

EDWARD CURRIER Esq born the 2<sup>d</sup> May 1727



*Engraved by J. G. Kneller from a drawing by the artist*

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq;

VOLUME THE FIRST.

A NEW EDITION.

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L O N D O N:

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# P R E F A C E.

**I**T is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety, or the importance of the subject, which I have undertaken to treat ; since the merit of the choice would serve to render the weakness of the execution still more apparent, and still less excusable. But as I have presumed to lay before the Public a *first* volume only <sup>1</sup> of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, it will perhaps be expected that I should explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

The memorable series of revolutions, which, in the course of about thirteen centuries, gradually undermined, and at length destroyed, the solid fabric of human greatness, may, with some propriety, be divided into the three following periods.

<sup>1</sup> The first volume of the quarto, is now contained in the two first volumes of this octavo, edition.

I. The first of these periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full strength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and will extend to the subversion of the Western Empire, by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude ancestors of the most polished nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which subjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the sixth century.

II. The second period of the Decline and Fall of Rome, may be supposed to commence with the reign of Justinian, who by his laws, as well as by his victories, restored a transient splendour to the Eastern Empire. It will comprehend the invasion of Italy by the Lombards; the conquest of the Asiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Roman people against the feeble princes of Constantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year eight hundred, established the second, or German Empire of the west.

III. The last and longest of these periods includes about six centuries and a half; from  
the

the revival of the Western Empire, till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to assume the titles of Cæsar and Augustus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a single city; in which the language as well as manners of the ancient Romans, had been long since forgotten. The writer who should undertake to relate the events of this period, would find himself obliged to enter into the general history of the Crusades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek Empire; and he would scarcely be able to restrain his curiosity from making some inquiry into the state of the city of Rome, during the darkness and confusion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too hastily, to commit to the press, a work, which, in every sense of the word, deserves the epithet of imperfect, I consider myself as contracting an engagement to finish, most probably in a second volume<sup>2</sup>, the first of these memorable periods; and to deliver to the Public the complete history of the Decline and Fall of

<sup>2</sup> The Author, as it frequently happens, took an inadequate measure of his growing work. The remainder of the first period has filled *two* volumes in quarto, the *four* last volumes of this octavo edition.

Rome, from the age of the Antonines, to the subversion of the Western Empire. With regard to the subsequent periods, though I may entertain some hopes, I dare not presume to give any assurances. The execution of the extensive plan which I have described, would connect the ancient and modern history of the World ; but it would require many years of health, of leisure, and of perseverance.

BENTINCK-STREET,  
February 1, 1776.

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*P. S.* The entire History, which is now published, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, abundantly discharges my engagements with the Public. Perhaps their favourable opinion may encourage me to prosecute a work, which, however laborious it may seem, is the most agreeable occupation of my leisure hours.

BENTINCK-STREET,  
March 1, 1781.

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An Author easily persuades himself that the public opinion is still favourable to his labours;  
and

and I have now embraced the serious resolution of proceeding to the last period of my original design, and of the Roman Empire, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-three. The most patient Reader, who computes that three ponderous volumes<sup>3</sup> have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may, perhaps, be alarmed at the long prospect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the same minuteness on the whole series of the Byzantine history. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Justinian, and the conquests of the Mahometans, will deserve and detain our attention, and the last age of Constantinople (the Crusades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of Modern Europe. From the seventh to the eleventh century, the obscure interval will be supplied by a concise narrative of such facts, as may still appear either interesting or important.

BENTINCK-STREET,

March 1, 1782.

<sup>3</sup> The six volumes of this octavo edition.

The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is now delivered to the Public in a more convenient form. Some alterations and improvements had presented themselves to my mind, but I was unwilling to injure or offend the purchasers of the preceding editions. The accuracy of the Corrector of the Press has been already tried and approved; and, perhaps, I may stand excused, if, amidst the avocations of a busy winter, I have preferred the pleasures of composition and study, to the minute diligence of revising a former publication.

BENTINCK-STREET,  
April 20, 1783.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

**D**ILIGENCE and accuracy are the only merits which an historical writer may ascribe to himself; if any merit indeed can be assumed from the performance of an indispensable duty. I may therefore be allowed to say that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illustrate the subject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete the extensive design which has been sketched out in the Preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors consulted during the progress of the whole work; and however such an attempt might incur the censure of ostentation, I am persuaded, that it would be susceptible of entertainment as well as information.

At present I shall content myself with a single observation. The Biographers, who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, composed, or rather compiled, the lives of the Emperors, from Hadrian to the sons of Carus, are usually mentioned under the names of *Ælius Spartianus*, *Julius Capitolinus*, *Ælius Lampridius*, *Vulcatius Gallicanus*, *Trebellius Pollio*, and *Flavius Vopiscus*. But there is so much perplexity in the titles

of the MSS.; and so many disputes have arisen among the critics (see Fabricius, Biblioth. Latin. l. iii. c. 6.) concerning their number, their names, and their respective property, that for the most part I have quoted them without distinction, under the general and well-known title of the *Augustan History*.

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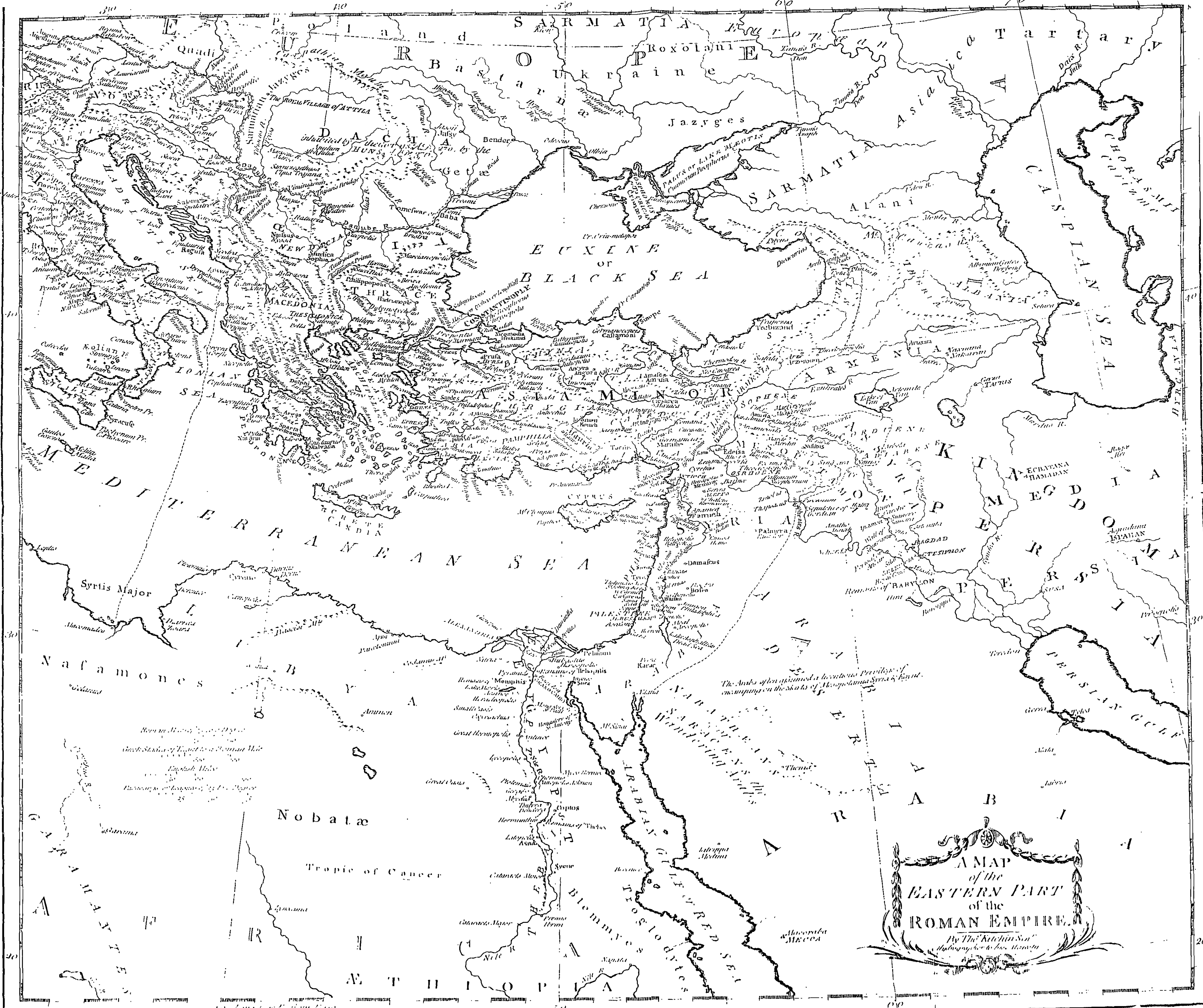
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A MAP  
of the  
EASTERN PART  
of the  
ROMAN EMPIRE.  
By The 'Kitchin Son'  
Antiquary to the Emperor

## C H A P. VI.

*The Death of Severus.—Tyranny of Caracalla.—  
Usurpation of Macrinus.—Follies of Elagabalus.  
—Virtues of Alexander Severus.—Licentiousness  
of the Army.—General State of the Roman Fi-  
nances.*

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V.

Greatness  
and dis-  
content of  
Severus.

THE ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercise of its own powers; but the possession of a throne could never yet afford a lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble station, elevated him to the first place among mankind. “He had been all things,” as he said himself, “and all was of little value.” Distracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preserving an empire, oppressed with age and infirmities, careless of fame<sup>2</sup>, and satiated with power, all his prospects of life were closed. The desire of perpetuating the greatness of his family, was the only remaining wish of his ambition and paternal tenderness.

His wife  
the em-  
press Ju-  
lia.

Like most of the Africans, Severus was passionately addicted to the vain studies of magic and divination, deeply versed in the interpreta-

<sup>1</sup> Hist. August. p. 71. “Omnia fui et nihil expedit.”

