intrigue, to assume, in the forty-third year of his age, the absolute government of the Roman Empire.

The invitation of the ministers and generals at Nicæa was of little moment, unless it were confirmed by the voice of the army. The aged Sallust, who had long observed the irregular fluctuations of popular assemblies, proposed, under pain of death, that none of those persons, whose rank in the service might excite a party in their favour, should appear in public on the day of the inauguration. Yet such was the prevalence of ancient superstition, that a whole day was voluntarily added to this dangerous interval, because it happened to be the intercalation of the bissextile. At length, when the hour was supposed to be propitious, Valentinian showed himself from a lofty tribunal ; the judicious choice was applauded ; and the new prince solemnly invested with the diadem and the purple amidst the acclamations of the troops, who were disposed in martial order round the tribunal. But when he stretched forth his hand to address the armed multitude, a busy whisper was accidentally started in the ranks, and insensibly swelled into a loud and imperious clamour, that he should name, without delay, a colleague in the empire.

The intrepid calmness of Valentinian at last obtained silence, and commanded respect ; and he thus addressed the assembly : “ A few minutes since it was in your power, fellow-soldiers, to have left me in the obscurity of a private station. Judging, from the testimony of my past life, that I deserved to reign, you have placed me on the throne. It is now my duty to consult the safety and interest of the republic. The weight of the universe is undoubtedly too great for the hands of a feeble mortal. I am conscious of the limits of my abilities, and the uncertainty of my life ; and far from declining, I am anxious to solicit, the assistance of a worthy colleague. But, where discord may be fatal, the choice of a faithful friend requires mature and serious deliberation. That deliberation shall be my care. Let your conduct be dutiful and consistent. Retire to your quarters, refresh your minds and bodies ; and expect the accustomed donative on the accession of the new emperor.”

The astonished troops, with a mixture of pride, of satisfaction, and of terror, confessed the voice of their master. Their angry clamours subsided into silent reverence ; and Valentinian, encompassed with the eagles of the legions, and the various banners of the cavalry and infantry, was conducted, in warlike pomp, to the palace of Nicæa. As he was sensible, however, of the importance of preventing some rash declaration of the soldiers, he consulted the assembly of the chiefs ; and their real sentiments were concisely expressed

by the generous freedom of Dagalaiphus. "Most excellent prince," said that officer "if you consider only your family, you have a brother; if you love the republic, look round for the most deserving of the Romans."

The emperor, who suppressed his displeasure, without altering his intention, slowly proceeded from Nicæa to Nicomedia and Constantinople. In one of the suburbs of that capital, thirty days after his own elevation, he bestowed the title of Augustus on his brother Valens; and as the boldest patriots were convinced that their opposition, without being serviceable to their country, would be fatal to themselves, the declaration of his absolute will was received with silent submission. Valens was now in the thirty-sixth year of his age; but his abilities had never been exercised in any employment, military or civil, and his character had not inspired the world with any sanguine expectations. He possessed, however, one quality, which recommended him to Valentinian, and preserved the domestic peace of the empire: a devout and grateful attachment to his benefactor, whose superiority of genius, as well as of authority, Valens humbly and cheerfully acknowledged in every action of his life.

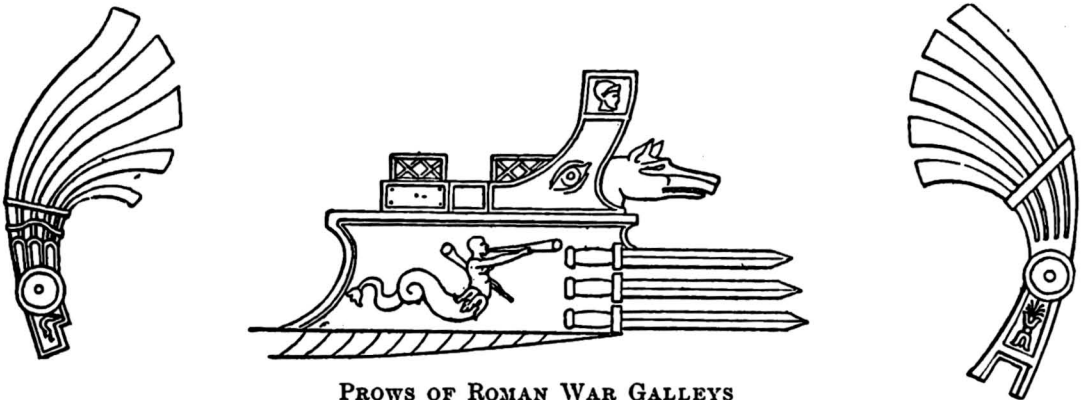
Before Valentinian divided the provinces, he reformed the administration of the empire. All ranks of subjects, who had been injured or oppressed under the reign of Julian, were invited to support their public accusations. The silence of mankind attested the spotless integrity of the prefect Sallust; and his own pressing solicitations that he might be permitted to retire from the business of the state were rejected by Valentinian with the most honourable expressions of friendship and esteem. But among the favourites of the late emperor, there were many who had abused his credulity or superstition, and who could no longer hope to be protected either by favour or justice.¹ The greater part of the ministers of the palace, and the governors of the provinces, were removed from their respective stations; yet the eminent merit of some officers was distinguished from the obnoxious crowd; and, notwithstanding the opposite clamours of zeal and resentment, the whole proceedings of this delicate inquiry appear to have been conducted with a reasonable share of wisdom and moderation. The festivity of a new reign received a short and suspicious interruption from the sudden illness of the two princes; but as soon as their health was restored, they left Constantinople in the beginning of the spring. In the castle or palace of Mediana, only three miles from Naissus, they executed the solemn and final division of the Roman Empire. Valentinian bestowed on his brother the rich prefecture of the East, from the lower Danube to the confines of Persia; whilst he reserved for his immediate government the warlike prefectures of Illyricum, Italy, and Gaul, from the extremity of Greece to the Caledonian rampart; and from the rampart of Caledonia to the foot of Mount Atlas. The provincial administration remained on its former basis; but a double supply of generals and magistrates was required for two councils and two courts: the division was made with a just regard to their peculiar merit and situation, and seven master-generals were soon created, either of the cavalry or infantry. When this important business had been amicably transacted, Valentinian and Valens embraced for the last time. The emperor of the West established his temporary residence at Mediolanum; and the emperor of the East returned to Constantinople, to assume the dominion of fifty provinces, of whose language he was totally ignorant.

