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The History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire

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Chap. X.

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CHAP. X.

The Emperors Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus. — The general Irruption of the Barbarians. — The thirty Tyrants.

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X.
The nature
of the sub-
ject.
A. D. 248
— 268.

FROM the great secular games celebrated by Philip, to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution. The confusion of the times, and the scarcity of authentic memorials, oppose equal difficulties to the historian, who attempts to preserve a clear and unbroken thread of narration. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture: and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the sure operation of its fierce and unrestrained passions, might, on some occasions, supply the want of historical materials.

The emperor Philip.

There is not, for instance, any difficulty in conceiving, that the successive murders of so many emperors had loosened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all the generals of Philip were disposed to imitate the example of their

master; and that the caprice of armies, long since habituated to frequent and violent revolutions, might every day raise to the throne the most obscure of their fellow-soldiers. History can only add, that the rebellion against the emperor Philip broke out in the summer of the year two hundred and forty-nine, among the legions of Mæsia; and that a subaltern officer², named Marinus, was the object of their seditious choice. Philip was alarmed. He dreaded lest the treason of the Mælian army should prove the first spark of a general conflagration. Distracted with the consciousness of his guilt and of his danger, he communicated the intelligence to the senate. A gloomy silence prevailed, the effect of fear, and perhaps of disaffection: till at length Decius, one of the assembly, assuming a spirit worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to discover more intrepidity than the emperor seemed to possess. He treated the whole business with contempt, as a hasty and inconsiderate tumult, and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who in a very few days would be destroyed by the same inconstancy that had created him. The speedy completion of the prophecy inspired Philip with a just esteem for so able a counsellor; and Decius appeared to him the only person capable of restoring peace and discipline to an army, whose tumultuous spirit did not immediately subside after the murder of Marinus. Decius, who long resisted his own nomination, seems to have insinuated the danger of presenting a leader of merit, to the angry and apprehensive minds of the soldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The

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Services;
revolt, vic-
tory, and
reign of
the empe-
ror Decius.
A. D. 249.

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legions of Mæsia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His subsequent conduct, after that decisive measure, was unavoidable. He conducted, or followed, his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raised up, advanced to meet him. The Imperial troops were superior in number²; but the rebels formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle, or put to death a few days afterwards at Verona. His son and associate in the empire was massacred at Rome by the Prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumstances than the ambition of that age can usually plead, was universally acknowledged by the senate and provinces. It is reported, that, immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title of Augustus, he had assured Philip by a private message, of his innocence and loyalty, solemnly protesting, that, on his arrival in Italy, he would resign the Imperial ornaments, and return to the condition of an obedient subject. His professions might be sincere. But in the situation where fortune had placed him, it was scarcely possible that he could either forgive or be forgiven³.

He marches
against
the Goths.
A. D. 250.

The emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace and the administration of justice, when he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the GOTHs. This is the first considerable occasion

in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the Capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the Western empire, that the name of GOTHs is frequently but improperly used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism.

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In the beginning of the sixth century, and after the conquest of Italy, the Goths, in possession of present greatness, very naturally indulged themselves in the prospect of past and of future glory. They wished to preserve the memory of their ancestors, and to transmit to posterity their own achievements. The principal minister of the court of Ravenna, the learned Cassiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic history, which consisted of twelve books, now reduced to the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes *. These writers passed with the most artful conciseness over the misfortunes of the nation, celebrated its successful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Asiatic trophies, that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient songs, the uncertain, but the only, memorials of barbarians, they deduced the first origin of the Goths, from the vast island, or peninsula, of Scandinavia †. That extreme country of the North was not unknown to the conquerors of Italy; the ties of ancient consanguinity had been strengthened by recent offices of friendship; and a Scandinavian king had cheerfully abdicated

Origin of
the Goths
from Scan-
dinavia.

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X.

his savage greatness, that he might pass the remainder of his days in the peaceful and polished court of Ravenna⁶. Many vestiges, which cannot be ascribed to the arts of popular vanity, attest the ancient residence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic. From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into east and west Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century) whilst Christianity was advancing with a slow progress into the north, the Goths and the Swedes composed two distinct and sometimes hostile members of the same monarchy⁷. The latter of these two names has prevailed without extinguishing the former. The Swedes, who might well be satisfied with their own fame in arms, have, in every age, claimed the kindred glory of the Goths. In a moment of discontent against the court of Rome, Charles the Twelfth insinuated, that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave ancestors, who had already subdued the mistress of the world⁸.

Religion
of the
Goths.

Till the end of the eleventh century, a celebrated temple subsisted at Upsal, the most considerable town of the Swedes and Goths. It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and sanctified by the uncouth representations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the god-

deus

deities of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general festival, that was solemnized every ninth year, nine animals of every species (without excepting the human) were sacrificed, and their bleeding bodies suspended in the sacred grove adjacent to the temple⁹. The only traces that now subsist of this barbaric superstition are contained in the Edda, a system of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and studied by the learned of Denmark and Sweden, as the most valuable remains of their ancient traditions.

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Notwithstanding the mysterious obscurity of the Edda, we can easily distinguish two persons confounded under the name of Odin; the god of war, and the great legislator of Scandinavia. The latter, the Mahomet of the north, instituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes on either side of the Baltic were subdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his persuasive eloquence, and by the fame, which he acquired, of a most skilful magician. The faith that he had propagated, during a long and prosperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehensive of the ignominious approach of disease and infirmity, he resolved to expire as became a warrior. In a solemn assembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himself in nine mortal places, hastening away (as he asserted with his dying voice) to prepare the feast of heroes in the palace of the god of war¹⁰.

Institu-
tions and
death of
Odin.

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Agreeable
but uncer-
tain hypo-
thesis con-
cerning
Odin.

The native and proper habitation of Odin is distinguished by the appellation of As-gard. The happy resemblance of that name with As-burg, or As-of¹¹, words of a similar signification, has given rise to an historical system of so pleasing a contexture, that we could almost wish to persuade ourselves of its truth. It is supposed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Mæotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the north with servitude. That Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to resist, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of the Asiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great design of forming, in that inaccessible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people, which, in some remote age, might be subservient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticism, should issue in numerous swarms from the neighbourhood of the Polar circle, to chastise the oppressors of mankind¹².

Emigra-
tion of the
Goths
from Scan-
dinavia
into Prus-
sia.

If so many successive generations of Goths were capable of preserving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we must not expect, from such unlettered barbarians, any distinct account of the time and circumstances of their emigration. To cross the Baltic was an easy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were masters of a sufficient number of large vessels, with oars¹³, and the distance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlscroon to the nearest

ports of Pomerania and Prussia; Here, at length, we land on firm and historic ground. At least as early as the Christian æra¹⁴, and as late as the age of the Antonines¹⁵, the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Koningsberg, and Dantzick were long afterwards founded¹⁶. Westward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder, and the sea-coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburgh. A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language, seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people¹⁷. The latter appear to have been subdivided into Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidæ¹⁸. The distinction among the Vandals was more strongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty states, many of which, in a future age, expanded themselves into powerful monarchies.

In the age of the Antonines, the Goths were still seated in Prussia. About the reign of Alexander Severus, the Roman province of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and destructive inroads¹⁹. In this interval, therefore, of about seventy years, we must place the second migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cause that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unsettled barbarians. Either a pesti-

From
Prussia to
the Uk-
raine.