<sup>2</sup> Dion Cassius, l. lxxvi. p. 1284.

tion of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the science of judicial astrology; which, in almost every age, except the present, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He had lost his first wife, whilst he was governor of the Lionnese Gaul<sup>3</sup>. In the choice of a second, he sought only to connect himself with some favourite of fortune; and as soon as he had discovered that a young lady of Emesa in Syria had a *royal nativity*, he solicited, and obtained her hand<sup>4</sup>. Julia Domna (for that was her name) deserved all that the stars could promise her. She possessed, even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty<sup>5</sup>, and united to a lively imagination, a firmness of mind, and strength of judgment, seldom bestowed on her sex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impression on the dark and jealous temper of her husband; but in her son's reign, she administered the principal affairs of the empire, with a prudence that supported his authority; and with a moderation that sometimes corrected his wild extravagancies<sup>6</sup>. Julia applied herself to letters and philosophy, with some success, and with the most splendid

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<sup>3</sup> About the year 186, M. de Tillemont is miserably embarrassed with a passage of Dion, in which the empress Faustina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia (l. lxxiv. p. 1243.). The learned compiler forgot, that Dion is relating, not a real fact, but a dream of Severus; and dreams are circumscribed to no limits of time or space. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were *consummated* in the temple of Venus at Rome? Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 389, Note 6.

<sup>4</sup> Hist. August. p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Hist. August. p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii. p. 1304. 1314.

repu-

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reputation. She was the patroness of every art, and the friend of every man of genius<sup>7</sup>. The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtue; but, if we may credit the scandal of ancient history, chastity was very far from being the most conspicuous virtue of the empress Julia<sup>8</sup>.

Their two  
sons, Ca-  
racalla and  
Geta.

Two sons, Caracalla<sup>9</sup> and Geta, were the fruit of this marriage, and the destined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father, and of the Roman world, were soon disappointed by these vain youths, who displayed the indolent security of hereditary princes; and a presumption that fortune would supply the place of merit, and application. Without any emulation of virtue or talents, they discovered, almost from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other. Their aversion, confirmed by years, and fomented by the arts of their interested favourites, broke out in childish, and, gradually in more serious, competitions; and, at length, divided the theatre, the circus, and the court, into two factions; actuated by the hopes and fears of their respective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavoured, by every expedient of advice and

Their mu-  
tual aver-  
sion to  
each other.

7 See a Dissertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius, de Fœminis Philosophis.

8 Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1285. Aurelius Victor.

9 Bassianus was his first name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign he assumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient historians. After his death, the public indignation loaded him with the nick-names of Tarantus and Caracalla. The first was borrowed from a celebrated Gladiator, the second from a long Gallic gown which he distributed to the people of Rome.

authority, to allay this growing animosity. The unhappy discord of his sons clouded all his prospects, and threatened to overturn a throne raised with so much labour, cemented with so much blood, and guarded with every defence of arms and treasure. With an impartial hand he maintained between them an exact balance of favour, conferred on both the rank of Augustus, with the revered name of Antoninus; and for the first time the Roman world beheld three emperors<sup>10</sup>. Yet even this equal conduct served only to inflame the contest, whilst the fierce Caracalla asserted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the soldiers. In the anguish of a disappointed father, Severus foretold, that the weaker of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger; who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices<sup>11</sup>.

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Three em-  
perors.

In these circumstances the intelligence of a war in Britain and of an invasion of the province by the barbarians of the North, was received with pleasure by Severus. Though the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been sufficient to repel the distant enemy, he resolved to embrace the honourable pretext of withdrawing his sons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds and irritated their passions; and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithstanding his advanced age (for

The Caledonian  
war.  
A. D. 208.

<sup>10</sup> The elevation of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillemont to the year 198: the association of Geta to the year 208.

<sup>11</sup> Herodian, l. iii. p. 130. The lives of Caracalla and Geta in the Augustan History.

he was above three-score), and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a litter, he transported himself in person into that remote island, attended by his two sons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately passed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country, with a design of completing the long attempted conquest of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the island, without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuscades of the Caledonians, who hung unseen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldness of the climate, and the severity of a winter march across the hills and morasses of Scotland, are reported to have cost the Romans above fifty thousand men. The Caledonians at length yielded to the powerful and obstinate attack, sued for peace, and surrendered a part of their arms, and a large tract of territory. But their apparent submission lasted no longer than the present terror. As soon as the Roman legions had retired, they resumed their hostile independence. Their restless spirit provoked Severus to send a new army into Caledonia, with the most bloody orders, not to subdue but to extirpate the natives. They were saved by the death of their haughty enemy<sup>12</sup>.

Fingal and  
his heroes.

This Caledonian war, neither marked by decisive events, nor attended with any important consequences, would ill deserve our attention; but it is supposed, not without a considerable

<sup>12</sup> Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1230. &c. Herodian, l. iii. p. 132, &c.

degree of probability, that the invasion of Severus is connected with the most shining period of the British history or fable. Fingal, whose fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is said to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a signal victory on the banks of the Carun, in which the son of *the King of the World*, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride<sup>13</sup>. Something of a doubtful mist still hangs over these Highland traditions; nor can it be entirely dispelled by the most ingenious researches of modern criticism<sup>14</sup>: but if we could, with safety, indulge the pleasing supposition, that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and manners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Cara-

Contrast of  
the Cale-  
donians  
and the  
Romans.

<sup>13</sup> Ossian's Poems, vol. i. p. 175.

<sup>14</sup> That the Caricul of Ossian is the Caracalla of the Roman History, is, perhaps, the only point of British antiquity in which Mr. Macpherson and Mr. Whitaker are of the same opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war, the son of Severus was known only by the appellation of Antoninus; and it may seem strange, that the Highland bard should describe him by a nick-name, invented four years afterwards, scarcely used by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and seldom employed by the most ancient historians. See Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1317. Hist. August. p. 89. Aurel. Victor. Euseb. in Chron. ad ann. 214.



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calla, with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the Imperial standard, with the freeborn warriors who started to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery.

Ambition  
of Caracalla.

The declining health and last illness of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black passions of Caracalla's soul. Impatient of any delay or division of empire, he attempted, more than once, to shorten the small remainder of his father's days, and endeavoured, but without success, to excite a mutiny among the troops<sup>15</sup>. The old emperor had often censured the misguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a single act of justice, might have saved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthless son. Placed in the same situation, he experienced how easily the rigour of a judge dissolves away in the tenderness of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not punish; and this last and only instance of mercy, was more fatal to the empire than a long series of cruelty<sup>16</sup>. The disorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wished impatiently for death, and hastened the instant of it by his impatience. He expired at York in

Death of  
Severus,  
and accession  
of his  
two sons.

A. D.  
4th Febru-  
ary.

<sup>15</sup> Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1282. Hist. August. p. 71. Aurel. Victor.

<sup>16</sup> Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1283. Hist. August. p. 89.

the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and successful reign. In his last moments he recommended concord to his sons, and his sons to the army. The salutary advice never reached the heart, or even the understanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance, and of the authority of their deceased master, resisted the sollicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes soon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honours, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful sovereigns, by the senate, the people, and the provinces. Some pre-eminence of rank seems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both administered the empire with equal and independent power<sup>17</sup>.

Such a divided form of government would have proved a source of discord between the most affectionate brothers. It was impossible that it could long subsist between two implacable enemies, who neither desired nor could trust a reconciliation. It was visible that one only could reign, and that the other must fall; and each of them judging of his rival's designs by his own, guarded his life with the most jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poison or the sword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy,

Jealousy  
and hatred  
of the two  
emperors.

<sup>17</sup> Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Herodian, l. iii. p. 135.

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during which they never eat at the same table, or slept in the same house, displayed to the provinces the odious spectacle of fraternal discord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vast extent of the Imperial palace<sup>18</sup>. No communication was allowed between their apartments; the doors and passages were diligently fortified, and guards posted and relieved with the same strictness as in a besieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the presence of their afflicted mother; and each surrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on these occasions of ceremony, the dissimulation of courts could ill disguise the rancour of their hearts<sup>19</sup>.

Fruitless  
negotia-  
tion for di-  
viding the  
empire be-  
tween  
them.

This latent civil war already distracted the whole government, when a scheme was suggested that seemed of mutual benefit to the hostile bro-

<sup>18</sup> Mr. Hume is justly surpris'd at a passage in Herodian (l. iv. p. 139), who, on this occasion, represents the Imperial palace, as equal in extent to the rest of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine Mount on which it was built, occupied, at most, a circumference of eleven or twelve thousand feet (see the Notitia and Victor, in Nardini's *Roma Antica*). But we should recollect that the opulent senators had almost surrounded the city with their extensive gardens and suburb palaces, the greatest part of which had been gradually confiscated by the emperors. If Geta resided in the gardens that bore his name in the Janiculum; and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Mæcenas on the Esqueline, the rival brothers were separated from each other by the distance of several miles; and yet the intermediate space was filled by the imperial gardens of Sallust, of Lucullus, of Agrippa, of Domitian, of Caius, &c. all skirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the streets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deserves, a particular dissertation, illustrated by a map of ancient Rome.

<sup>19</sup> Herodian, l. iv. p. 139.

thers. It was proposed, that since it was impossible to reconcile their minds, they should separate their interest, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with some accuracy. It was agreed, that Caracalla, as the elder brother, should remain in possession of Europe and the western Africa; and that he should relinquish the sovereignty of Asia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his residence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itself in wealth and greatness; that numerous armies should be constantly encamped on either side of the Thracian Bosphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the senators of European extraction should acknowledge the sovereign of Rome, whilst the natives of Asia followed the emperor of the East. The tears of the empress Julia interrupted the negociation, the first idea of which had filled every Roman breast with surprise and indignation. The mighty mass of conquest was so intimately united by the hand of time and policy, that it required the most forcible violence to rend it asunder. The Romans had reason to dread, that the disjointed members would soon be reduced by a civil war under the dominion of one master; but if the separation was permanent, the division of the provinces must terminate in the dissolution of an empire whose unity had hitherto remained inviolate<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Herodian, l. iv. p. 144.