¹ Eunapius celebrates and exaggerates the sufferings of Maximus, yet he allows that this sophist or magician, the guilty favourite of Julian and the personal enemy of Valentinian, was dismissed on the payment of a small fine.

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When Julian had gone, the barbarians, repulsed for a while, had once more turned towards the Roman provinces. The Alamanni and Burgundians crossed the upper Rhine, the Quadi and Sarmatians the Danube. The Franks had come out of their cantonments on the lower Rhine, and Saxon pirates again swarmed on the seas. In Britain the Picts and Scots had come down from their mountains. In Africa a Moorish chief, Firmus, had revolted. It seemed as if the whole barbarian world had risen to assault a falling and humiliated empire. Valentinian had the courage necessary to face the danger; able generals, Jovin, Sebastian, above all Theodosius, helped in this difficult task. In the year 365 he established himself in Paris that he might keep a closer watch over the barbarians, degraded the corps which had allowed their standards to be seized, and, feeling more sure of his troops after this revival of ancient discipline, he marched against the Alamanni, whom he defeated near Catelauni (Châlons) (366).

Two years later, one of their kings, Randon, surprised Mogontiacum when *en fête* and took much booty and many captives. Similar expeditions were on foot, and the whole Alamannic league was astir. The emperor resumed



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the policy of Diocletian, Tiberius, and Augustus, and sowed division among the barbarians. The Burgundians, who had already attained to a certain degree of civilisation, were gained over and opposed to the Alamanni. He himself crossed the Rhine with a numerous army and conquered the rebellious tribes near Solicinium¹ (368). He employed part of the following year in raising the fortifications which guarded the river passages, and on the Neckar, near Mannheim, began works to which he wished to attach great importance. To make the barbarians understand that the empire intended to resume its aggressive position towards them, he entered the great valley of the Mœnus (Main), which flows through the heart of Germany. Macrianus, the Alamannic king, was alarmed and sued for peace, and Valentinian returned in triumph to Augusta Trevirorum (Treves) with his son Gratian. The poet Ausonius of Burdigala (Bordeaux), the young prince's tutor, and Symmachus, the last orator of Rome, celebrated these exploits which gave security to Gaul.

During these operations on the Rhine those "kings of the sea," the Saxons, had been chased from the shores they had been accustomed to pillage, and the count Theodosius, the father of the future emperor, had acquired in Britain a renown almost equal among his contemporaries to that of Agricola;

[¹ Salzbach according to Duruy.]

but he had not a Tacitus for son-in-law. He saved the Britons from pillage by the Picts, re-established the Roman dominion, which had been nearly driven from the island, and consolidated it by a wise administration. Some time after, he brought the same talents into Africa. The exactions of the last governors and their cruelties towards the Donatists had excited such great disaffection that Firmus the Moor had been able to conquer a large part of the country. Theodosius suppressed the revolt, and, after the death of Valentinian, restored peace to the province; but, becoming involved in some obscure intrigue, in spite of his innocence and his services, he was beheaded at Carthage.

In the internal government of the provinces Valentinian was hard and often cruel. He had hardly any other punishment for crimes save death. And if we are to credit a not very reliable story, he had lodged in his palace two immense bears, which tore criminals to pieces before his eyes. In religious matters he followed the principles of tolerance, with regard to all religions, although he himself belonged to the orthodox church. The magicians alone, who were then rapidly increasing in number, were diligently hunted down. Wise laws against the exposing of children, for the management of schools, the retaining of paid doctors in Rome and the establishment in provincial towns of protectors or defensors of the city, show that he was not only a man of war. Unfortunately for the empire he died in an expedition against the Quadi. When these people, whom he intended to punish for an incursion into Illyricum, heard of his coming, they sent him a humble embassy to which he refused to listen. When he had pitilessly devastated their country, he consented to receive their deputies, but spoke to them with so much passion that he burst a blood vessel, and some moments after expired (375). The successor of Valentinian was his son Gratian, who had borne the title of Augustus since 367, and was now only seventeen. He accepted his brother Valentinian II, then only four years old, as colleague, and abandoned in his favour the prefectures of Italy and Illyricum.

INVASION OF THE GOTHS IN THE EAST (375); BATTLE OF HADRIANOPOLIS AND DEATH OF VALENS (378)

During these events there reigned in the East a suspicious and weak prince, Valens, who had had to suppress the revolt of Procopius, cousin to Julian. That usurper being detected in treason was beheaded (366); but Valens, far from imitating the prudent reserve of his brother, disturbed the whole Orient by a cruel persecution directed against the magicians and those who consulted them, and also by his partiality for the Arians. The faithful of the orthodox church were once more disturbed, the bishops driven from their sees, and an Arian placed on the archiepiscopal throne at Constantinople. Still worse sufferings would have been inflicted on the Church if the gravity of the political events which filled this reign had left Valens sufficient leisure to respond to all the demands of the heretic leaders. Sapor had expelled the kings of Armenia and Iberia. Valens restored them and forced the Great King to agree to a treaty with the empire. This was a success, but unfortunately a frightful catastrophe was preparing on the Thracian border.

Procopius, when he revolted, had taken into his pay a corps of three thousand Visigoths. When the usurper was overthrown Valens endeavoured to punish the barbarians for the help they had furnished. A three years' war

[375-378 A.D.]

ended in a treaty by which the barbarians were sent beyond the Danube, the subsidies which the empire had paid them were suppressed, and two frontier towns given in exchange. Athanaric, one of the principal leaders of the western Goths or Visigoths who lived to the north of the lower Danube, accepted this convention for his people. Bishop Ulfilas had just converted a number of the Goths to Arianism. He had compiled a translation of the Gospels in their tongue, the first written monument of their language. The manuscript is preserved at Upsala. Ulfilas had first to make an alphabet, which he borrowed in great part from that of the Greeks. Arianism was therefore to return with the barbarians during the invasion.

To that invasion we are approaching, after having seen it constantly threatening for nearly two hundred years. The people who brought it about were strangers to the Germanic race, being tribes of Huns belonging to the Mongolian race, as far as can be judged from the description which ancient writers have left us of the features and customs of these ferocious hordes. The Huns were nomads and scarcely recognised social ties. The tribes in their expeditions followed particular leaders, who sometimes, however, united for common enterprises. Attila, one of them, is apparently the first who contrived to make the entire nation recognise his authority.