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X.

lence, or a famine, a victory, or a defeat, an oracle of the Gods, or the eloquence of a daring leader, were sufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the south. Besides the influence of a martial religion, the numbers and spirit of the Goths were equal to the most dangerous adventures. The use of round bucklers and short swords rendered them formidable in a close engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings, gave uncommon union and stability to their councils²⁰; and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth ancestor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the ascendant of personal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *Anses*, or demigods of the Gothic nation²¹.

The Gothic nation
increases
in its
march.

The fame of a great enterprise excited the bravest warriors from all the Vandalic states of Germany, many of whom are seen a few years afterwards combating under the common standard of the Goths²². The first motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prypec, a river universally conceived by the ancients to be the southern branch of the Borysthenes²³. The windings of that great stream through the plains of Poland and Russia gave a direction to their line of march, and a constant supply of fresh water and pasturage to their numerous herds of cattle. They followed the unknown course of the river, confident in their valour, and careless of whatever power might oppose their progress. The Bastarnæ and the Venedi were the first who presented themselves; and the

flower of their youth, either from choice or compulsion, increased the Gothic army. The Bastarnæ dwelt on the northern side of the Carpathian mountains; the immense tract of land that separated the Bastarnæ from the savages of Finland, was possessed, or rather wasted, by the Venedi²⁴: we have some reason to believe that the first of these nations, which distinguished itself in the Macedonian war²⁵, and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, etc. derived its origin from the Germans. With better authority, a Sarmatian extraction may be assigned to the Venedi, who rendered themselves so famous in the middle ages²⁶. But the confusion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the most accurate observers²⁷. As the Goths advanced near the Euxine sea, they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the Jazyges, the Alani, and the Roxolani; and they were probably the first Germans who saw the mouths of the Borysthenes, and of the Tanais. If we inquire into the characteristic marks of the people of Germany and of Sarmatia, we shall discover that those two great portions of human kind were principally distinguished by fixed huts or moveable tents, by a close dress, or flowing garments, by the marriage of one or of several wives, by a military force, consisting, for the most part, either of infantry or cavalry; and above all by the use of the Teutonic, or of the Slavonian language; the last of which has been diffused by conquest, from the confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

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Distinction
of Ger-
mans and
Sarma-
tians.

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Deſcription
of the
Ukraine.

The Goths were now in poſſeſſion of the Ukraine, a country of conſiderable extent and uncommon fertility, interſected with navigable rivers, which, from either ſide, diſcharge themſelves into the Boryſthenes; and interſperſed with large and lofty foreſts of oaks. The plenty of game and fiſh, the innumerable bee-hives, depoſited in the hollow of old trees, and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the ſize of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptneſs of the ſoil for every ſpecies of grain, and the luxuriance of the vegetation, all diſplayed the liberality of Nature, and tempted the induſtry of man²¹. But the Goths withſtood all theſe temptations, and ſtill adhered to a life of idleneſs, of poverty, and of rapine.

The Goths
invade the
Roman
provinces.

The Scythian hords, which, towards the eaſt, bordered on the new ſettlements of the Goths, preſented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the proſpect of the Roman territories was far more alluring; and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harveſts, ſown by the hands of an induſtrious, and expoſed to be gathered by thoſe of a warlike, people. It is probable, that the conqueſts of Trajan, maintained by his ſucceſſors, leſs for any real advantage, than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that ſide. The new and unſettled province of Dacia was neither ſtrong enough to reſiſt, nor rich enough to ſatiate, the rapaciouſneſs of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Nieſter were conſidered as the boundary of the Roman power,

the fortifications of the Lower Danube were more carelessly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mæsia lived in supine security, fondly conceiving themselves at an inaccessible distance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their mistake. The king, or leader of that fierce nation, traversed with contempt the province of Dacia, and passed both the Niefter and the Danube without encountering any opposition capable of retarding his progress. The relaxed discipline of the Roman troops betrayed the most important posts, where they were stationed, and the fear of deserved punishment induced great numbers of them to enlist under the Gothic standard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his sister, and at that time the capital of the second Mæsia²². The inhabitants consented to ransom their lives and property, by the payment of a large sum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deserts, animated, rather than satisfied, with the first success of their arms against an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was soon transmitted to the emperor Decius, that Cniva, king of the Goths, had passed the Danube a second time, with more considerable forces; that his numerous detachments scattered devastation over the province of Mæsia, whilst the main body of the army, consisting of seventy thousand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the most daring achievements, required the presence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

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X.
Various
events of
the Gothic
war.
A. D. 250.

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories³⁰. On his approach, they raised the siege, but with a design only of marching away to a conquest of greater importance, the siege of Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of mount Hæmus³¹. Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but when he imagined himself at a considerable distance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his pursuers. The camp of the Romans was surprised and pillaged, and, for the first time, their emperor fled in disorder before a troop of half-armed barbarians. After a long resistance, Philippopolis, destitute of succour, was taken by storm. A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city³². Many prisoners of consequence became a valuable accession to the spoil; and Priscus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, blushed not to assume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome³³. The time, however, consumed in that tedious siege, enabled Decius to revive the courage, restore the discipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted several parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were hastening to share the victory of their countrymen³⁴, intrusted the passes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity³⁵, repaired and strengthened the fortifications of the Danube, and exerted his utmost vigilance to oppose either the progress or the retreat of the Goths.

Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiously waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and decisive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms ³⁶.

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At the same time when Decius was struggling with the violence of the tempest, his mind, calm and deliberate amidst the tumult of war, investigated the more general causes, that, since the age of the Antonines, had so impetuously urged the decline of the Roman greatness. He soon discovered that it was impossible to replace that greatness on a permanent basis, without restoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppressed majesty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous design, he first resolved to revive the obsolete office of censor; an office, which, as long as it had subsisted in its pristine integrity, had so much contributed to the perpetuity of the state ³⁷, till it was usurped and gradually neglected by the Cæsars ³⁸. Conscious that the favour of the sovereign may confer power, but that the esteem of the people can alone bestow authority, he submitted the choice of the censor to the unbiassed voice of the senate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then served with distinction in the army of Decius, was declared the most worthy of that exalted honour. As soon as the decree of the senate was transmitted to the emperor, he assembled a great council in his camp, and, before the investiture of the censor elect, he apprized him of the difficulty and

Decius re-
vives the
office of
censor in
the person
of Valeri-
an.

A. D. 251.
27th Octo-
ber.

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importance of his great office. „Happy Valerian, ” said the prince, to his distinguished subject, „happy
 „ in the general approbation of the senate and of
 „ the Roman republic! Accept the censorship of
 „ mankind; and judge of our manners. You will
 „ select those who deserve to continue members
 „ of the senate; you will restore the equestrian
 „ order to its ancient splendour; you will improve
 „ the revenue, yet moderate the public burdens.
 „ You will distinguish into regular classes the
 „ various and infinite multitude of citizens, and
 „ accurately review the military strength, the
 „ wealth, the virtue, and the resources of Rome.
 „ Your decisions shall obtain the force of laws.
 „ The army, the palace, the ministers of justice,
 „ and the great officers of the empire, are all
 „ subject to your tribunal. None are exempted,
 „ excepting only the ordinary consuls ”, the
 „ prefect of the city, the king of the sacrifices,
 „ and (as long as she preserves her chastity
 „ inviolate) the eldest of the vestal virgins. Even
 „ these few, who may not dread the severity,
 „ will anxiously solicit the esteem, of the Roman
 „ censor “.”