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Murder of  
Geta.  
A.D. 212.  
27th Fe-  
bruary.

Had the treaty been carried into execution, the sovereign of Europe might soon have been the conqueror of Asia; but Caracalla obtained an easier though a more guilty victory. He artfully listened to his mother's entreaties, and consented to meet his brother in her apartment, on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midst of their conversation, some centurions, who had contrived to conceal themselves, rushed with drawn swords upon the unfortunate Geta. His distracted mother strove to protect him in her arms; but, in the unavailing struggle, she was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger son, while she saw the elder animating and assisting<sup>21</sup> the fury of the assassins. As soon as the deed was perpetrated, Caracalla, with hasty steps, and horror in his countenance, ran towards the Prætorian camp as his only refuge, and threw himself on the ground before the statues of the tutelary deities<sup>22</sup>. The soldiers attempted to raise and comfort him. In broken and disordered words he informed them of his imminent danger and fortunate escape; insinuating that he had prevented the designs of his enemy, and declared his resolution to live and die with his faith-

<sup>21</sup> Caracalla consecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the sword, with which, as he boasted, he had slain his brother Geta. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.

<sup>22</sup> Herodian, l. iv. p. 147. In every Roman camp there was a small chapel near the head quarters, in which the statues of the tutelary deities were preserved and adored; and we may remark, that the eagles, and other military ensigns, were in the first rank of these deities: an excellent institution, which confirmed discipline by the sanction of religion. See Lipsius de Militia Romana, iv. 5. v. 2.

ful troops. Geta had been the favourite of the soldiers; but complaint was useless, revenge was dangerous, and they still revered the son of Severus. Their discontent died away in idle murmurs, and Caracalla soon convinced them of the justice of his cause, by distributing in one lavish donative the accumulated treasures of his father's reign <sup>23</sup>. The real *sentiments* of the soldiers alone were of importance to his power or safety. Their declaration in his favour, commanded the dutiful *professions* of the senate. The obsequious assembly was always prepared to ratify the decision of fortune; but as Caracalla wished to assuage the first emotions of public indignation, the name of Geta was mentioned with decency, and he received the funeral honours of a Roman emperor <sup>24</sup>. Posterity, in pity to his misfortune, has cast a veil over his vices. We consider that young prince as the innocent victim of his brother's ambition, without recollecting that he himself wanted power, rather than inclination, to consummate the same attempts of revenge and murder.

The crime went not unpunished. Neither business, nor pleasure, nor flattery, could defend Caracalla from the stings of a guilty conscience; and he confessed, in the anguish of a tortured mind, that his disordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother rising

Remorse  
and cruelty  
of Caracalla.

<sup>23</sup> Herodian, l. iv. p. 148. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1289.

<sup>24</sup> Geta was placed among the gods. *Sit divus, dum non sit vivus*, said his brother. Hist. August. p. 91. Some marks of Geta's consecration are still found upon medals.

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into life, to threaten and upbraid him<sup>25</sup>. The consciousness of his crime should have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal necessity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recal the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the senate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of several noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger son. The jealous emperor threatened them with instant death; the sentence was executed against Fadilla, the last remaining daughter of the emperor Marcus; and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to silence her lamentations, to suppress her sighs, and to receive the assassin with smiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death. His guards and freedmen, the ministers of his serious business, and the companions of his looser hours, those who by his interest had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long-connected chain of their dependents, were included in the proscription; which endeavoured to reach every one who had maintained the smallest correspondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name<sup>26</sup>.

Helvius

<sup>25</sup> Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.

<sup>26</sup> Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1290. Herodian, l. iv. p. 150. Dion (p. 1290.) says, that the comic poets no longer durst employ the name

Helvius Pertinax, son to the prince of that name, lost his life by an unseasonable witticism<sup>27</sup>. It was a sufficient crime of Thrasea Priscus, to be descended from a family in which the love of liberty seemed an hereditary quality<sup>28</sup>. The particular causes of calumny and suspicion were at length exhausted; and when a senator was accused of being a secret enemy to the government, the emperor was satisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the most bloody inferences.

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Death of  
Papinian.

The execution of so many innocent citizens was bewailed by the secret tears of their friends and families. The death of Papinian, the Prætorian præfect, was lamented as a public calamity. During the last seven years of Severus, he had exercised the most important offices of the state, and, by his salutary influence, guided the emperor's steps in the paths of justice and moderation. In full assurance of his virtues and abilities, Severus, on his death-bed, had conjured him to watch over the prosperity and union

name of Geta in their plays, and that the estates of those who mentioned it in their testaments, were confiscated.

<sup>27</sup> Caracalla had assumed the names of several conquered nations; Pertinax observed, that the name of *Geticus* (he had obtained some advantage of the Goths or Getae) would be a proper addition to Parthicus, Alemannicus, &c. Hist. August. p. 89.

<sup>28</sup> Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1291. He was probably descended from Helvidius Priscus, and Thrasea Lætus, those patriots whose firm, but useless and unseasonable virtue, has been immortalized by Tacitus.

of



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of the Imperial family<sup>29</sup>. The honest labours of Papinian served only to inflame the hatred which Caracalla had already conceived against his father's minister. After the murder of Geta, the Præfect was commanded to exert the powers of his skill and eloquence in a studied apology for that atrocious deed. The philosophic Seneca had condescended to compose a similar epistle to the senate, in the name of the son and assassin of Agrippina<sup>30</sup>; "That it was easier to commit than to justify a parricide," was the glorious reply of Papinian<sup>31</sup>, who did not hesitate between the loss of life and that of honour. Such intrepid virtue, which had escaped pure and unfulled from the intrigues of courts, the habits of business, and the arts of his profession, reflects more lustre on the memory of Papinian, than all his great employments, his numerous writings, and the superior reputation as a lawyer, which he has preserved through every age of the Roman jurisprudence<sup>32</sup>.

His tyranny extended over the whole empire.

It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worst of times their consolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus, visited their extensive dominions in person, and their progress was marked by acts of wisdom and beneficence.

<sup>29</sup> It is said that Papinian was himself a relation of the empress Julia.

<sup>30</sup> Tacit. Annal. xiv. ii.

<sup>31</sup> Hist. August. p. 93.

<sup>32</sup> With regard to Papinian, see Heineccius's *Historia Juris Romani*, l. 330, &c.

The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian, who resided almost constantly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the senatorial and equestrian orders<sup>33</sup>. But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and he never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the empire, particularly those of the East, and every province was by turns the scene of his rapine and cruelty. The senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immense expence, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect, in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either disdained to visit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes<sup>34</sup>. In the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands, at Alexandria in Egypt, for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers; since, as he coolly inform-

A.D. 213.

<sup>33</sup> Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neighbourhood of Rome. Nero made a short journey into Greece. "Et laudatorem Principum usus ex æquo quamvis procul agentibus. Sævi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hist. iv. 75.

<sup>34</sup> Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1294.

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Relaxation  
of disci-  
pline.

ed the senate, *all* the Alexandrians, those who had perished and those who had escaped, were alike guilty <sup>35</sup>.

The wise instructions of Severus never made any lasting impression on the mind of his son, who, although not destitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity <sup>36</sup>. One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abused by Caracalla, “To secure the affections of the army, and to esteem the rest of his subjects as of little moment.” But the liberality of the father had been restrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was tempered by firmness and authority. The careless profusion of the son was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigour of the soldiers, instead of being confirmed by the severe discipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The excessive increase of their pay and donatives <sup>37</sup> exhausted

<sup>35</sup> Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307. Herodian, l. iv. p. 158. The former represents it as a cruel massacre, the latter as a perfidious one. It seems probable, that the Alexandrians had irritated the tyrant by their raileries, and perhaps by their tumults.

<sup>36</sup> Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1296.

<sup>37</sup> Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Mr. Wotton (Hist. of Rome, p. 330.) suspects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himself, and attributed to his father.

<sup>38</sup> Dion (l. lxxviii. p. 1345.) informs us, that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to seventy millions of *arachnæ* (about two millions three hundred and fifty thousand pounds). There is another passage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely curious; were it not obscure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The best sense seems to be, that the Praetorian guards

ed the state to enrich the military order, whose modesty in peace, and service in war, is best secured by an honourable poverty. The demeanor of Caracalla was haughty and full of pride; but with the troops he forgot even the proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their insolent familiarity, and, neglecting the essential duties of a general, affected to imitate the dress and manners of a common soldier.