All the Huns were horsemen, and knew no other dwellings than their tents or huts. As greedy and cruel as those Mongols of the Middle Ages who killed five or six million men under Jenghiz Khan, they ravaged gold and silver — not for use, because that they did not understand, but simply to possess it. Following their vagabond instincts, and in order to augment these useless treasures, they undertook disastrous expeditions against civilised peoples. Their incursions, so rapid and unlooked for, spread more terror than those of any other barbarous people of the time, for wherever they passed they destroyed, merely for the pleasure of destroying. Attila, their great chief, boasted later that grass would not spring again where his horse had passed. There was a legend that they were born in the desert of demons and witches, and their cruelty towards women, whom even the Germans in their ravages respected, seemed to confirm this unclean origin.

Where they first lived and what led them to migrate towards the west, is unknown, but it seems to be established that, at the time when the Scandinavian and German tribes began to stir, the nomadic hordes of western Asia furled their tents and advanced on the west. Their march, many times interrupted and by long intervals, owing to the obstinate resistance of certain tribes, resumed its course when the obstacle had been overcome or they had attracted to them the peoples who had stopped their way. This is what happened in the time of Valens. The Huns crossed the Urals and subjugated the Alans who lived between the Volga and the Black Sea. A part of these people fled beyond the Caucasus, where their descendants still live; the rest followed the conquerors, who, spreading over the vast plains of Sarmatia, found themselves confronted by the great kingdom of the Goths.

That great German nation, which had gradually descended from the mouth of the Oder, on the Danube and Pontus Euxinus, had long remained divided under a great number of chiefs. But Hermanric had united the greater part of his tribes and founded a powerful state, the kingdom of the Ostrogoths or eastern Goths, which extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and a number of peoples had submitted to him. This kingdom barred the whole continent and, had it not already been in full course of dissolution, would no doubt have stopped the invasion.

[375-378 A.D.]

When the aged Hermanric learned of the enemy's approach, he made great preparations, despite his 110 years. But the vassal tribes showed little zeal for such a formidable war. Two chiefs of the Roxolani, whose sister he had caused to be trampled to death under his horse's hoofs because her husband refused to arm for him, tried to assassinate him. Other chiefs also refused obedience and the old king in desperation fell upon his sword. His successor Whithimer was vanquished and killed. He left an infant son who was saved by Alatheus and Saphrax, two Gothic warriors who had served for a long time in the Roman armies. Leaving the bulk of the nation to make submission to the conquerors, they, with the royal child, gained the interior of the country by skilful marches and escaped the pursuit of the Huns, now occupied in fighting a new enemy. Athanaric, a chief of the western Goths, had advanced as far as the Danastris (Dniester) to defend the passage; their cavalry crossed the river during the night and attacked him in the rear. There was nothing for it but to retreat as far as the Pyretus (Pruth). There Athanaric wanted to raise fortifications from the Carpathians to the sea and might thus have arrested the Huns, but his discouraged people preferred going to beg an asylum in the territories of the empire. The brave chief himself refused such a disgrace, or did not venture to trust to the hospitality of Valens, and fled to the mountains with a few faithful warriors (375).

When the emperor was told that what remained of the Gothic nation was now suppliant to him, his flattered pride made him forget his prudence, and he opened the empire to this multitude, which still numbered two hundred thousand fighting men. The only condition imposed was that they should lay down their arms and give some of their children as hostages, who were sent to the small towns of Asia Minor. The barbarians submitted to anything. But when the imperial officers saw them disarmed they would sell them no provisions except at the highest prices. All their money was first exhausted, then their slaves, and afterwards their children, whom they sold. When they had nothing more they were reduced to taking by force what was refused to them, and went marauding through the country. They had not given up all their arms and they manufactured more. Alatheus and Saphrax, who, about the same time, forced the Danube passage and came with their comrades to join them, augmented both their numbers and their confidence. All Thrace was given up to pillage. Even Huns and Alans ran to share in the prey.

Valens collected his forces to fight them and also invoked the aid of his nephew. Gratian promised help, but a young Alamannian of his guard, away on leave among his own people, having spoken of these preparations, the Alamanni thought it a favourable opportunity to attack the denuded frontiers and their movement made it necessary to keep back the troops destined for Valens. Yet every day added to the peril of this prince. All the barbarians settled in the Danubian provinces, all the Germanic captives whom the emperors had transported there, hastened to join their brethren. For a whole year the legions vainly tried to stay the devastation. At last, in 378, Valens arrived with a part of the army of the East. Gratian was also on the march; but Valens wanted to prevent the concentration of the barbarians in a single body and advanced against them.^c

The Goths had proposed to occupy the defiles on the road from Constantinople to Hadrianopolis, but the march of the imperial troops was conducted with so much skill and celerity, that they reached the latter place unimpeded and secured themselves in a strong camp beneath its walls. A council was held to decide on future operations.^e

[378 A.D.]

VALENS MARCHES AGAINST THE GOTHS

On the ninth of August, a day which has deserved to be marked among the most inauspicious of the Roman calendar, the emperor Valens, leaving under a strong guard his baggage and military treasure, marched from Hadrianopolis to attack the Goths, who were encamped about twelve miles from the city. By some mistake of the orders, or some ignorance of the ground, the right wing or column of cavalry arrived in sight of the enemy whilst the left was still at a considerable distance; the soldiers were compelled, in the sultry heat of summer, to precipitate their pace; and the line of battle was formed with tedious confusion and irregular delay. The Gothic cavalry had been detached to forage in the adjacent country; and Fritigern still continued to practise his customary arts. He despatched messengers of peace, made proposals, required hostages, and wasted the hours, till the Romans, exposed without shelter to the burning rays of the sun, were exhausted by thirst, hunger, and intolerable fatigue. The emperor was persuaded to send an ambassador to the Gothic camp; the zeal of Richomer, who alone had courage to accept the dangerous commission, was applauded.