The design
impracti-
cable and
without
effect.

A magistrate, invested with such extensive powers, would have appeared not so much the minister as the colleague of his sovereign “. Valerian justly dreaded an elevation so full of envy and of suspicion. He modestly urged the alarming greatness of the trust, his own insufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully insinuated, that the office of censor was inseparable

from the Imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a subject were unequal to the support of such an immense weight of cares and of power". The approaching event of war soon put an end to the prosecution of a project so specious but so impracticable; and whilst it preserved Valerian from the danger, saved the emperor Decius from the disappointment, which would most probably have attended it. A censor may maintain, he can never restore, the morals of a state. It is impossible for such a magistrate to exert his authority with benefit, or even with effect, unless he is supported by a quick sense of honour and virtue in the minds of the people; by a decent reverence for the public opinion, and by a train of useful prejudices combating on the side of national manners. In a period when these principles are annihilated, the censorial jurisdiction must either sink into empty pageantry, or be converted into a partial instrument of vexatious oppression". It was easier to vanquish the Goths, than to eradicate the public vices; yet even in the first of these enterprises, Decius lost his army and his life.

The Goths were now, on every side, surrounded and pursued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had perished in the long siege of Philippopolis, and the exhausted country could no longer afford subsistence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchased, by the surrender of all their booty and prisoners, the permission of an undisturbed

Defeat and
death of
Decius and
his son.

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X.

retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and resolving, by the chastisement of these invaders, to strike a salutary terror into the nations of the North, refused to listen to any terms of accommodation. The high-spirited barbarians preferred death to slavery. An obscure town of Mæsia, called Forum Terebronii **, was the scene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a morass. In the beginning of the action, the son of Decius, a youth of the fairest hopes, and already associated to the honours of the purple, was slain by an arrow, in the sight of his afflicted father; who summoning all his fortitude, admonished the dismayed troops, that the loss of a single soldier was of little importance to the republic **. The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of despair against grief and rage. The first line of the Goths at length gave way in disorder; the second, advancing to sustain it, shared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to dispute the passage of the morass, which was imprudently attempted by the presumption of the enemy.

„ Here the fortune of the day turned, and all
 „ things became adverse to the Romans: the
 „ place deep with ooze, sinking under those who
 „ stood, slippery to such as advanced; their
 „ armour heavy, the waters deep; nor could
 „ they wield, in that uneasy situation, their
 „ weighty javelins. The barbarians, on the
 „ contrary, were enured to encounters in the

„ bogs, their persons tall, their spears long, such „ as could wound at a distance “6.” In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost; nor could the body of the emperor ever be found “7. Such was the fate of Decius, in the fiftieth year of his age; an accomplished prince, active in war, and affable in peace “8; who, together with his son, has deserved to be compared, both in life and death, with the brightest examples of ancient virtue “9.

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, the insolence of the legions. They appear to have patiently expected, and submissively obeyed, the decree of the senate, which regulated the succession to the throne. From a just regard for the memory of Decius, the Imperial title was conferred on Hostilianus, his only surviving son; but an equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus, whose experience and ability seemed equal to the great trust of guardian to the young prince and the distressed empire “10. The first care of the new emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He consented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty, and, what was still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest merit and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp with every convenience that could assuage their angry spirits, or facilitate their so much wished-for departure; and he even promised to pay them annually a large sum of gold, on condition they should never afterwards infect the Roman territories by their incursions “11.

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Election of
Gallus.
A. D. 251.
December.

A. D. 252.

Retreat of
the Goths.

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Gallus
purchases
peace by
the pay-
ment of an
annual tri-
bute.

Popular
discontent.

In the age of the Scipios, the most opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chair, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin⁵². After the wealth of nations had centred in Rome, the emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow not from the fears, but merely from the generosity or the gratitude of the Romans; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt⁵³. But this stipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy, appeared without disguise in the light of an ignominious tribute; the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed to accept such unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the prince, who by a necessary concession had probably saved his country, became the object of the general contempt and aversion. The death of Hostilianus, though it happened in the midst of a raging pestilence, was interpreted as the personal crime of Gallus⁵⁴; and even the defeat of the late emperor was ascribed by the voice of suspicion to the perfidious counsels of his hated successor⁵⁵. The tranquillity which

the empire enjoyed during the first year of his administration “, served rather to inflame than to appease the public discontent; and, as soon as the apprehensions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more sensibly felt.

But the Romans were irritated to a still higher degree, when they discovered that they had not even secured their repose, though at the expence of their honour. The dangerous secret of the wealth and weakness of the empire, had been revealed to the world. New swarms of barbarians, encouraged by the success, and not conceiving themselves bound by the obligation, of their brethren, spread devastation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which seemed abandoned by the pusillanimous emperor, was assumed by Æmilianus, governor of Pannonia and Mæsia; who rallied the scattered forces, and revived the fainting spirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly attacked, routed, chased, and pursued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader distributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the soldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle “⁷. Gallus, who, careless of the general welfare, indulged himself in the pleasures of Italy, was almost in the same instant informed of the success, of the revolt, and of the rapid approach, of his aspiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the armies came in sight of each

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Victory
and revolt
of Æmili-
anus.
A. D. 253.

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X.

Gallus abandoned and slain.
A. D. 253.
May.

Valerian revenges the death of Gallus, and is acknowledged emperor.

other, the soldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their sovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of Æmilianus; they were attracted by his liberality, for he offered a considerable increase of pay to all deserters⁵⁸. The murder of Gallus, and of his son Volusianus, put an end to the civil war; and the senate gave a legal sanction to the rights of conquest. The letters of Æmilianus to that assembly, displayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He assured them, that he should resign to their wisdom the civil administration; and, contenting himself with the quality of their general, would in a short time assert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the North and of the East⁵⁹. His pride was flattered by the applause of the senate; and medals are still extant, representing him with the name and attributes of Hercules the Victor, and of Mars the Avenger⁶⁰.

If the new monarch possessed the abilities, he wanted the time, necessary to fulfill these splendid promises. Less than four months intervened between his victory and his fall⁶¹. He had vanquished Gallus: he sunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had sent Valerian, already distinguished by the honourable title of censor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany⁶² to his aid. Valerian executed that commission with zeal and fidelity; and as he arrived too late to save his sovereign, he resolved to revenge him. The troops of Æmilianus, who still lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were
awed

awed by the sanctity of his character, but much more by the superior strength of his army; and as they were now become as incapable of personal attachment as they had always been of constitutional principle, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who so lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained the possession of the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence singular in that age of revolutions; since he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predecessor, whom he dethroned.

Valerian was about sixty years of age " when he was invested with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace, or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual ascent through the honours of the state, he had deserved the favour of virtuous princes, and had declared himself the enemy of tyrants ". His noble birth, his mild but unblemished manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the senate and people; and if mankind (according to the observation of an ancient writer) had been left at liberty to chuse a master, their choice would most assuredly have fallen on Valerian ". Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at least his spirit, were affected by the languor and coldness of old age. The consciousness of his decline engaged him to share the throne with a younger and more active associate " : the emergency of the times demanded

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X.A. D. 253.
August.Character
of Vale-
rian.General
misfor-
tunes of
the reigns

CHAP.