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It was impossible that such a character, and such a conduct as that of Caracalla, could inspire either love or esteem; but as long as his vices were beneficial to the armies, he was secure from the danger of rebellion. A secret conspiracy, provoked by his own jealousy, was fatal to the tyrant. The Prætorian præfecture was divided between two ministers. The military department was intrusted to Adventus, an experienced rather than an able soldier; and the civil affairs were transacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in business, had raised himself, with a fair character, to that high office. But his favour varied with the caprice of the emperor, and his life might depend on the slightest suspicion, or the most casual circumstance. Malice or fanaticism had suggested to an African, deeply

Murder of  
Caracalla.  
A.D. 217.  
8th March.

guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmæ (forty pounds) a year (Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.). Under the reign of Augustus, they were paid at the rate of two drachmæ, or denarii, per day, 720 a year (Tacit. Annal. i. 17.). Domitian, who increased the soldiers pay one fourth, must have raised the Prætorians to 960 drachmæ (Gronovius de Pecuniâ Veteri, l. iii. c. 2.). These successive augmentations ruined the empire, for, with the soldiers pay, their numbers too were increased. We have seen the Prætorians alone increased from 10,000 to 50,000 men.

skilled

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skilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his son were destined to reign over the empire. The report was soon diffused through the province; and when the man was sent in chains to Rome, he still asserted, in the presence of the Præfect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magistrate, who had received the most pressing instructions to inform himself of the *successors* of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the Imperial court, which at that time resided in Syria. But, notwithstanding the diligence of the public messengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprise him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot race, he delivered them unopened to the Prætorian Præfect, directing him to dispatch the ordinary affairs, and to report the more important business that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate, and resolved to prevent it. He inflamed the discontents of some inferior officers, and employed the hand of Martialis, a desperate soldier, who had been refused the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edessa to the celebrated temple of the Moon at Carrhæ. He was attended by a body of cavalry; but having stopped on the road for some necessary occasion, his guards preserved a respectful distance, and Martialis approaching his person under a pretence of duty, stabbed him with a dagger. The bold  
assassin

assassin was instantly killed by a Scythian archer of the Imperial guard. Such was the end of a monster whose life disgraced human nature, and whose reign accused the patience of the Romans<sup>39</sup>. The grateful soldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the senate to prostitute their own dignity and that of religion by granting him a place among the gods. Whilst he was upon earth, Alexander the Great was the only hero whom this god deemed worthy his admiration. He assumed the name and ensigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards, persecuted the disciples of Aristotle, and displayed with a puerile enthusiasm the only sentiment by which he discovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can easily conceive, that after the battle of Narva, and the conquest of Poland, Charles the Twelfth (though he still wanted the more elegant accomplishments of the son of Philip) might boast of having rivalled his valour and magnanimity: but in no one action of his life did Caracalla express the faintest resemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and of his father's friends<sup>40</sup>.

Imitation  
of Alex-  
ander.

After the extinction of the house of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a

Election  
and char-  
acter of  
Macrinus.

<sup>39</sup> Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1312. Herodian, l. iv. p. 168.

<sup>40</sup> The fondness of Caracalla for the name and ensigns of Alexander, is still preserved on the medals of that emperor. See Spanheim, de Ulu Numismatum, Dissertat. xii. Herodian (l. iv. p. 154.) had seen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn, with one side of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla.

master.

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master. The choice of the army (for the authority of a distant and feeble senate was little regarded) hung in an anxious suspense; as no candidate presented himself whose distinguished birth and merit could engage their attachment and unite their suffrages. The decisive weight of the Prætorian guards elevated the hopes of their præfects, and these powerful ministers began to assert their *legal* claim to fill the vacancy of the Imperial throne. Adventus, however, the senior præfect, conscious of his age and infirmities, of his small reputation, and his smaller abilities, resigned the dangerous honour to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whose well-dissembled grief removed all suspicion of his being accessory to his master's death<sup>41</sup>. The troops neither loved nor esteemed his character. They cast their eyes around in search of a competitor, and at last yielded with reluctance to his promises of unbounded liberality and indulgence. A short time after his accession, he conferred on his son Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the Imperial title and the popular name of Antoninus. The beautiful figure of the youth, assisted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furnished a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favour of the army, and secure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

A.D. 217.  
March 11.

Discontent  
of the se-  
nate.

The authority of the new sovereign had been ratified by the cheerful submission of the senate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpect-

<sup>41</sup> Herodian, l. iv. p. 167. Hist. August. p. 94.

ed deliverance from a hated tyrant, and it seemed of little consequence to examine into the virtues of the successor of Caracalla. But as soon as the first transports of joy and surprize had subsided, they began to scrutinize the merits of Macrinus with a critical severity, and to arraign the hasty choice of the army. It had hitherto been considered as a fundamental maxim of the constitution, that the emperor must be always chosen in the senate, and the sovereign power, no longer exercised by the whole body, was always delegated to one of its members. But Macrinus was not a senator <sup>42</sup>. The sudden elevation of the Prætorian præfects betrayed the meanness of their origin; and the equestrian order was still in possession of that great office, which commanded with arbitrary sway the lives and fortunes of the senate. A murmur of indignation was heard, that a man whose obscure <sup>43</sup> extraction had never been illustrated by any signal service, should dare to invest himself with the purple, instead of bestowing it on some distinguished senator, equal

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<sup>42</sup> Dion, l. lxxxviii. p. 1350. Elagabalus reproached his predecessor, with daring to seat himself on the throne; though, as Prætorian præfect, he could not have been admitted into the senate after the voice of the cryer had cleared the house. The personal favour of Plautianus and Sejanus had broke through the established rule. They rose indeed from the equestrian order; but they preserved the præfecture with the rank of senator, and even with the consulship.

<sup>43</sup> He was a native of Caesarea, in Numidia, and began his fortune by serving in the household of Plautian, from whose ruin he narrowly escaped. His enemies asserted, that he was born a slave, and had exercised, among other infamous professions, that of a gladiator. The fashion of aspersing the birth and condition of an adversary, seems to have lasted from the time of the Greek orators, to the learned grammarians of the last age.



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in birth and dignity to the splendour of the Imperial station. As soon as the character of Macrinus was surveyed by the sharp eye of discontent, some vices, and many defects, were easily discovered. The choice of his ministers was in many instances justly censured, and the dissatisfied people with their usual candour, accused at once his indolent tameness and his excessive severity <sup>44</sup>.

and the army.

His rash ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to stand with firmness, and impossible to fall without instant destruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil business, he trembled in the presence of the fierce and undisciplined multitude, over whom he had assumed the command; his military talents were despised, and his personal courage suspected; a whisper that circulated in the camp, disclosed the fatal secret of the conspiracy against the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baseness of hypocrisy, and heightened contempt by detestation. To alienate the soldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting: and such was the peculiar hardship of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exercise that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and disorder; and if that worthless

<sup>44</sup> Both Dion and Herodian speak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus, with candour and impartiality; but the author of his life, in the Augustan History, seems to have implicitly copied some of the venal wiles, employed by Elagabalus, to blacken the memory of his predecessor.

tyrant

tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the sure consequences of his own conduct, he would perhaps have enjoyed the dark prospect of the distress and calamities which he bequeathed to his successors.

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In the management of this necessary reformation, Macrinus proceeded with a cautious prudence, which would have restored health and vigour to the Roman army, in an easy and almost imperceptible manner. To the soldiers already engaged in the service, he was constrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate though liberal establishment of Severus, and gradually formed to modesty and obedience<sup>45</sup>. One fatal error destroyed the salutary effects of this judicious plan. The numerous army, assembled in the East by the late emperor, instead of being immediately dispersed by Macrinus through the several provinces, was suffered to remain united in Syria, during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleness of their quarters, the troops viewed their strength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, instead of being flattered by the advantageous distinction, were alarmed by the first steps of the emperor, which they

Macrinus  
attempts a  
reforma-  
tion of the  
army.

<sup>45</sup> Dion, l. lxxxiii. p. 1335. The sense of the author is as clear as the intention of the emperor; but M. Wotton has mistaken both, by understanding the distinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. History of Rome, p. 347.

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considered as the presage of his future intentions. The recruits, with sullen reluctance, entered on a service, whose labours were increased while its rewards were diminished by a covetous and unwarlike sovereign. The murmurs of the army swelled with impunity into seditious clamours; and the partial mutinies betrayed a spirit of discontent and disaffection, that waited only for the slightest occasion to break out on every side into a general rebellion. To minds thus disposed, the occasion soon presented itself.

Death of the empress Julia. Education, pretensions, and revolt of Elagabalus, called at first Bassianus and Antoninus.

The empress Julia had experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune. From an humble station she had been raised to greatness, only to taste the superior bitterness of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her sons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good sense must have long taught her to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empress. Notwithstanding the respectful civility expressed by the usurper towards the widow of Severus, she descended with a painful struggle into the condition of a subject, and soon withdrew herself by a voluntary death from the anxious and humiliating dependence<sup>46</sup>. Julia Mæsa, her sister, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emesa with an immense fortune, the fruit of twenty years favour, accompanied by her two daughters, Soæmias and Mamæa, each of

<sup>46</sup> Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1330. The abridgment of Xiphilin, though less particular, is in this place clearer than the original.

whom

whom was a widow, and each had an only son. Bassianus, for that was the name of the son of Soæmias, was consecrated to the honourable ministry of high priest of the Sun; and this holy vocation, embraced either from prudence or superstition, contributed to raise the Syrian youth to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of troops was stationed at Emesa; and, as the severe discipline of Macrinus had constrained them to pass the winter encamped, they were eager to revenge the cruelty of such unaccustomed hardships. The soldiers, who resorted in crowds to the temple of the Sun, beheld with veneration and delight the elegant dress and figure of a young Pontiff: they recognised, or they thought that they recognised, the features of Caracalla, whose memory they now adored. The artful Mæsa saw and cherished their rising partiality, and readily sacrificing her daughter's reputation to the fortune of her grandson, she insinuated that Bassianus was the natural son of their murdered sovereign. The sums distributed by her emissaries with a lavish hand, silenced every objection, and the profusion sufficiently proved the affinity, or at least the resemblance, of Bassianus with the great original. The young Antoninus (for he had assumed and polluted that respectable name) was declared emperor by the troops of Emesa, asserted his hereditary right, and called aloud on the armies to follow the standard of a young and liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge

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A. D. 218,  
May 16.

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Defeat and  
death of  
MACRINUS.

his father's death and the oppression of the military order <sup>47</sup>.

Whilst a conspiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigour, Macrinus, who, by a decisive motion, might have crushed his infant enemy, floated between the opposite extremes of terror and security, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A spirit of rebellion diffused itself through all the camps and garrisons of Syria, successive detachments murdered their officers <sup>48</sup>, and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy restitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakness of Macrinus. At length he marched out of Antioch, to meet the increasing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops seemed to take the field with faintness and reluctance; but, in the heat of the battle <sup>49</sup>, the Prætorian guards, almost by an involuntary impulse; asserted the

A. D. 218,  
7th June.

<sup>47</sup> According to Lampridius (*Hist. August.* p. 135.), Alexander Severus lived twenty nine years, three months, and seven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205, and was consequently about this time thirteen years old, as his elder cousin might be about seventeen. This computation suits much better the history of the young princes, than that of Herodian (*l. v. p. 181.*), who represents them as three years younger; whilst, by an opposite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conspiracy, see Dion, *l. lxxviii. p. 1339.* Herodian, *l. v. p. 184.*

<sup>48</sup> By a most dangerous proclamation of the pretended Antoninus, every soldier who brought in his officer's head, became entitled to his private estate, as well as to his military commission.