The count of the domestics, adorned with the splendid ensigns of his dignity, had proceeded some way in the space between the two armies, when he was suddenly recalled by the alarm of battle. The hasty and imprudent attack was made by Bacurius the Iberian, who commanded a body of archers and targeteers; and as they advanced with rashness, they retreated with loss and disgrace. In the same moment the flying squadrons of Alatheus and Saphrax, whose return was anxiously expected by the general of the Goths, descended like a whirlwind from the hills, swept across the plain, and added new terrors to the tumultuous but irresistible charge of the barbarian host. The event of the battle of Hadrianopolis, so fatal to Valens and to the empire, may be described in a few words; the Roman cavalry fled; the infantry was abandoned, surrounded,



A GOTHIC WARRIOR
(After Hothmoth)

and cut in pieces. The most skilful evolutions, the firmest courage, are scarcely sufficient to extricate a body of foot, encompassed on an open plain by superior numbers of horse; but the troops of Valens, oppressed by the weight of the enemy and their own fears, were crowded into a narrow space, where it was impossible for them to extend their ranks, or even to use with effect their swords and javelins.

In the midst of tumult, slaughter, and dismay, the emperor, deserted by his guards, and wounded, as it was supposed, with an arrow, sought protection among the lancearii and the mattiarii, who still maintained their ground with some appearance of order and firmness. His faithful generals, Trajan and Victor, who perceived his danger, loudly exclaimed that all was lost unless the person of the emperor could be saved. Some troops, animated by their exhortation, advanced to his relief; they found only a bloody spot, covered with a heap of broken arms and mangled bodies, without being able to discover their unfortunate prince, either among the living or the dead. Their search could not indeed be successful, if there is any truth in the circumstances with which some historians have related the death of the emperor. By the care of his attendants, Valens was removed from the field of battle to a neighbouring cottage, where they attempted to dress his wound, and to provide for his future safety. But his humble retreat was instantly surrounded by the enemy; they tried to force the door; they were provoked by a discharge of arrows from the roof, till at length, impatient of delay, they set fire to a pile of dry fagots, and consumed the cottage with the Roman emperor and his train. Valens perished in the flames; and a youth who dropped from the window alone escaped, to attest the melancholy tale and to inform the Goths of the inestimable prize which they had lost by their own rashness. A great number of brave and distinguished officers perished in the battle of Hadrianopolis, which equalled in the actual loss, and far surpassed in the fatal consequences, the misfortune which Rome had formerly sustained in the fields of Cannæ.

The pride of the Goths was elated by this memorable victory; but their avarice was disappointed by the mortifying discovery that the richest part of the imperial spoil had been within the walls of Hadrianopolis. They hastened to possess the reward of their valour; but they were encountered by the remains of a vanquished army, with an intrepid resolution which was the effect of their despair and the only hope of their safety. The walls of the city, and the ramparts of the adjacent camp, were lined with military engines, that threw stones of an enormous weight, and astonished the ignorant barbarians by the noise and velocity, still more than by the real effects, of the discharge. The soldiers, the citizens, the provincials, the domestics of the palace were united in the danger and in the defence; the furious assault of the Goths was repulsed; their secret arts of treachery and treason were discovered; and, after an obstinate conflict of many hours, they retired to their tents; convinced, by experience, that it would be far more advisable to observe the treaty which their sagacious leader had tacitly stipulated with the fortifications of great and populous cities. After the hasty and impolitic massacre of three hundred deserters, an act of justice extremely useful to the discipline of the Roman armies, the Goths indignantly raised the siege of Hadrianopolis. The scene of war and tumult was instantly converted into a silent solitude: the multitude suddenly disappeared; the secret paths of the woods and mountains were marked with the footsteps of the trembling fugitives, who sought a refuge in the distant cities of Illyricum and Macedonia; and the faithful officers of the

[378-382 A.D.]

household and the treasury cautiously proceeded in search of the emperor, of whose death they were still ignorant. The tide of the Gothic inundation rolled from the walls of Hadrianopolis to the suburbs of Constantinople.

The barbarians were surprised with the splendid appearance of the capital of the East, the height and extent of the walls, the myriads of wealthy and affrighted citizens who crowded the ramparts, the various prospect of the sea and land. While they gazed with hopeless desire on the inaccessible beauties of Constantinople, a sally was made from one of the gates by a party of Saracens who had been fortunately engaged in the service of Valens. The cavalry of Scythia was forced to yield to the admirable swiftness and spirit of the Arabian horses; their riders were skilled in the evolutions of irregular war, and the northern barbarians were astonished and dismayed by the inhuman ferocity of the barbarians of the south. A Gothic soldier was slain by the dagger of an Arab; and the hairy, naked savage, applying his lips to the wound, expressed a horrid delight while he sucked the blood of his vanquished enemy. The army of the Goths, laden with the spoils of the wealthy suburbs and the adjacent territory, slowly moved from the Bosphorus to the mountains which form the western boundary of Thrace. The important pass of Succi was betrayed by the fear, or the misconduct, of Maurus; and the barbarians, who no longer had any resistance to apprehend from the scattered and vanquished troops of the east, spread themselves over the face of a fertile and cultivated country, as far as the confines of Italy and the Adriatic Sea.^b

Gratian, more fortunate, at the same time defeated the Alamanni near Colmar. But the Eastern Empire was without a head. Gratian could not think of adding this heavy crown to that which he already wore, and to help him in the difficult task of repairing the great catastrophe under which the nation groaned, he cast his eyes on Theodosius, son of the valiant count Theodosius.

THEODOSIUS NAMED AUGUSTUS

After his father's unhappy end Theodosius had retired to Spain, his native country. Gratian recalled him, and on the Jan. 19, 379, gave him the title of Augustus and the two prefectures of the East and of Illyricum. Theodosius set to work bravely. Asia was quiet, thanks to an atrocious measure. All the Goths sent as hostages into the provinces had been convoked on the same day in the chief cities to receive gifts in money and land. But troops awaited them there; taken by surprise and defenceless, they had been massacred. In Thrace their brothers and fathers were avenging them. Theodosius had to reform an army, and, above all, to raise the courage of the soldiers. He succeeded in so doing by giving them the opportunity of fighting a great many small battles wherein he was careful to insure their success. These were the old tactics of Fabius Cunctator against Hannibal; and in this case they were even more successful. He allowed no stronghold to fall into the hands of the enemy, whose numbers he diminished by provoking desertions, so that, without gaining a great victory, he brought the Goths to treat.

Fritigern, the conqueror of Hadrianopolis, was dead; the gallant Athanaric, his successor, had allowed himself to be allured to Constantinople, and there, dazzled by the brilliance of the gorgeous court, he persuaded his people to accept the emperor's offers (October, 382). Theodosius, as a matter of fact, gave them what they wanted. He settled them in Thrace and Mœsia,

[382-388 A.D.]

with the charge of defending the passage of the Danube. Forty thousand warriors of the Goths were enrolled among the imperial troops.