X.

of Valerian
and Gallienus.

A. D. 253

— 268.

a general no less than a prince; and the experience of the Roman censor might have directed him where to bestow the Imperial purple, as the reward of military merit. But instead of making a judicious choice, which would have confirmed his reign and endeared his memory, Valerian, consulting only the dictates of affection or vanity, immediately invested with the supreme honours his son Gallienus, a youth whose effeminate vices had been hitherto concealed by the obscurity of a private station. The joint government of the father and the son subsisted about seven, and the sole administration of Gallienus continued about eight, years. But the whole period was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity. As the Roman empire was at the same time, and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers, we shall consult order and perspicuity, by pursuing, not so much the doubtful arrangement of dates, as the more natural distribution of subjects. The most dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were, 1. The Franks. 2. The Alemanni. 3. The Goths; and, 4. The Persians. Under these general appellations, we may comprehend the adventures of less considerable tribes, whose obscure and uncouth names would only serve to oppress the memory and perplex the attention of the reader.

Inroads of
the barba-
rians.

Origin and
confederacy of the
Franks.

I. As the posterity of the Franks compose one of the greatest and most enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity

have been exhausted in the discovery of their unlettered ancestors. To the tales of credulity, have succeeded the systems of fancy. Every passage has been sifted, every spot has been surveyed, that might possibly reveal some faint traces of their origin. It has been supposed, that Pannonia⁶⁷, that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany⁶⁸, gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the most rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigrations of ideal conquerors, have acquiesced in a sentiment whose simplicity persuades us of its truth⁶⁹. They suppose, that about the year two hundred and forty⁷⁰, a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks, by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weser. The present circle of Westphalia, the Landgraviate of Hesse, and the dutchies of Brunswick and Luneburg, were the ancient seat of the Chauci, who, in their inaccessible morasses, defied the Roman arms⁷¹; of the Cherusci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of several other tribes of inferior power and renown⁷². The love of liberty was the ruling passion of these Germans; the enjoyment of it their best treasure; the word that expressed that enjoyment, the most pleasing to their ear. They deserved, they assumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks or Freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguish the peculiar names of the several states of the confederacy⁷³. Tacit consent, and mutual advantage, dictated the first laws of the union: it was gradually cemented

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by habit and experience. The league of the Franks may admit of some comparison with the Helvetic body; in which every canton, retaining its independent sovereignty, consults with its brethren in the common cause, without acknowledging the authority of any supreme head, or representative assembly ⁷⁴. But the principle of the two confederacies was extremely different. A peace of two hundred years has rewarded the wise and honest policy of the Swiss. An inconstant spirit, the thirst of rapine, and a disregard to the most solemn treaties, disgraced the character of the Franks.

They in-
vade Gaul,

The Romans had long experienced the daring valour of the people of Lower Germany. The union of their strength threatened Gaul with a more formidable invasion, and required the presence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of Imperial power ⁷⁵. Whilst that prince, and his infant son Salonius, displayed, in the court of Treves, the majesty of the empire, its armies were ably conducted by their general Posthumus, who, though he afterwards betrayed the family of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great interest of the monarchy. The treacherous language of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a long series of victories. Trophies and titles attest (if such evidence can attest) the fame of Posthumus, who is repeatedly styled The conqueror of the Germans, and the saviour of Gaul ⁷⁶.

ravage
Spain,

But a single fact, the only one indeed of which we have any distinct knowledge, erases, in a great measure, these monuments of vanity and adulation.

The Rhine, though dignified with the title of Safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier against the daring spirit of enterprise with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devastations stretched from the river to the foot of the Pyrenees: nor were they stopped by those mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to resist, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years, the greatest part of the reign of Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and destructive hostilities. Tarragona, the flourishing capital of a peaceful province, was sacked and almost destroyed⁷⁷; and so late as the days of Orosius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages, scattered amidst the ruins of magnificent cities, still recorded the rage of the barbarians⁷⁸. When the exhausted country no longer supplied a variety of plunder, the Franks seized on some vessels in the ports of Spain⁷⁹, and transported themselves into Mauritania. The distant province was astonished with the fury of these barbarians, who seemed to fall from a new world, as their name, manners, and complexion, were equally unknown on the coast of Africa⁸⁰.

CHAP.
X.and pass
over into
Africa.

II. In that part of Upper Saxony beyond the Elbe, which is at present called the Marquisate of Luface, there existed, in ancient times, a sacred wood, the awful seat of the superstition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts, without confessing, by their servile bonds and suppliant posture, the immediate presence of the sovereign Deity⁸¹. Patriotism contributed as

Origin and
renown of
the Suevi.

CHAP.
X.

well as devotion to consecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnones²². It was universally believed, that the nation had received its first existence on that sacred spot. At stated periods, the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood, resorted thither by their ambassadors; and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rites and human sacrifices. The wide extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to those of the Danube. They were distinguished from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dressing their long hair, which they gathered into a rude knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that shewed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the enemy²³. Jealous, as the Germans were, of military renown, they all confessed the superior valour of the Suevi; and the tribes of the Usipetes and Tencteri, who, with a vast army, encountered the dictator Cæsar, declared that they esteemed it not a disgrace to have fled before a people, to whose arms the immortal gods themselves were unequal²⁴.

A mixed
body of
Suevi ac-
sume the
name of
Alemanni,

In the reign of the emperor Caracalla, an innumerable swarm of Suevi appeared on the banks of the Mein, and in the neighbourhood of the Roman provinces, in quest either of food, of plunder, or of glory²⁵. The hasty army of volunteers gradually coalesced into a great and permanent nation, and, as it was composed from so many different tribes, assumed the name of Alemanni, or *All-men*; to denote at once their various lineage, and their common

bravery". The latter was soon felt by the Romans in many a hostile inroad. The Alemanni fought chiefly on horseback; but their cavalry was rendered still more formidable by a mixture of light infantry, selected from the bravest and most active of the youth, whom frequent exercise had enured to accompany the horseman in the longest march, the most rapid charge, or the most precipitate retreat".

This warlike people of Germans had been astonished by the immense preparation of Alexander Severus, they were dismayed by the arms of his successor, a barbarian equal in valour and fierceness to themselves. But still hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increased the general disorder that ensued after the death of Decius. They inflicted severe wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul: they were the first who removed the veil that covered the feeble majesty of Italy. A numerous body of the Alemanni penetrated across the Danube, and through the Rhætian Alps, into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and displayed the victorious banners of barbarians almost in sight of Rome". The insult and the danger rekindled in the senate some sparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far distant wars, Valerian in the east, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and resources of the Romans were in themselves. In this emergency, the senators resumed the defence of the republic, drew out the Prætorian guards, who had been left to garrison the capital, and filled up their numbers, by insisting into the public service the stoutest and most willing of the

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X.

invade
Gaul and
Italy,

are repulsed from
Rome by
the senate
and people.

CHAP. X. Plebeians. The Alemanni, astonished with the sudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany, laden with spoil; and their retreat was esteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans²⁰.

The senators excluded by Gallienus from the military service.