<sup>49</sup> Dion, *l. lxxviii. p. 1345.* Herodian, *l. v. p. 186.* The battle was fought near the village of Immæ, about two and twenty miles from Antioch.

superiority

superiority of their valour and discipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who, according to their eastern custom, had attended the army, threw themselves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compassion of the soldiers, endeavoured to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himself, who, in the rest of his life, never acted like a man, in this important crisis of his fate approved himself a hero, mounted his horse, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged sword in hand among the thickest of the enemy; whilst the eunuch Gannys, whose occupations had been confined to female cares and the soft luxury of Asia, displayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle still raged with doubtful violence, and Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cause by a shameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice served only to protract his life a few days, and to stamp deserved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is scarcely necessary to add, that his son Diadumenianus was involved in the same fate. As soon as the stubborn Prætorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had basely deserted them, they surrendered to the conqueror; the contending parties of the Roman army mingling tears of joy and tenderness, united under the banners of the imagined son of Caracalla, and the East acknowledged with pleasure the first emperor of Asiatic extraction.

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Elagabalus writes to the senate.

The letters of Macrinus had condescended to inform the senate of the slight disturbance occasioned by an impostor in Syria, and a decree immediately passed, declaring the rebel and his family public enemies; with a promise of pardon, however, to such of his deluded adherents as should merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapsed from the declaration to the victory of Antoninus (for in so short an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided), the capital and the provinces, more especially those of the East, were distracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and stained with a useless effusion of civil blood, since whosoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria, must reign over the empire. The specious letters in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient senate, were filled with professions of virtue and moderation; the shining examples of Marcus and Augustus, he should ever consider as the great rule of his administration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the striking resemblance of his own age and fortunes with those of Augustus, who in the earliest youth had revenged by a successful war the murder of his father. By adopting the style of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, son of Antoninus and grandson of Severus, he tacitly asserted his hereditary claim to the empire; but, by assuming the tribunician and proconsular powers before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the senate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the constitution

was

was probably dictated either by the ignorance of his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce disdain of his military followers <sup>50</sup>.

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As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the most trifling amusements, he wasted many months in his luxurious progress from Syria to Italy, passed at Nicomedia his first winter after his victory, and deferred till the ensuing summer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of Victory in the senate-house, conveyed to the Romans the just but unworthy resemblance of his person and manners. He was drawn in his sacerdotal robes of silk and gold, after the loose flowing fashion of the Medes and Phœnicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an inestimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white <sup>51</sup>. The grave senators confessed with a sigh, that, after having long experienced the stern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of Oriental despotism.

Picture of  
Elagaba-  
lus.  
A.D. 219.

The Sun was worshipped at Emesa, under the name of Elagabalus <sup>52</sup>, and under the form of a

His super-  
stition.

<sup>50</sup> Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1353.

<sup>51</sup> Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363. Herodian, l. v. p. 189.

<sup>52</sup> This name is derived by the learned from two Syriac words, *Ela* a God, and *Gabal* to form, the forming, or plastic God, a proper, and even happy epithet for the Sun. Wotton's History of Rome, p. 378.

black



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black conical stone, which, as it was universally believed, had fallen from heaven on that sacred place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not without some reason, ascribed his elevation to the throne. The display of superstitious gratitude, was the only serious business of his reign. The triumph of the god of Emesa over all the religions of the earth, was the great object of his zeal and vanity: and the appellation of Elagabalus (for he presumed as pontiff and favourite to adopt that sacred name) was dearer to him than all the titles of Imperial greatness. In a solemn procession through the streets of Rome, the way was strewed with gold dust; the black stone set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk white horses richly caparisoned. The pious emperor held the reins, and, supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine Mount, the sacrifices of the god of Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumstance of cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics, were profusely consumed on his altar. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damsels performed their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music, whilst the gravest personages of the state and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions, with affected zeal and secret indignation<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Herodian, l. v. p. 190.

To this temple, as to the common centre of religious worship, the Imperial fanatic attempted to remove the Ancilia, the Palladium<sup>54</sup>, and all the sacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A crowd of inferior deities attended in various stations the majesty of the god of Emesa; but his court was still imperfect, till a female of distinguished rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas had been first chosen for his consort; but as it was dreaded lest her warlike terrors might affright the soft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the Moon, adored by the Africans under the name of Astarte, was deemed a more suitable companion for the Sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her temple as a marriage portion, was transported with solemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and the day of these mystic nuptials was a general festival in the capital and throughout the empire<sup>55</sup>.

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable respect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of sense by social intercourse, endearing connections, and the soft colouring of taste and the imagination. But Elagabalus (I speak of the emperor of that name),

His profligate and effeminate luxury.

<sup>54</sup> He broke into the sanctuary of Vesta, and carried away a statue, which he supposed to be the Palladium; but the vestals boasted, that, by a pious fraud, they had imposed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. *Hist. August.* p. 103.

<sup>55</sup> *Dion*, l. lxxix. p. 1360. *Herodian*, l. v. p. 193. The subjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal presents to the new-married couple; and whatever they had promised during the life of Elagabalus, was carefully exacted under the administration of *Mæa*.

corrupted by his youth, his country, and his fortune, abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures with ungoverned fury, and soon found disgust and satiety in the midst of his enjoyments. The inflammatory powers of art were summoned to his aid: the confused multitude of women, of wines, and of dishes, and the studied variety of attitudes and sauces, served to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in these sciences, the only ones cultivated and patronised by the monarch<sup>56</sup>, signalized his reign, and transmitted his infamy to succeeding times. A capricious prodigality supplied the want of taste and elegance; and whilst Elagabalus lavished away the treasures of his people in the wildest extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers applauded a spirit and magnificence unknown to the tameness of his predecessors. To confound the order of seasons and climates<sup>57</sup>, to sport with the passions and prejudices of his subjects, and to subvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his most delicious amusements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid succession of wives, among whom was a vestal virgin, ravished by force from her

<sup>56</sup> The invention of a new sauce was liberally rewarded; but if it was not relished, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing else, till he had discovered another more agreeable to the Imperial palate. Hist. August. p. 111.

<sup>57</sup> He never would eat sea-fish except at a great distance from the sea; he then would distribute vast quantities of the rarest sorts, brought at an immense expence, to the peasants of the inland country. Hist. Aug. p. 109.

sacred asylum<sup>58</sup>, were insufficient to satisfy the impotence of his passions. The master of the Roman world affected to copy the dress and manners of the female sex, preferred the distaff to the sceptre, and dishonoured the principal dignities of the empire by distributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly invested with the title and authority of the emperor's, or, as he more properly styled himself, of the empress's husband<sup>59</sup>.

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It may seem probable, the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy, and blackened by prejudice<sup>60</sup>. Yet confining ourselves to the public scenes displayed before the Roman people, and attested by grave and contemporary historians, their inexpressible infamy surpasses that of any other age or country. The licence of an eastern monarch is secluded from the eye of curiosity by the inaccessible walls of his seraglio. The sentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleasure, a regard for decency, and a respect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe; but

Contempt of decency which distinguished the Roman tyrants.

<sup>58</sup> Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1358. Herodian, l. v. p. 192.

<sup>59</sup> Hierocles enjoyed that honour; but he would have been supplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived, by a petition, to enervate the powers of his rival, who being found on trial unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363, 1364. A danger was made prefect of the city, a charioteer prefect of the watch, a barber prefect of the provisions. These three ministers, with many inferior officers, were all recommended, *encomitate membrorum*. Hist. August. p. 105.

<sup>60</sup> Even the credulous compiler of his life, in the Augustan history (p. 111.), is inclined to suspect that his vices may have been exaggerated.

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the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty confux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careless of censure, they lived without restraint in the patient and humble society of their slaves and parasites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his subjects with the same contemptuous indifference, asserted without control his sovereign privilege of lust and luxury.

Discon-  
tents of the  
army.

The most worthless of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the same disorders which they allow in themselves; and can readily discover some nice difference of age, character, or station, to justify the partial distinction. The licentious soldiers, who had raised to the throne the dissolute son of Caracalla, blushed at their ignominious choice, and turned with disgust from that monster, to contemplate with pleasure the opening virtues of his cousin Alexander the son of Mænia. The crafty Mænia, sensible that her grandson Elagabalus must inevitably destroy himself by his own vices, had provided another and surer support of her family. Embracing a favourable moment of fondness and devotion, she had persuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander, and to invest him with the title of Cæsar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer interrupted by the care of the earth. In the second rank that amiable prince soon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's jealousy, who resolved to terminate the dangerous competition, either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival.

Alexander  
Severus  
declared  
Cæsar,  
A.D. 211.

His

His arts proved unsuccessful; his vain designs were constantly discovered by his own loquacious folly, and disappointed by those virtuous and faithful servants whom the prudence of *Mamæa* had placed about the person of her son. In a hasty sally of passion, *Elagabalus* resolved to execute by force what he had been unable to compass by fraud, and by a despotic sentence degraded his cousin from the rank and honours of *Cæsar*. The message was received in the senate with silence, and in the camp with fury. The *Prætorian* guards swore to protect *Alexander*, and to revenge the dishonoured majesty of the throne. The tears and promises of the trembling *Elagabalus*, who only begged them to spare his life, and to leave him in the possession of his beloved *Hierocles*, diverted their just indignation; and they contented themselves with empowering their præfects to watch over the safety of *Alexander*, and the conduct of the emperor<sup>61</sup>.