This was really to deliver the empire into their hands; for these Goths—remaining a national body under their national leaders, with a military organisation of their own—soon felt the instincts of pillage and the need of adventure reawakened in them. A few years more, and they would take Rome after ravaging Greece and Italy, and the war they would thus carry to the very heart of the empire would level the barriers over which this flood of invasion was destined to pass.

For the time being, however, Theodosius had put an end to a deplorable situation, and the empire, believing itself saved, showed its gratitude. Those sad events of which the West was the scene, and which would lead to a reunion of the whole empire of Augustus under his authority, for a while increased his renown. The church, above all, delivered by him from Arianism, looked upon him as a second Constantine, and the epithet of “the great” has remained joined to the name of the last master of the Roman world.

Gratian, active, intelligent, and brave, was nevertheless overthrown by a usurper. Passionately fond of hunting, he forgot his princely duties, and was now usually seen surrounded by Alan archers. This preference irritated the soldiers, and the British legions proclaimed their chief, Maximus, one of the able comrades of Count Theodosius, emperor. Maximus immediately marched into Gaul. Gratian, abandoned by his troops, tried to reach the Alps, but, being overtaken near Lyons, he was put to death (August 25, 383). For this expedition Maximus had withdrawn the legions from Britain. The island, left defenceless, was soon desolated by the inroads of the Picts and Scots, and by the invasions of Saxons and Frisians.

Theodosius would gladly have avenged his benefactor, but tranquillity was not yet restored in the East, and a civil war might have lost all. He recognised the usurper as master of the Gallic prefecture on condition that he should leave that of Italy to the young Valentinian II (385). The latter's mother, Justina, in her zeal for Arianism, sought to propagate heresy in her son's provinces, which were by no means favourably disposed towards it. At Mediolanum the opposition was very strong. She tried to overcome it by threatening to exile Saint Ambrose, the archbishop, but the people repulsed her barbarian guards. Maximus thought the occasion favourable. He crossed the Alps, and Valentinian II fled (387) to Theodosius at Thessalonica.

This prince had already declared himself strongly opposed to the Arians. As early as the year 380 he had received baptism, had promulgated edicts in favour of orthodoxy, and expelled Damophilus, patriarch of Constantinople, from his see, which was given to Gregory of Nazianzus. A council which met in Constantinople (381) condemned the heresy afresh and confirmed the Nicene creed. Justina owed her misfortunes to her zeal for Arianism, but Theodosius had married her daughter, the beautiful Galla, so the empress, despite her imprudence, could count on the support of her son-in-law. He hesitated, however, for nearly a year until he learned that Maximus by his harshness had stirred up all the Italians against him.

Theodosius entered Pannonia in the year 388, and made a diversion in Gaul by means of the Saxons and Franks. Maximus used the same weapons against him and tampered with the fidelity of his barbaric troops. Dangerous defections would have ensued had he not anticipated them by severe measures. The usurper, vanquished on the banks of the Save, was given up by his own soldiers and put to death in Aquileia. Theodosius kept no

[388-395 A.D.]

part of his conquest, but gave it up to Valentinian. To confirm the young prince's power and extirpate both heresy and the last remains of paganism which yet lingered in the Western provinces, he stayed three years in his brother-in-law's province. On his departure he gave him as chief minister Arbogast the Frank, who had just delivered Gaul from the Germans, and filled all offices, civil and military, with barbarians. Valentinian did not long endure this guardianship; he wished to deprive the count of all his offices. "I hold my charge from Theodosius," answered Arbogast before the whole court, "he alone can take it from me." Valentinian, in a violent rage, threw himself upon Arbogast, sword in hand. Some days after he was found dead (May 15, 392).

Arbogast could not hope that Theodosius would leave this murder unpunished. Not daring to proclaim himself emperor, he threw the purple robe on the shoulders of an imperial secretary, the rhetorician Eugenius. Theodosius, the avenger of orthodoxy, had the Catholic clergy on his side.



THE PALATINE, ROME

Arbogast and Eugenius tried to rally to their cause all that were left of the pagans. This conduct raised the Christian population against them. A single battle, near Aquileia, put an end to this rule. Eugenius, being taken prisoner, was put to death; Arbogast slew himself (394). This time the victor retained his conquests.

This victory redoubled Theodosius' zeal for orthodoxy. He forbade, under severe penalties, the worship of the gods, who, driven from the towns, took refuge amongst the country people (*pagani*), and he deprived heretics not only of all claim to honours but of the right of disposing of their property. On the other hand, numerous and wise regulations showed the monarch's constant preoccupation with remedies for some of the evils which were harassing this moribund social order. He could not succeed, for the ills were incurable, but at least he did honour to the last days of the empire by displaying such virtue on the throne as subjects rarely had been called upon to reverence. We have seen his disinterestedness and his gratitude to his benefactor's family; let us add that peace always reigned in his numerous family—that if he retained courtiers he also had friends.

Before his death (January 17, 395) he divided the empire between his two sons Arcadius and Honorius; an irrevocable separation which still endures in the different religion and civilisation of these two halves of the ancient world.

One great act does Theodosius honour. The people of Thessalonica had killed the governor and several imperial officers in a sedition. Under similar

[390-395 A.D.]

circumstances Theodosius had pardoned the people of Antioch (387). This time he fell into a violent rage and gave orders which cost the lives of seven thousand persons. This massacre excited a feeling of horror throughout the empire. When, some time after, Theodosius presented himself at the doors of Milan cathedral, St. Ambrose had the courage to stop him. Before all the crowd he reproached him for his crime, forbidding him to enter or approach the Holy Table. Theodosius accepted the public penance which the bishop imposed upon him in the name of God and outraged humanity. For eight months he never crossed the threshold of the church.