When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much less delighted, than alarmed, with the courage of the senate, since it might one day prompt them to rescue the public from domestic tyranny, as well as from foreign invasion. His timid ingratitude was published to his subjects, in an edict which prohibited the senators from exercising any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundless. The rich and luxurious nobles, sinking into their natural character, accepted, as a favour, this disgraceful exemption from military service; and as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas, they cheerfully resigned the more dangerous cares of empire, to the rough hands of peasants and soldiers²¹.

Gallienus contracts an alliance with the Alemanni.

Another invasion of the Alemanni, of a more formidable aspect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the lower empire. Three hundred thousand of that warlike people are said to have been vanquished, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in person, at the head of only ten thousand Romans²². We may however, with great probability, ascribe this incredible victory, either to the credulity of the historian, or

to some exaggerated exploits of one of the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very different nature, that Gallienus endeavoured to protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He espoused Pipa the daughter of a king of the Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often confounded with the Alemanni in their wars and conquests²². To the father, as the price of his alliance, he granted an ample settlement in Pannonia. The native charms of unpolished beauty seem to have fixed the daughter in the affections of the inconstant emperor, and the bands of policy were more firmly connected by those of love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome still refused the name of marriage, to the profane mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has stigmatized the German princess with the opprobrious title of concubine of Gallienus²³.

III. We have already traced the emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia, or at least from Prussia, to the mouth of the Borysthenes, and have followed their victorious arms from the Borysthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the frontier of the last mentioned river was perpetually infested by the inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was defended by the Romans with more than usual firmness and success. The provinces that were the seat of war, recruited the armies of Rome with an inexhaustible supply of hardy foldiers; and more than one of these Illyrian peasants attained the station, and displayed the abilities, of

Inroads of
the Goths.

CHAP. a general. Though flying parties of the barba-
 X. rians, who incessantly hovered on the banks of
 the Danube, penetrated sometimes to the confines
 of Italy and Macedonia; their progress was com-
 monly checked, or their return intercepted, by
 the Imperial lieutenants⁹⁴. But the great stream
 of the Gothic hostilities was diverted into a very
 different channel. The Goths, in their new set-
 tlement of the Ukraine, soon became masters of
 the northern coast of the Euxine: to the south of
 that inland sea, were situated the soft and wealthy
 provinces of Asia Minor, which possessed all that
 could attract, and nothing that could resist, a
 barbarian conqueror.

Conquest
 of the Bos-
 phorus by
 the Goths,

The banks of the Borysthenes are only sixty
 miles distant from the narrow entrance⁹⁵ of the
 peninsula of Crim Tartary, known to the ancients
 under the name of Chersonesus Taurica⁹⁶. On
 that inhospitable shore, Euripides, embellishing
 with exquisite art the tales of antiquity, has
 placed the scene of one of his most affecting tra-
 gedies⁹⁷. The bloody sacrifices of Diana, the
 arrival of Orestes and Pylades, and the triumph
 of virtue and religion over savage fierceness, serve
 to represent an historical truth, that the Tauri,
 the original inhabitants of the peninsula, were,
 in some degree, reclaimed from their brutal man-
 ners, by a gradual intercourse with the Grecian
 colonies, which settled along the maritime coast.
 The little kingdom of Bosphorus, whose capital
 was situated on the Straits, through which the
 Mæotis communicates itself to the Euxine, was

composed of degenerate Greeks, and half-civilized barbarians. It subsisted, as an independent state, from the time of the Peloponnesian war⁹⁸, was at last swallowed up by the ambition of Mithridates⁹⁹, and, with the rest of his dominions, sunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From the reign of Augustus¹⁰⁰, the kings of Bosphorus were the humble, but not useless, allies of the empire. By presents, by arms, and by a slight fortification drawn across the Isthmus, they effectually guarded against the roving plunderers of Sarmatia, the access of a country, which, from its peculiar situation and convenient harbours, commanded the Euxine sea and Asia Minor¹⁰¹. As long as the sceptre was possessed by a lineal succession of kings, they acquitted themselves of their important charge with vigilance and success. Domestic factions, and the fears, or private interest, of obscure usurpers, who seized on the vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart of Bosphorus. With the acquisition of a superfluous waste of fertile soil, the conquerors obtained the command of a naval force, sufficient to transport their armies to the coast of Asia¹⁰². The ships used in the navigation of the Euxine were of a very singular construction. They were slight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only, without the least mixture of iron, and occasionally covered with a shelving roof, on the appearance of a tempest¹⁰³. In these floating houses, the Goths carelessly trusted themselves to the mercy of an unknown sea, under the conduct of

who acquire a naval force.

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X.

sailors pressed into the service, and whose skill and fidelity were equally suspicious. But the hopes of plunder had banished every idea of danger, and a natural fearlessness of temper supplied in their minds the more rational confidence, which is the just result of knowledge and experience. Warriors of such a daring spirit must have often murmured against the cowardice of their guides, who required the strongest assurances of a settled calm before they would venture to embark; and would scarcely ever be tempted to lose sight of the land. Such, at least, is the practice of the modern Turks¹⁰⁴; and they are probably not inferior, in the art of navigation, to the ancient inhabitants of Bosphorus.

First naval
expedition
of the
Goths.

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coast of Circassia on the left hand, first appeared before Pityus¹⁰⁵, the utmost limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port and fortified with a strong wall. Here they met with a resistance more obstinate than they had reason to expect from the feeble garrison of a distant fortress. They were repulsed; and their disappointment seemed to diminish the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Successianus, an officer of superior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual; but as soon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but less important station, they resumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the destruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former disgrace¹⁰⁶.

Circling round the eastern extremity of the Euxine sea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebizond is about three hundred miles ¹⁰⁷. The course of the Goths carried them in sight of the country of Colchis, so famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without success, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phasis. Trebizond, celebrated in the retreat of the ten thousand as an ancient colony of Greeks ¹⁰⁸, derived its wealth and splendour from the munificence of the emperor Hadrian, who had constructed an artificial port on a coast left destitute by nature of secure harbours ¹⁰⁹. The city was large and populous; a double enclosure of walls seemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the usual garrison had been strengthened by a reinforcement of ten thousand men. But there are not any advantages capable of supplying the absence of discipline and vigilance. The numerous garrison of Trebizond, dissolved in riot and luxury, disdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths soon discovered the supine negligence of the besieged, erected a lofty pile of fascines, ascended the walls in the silence of the night, and entered the defenceless city, sword in hand. A general massacre of the people ensued, whilst the affrighted soldiers escaped through the opposite gates of the town. The most holy temples, and the most splendid edifices, were involved in a common destruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immense: the wealth of the adja-

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X.

The Goths
besiege and
take Tre-
bizond.

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X.

cent countries had been deposited in Trebizond, as in a secure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without opposition through the extensive province of Pontus¹¹⁰. The rich spoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ships that had been found in the port. The robust youth of the sea-coast were chained to the oar; and the Goths, satisfied with the success of their first naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new establishments in the kingdom of Bosphorus¹¹¹.

The second expedition of the Goths.