It was impossible that such a reconciliation should last, or that even the mean soul of *Elagabalus* could hold an empire on such humiliating terms of dependence. He soon attempted, by a dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the soldiers. The report of the death of *Alexander*, and the natural suspicion that he had been murdered, inflamed their passions into fury, and the tempest of the camp could only be appeased by

Sedition of the guards, and murder of *Elagabalus*, A. D. 222, 10 March.

<sup>61</sup> *Dion*, l. lxxix. p. 1365. *Herodian*, l. v. p. 195—201. *Hi*. August. p. 105. The last of the three historians seems to have followed the best authors in his account of the revolution.

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the presence and authority of the popular youth. Provoked at this new instance of their affection for his cousin, and their contempt for his person, the emperor ventured to punish some of the leaders of the mutiny. His unseasonable severity proved instantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himself. Elagabalus was massacred by the indignant Prætorians, his mutilated corpse dragged through the streets of the city, and thrown into the Tyber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the senate; the justice of whose decree has been ratified by posterity<sup>62</sup>.

Accession  
of Alex-  
ander Se-  
verus.

In the room of Elagabalus, his cousin Alexander was raised to the throne by the Prætorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whose name he assumed, was the same as that of his predecessor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the senate conferred upon him, in one day, the various titles and powers of the

<sup>62</sup> The æra of the death of Elagabalus, and of the accession of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillemont, Vaissecchi, Vignoli, and Torre bishop of Adria. The question is most assuredly intricate; but I still adhere to the authority of Dion; the truth of whose calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whose text is justified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zonaras, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years, nine months, and four days, from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 212. But what shall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunician power? We shall reply with the learned Vaissecchi, that the usurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the son of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death. After resolving this great difficulty, the smaller knots of this question may be easily untied, or cut asunder.

Imperial

Imperial dignity<sup>63</sup>. But as Alexander was a modest and dutiful youth, of only seventeen years of age, the reins of government were in the hands of two women, of his mother Mamæa, and of Mæsa, his grandmother. After the death of the latter, who survived but a short time the elevation of Alexander, Mamæa remained the sole regent of her son and of the empire.

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VI.

Power of  
his mother  
Mamæa.

In every age and country, the wiser, or at least the stronger, of the two sexes, has usurped the powers of the state, and confined the other to the cares and pleasures of domestic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and especially in those of modern Europe, the gallant spirit of chivalry, and the law of succession, have accustomed us to allow a singular exception; and a woman is often acknowledged the absolute sovereign of a great kingdom, in which she would be deemed incapable of exercising the smallest employment, civil or military. But as the Roman emperors were still considered as the generals and magistrates of the republic, their wives and mothers, although distinguished by the name of Augusta, were never associated to their personal honours; and a female reign would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of those primitive Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and respect<sup>64</sup>. The haughty  
Agrippina

<sup>63</sup> Hist. August. p. 114. By this unusual precipitation, the senate meant to confound the hopes of pretenders, and prevent the factions of the armies.

<sup>64</sup> Metellus Numidicus, the censor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that had kind Nature allowed us to  
Vez. I. R exist



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Agrippina aspired, indeed, to share the honours of the empire, which she had conferred on her son; but her mad ambition, detested by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was disappointed by the artful firmness of Seneca and Burrhus<sup>65</sup>. The good sense, or the indifference, of succeeding princes, restrained them from offending the prejudices of their subjects; and it was reserved for the profligate Elagabalus, to discharge the acts of the senate, with the name of his mother Soæmias, who was placed by the side of the consuls, and subscribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legislative assembly. Her more prudent sister, Mamæa, declined the useless and odious prerogative, and a solemn law was enacted, excluding women for ever from the senate, and devoting to the infernal gods, the head of the wretch by whom this sanction should be violated<sup>66</sup>. The substance, not the pageantry, of power was the object of Mamæa's manly ambition. She maintained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander, with her consent, married the daughter of a Patrician; but his respect for his father-in-law, and love for the empress, were inconsistent with the tenderness or interest of Mamæa. The Patrician was executed on the ready accu-

exit without the help of women, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and he could recommend matrimony, only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty. Aulus Gellius, i. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Tacit. *Annal.* xiii. 5.

<sup>66</sup> Hist. August. p. 102. 107.

sation of treason, and the wife of Alexander driven with ignominy from the palace, and banished into Africa <sup>67</sup>.

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Notwithstanding this act of jealous cruelty, as well as some instances of avarice, with which Mamæa is charged; the general tenour of her administration was equally for the benefit of her son and of the empire. With the approbation of the senate, she chose sixteen of the wisest and most virtuous senators, as a perpetual council of state, before whom every public business of moment was debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally distinguished by his knowledge of, and his respect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmness of this aristocracy restored order and authority to the government. As soon as they had purged the city from foreign superstition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied themselves to remove his worthless creatures from every department of public administration, and to supply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of justice, became the only recommendations for civil offices. Valour, and the love of discipline,

Wife and moderate administration.

<sup>67</sup> Dion, l. lxx. p. 1369. Herodian, l. vi. p. 206. Hist. August. p. 131. Herodian represents the Patricians as innocent. The Augustan History, on the authority of Dexippus, condemns him, as guilty of a conspiracy against the life of Alexander. It is impossible to pronounce between them: but Dion is an irreproachable witness of the jealousy and cruelty of Mamæa toward the young empress, whose hard fate Alexander lamented, but durst not oppose.

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VI.

Education  
and virtu-  
ous temper  
of Alex-  
ander.

the only qualifications for military employ-  
ments <sup>65</sup>.

But the most important care of Mamæa and her wise counsellors, was to form the character of the young emperor, on whose personal qualities the happiness or misery of the Roman world must ultimately depend. The fortunate soil assisted, and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent understanding soon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleasure of knowledge, and the necessity of labour. A natural mildness and moderation of temper preserved him from the assaults of passion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his esteem for the wife Ulpian, guarded his unexperienced youth from the poison of flattery.

Journal of  
his ordi-  
nary life.

The simple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleasing picture of an accomplished emperor <sup>66</sup>, and with some allowance for the difference of manners, might well deserve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander rose early: the first moments of the day were consecrated to private devotion, and his domestic chapel was filled with the images of those heroes, who, by improving or reforming human life, had deserved the grateful reverence of posterity. But, as he

<sup>65</sup> Herodian, l. vi. p. 203. Hist. August. p. 119. The latter intimates, that when any law was to be passed, the council was assisted by a number of able lawyers and experienced senators, whose opinions were separately given, and taken down in writing.

<sup>66</sup> See his life in the Augustan History. The undistinguishing compiler has buried these interesting anecdotes under a load of trivial and unmeaning circumstances.

deemed the service of mankind the most acceptable worship of the gods, the greatest part of his morning hours was employed in his council, where he discussed public affairs, and determined private causes, with a patience and discretion above his years. The dryness of business was relieved by the charms of literature: and a portion of time was always set apart for his favourite studies of poetry, history, and philosophy. The works of Virgil and Horace, the republics of Plato and Cicero, formed his taste, enlarged his understanding, and gave him the noblest ideas of man and government. The exercises of the body succeeded to those of the mind; and Alexander, who was tall, active, and robust, surpassed most of his equals in the gymnastic arts. Refreshed by the use of the bath and a slight dinner, he resumed, with new vigour, the business of the day; and, till the hour of supper, the principal meal of the Romans, he was attended by his secretaries, with whom he read and answered the multitude of letters, memorials, and petitions, that must have been addressed to the master of the greatest part of the world. His table was served with the most frugal simplicity; and whenever he was at liberty to consult his own inclination, the company consisted of a few select friends, men of learning and virtue, amongst whom Ulpian was constantly invited. Their conversation was familiar and instructive; and the pauses were occasionally enlivened by the recital of some pleasing composition, which supplied the place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators,



diators, so frequently summoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans <sup>70</sup>. The dress of Alexander was plain and modest, his demeanor courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his subjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleusinian mysteries, pronouncing the same salutary admonition; "Let none enter those holy walls, unless he  
" is conscious of a pure and innocent mind <sup>71</sup>."

General  
happiness  
of the  
Roman  
world.  
A. D. 222  
—235.

Such an uniform tenour of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wisdom and justice of Alexander's government, than all the trifling details preserved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the accession of Commodus, the Roman world had experienced, during a term of forty years, the successive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus, it enjoyed an auspicious calm of thirteen years. The provinces, relieved from the oppressive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended son, flourished in peace and prosperity, under the administration of magistrates, who were convinced by experience, that to deserve the love of the subjects, was their best and only method of obtaining the favour of their sovereign. While some gentle restraints were imposed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of provisions, and the interest of money, were reduced,

<sup>70</sup> See the 13th Satire of Juvenal.

<sup>71</sup> Hist. August. p. 119.

by the paternal care of Alexander, whose prudent liberality, without distressing the industrious, supplied the wants and amusements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority of the senate were restored; and every virtuous senator might approach the person of the emperor, without fear, and without a blush.

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The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the dissolute Verus, and by descent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honourable appellation of the sons of Severus, was bestowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length prostituted to the infamy of the high priest of Emesa. Alexander, though pressed by the studied, and perhaps sincere importunity of the senate, nobly refused the borrowed lustre of a name; whilst in his whole conduct he laboured to restore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines <sup>72</sup>.

Alexander  
refutes the  
name of  
Antoninus.

In the civil administration of Alexander, wisdom was enforced by power, and the people, sensible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with their love and gratitude. There still remained a greater, a more necessary, but a more difficult enterprise; the reformation of the military order, whose interest and temper, con-

He at-  
tempts to  
reform the  
army.