VIRTUES OF THEODOSIUS

The orator, who may be silent without danger, may praise without difficulty and without reluctance ; and posterity will confess that the character of Theodosius might furnish the subject of a sincere and ample panegyric. The wisdom of his laws and the success of his arms rendered his administration respectable in the eyes both of his subjects and of his enemies. He loved and practised the virtues of domestic life, which seldom hold their residence in the palaces of kings. Theodosius was chaste and temperate ; he enjoyed, without excess, the sensual and social pleasures of the table ; and the warmth of his amorous passions was never diverted from their lawful objects. The proud titles of imperial greatness were adorned by the tender names of a faithful husband, an indulgent father ; his uncle was raised, by his affectionate esteem, to the rank of a second parent. Theodosius embraced, as his own, the children of his brother and sister ; and the expressions of his regard were extended to the most distant and obscure branches of his numerous kindred. His familiar friends were judiciously selected from among those persons who, in the equal intercourse of private life, had appeared before his eyes without a mask. The consciousness of personal and superior merit enabled him to despise the accidental distinction of the purple ; and he proved, by his conduct, that he had forgotten all the injuries, while he most gratefully remembered all the favours and services, which he had received before he ascended the throne of the Roman Empire.

The serious or lively tone of his conversation was adapted to the age, the rank, or the character of subjects whom he admitted into his society ; and the affability of his manners displayed the image of his mind. Theodosius respected the simplicity of the good and virtuous ; every art, every talent, of a useful or even of an innocent nature, was rewarded by his judicious liberality ; and, except the heretics, whom he persecuted with implacable hatred, the diffusive circle of his benevolence was circumscribed only by the limits of the human race. The government of a mighty empire may assuredly suffice to occupy the time and the abilities of a mortal ; yet the diligent prince, without aspiring to the unsuitable reputation of profound learning, always reserved some moments of his leisure for the instructive amusement of reading. History, which enlarged his experience, was his favourite study. The annals of Rome, in the long period of eleven hundred years, presented him with a various and splendid picture of human life ; and it has been particularly observed that whenever he perused the cruel acts of Cinna, of Marius, or of Sulla, he warmly expressed his generous detestation of those enemies of humanity and freedom. His disinterested opinion of past events was usefully applied as the rule of his own actions ; and Theodosius has deserved the singular commendation, that his virtues always

[387 A. D.]

seemed to expand with his fortune. The season of his prosperity was that of his moderation; and his clemency appeared the most conspicuous after the danger and success of the civil war. The Moorish guards of the tyrant had been massacred in the first heat of the victory, and a small number of the most obnoxious criminals suffered the punishment of the law. But the emperor showed himself much more attentive to relieve the innocent than to chastise the guilty. The oppressed subjects of the West, who would have deemed themselves happy in the restoration of their lands, were astonished to receive a sum of money equivalent to their losses; and the liberality of the conqueror supported the aged mother and educated the orphan daughters of Maximus. A character thus accomplished might almost excuse the extravagant supposition of the orator Pacatus that if the elder Brutus could be permitted to revisit the earth, the stern republican would abjure, at the feet of Theodosius, his hatred of kings; and ingenuously confess that such a monarch was the most faithful guardian of the happiness and dignity of the Roman people.

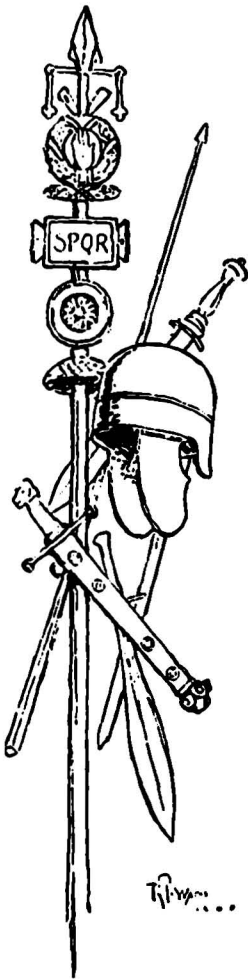
Yet the piercing eye of the founder of the republic must have discerned two essential imperfections, which might perhaps have abated his recent love of despotism. The virtuous mind of Theodosius was often relaxed by indolence, and it was sometimes inflamed by passion. In the pursuit of an important object, his active courage was capable of the most vigorous exertions; but, as soon as the design was accomplished or the danger was surmounted, the hero sunk into inglorious repose; and, forgetful that the time of a prince is the property of his people, resigned himself to the enjoyment of the innocent but trifling pleasures of a luxurious court. The natural disposition of Theodosius was hasty and choleric; and, in a station where none could resist and few would dissuade the fatal consequence of his resentment, the humane monarch was justly alarmed by the consciousness of his infirmity and of his power. It was the constant study of his life to suppress or regulate the intemperate sallies of passion; and the success of his efforts enhanced the merit of his clemency. But the painful virtue which claims the merit of victory is exposed to the danger of defeat; and the reign of a wise and merciful prince was polluted by an act of cruelty which would stain the annals of Nero or Domitian. Within the space of three years, the inconsistent historian of Theodosius must relate the generous pardon of the citizens of Antioch and the inhuman massacre of the people of Thessalonica.

TUMULT IN ANTIOCH

The lively impatience of the inhabitants of Antioch was never satisfied with their own situation, or with the character and conduct of their successive sovereigns. The Arian subjects of Theodosius deplored the loss of their churches; and, as three rival bishops disputed the throne of Antioch, the sentence which decided their pretensions excited the murmurs of the two unsuccessful congregations. The exigencies of the Gothic War, and the inevitable expense that accompanied the conclusion of the peace, had constrained the emperor to aggravate the weight of the public impositions; and the provinces of Asia, as they had not been involved in the distress were the less inclined to contribute to the relief of Europe. The auspicious period now approached of the tenth year of his reign; a festival more grateful to the soldiers, who received a liberal donative, than to the subjects, whose voluntary offerings had been long since converted into an extraordinary and

oppressive burden. The edicts of taxation interrupted the repose and pleasures of Antioch; and the tribunal of the magistrate was besieged by a suppliant crowd, who, in pathetic but at first in respectful language, solicited the redress of their grievances. They were gradually incensed by the pride of their haughty rulers, who treated their complaints as a criminal resistance; their satirical wit degenerated into sharp and angry invectives; and, from the subordinate powers of government, the invectives of the people insensibly rose to attack the sacred character of the emperor himself.