The second expedition of the Goths was undertaken with greater powers of men and ships; but they steered a different course, and, disdain- ing the exhausted provinces of Pontus, followed the western coast of the Euxine, passed before the wide mouths of the Borysthenes, the Niester, and the Danube, and increasing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fishing barks, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine sea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Asia. The garrison of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the Strait; and so inconsiderable were the dreaded invasions of the barbarians, that this body of troops surpassed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they surpassed it. They deserted with precipitation their advantageous post, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, most plentifully stored with arms and money, to the

They plunder the cities of Bithynia.

discretion of the conquerors. Whilst they hesitated whether they should prefer the sea or land, Europe or Asia, for the scene of their hostilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia, once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and easy conquest. He guided the march, which was only sixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon¹¹², directed the resistless attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned sufficient policy to reward the traitor, whom they detested. Nice, Prusa, Apæmæa, Cius, cities that had sometimes rivalled, or imitated, the splendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the same calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without controul through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the soft inhabitants of Asia, had abolished the exercise of arms, and removed the apprehension of danger. The ancient walls were suffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the most opulent cities was reserved for the construction of baths, temples, and theatres¹¹³.

When the city of Cyzicus withstood the utmost effort of Mithridates¹¹⁴, it was distinguished by wise laws, a naval power of two hundred galleys, and three arsenals; of arms, of military engines, and of corn¹¹⁵. It was still the seat of wealth and luxury; but of its ancient strength, nothing remained except the situation, in a little island of the Propontis, connected with the continent of Asia only by two bridges. From the recent sack of Prusa, the Goths advanced within

Retreat of
the Goths.

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X.

eighteen miles ¹¹⁶ of the city, which they had devoted to destruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The season was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reservoir of all the springs of Mount Olympus, rose to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhyndacus, which issues from the lake, swelled into a broad and rapid stream, and stopped the progress of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been stationed, was attended by a long train of waggons, laden with the spoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicomedia, which they wantonly burnt ¹¹⁷. Some obscure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that secured their retreat ¹¹⁸. But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox summoned them to hasten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is esteemed by the modern Turks the most unquestionable instance of rashness and folly ¹¹⁹.

Third naval expedition of the Goths.

When we are informed that the third fleet, equipped by the Goths in the ports of Bosphorus, consisted of five hundred sail of ships ¹²⁰, our ready imagination instantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are assured by the judicious Strabo ¹²¹, that the piratical vessels used by the barbarians of Pontus and the Lesser Scythia, were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may safely affirm, that fifteen thousand warriors, at the most, embarked

They pass
the Bos-
phorus and
the Helle-
spont,

embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they steered their destructive course from the Cimmerian to the Thracian Bosphorus. When they had almost gained the middle of the Straits, they were suddenly driven back to the entrance of them; till a favourable wind springing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid sea, or rather lake of the Propontis. Their landing on the little island of Cyzicus, was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From thence issuing again through the narrow passage of the Hellespont, they pursued their winding navigation, amidst the numerous islands scattered over the Archipelago, or the Ægean Sea. The assistance of captives and deserters must have been very necessary to pilot their vessels, and to direct their various incursions, as well on the coast of Greece as on that of Asia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles distant from Athens¹²², which had attempted to make some preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities against the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls fallen to decay since the time of Sylla. The efforts of his skill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became masters of the native seat of the muses and the arts. But while the conquerors abandoned themselves to the license of plunder and intemperance, their fleet, that lay with a slender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexip-

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X.

pus, who, flying with the engineer Cleodamus from the sack of Athens, collected a hasty band of volunteers, peasants as well as soldiers, and in some measure avenged the calamities of his country¹²³.

ravage
Greece,
and threat-
en Italy.

But this exploit, whatever lustre it might shed on the declining age of Athens, served rather to irritate than to subdue the undaunted spirit of the northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the same time in every district of Greece. Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged such memorable wars against each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by sea, spread from the eastern point of Sunium to the western coast of Epirus. The Goths had already advanced within sight of Italy, when the approach of such imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleasure. The emperor appeared in arms; and his presence seems to have checked the ardour, and to have divided the strength, of the enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, accepted an honourable capitulation, entered with a large body of his countrymen into the service of Rome, and was invested with the ornaments of the consular dignity, which had never before been profaned by the hands of a barbarian¹²⁴. Great numbers of the Goths, disgusted with the perils and hardships of a tedious voyage, broke into Mæsia, with a design of forcing their way over the Danube to their set-

Their di-
visions and
retreat.

lements in the Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved inevitable destruction, if the discord of the Roman generals had not opened to the barbarians the means of an escape ¹²⁵. The small remainder of this destroying host returned on board their vessels; and measuring back their way through the Hellespont and the Bosphorus, ravaged in their passage the shores of Troy, whose fame, immortalized by Homer, will probably survive the memory of the Gothic conquests. As soon as they found themselves in safety within the basin of the Euxine, they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near the foot of Mount Hæmus; and, after all their toils, indulged themselves in the use of those pleasant and salutary hot baths. What remained of the voyage was a short and easy navigation ¹²⁶. Such was the various fate of this third and greatest of their naval enterprises. It may seem difficult to conceive, how the original body of fifteen thousand warriors could sustain the losses and divisions of so bold an adventure. But as their numbers were gradually wasted by the sword, by shipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deserters, who flocked to the standard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive slaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly seized the glorious opportunity of freedom and revenge. In these expeditions, the Gothic nation claimed a superior share of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners, are sometimes distinguished and

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sometimes confounded in the imperfect histories of that age; and as the barbarian fleets seemed to issue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians was frequently bestowed on the mixt multitude ¹²⁷.

Ruin of
the temple
of Ephe-
sus.

In the general calamities of mankind, the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are passed over with careless inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after having risen with increasing splendour from seven repeated misfortunes ¹²⁸, was finally burnt by the Goths in their third naval invasion. The arts of Greece, and the wealth of Asia, had conspired to erect that sacred and magnificent structure. It was supported by an hundred and twenty-seven marble columns of the Ionic order. They were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was sixty feet high. The altar was adorned with the masterly sculptures of Praxiteles, who had, perhaps, selected from the favourite legends of the place the birth of the divine children of Latona, the concealment of Apollo after the slaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of Bacchus to the vanquished Amazons ¹²⁹. Yet the length of the temple of Ephesus was only four hundred and twenty-five feet, about two-thirds of the measure of the church of St. Peter's at Rome ¹³⁰. In the other dimensions, it was still more inferior to that sublime production of modern architecture. The spreading arms of a Christian cross require a much greater breadth than the oblong temples

of the Pagans; and the boldest artists of antiquity would have been startled at the proposal of raising in the air a dome of the size and proportions of the pantheon. The temple of Diana was, however, admired as one of the wonders of the world. Successive empires, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its sanctity, and enriched its splendour¹³¹. But the rude savages of the Baltic were destitute of a taste for the elegant arts, and they despised the ideal terrors of a foreign superstition¹³².

Another circumstance is related of these invasions, which might deserve our notice, were it not justly to be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist. We are told, that in the sack of Athens the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of setting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design; by the profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books, they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms¹³³. The sagacious counsellor (should the truth of the fact be admitted) reasoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the most polite and powerful nations, genius of every kind has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.

IV. The new sovereigns of Persia, Artaxerxes and his son Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already seen) over the house of Arsaces. Of the

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Conduct of
the Goths
at Athens.

Conquest
of Armenia
by the
Persians.