<sup>72</sup> See in the Hist. August. p. 116, 117, the whole contest between Alexander and the senate, extracted from the journals of that assembly. It happened on the ixth of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almost a twelvemonth, the blessings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honour, the senate waited to see whether Alexander would not assume it, as a family name.

firming by long impunity, rendered them impatient of the restraints of discipline, and careless of the blessings of public tranquillity. In the execution of his design the emperor affected to display his love, and to conceal his fear, of the army. The most rigid œconomy in every other branch of the administration, supplied a fund of gold and silver for the ordinary pay and the extraordinary rewards of the troops. In their marches he relaxed the severe obligation of carrying seventeen days provision on their shoulders. Ample magazines were formed along the public roads, and as soon as they entered the enemy's country, a numerous train of mules and camels waited on their haughty laziness. As Alexander despaired of correcting the luxury of his soldiers, he attempted, at least, to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament, fine horses, splendid armour, and shield enriched with silver and gold. He shared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impose, visited, in person, the sick and wounded, preserved an exact register of their services and his own gratitude, and expressed, on every occasion, the warmest regard for a body of men, whose welfare, as he affected to declare, was so closely connected with that of the state<sup>75</sup>. By the most gentle arts he laboured to inspire the fierce multitude with a sense of duty, and to restore at least a faint image of that discipline to which the Romans owed their empire over so

<sup>75</sup> It was a favourite saying of the emperor's, *Se milites magis servare, quam regere; quod satis publica in his esset.* Hist. August. p. 152.

many other nations, as warlike and more powerful than themselves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation served only to inflame the ills it was meant to cure.

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The Prætorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil, whom they had saved from a tyrant's fury, and placed on the Imperial throne. That amiable prince was sensible of the obligation; but as his gratitude was restrained within the limits of reason and justice, they soon were more dissatisfied with the virtues of Alexander, than they had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their præfect, the wise Ulpian, was the friend of the laws and of the people; he was considered as the enemy of the soldiers, and to his pernicious counsels every scheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their discontent into a furious mutiny; and a civil war raged, during three days, in Rome, whilst the life of that excellent minister was defended by the grateful people. Terrified, at length, by the sight of some houses in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a sigh, and left the virtuous, but unfortunate, Ulpian to his fate. He was pursued into the Imperial palace, and massacred at the feet of his master, who vainly strove to cover him with the purple, and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable soldiers. Such was the deplorable weakness of government, that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered friend

Seditions  
of the Præ-  
torian  
guards,  
and mur-  
der of Ul-  
pian.



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friend and his insulted dignity, without stooping to the arts of patience and dissimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome, by the honourable employment of præfect of Egypt; from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when, at length, his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and absence, Alexander ventured to inflict the tardy, but deserved punishment of his crimes<sup>74</sup>. Under the reign of a just and virtuous prince, the tyranny of the army threatened with instant death his most faithful ministers, who were suspected of an intention to correct their intemperate disorders.

Danger of  
Dion Cas-  
sius.

The historian Dion Cassius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the spirit of ancient discipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cause of military licence, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, instead of yielding to their seditious clamours, shewed a just sense of his merit and services, by appointing him his colleague in the consulship, and defraying from his own treasury the expence of that vain dignity: but as it was justly apprehended, that if the soldiers beheld him with the ensigns of his office, they would revenge the insult in his blood, the nominal first magistrate of the state retired, by the emperor's advice, from

<sup>74</sup> Though the author of the life of Alexander (Hist. August. p. 132.) mentions the sedition raised against Ulpian by the soldiers, he conceals the catastrophe, as it might discover a weakness in the administration of his hero. From this designed omission, we may judge of the weight and candour of that author.

the city, and spent the greatest part of his consulship at his villas in Campania <sup>75</sup>.

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Tumults  
of the le-  
gions.

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the insolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the guards, and defended their prerogative of licentiousness with the same furious obstinacy. The administration of Alexander was an unavailing struggle against the corruption of his age. In Illyricum, in Mauritania, in Armenia, in Mesopotamia, in Germany, fresh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was insulted, and his life at last sacrificed to the fierce discontents of the army <sup>76</sup>. One particular fact well deserves to be recorded, as it illustrates the manners of the troops, and exhibits a singular instance of their return to a sense of duty and obedience. Whilst the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Persian expedition, the particulars of which we shall hereafter relate, the punishment of some soldiers, who had been discovered in the baths of women, excited a sedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander ascended his tribunal, and with a modest firmness represented to the armed multitude, the absolute necessity as well as his inflexible resolution of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predecessor, and of maintaining the discipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamours interrupted his mild ex-

Firmness  
of the em-  
peror.

<sup>75</sup> For an account of Ulpian's fate and his own danger, see the mutilated conclusion of Dion's History, l. lxxx. p. 1371.

<sup>76</sup> Annot. Reimar. ad Dion Cassius, l. lxxx. p. 1369.

postulation. " Reserve your shouts," said the undaunted emperor, " till you take the field " against the Persians, the Germans, and the " Sarmatians. Be silent in the presence of your " sovereign and benefactor, who bestows upon " you the corn, the clothing, and the money of " the provinces. Be silent, or I shall no longer " style you soldiers, but *citizens* ", if those in- " deed who disclaim the laws of Rome deserve " to be ranked among the meanest of the peo- " ple." His menaces inflamed the fury of the legion, and their brandished arms already threat- ened his person. " Your courage," resumed the intrepid Alexander, " would be more nobly dis- " played in the field of battle; *me* you may de- " froy, you cannot intimidate; and the severe " justice of the republic would punish your crime, " and revenge my death." The legion still per- sisted in clamorous sedition, when the emperor pronounced, with a loud voice, the decisive sen- tence, " *Citizens!* lay down your arms, and de- " part in peace to your respective habitations." The tempest was instantly appeased; the soldiers, filled with grief and shame, silently confessed the justice of their punishment and the power of dis- cipline, yielded up their arms and military en- signs, and retired in confusion, not to their camp, but to the several inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying spec-

77 Julius Cæsar had appeased a sedition with the same word *Qui- rites*; which thus applied to *Soldiers*, was used in a sense of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the less honourable condition of mere *citizens*. Tacit. *Annal.* i. 43.

tacle of their repentance; nor did he restore them to their former rank in the army, till he had punished with death those tribunes whose connivance had occasioned the mutiny. The grateful legion served the emperor, whilst living, and revenged him when dead <sup>78</sup>.

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The resolutions of the multitude generally depend on a moment; and the caprice of passion might equally determine the seditious legion to lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to plunge them into his breast. Perhaps, if the singular transaction had been investigated by the penetration of a philosopher, we should discover the secret causes which on that occasion authorized the boldness of the prince, and commanded the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if it had been related by a judicious historian, we should find this action, worthy of Cæsar himself, reduced nearer to the level of probability and the common standard of the character of Alexander Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince seem to have been inadequate to the difficulties of his situation, the firmness of his conduct inferior to the purity of his intentions. His virtues, as well as the vices of Elagabalus, contracted a tincture of weakness and effeminacy from the soft climate of Syria, of which he was a native; though he blasphemed at his foreign origin, and listened with a vain complacency to the flattering genealogists, who derived his race from

Defects of  
his reign  
and character.

<sup>78</sup> Hist. August. p. 132.

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the ancient stock of Roman nobility<sup>79</sup>. The pride and avarice of his mother cast a shade on the glories of his reign; and by exacting from his riper years the same dutiful obedience which she had justly claimed from his unexperienced youth, Mamæa exposed to public ridicule both her son's character and her own<sup>80</sup>. The fatigues of the Persian war irritated the military discontent; the unsuccessful event degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and even as a soldier. Every cause prepared, and every circumstance hastened, a revolution, which distracted the Roman empire with a long series of intestine calamities.

Digestion  
on the fi-  
nances of  
the empire.

The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the new maxims of policy introduced by the house of Severus, had all contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was still impressed

<sup>79</sup> From the Metelli. Hist. August. p. 119. The choice was judicious. In one short period of twelve years, the Metelli could reckon seven consulships and five triumphs. See Velicius Paterculus, ii. 11. and the Fasti.

<sup>80</sup> The life of Alexander, in the Augustan History, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropædia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is rational and moderate, consistent with the general history of the age; and, in some of the most invidious particulars, confirmed by the decisive fragments of Dion. Yet from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuse Herodian, and copy the Augustan History. See Meib. de Tillemont and Wotton. From the opposite prejudice, the emperor Julian (in Cæsarib. p. 315.) dwells with a virile satisfaction on the effeminate weakness of the *Syrians*, and the ridiculous avarice of his mother.

on the minds of the Romans. This internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavoured to explain with some degree of order and perspicuity. The personal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, follies, and fortunes, can interest us no farther than as they are connected with the general history of the Decline and Fall of the monarchy. Our constant attention to that great object, will not suffer us to overlook a most important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind; it was the sordid result of avarice, and will naturally be illustrated by some observations on the finances of that state, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus.

The siege of Veii in Tuscany, the first considerable enterprize of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year, much less by the strength of the place than by the unskilfulness of the besiegers. The unaccustomed hardships of so many winter campaigns, at the distance of near twenty miles from home<sup>81</sup>, required more than common encouragements; and the senate wisely prevented

Establi-  
ment

<sup>81</sup> According to the more accurate Dionysius, the city itself was only an hundred stadia, or twelve miles and a half from Rome; though some out-posts might be advanced farther on the side of Etruria. Nardini, in a professed treatise, has combated the popular opinion and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Civita Castellana, to a little spot called Itefa, in the midway between Rome and the lake Bracciano.

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the clamours of the people, by the institution of a regular pay for the soldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, assessed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens<sup>82</sup>. During more than two hundred years after the conquest of Veii, the victories of the republic added less to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The states of Italy paid their tribute in military service only, and the vast force both by sea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expence of the Romans themselves. That high-spirited people (such is often the generous enthusiasm of freedom) cheerfully submitted to the most excessive but voluntary burdens, in the just confidence that they should speedily enjoy the rich harvest of their labours. Their expectations were not disappointed. In the course of a few years, the riches of Syracuse, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Asia, were brought in triumph to Rome. The treasures of Perseus alone amounted to near two millions sterling, and the Roman people, the sovereign of so many nations, was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes<sup>83</sup>. The increasing revenue of the provinces was found sufficient to defray the ordinary establishment of war and government, and the superfluous mass of gold and silver was deposited in the temple of

and abolition of the tribute on Roman citizens.