Their fury, provoked by a feeble opposition, discharged itself on the images of the imperial family, erected, as objects of public veneration, in the most conspicuous places of the city. The statues of Theodosius, of his father, of his wife Flaccilla, of his two sons Arcadius and Honorius, were insolently thrown down from their pedestals, broken in pieces, or dragged with contempt through the streets; and the indignities which were offered to the representations of imperial majesty sufficiently declared the impious and treasonable wishes of the populace. The tumult was almost immediately suppressed by the arrival of a body of archers; and Antioch had leisure to reflect on the nature and consequences of her crime. According to the duty of his office, the governor of the province despatched a faithful narrative of the whole transaction; while the trembling citizens entrusted the confession of their crime and the assurances of their repentance to the zeal of Flavian their bishop, and to the eloquence of the senator Hilarius, the friend and most probably the discipl of Libanius, whose genius, on this melancholy occasion, was not useless to his country. But the two capitals, Antioch and Constantinople, were separated by the distance of eight hundred miles; and, notwithstanding the diligence of the imperial posts, the guilty city was severely punished by a long and dreadful interval of suspense. Every rumour agitated the hopes and fears of the Antiochians, and they heard with terror that their sovereign, exasperated by the insult which had been offered to his own statues, and more especially to those of his beloved wife, had resolved to level with the ground the offending city; and to massacre, without distinction of age or sex, the criminal inhabitants, many of whom were actually driven, by their apprehensions, to seek a refuge in the mountains of Syria and the adjacent desert. At length, twenty-four days after the sedition, the general



ROMAN ARMS

Hellebicus, and Cæsarius, master of the offices, declared the will of the emperor and the sentence of Antioch. That proud capital was degraded from the rank of a city; and the metropolis of the East, stripped of its lands, its privileges, and its revenues, was subjected, under the humiliating denomination of a village, to the jurisdiction of Laodicea.

The baths, the circus, and the theatres were shut; and, that every source of plenty and pleasure might at the same time be intercepted, the distribution of corn was abolished, by the severe instructions of Theodosius. His commissioners then proceeded to inquire into the guilt of individuals; of those who had perpetrated, and of those who had not prevented, the destruction of the sacred statues. The tribunal of Hellebicus and Cæsarius, encompassed with armed soldiers, was erected in the midst of the Forum. The

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noblest and most wealthy of the citizens of Antioch, appeared before them in chains; the examination was assisted by the use of torture, and their sentence was pronounced or suspended according to the judgment of these extraordinary magistrates. The houses of the criminals were exposed to sale, their wives and children were suddenly reduced from affluence and luxury to the most abject distress; and a bloody execution was expected to conclude the horrors of a day, which the preacher of Antioch, the eloquent Chrysostom, has represented as a lively image of the last and universal judgment of the world. But the ministers of Theodosius performed, with reluctance, the cruel task which had been assigned them; they dropped a gentle tear over the calamities of the people; and they listened with reverence to the pressing solicitations of the monks and hermits, who descended in swarms from the mountains. Hellebicus and Cæsarius were persuaded to suspend the execution of their sentence; and it was agreed that the former should remain at Antioch, while the latter returned, with all possible speed, to Constantinople and presumed once more to consult the will of his sovereign.

The resentment of Theodosius had already subsided; the deputies of the people, both the bishop and the orator, had obtained a favourable audience; and the reproaches of the emperor were the complaints of injured friendship, rather than the stern menaces of pride and power. A free and general pardon was granted to the city and citizens of Antioch; the prison-doors were thrown open; the senators who despaired of their lives recovered the possession of their houses and estates; and the capital of the East was restored to the enjoyment of her ancient dignity and splendour. Theodosius condescended to praise the senate of Constantinople, who had generously interceded for their distressed brethren; he rewarded the eloquence of Hilarius with the government of Palestine, and dismissed the bishop of Antioch with the warmest expressions of his respect and gratitude. A thousand new statues arose to the clemency of Theodosius; the applause of his subjects was ratified by the approbation of his own heart; and the emperor confessed that, if the exercise of justice is the most important duty, the indulgence of mercy is the most exquisite pleasure of a sovereign.

THE SEDITION OF THESSALONICA

The sedition of Thessalonica is ascribed to a more shameful cause, and was productive of much more dreadful consequences. That great city, the metropolis of all the Illyrian provinces, had been protected from the dangers of the Gothic war by strong fortifications and a numerous garrison. Botheric, the general of those troops, and, as it should seem from his name, a barbarian, had among his slaves a beautiful boy, who excited the impure desires of one of the charioteers of the circus. The insolent and brutal lover was thrown into prison by the order of Botheric; and he sternly rejected the importunate clamours of the multitude, who, on the day of the public games, lamented the absence of their favourite, and considered the skill of a charioteer as an object of more importance than his virtue. The resentment of the people was embittered by some previous disputes; and, as the strength of the garrison had been drawn away for the service of the Italian War, the feeble remnant whose numbers were reduced by desertion, could not save the unhappy general from their licentious fury. Botheric, and several of his principal officers, were inhumanly murdered: their mangled bodies were dragged about the streets; and the emperor, who then resided at Mediolanum,

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was surprised by the intelligence of the audacious and wanton cruelty of the people of Thessalonica. The sentence of a dispassionate judge would have inflicted a severe punishment on the authors of the crime ; and the merit of Botheric might contribute to exasperate the grief and indignation of his master. The fiery and choleric temper of Theodosius was impatient of the dilatory forms of a judicial inquiry ; and he hastily resolved that the blood of his lieutenant should be expiated by the blood of the guilty people.

Yet his mind still fluctuated between the counsels of clemency and of revenge ; the zeal of the bishops had almost extorted from the reluctant emperor the promise of a general pardon ; his passion was again inflamed by the flattering suggestions of his minister, Rufinus ; and, after Theodosius had despatched the messengers of death, he attempted, too late, to prevent the execution of his orders. The punishment of a Roman city was blindly committed to the undistinguishing sword of the barbarians ; and the hostile preparations were concerted with the dark and perfidious artifice of an illegal conspiracy. The people of Thessalonica were treacherously invited, in the name of their sovereign, to the games of the circus ; and such was their insatiate avidity for those amusements that every consideration of fear, or suspicion, was disregarded by the numerous spectators. As soon as the assembly was complete, the soldiers, who had been secretly posted round the circus, received the signal, not of the races but of a general massacre. The promiscuous carnage continued three hours, without discrimination of strangers or natives, of age or sex, of innocence or guilt ; the most moderate accounts state the number of the slain at seven thousand ; and it is affirmed by some writers that more than fifteen thousand victims were sacrificed to the manes of Botheric. A foreign merchant, who had probably no concern in his murder, offered his own life, and all his wealth, to supply the place of one of his two sons ; but, while the father hesitated with equal tenderness, while he was doubtful to choose and unwilling to condemn, the soldiers determined his suspense by plunging their daggers at the same moment into the breasts of the defenceless youths. The apology of the assassins that they were obliged to produce the prescribed number of heads, serves only to increase, by an appearance of order and design, the horrors of the massacre, which was executed by the commands of Theodosius. The guilt of the emperor is aggravated by his long and frequent residence at Thessalonica. The situation of the unfortunate city, the aspect of the streets and buildings, the dress and faces of the inhabitants, were familiar, and even present to his imagination ; and Theodosius possessed a quick and lively sense of the existence of the people whom he destroyed.