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many princes of that ancient race, Chosroes, king of Armenia, had alone preserved both his life and his independence. He defended himself by the natural strength of his country; by the perpetual resort of fugitives and malecontents; by the alliance of the Romans, and, above all, by his own courage. Invincible in arms, during a thirty years war, he was at length assassinated by the emissaries of Sapor king of Persia. The patriotic satraps of Armenia, who asserted the freedom and dignity of the crown, implored the protection of Rome in favour of Tiridates the lawful heir. But the son of Chosroes was an infant, the allies were at a distance, and the Persian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irresistible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was saved by the fidelity of a servant, and Armenia continued above twenty-seven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy of Persia¹³⁴. Elated with this easy conquest, and presuming on the distresses or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the strong garrisons of Carrhæ and Nisibis to surrender, and spread devastation and terror on either side of the Euphrates.

Valerian
marches
into the
East.

The loss of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid success of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep sense of the insult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himself, that the vigilance of his lieutenants would sufficiently provide for the safety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he resolved, notwithstanding his advanced age, to march in person to the defence

of the Euphrates. During his progress through Asia Minor, the naval enterprises of the Goths were suspended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm. He passed the Euphrates, encountered the Persian monarch near the walls of Edessa, was vanquished and taken prisoner by Sapor. The particulars of this great event are darkly and imperfectly represented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may discover a long series of imprudence, of error, and of deserved misfortunes on the side of the Roman emperor. He reposed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his Prætorian præfect¹³⁵. That worthless minister rendered his master formidable only to the oppressed subjects, and contemptible to the enemies of Rome¹³⁶. By his weak or wicked counsels, the Imperial army was betrayed into a situation, where valour and military skill were equally unavailing¹³⁷. The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Persian host was repulsed with great slaughter¹³⁸; and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage of famine and pestilence had ensured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamours demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart,

Is defeated
and
taken pri-
soner by
Sapor king
of Persia.
A. D. 260.

CHAP. and insisted on a personal conference with the
 X. emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of
 intrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an
 enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to
 expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and
 his astonished troops laid down their arms¹¹⁹. In
 such a moment of triumph, the pride and policy
 of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne
 with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure.
 Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained
 with every vice, was chosen to dishonour the
 Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor
 could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations,
 however reluctant, of the captive army¹²⁰.

Sapor
 overruns
 Syria, Ci-
 licia, and
 Cappado-
 cia.

The imperial slave was eager to secure the favour
 of his master, by an act of treason to his native
 country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates,
 and by the way of Chalcis to the metropolis of
 the East. So rapid were the motions of the Persian
 cavalry, that, if we may credit a very judicious
 historian¹²¹, the city of Antioch was surprised
 when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the
 amusements of the theatre. The splendid buildings
 of Antioch, private as well as public, were either
 pillaged or destroyed; and the numerous inhabitants
 were put to the sword, or led away into captivity¹²².
 The tide of devastation was stopped for a moment
 by the resolution of the high priest of Emesa. Arrayed
 in his sacerdotal robes, he appeared at the head of
 a great body of fanatic peasants, armed only with
 slings, and defended his god and his property from
 the sacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroa-

ster¹⁴³. But the ruin of Tarsus, and of many other cities, furnishes a melancholy proof that, except in this singular instance, the conquest of Syria and Cilicia scarcely interrupted the progress of the Persian arms. The advantages of the narrow passes of mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader, whose principal force consisted in his cavalry, would have been engaged in a very unequal combat: and Sapor was permitted to form the siege of Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the second rank, which was supposed to contain four hundred thousand inhabitants. Demosthenes commanded in the place, not so much by the commission of the emperor, as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and, when at last Cæsarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a physician, he cut his way through the Persians, who had been ordered to exert their utmost diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief escaped the power of a foe, who might either have honoured or punished his obstinate valour; but many thousands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general massacre, and Sapor is accused of treating his prisoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty¹⁴⁴. Much should undoubtedly be allowed for national animosity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain, that the same prince, who, in Armenia, had displayed the mild aspect of a legislator, shewed himself to the Romans under the stern features of a conqueror. He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the

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Boldness
and success
of Odena-
thus a-
gainst Sa-
por.

empire, and fought only to leave behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces ¹⁴⁵.

At the time when the East trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a present not unworthy of the greatest kings; a long train of camels laden with the most rare and valuable merchandises. The rich offering was accompanied with an epistle, respectful but not servile, from Odenathus, one of the noblest and most opulent senators of Palmyra. „ Who is this Odenathus (said the haughty victor, „ and he commanded that the presents should be „ cast into the Euphrates), that he thus insolently „ presumes to write to his lord? If he entertains „ a hope of mitigating his punishment, let him „ fall prostrate before the foot of our throne with „ his hands bound behind his back. Should he „ hesitate, swift destruction shall be poured on „ his head, on his whole race, and on his „ country ¹⁴⁶.” The desperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced, called into action all the latent powers of his soul. He met Sapor; but he met him in arms. Infusing his own spirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria ¹⁴⁷, and the tents of the desert ¹⁴⁸, he hovered round the Persian host, harassed their retreat, carried off part of the treasure, and, what was dearer than any treasure, several of the women of the Great King; who was at last obliged to repass the Euphrates with some marks of haste and confusion ¹⁴⁹. By this exploit, Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortunes.

The majesty of Rome, oppressed by a Persian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

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X.

Treatment
of Valeri-
an.

The voice of history, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuse of the rights of conquest. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but invested with the Imperial purple, was exposed to the multitude, a constant spectacle of fallen greatness; and that whenever the Persian monarch mounted on horseback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his allies, who repeatedly advised him to remember the vicissitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illustrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of insult, Sapor still remained inflexible. When Valerian sunk under the weight of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and formed into the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia; a more real monument of triumph, than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity¹⁵⁰. The tale is moral and pathetic, but the truth of it may very fairly be called in question. The letters still extant from the princes of the East to Sapor, are manifest forgeries¹⁵¹; nor is it natural to suppose that a jealous monarch should, even in the person of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majesty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Persia, it is at least certain, that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy, languished away his life in hopeless captivity.

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X.

Character
and admin-
istration
of Gal-
lienus.

The emperor Gallienus, who had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure and avowed indifference. „ I knew that my father was a mortal, ” said he, „ and since he has acted as becomes a „ brave man, I am satisfied. ” Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers, as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic ¹⁵². It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconstant character of Gallienus, which he displayed without constraint, as soon as he became sole possessor of the empire. In every art that he attempted, his lively genius enabled him to succeed; and as his genius was destitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a master of several curious but useless sciences, a ready orator, and elegant poet ¹⁵³, a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and a most contemptible prince. When the great emergencies of the state required his presence and attention, he was engaged in conversation with the philosopher Plotinus ¹⁵⁴, wasting his time in trifling or licentious pleasures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian mysteries, or soliciting a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His profuse magnificence insulted the general poverty; the solemn ridicule of his triumphs impressed a deeper sense of the public disgrace ¹⁵⁵. The repeated intelligence of invasions, defeats, and rebellions, he received with a careless smile; and singling out,

with affected contempt, some particular production of the lost province, he carelessly asked, whether Rome must be ruined, unless it was supplied with linen from Egypt, and Arras cloth from Gaul? There were, however, a few short moments in the life of Gallienus, when, exasperated by some recent injury, he suddenly appeared the intrepid soldier, and the cruel tyrant; till satiated with blood, or fatigued by resistance, he insensibly sunk into the natural mildness and indolence of his character ¹⁵⁶.