THEODOSIUS AND AMBROSE

The respectful attachment of the emperor for the orthodox clergy had disposed him to love and admire the character of Ambrose, who united all the episcopal virtues in the most eminent degree. The friends and ministers of Theodosius imitated the example of their sovereign ; and he observed, with more surprise than displeasure, that all his secret counsels were immediately communicated to the archbishop, who acted from the laudable persuasion that every measure of civil government may have some connection with the glory of God and the interests of the true religion. The monks and populace of Callinicum, an obscure town on the frontier of Persia, excited by their own fanaticism and by that of their bishop, had

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tumultuously burned a conventicle of the Valentinians and a synagogue of the Jews.

The seditious prelate was condemned, by the magistrate of the province, either to rebuild the synagogue or to repay the damage; this moderate sentence was confirmed by the emperor. But it was not confirmed by the archbishop of Milan. He dictated an epistle of censure and reproach, more suitable, perhaps, if the emperor had received the mark of circumcision and renounced the faith of his baptism. Ambrose considers the toleration of the Jewish, as the persecution of the Christian, religion; boldly declares that he himself, and every true believer, would eagerly dispute with the bishop of Callinicum the merit of the deed, and the crown of martyrdom; and laments in the most pathetic terms that the execution of the sentence would be fatal to the fame and salvation of Theodosius. As this private admonition did not produce an immediate effect, the archbishop, from his pulpit, publicly addressed the emperor on his throne; nor would he consent to offer the oblation of the altar, till he had obtained from Theodosius a solemn and positive declaration, which secured the impunity of the bishop and monks of Callinicum. The recantation of Theodosius was sincere; and during the term of his residence at Milan his affection for Ambrose was continually increased by the habits of pious and familiar conversation.

When Ambrose was informed of the massacre of Thessalonica, his mind was filled with horror and anguish. He retired into the country to indulge his grief, and to avoid the presence of Theodosius. But as the archbishop was satisfied that a timid silence would render him the accomplice of his guilt, he represented, in a private letter, the enormity of the crime; which could only be effaced by the tears of penitence. The episcopal vigour of Ambrose was tempered by prudence; and he contented himself with signifying an indirect sort of excommunication, by the assurance that he had been warned in a vision not to offer the oblation in the name or in the presence of Theodosius; and by the advice that he would confine himself to the use of prayer, without presuming to approach the altar of Christ, or to receive the Holy Eucharist with those hands that were still polluted with the blood of an innocent people. The emperor was deeply affected by his own reproaches and by those of his spiritual father; and, after he had bewailed the mischievous and irreparable consequences of his rash fury, he proceeded, in the accustomed manner, to perform his devotions in the great church of Milan.

He was stopped in the porch by the archbishop, who, in the tone and language of an ambassador of heaven, declared to his sovereign that private contrition was not sufficient to atone for a public fault, or to appease the justice of the offended Deity. Theodosius humbly represented that, if he had contracted the guilt of homicide, David, the man after God's own heart, had been guilty, not only of murder but of adultery. "You have imitated David in his crime, imitate then his repentance," was the reply of the undaunted Ambrose. The rigorous conditions of peace and pardon were accepted; and the public penance of the emperor Theodosius has been recorded as one of the most honourable events in the annals of the Church. According to the mildest rules of ecclesiastical discipline, which were established in the fourth century, the crime of homicide was expiated by the penitence of twenty years; and as it was impossible, in the period of human life, to purge the accumulated guilt of the massacre of Thessalonica, the murderer should have been excluded from the Holy Communion till the hour of his death. But the archbishop, consulting the maxims of religious policy, granted some

indulgence to the rank of his illustrious penitent, who humbled in the dust the pride of the diadem; and the public edification might be admitted as a weighty reason to abridge the duration of his punishment. It was sufficient that the emperor of the Romans, stripped of the ensigns of royalty, should appear in a mournful and suppliant posture; and that, in the midst of the church of Milan, he should humbly solicit, with sighs and tears, the pardon of his sins.

LAST DAYS OF THEODOSIUS

After the defeat and death of the tyrant of Gaul, the Roman world was in the possession of Theodosius. He derived from the choice of Gratian his honourable title to the provinces of the East: he had acquired the West by the right of conquest; and the three years which he spent in Italy were usefully employed to restore the authority of the laws and to correct the abuses which had prevailed with impunity under the usurpation of Maximus and the minority of Valentinian. The name of Valentinian was regularly inserted in the public acts; but the tender age and doubtful faith of the son of Justina appeared to require the prudent care of an orthodox guardian; and his specious ambition might have excluded the unfortunate youth, without a struggle, and almost without a murmur, from the administration, and even from the inheritance, of the empire. If Theodosius had consulted the rigid maxims of interest and policy, his conduct would have been justified by his friends; but the generosity of his behaviour on this memorable occasion has extorted the applause of his most inveterate enemies. He seated Valentinian on the throne of Milan; and, without stipulating any present or future advantages, restored him to the absolute dominion of all the provinces from which he had been driven by the arms of Maximus. To the restitution of his ample patrimony, Theodosius added the free and generous gift of the countries beyond the Alps, which his successful valour had recovered from the assassin of Gratian. Satisfied with the glory which he had acquired, by revenging the death of his benefactor and delivering the West from the yoke of tyranny, the emperor returned from Milan to Constantinople; and, in the peaceful possession of the East, insensibly relapsed into his former habits of luxury and indolence. Theodosius discharged his obligation to the brother, he indulged his conjugal tenderness to the sister, of Valentinian; and posterity, which admires the pure and singular glory of his elevation, must applaud his unrivalled generosity in the use of victory.^b