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At a time when the reins of government were held with so loose a hand, it is not surprising, that a crowd of usurpers should start up in every province of the empire against the son of Valerian. It was probably some ingenious fancy, of comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers of the Augustan history to select that celebrated number, which has been gradually received into a popular appellation ¹⁵⁷. But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What resemblance can we discover between a council of thirty persons, the united oppressors of a single city, and an uncertain list of independent rivals, who rose and fell in irregular succession through the extent of a vast empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed, unless we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the Imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne; Cyriades, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, and Zenobia in

The thirty
tyrants.

Their real
number
was no
more than
nineteen.

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the east; in Gaul, and the western provinces, Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus¹⁵⁸, Saturninus; in Isauria, Trebellianus; Piso in Thessaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celsus in Africa. To illustrate the obscure monuments of the life and death of each individual, would prove a laborious task, alike barren of instruction and of amusement. We may content ourselves with investigating some general characters, that most strongly mark the condition of the times, and the manners of the men, their pretensions, their motives, their fate, and the destructive consequences of their usurpation¹⁵⁹.

Character
and merit
of the ty-
rants.

It is sufficiently known, that the odious appellation of *Tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to express the illegal seizure of supreme power, without any reference to the abuse of it. Several of the pretenders, who raised the standard of rebellion against the emperor Gallienus, were shining models of virtue, and almost all possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the most important commands of the empire. The generals, who assumed the title of Augustus, were either respected by their troops for their able conduct and severe discipline, or admired for valour and success in war, or beloved for frankness and generosity. The field of victory

was often the scene of their election; and even the armourer Marius, the most contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was distinguished however by intrepid courage, matchless strength, and blunt honesty ¹⁶⁰. His mean and recent trade cast indeed an air of ridicule on his elevation; but his birth could not be more obscure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peasants, and enlisted in the army as private soldiers. In times of confusion, every active genius finds the place assigned him by Nature: in a general state of war, military merit is the road to glory and to greatness. Of the nineteen tyrants, Tetricus only was a senator; Piso alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight successive generations, ran in the veins of Calphurnius Piso ¹⁶¹, who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting, in his house, the images of Crassus and of the great Pompey ¹⁶². His ancestors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could bestow; and of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had survived the tyranny of the Cæsars. The personal qualities of Piso added new lustre to his race. The usurper Valens, by whose order he was killed, confessed, with deep remorse, that even an enemy ought to have respected the sanctity of Piso; and although he died in arms against Gallienus, the senate, with the emperor's generous permission, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of so virtuous a rebel ¹⁶³.

Their ob-
scure birth.

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X.
The causes
of their
rebellion.

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father, whom they esteemed. They disdained to serve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy son. The throne of the Roman world was unsupported by any principle of loyalty; and treason, against such a prince, might easily be considered as patriotifm to the state. Yet if we examine with candour the conduct of these usurpers, it will appear, that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears, than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel fufpicions of Gallienus; they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deserving of the purple, they were marked for fure destruction; and even prudence would counsel them, to secure a short enjoyment of empire, and rather to try the fortune of war, than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the foldiers invested the reluctant victims with the ensigns of fovereign authority, they sometimes mourned in fecret their approaching fate. "You have loft," faid Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you have loft a useful commander, and „ you have made a very wretched emperor ¹⁶⁴."

Their vio-
lent deaths.

The apprehenfions of Saturninus were juftified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who ftarted up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As foon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they infpired their adherents with the fame fears and ambition
which

which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These precarious monarchs received, however, such honours, as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could bestow; but their claim, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the senate, constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended indeed to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honourable distinction, by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans, and the consent of Gallienus, the senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to intrust him with the government of the East, which he already possessed, in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow Zenobia¹⁶⁵.

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher; were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents.

Fatal consequences
of these usurpations.

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The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops, by an immense donative, drawn from the bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum. "It is not enough," says that soft but inhuman prince, "that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms: the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; provided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has dropt an expression, who has entertained a thought against me, against *me*, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes¹⁶⁶. Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor: tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings¹⁶⁷." Whilst the public forces of the state were dissipated in private quarrels, the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every invader. The bravest usurpers were compelled, by the perplexity of their situation, to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchase with oppressive tributes the

neutrality or services of the barbarians, and to introduce hostile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy ¹⁶⁸.

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Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, dismembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge. As far as the barrenness of materials would permit, we have attempted to trace, with order and perspicuity, the general events, of that calamitous period. There still remain some particular facts; I. The disorders of Sicily; II. The tumults of Alexandria; and, III. The rebellion of the Isaurians, which may serve to reflect a strong light on the horrid picture.

Disorders
of Sicily.

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by success and impunity, publicly defy, instead of eluding the justice of their country, we may safely infer, that the excessive weakness of the government is felt and abused by the lowest ranks of the community. The situation of Sicily preserved it from the barbarians; nor could the disarmed province have supported an usurper. The sufferings of that once flourishing and still fertile island, were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times ¹⁶⁹. Devastations, of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal estates were the property of the opulent senators of Rome, who often enclosed within a farm

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the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable, that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply, than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians.

Tumults
of Alex-
andria.

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble design, at once conceived and executed by the son of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, second only to Rome itself, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles ¹⁷⁰; it was peopled by three hundred thousand free inhabitants, besides at least an equal number of slaves ¹⁷¹. The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria to the capital and provinces of the empire. Idleness was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glass, others in weaving of linen, others again in manufacturing the papyrus. Either sex, and every age, was engaged in the pursuits of industry, nor did even the blind or the lame want occupations suited to their condition ¹⁷². But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconstancy of the Greeks, with the superstition and obstinacy of the Egyptians. The most trifling occasion, a transient scarcity of flesh or lentils, the neglect of an accustomed salutation, a mistake of precedency in the public baths, or even a religious dispute ¹⁷³, were at any time sufficient to kindle a sedition among that vast multitude, whose resentments were furious and implacable ¹⁷⁴. After the captivity of Valerian and the insolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the

theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years ¹⁷⁵. All intercourse was cut off between the several quarters of the afflicted city, every street was polluted with blood, every building of strength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults subside, till a considerable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The spacious and magnificent district of Bruchion, with its palaces and musæum, the residence of the kings and philosophers of Egypt, is described above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its present state of dreary solitude ¹⁷⁶.

III. The obscure rebellion of Trebellianus, who assumed the purple in Isauria, a petty province of Asia Minor, was attended with strange and memorable consequences. The pageant of royalty was soon destroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, despairing of mercy, resolved to shake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor, but to the empire, and suddenly returned to the savage manners, from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide-extended Taurus, protected their inaccessible retreat. The tillage of some fertile vallies ¹⁷⁷ supplied them with necessaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Isaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakness, by surrounding the hostile and independent spot, with a strong chain

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X.

Rebellion
of the
Isaurians.

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of fortifications¹⁷⁸, which often proved insufficient to restrain the incursions of these domestic foes. The Isaurians, gradually extending their territory to the sea-coast, subdued the western and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the nest of those daring pirates, against whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmost force, under the conduct of the great Pompey¹⁷⁹.

Famine
and pesti-
lence.

Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated¹⁸⁰. But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must however have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year two hundred and fifty, to the year two hundred and sixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family, of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns, that had escaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated¹⁸¹.

Diminu-
tion of the
human
species.

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register

was kept at Alexandria, of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found, that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy, had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus¹⁸². Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves, that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect, that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species¹⁸³.

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X.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.