<sup>82</sup> See the 4th and 5th books of Livy. In the Roman Census, property, power, and taxation, were commensurate with each other.

<sup>83</sup> Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. Cicero de Offic. ii. 22. Plutarch, in P. Æmil. p. 275.

Saturn,

Saturn, and reserved for any unforeseen emergency of the state<sup>84</sup>.

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History has never perhaps suffered a greater or more irreparable injury, than in the loss of the curious register bequeathed by Augustus to the senate, in which that experienced prince so accurately balanced the revenues and expences of the Roman empire<sup>85</sup>. Deprived of this clear and comprehensive estimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from such of the ancients as have accidentally turned aside from the splendid to the more useful parts of history. We are informed that, by the conquests of Pompey, the tributes of Asia were raised from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms; or about four millions and a half sterling<sup>86</sup>. Under the last and most indolent of the Ptolemies, the revenue of Egypt is said to have amounted to twelve thousand five hundred talents; a sum equivalent to more than two millions and a half of our money, but which was afterwards considerably improved by the more exact œconomy of the Romans, and the increase of the trade of Æthiopia and India<sup>87</sup>. Gaul was enriched by rapine, as Egypt was by commerce, and the tributes of those two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to

Tributes  
of the provinces

of Asia,

of Egypt,

of Gaul,

<sup>84</sup> See a fine description of this accumulated wealth of ages, in Lucan's Phari. l. iii. v. 155, &c.

<sup>85</sup> Tacit in Annal. i. 11. It seems to have existed in the time of Appian.

<sup>86</sup> Plutarch. in Pompeio, p. 642. <sup>87</sup> Strabo, l. xvii. p. 733.



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of Africa,

each other in value<sup>88</sup>. The ten thousand Euboic or Phœnician talents, about four millions sterling<sup>89</sup>, which vanquished Carthage was condemned to pay within the term of fifty years, were a slight acknowledgment of the superiority of Rome<sup>90</sup>, and cannot bear the least proportion with the taxes afterwards raised both on the lands and on the persons of the inhabitants, when the fertile coast of Africa was reduced into a province<sup>91</sup>.

of Spain,

Spain, by a very singular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The discovery of the rich western continent by the Phœnicians, and the oppression of the simple natives, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of strangers, form an exact type of the more recent history of Spanish America<sup>92</sup>. The Phœnicians were acquainted only with the sea-coast of Spain; avarice, as well as ambition, carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almost every part of the soil was found pregnant with copper, silver, and gold. Mention is made of a mine near Carthage which yielded every day twenty-five

<sup>88</sup> Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 39. He seems to give the preference to the revenue of Gaul.

<sup>89</sup> The Euboic, the Phœnician, and the Alexandrian talents were double in weight to the Attic. See Hooper of ancient weights and measures, p. iv. c. 5. It is very probable, that the same talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage.

<sup>90</sup> Polyb. l. xv. c. 2.      <sup>91</sup> Appian in Punicis, p. 84.

<sup>92</sup> Diodorus Siculus, l. v. Cadiz was built by the Phœnicians a little more than a thousand years before Christ. See Vell. Paterc. i. 2.

thousand

thousand drachms of silver, or about three hundred thousand pounds a year<sup>93</sup>. Twenty thousand pound weight of gold was annually received from the provinces of Asturia, Gallicia, and Lusitania<sup>94</sup>.

We want both leisure and materials to pursue this curious inquiry through the many potent states that were annihilated in the Roman empire. Some notion, however, may be formed of the revenue of the provinces where considerable wealth had been deposited by nature, or collected by man, if we observe the severe attention that was directed to the abodes of solitude and sterility. Augustus once received a petition from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one-third of their excessive impositions. Their whole tax amounted indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty drachms, or about five pounds: but Gyarus was a little island, or rather a rock, of the Ægean sea, destitute of fresh water and every necessary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fishermen<sup>95</sup>.

of the isle  
of Gyarus,

From the faint glimmerings of such doubtful and scattered lights we should be inclined to believe, 1st, That (with every fair allowance for

Amount  
of the re-  
venue.

<sup>93</sup> Strabo, l. iii. p. 148.

<sup>94</sup> Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. He mentions likewise a silver mine in Dalmatia, that yielded every day fifty pounds to the state.

<sup>95</sup> Strabo, l. x. p. 485. Tacit. Annal. iii. 69. and iv. 30. See in Tournefort (Voyages au Levant, Lettre viii.) a very lively picture of the actual misery of Gyarus.

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the difference of times and circumstances) the general income of the Roman provinces could seldom amount to less than fifteen or twenty millions of our money<sup>96</sup>; and, 2dly, That so ample a revenue must have been fully adequate to all the expences of the moderate government instituted by Augustus, whose court was the modest family of a private senator, and whose military establishment was calculated for the defence of the frontiers, without any aspiring views of conquest, or any serious apprehension of a foreign invasion.

Taxes on Roman citizens instituted by Augustus.

Notwithstanding the seeming probability of both these conclusions, the latter of them at least is positively disowned by the language and conduct of Augustus. It is not easy to determine whether, on this occasion, he acted as the common father of the Roman world, or as the oppressor of liberty; whether he wished to relieve the provinces, or to impoverish the senate and the equestrian order. But no sooner had he assumed the reins of government, than he frequently intimated the insufficiency of the tributes, and the necessity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burden upon Rome and Italy. In the prosecution of this unpopular design, he advanced, however, by cautious and well-weighed steps. The introduction of customs was followed by the establishment of an excise,

<sup>96</sup> Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ (l. ii. c. 3.) computes the revenue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated imagination.

and the scheme of taxation was completed by an artful assessment on the real and personal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half.

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The cus-  
toms.

I. In a great empire like that of Rome, a natural balance of money must have gradually established itself. It has been already observed, that as the wealth of the provinces was attracted to the capital by the strong hand of conquest and power; so a considerable part of it was restored to the industrious provinces by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Augustus and his successors, duties were imposed on every kind of merchandise, which through a thousand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatsoever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax<sup>97</sup>. The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to suppose that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy: that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on those of necessity, and that the productions raised or manufactured by the labour of the subjects of the empire, were treated with more indulgence than was shewn to the pernicious, or at least the unpopular commerce of Arabia and

<sup>97</sup> Tacit. Annal. xiii. 31.

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India<sup>98</sup>. There is still extant a long but imperfect catalogue of eastern commodities, which about the time of Alexander Severus were subject to the payment of duties; cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, and the whole tribe of aromatics, a great variety of precious stones, among which the diamond 'was the most remarkable for its price, and the emerald for its beauty<sup>99</sup>: Parthian and Babylonian leather, cottons, silks, both raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs<sup>100</sup>. We may observe that the use and value of those effeminate slaves gradually rose with the decline of the empire.

The excise.

II. The excise, introduced by Augustus after the civil wars, was extremely moderate, but it was general. It seldom exceeded one *per cent.*; but it comprehended whatever was sold in the markets or by public auction, from the most considerable purchases of lands and houses, to those minute objects which can only derive a value from their infinite multitude, and daily consumption. Such a tax, as it affects the body of the people, has ever been the occasion of clamour and discontent. An emperor well acquainted

<sup>98</sup> See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. vi. c. 23. l. xii. c. 18.). His observation, that the Indian commodities were sold at Rome at a hundred times their original price, may give us some notion of the produce of the customs, since that original price amounted to more than eight hundred thousand pounds.

<sup>99</sup> The ancients were unacquainted with the art of cutting diamonds.

<sup>100</sup> M. Bouchard, in his treatise de l'Impot chez les Romains, has transcribed this catalogue, from the Digest, and attempts to illustrate it by a very prolix commentary.

with

with the wants and resources of the state, was obliged to declare by a public edict, that the support of the army depended in a great measure on the produce of the excise <sup>101</sup>.

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III. When Augustus resolved to establish a permanent military force for the defence of his government against foreign and domestic enemies, he instituted a peculiar treasury for the pay of the soldiers, the rewards of the veterans, and the extraordinary expences of war. The ample revenue of the excise, though peculiarly appropriated to those uses, was found inadequate. To supply the deficiency, the emperor suggested a new tax of five *per cent.* on all legacies and inheritances. But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom. Their indignant murmurs were received by Augustus with his usual temper. He candidly referred the whole business to the senate, and exhorted them to provide for the public service by some other expedient of a less odious nature. They were divided and perplexed. He insinuated to them, that their obstinacy would oblige him to *propose* a general land-tax and capitation. They acquiesced in silence <sup>102</sup>. The new imposition on legacies and inheritances was however mitigated by some restrictions. It did not take place unless the object was of a certain value,

Tax on legacies and inheritances.

<sup>101</sup> Tacit. Annal. i. 78. Two years afterwards, the reduction of the poor kingdom of Cappadocia gave Tiberius a pretence for diminishing the excise to one half; but the relief was of very short duration.

<sup>102</sup> Dion Cassius, l. lv. p. 794. l. lvi. p. 825.



most probably of fifty or an hundred pieces of gold <sup>103</sup> nor could it be exacted from the nearest of kin on the father's side <sup>104</sup>. When the rights of nature and poverty were thus secured, it seemed reasonable, that a stranger, or a distant relation, who acquired an unexpected accession of fortune, should cheerfully resign a twentieth part of it, for the benefit of the state <sup>105</sup>.

Suited to  
the laws  
and man-  
ners.

Such a tax, plentiful as it must prove in every wealthy community, was most happily suited to the situation of the Romans, who could frame their arbitrary wills, according to the dictates of reason or caprice, without any restraint from the modern fetters of entails and settlements. From various causes the partiality of paternal affection often lost its influence over the stern patriots of the commonwealth, and the dissolute nobles of the empire; and if the father bequeathed to his son the fourth part of his estate, he removed all ground of legal complaint <sup>106</sup>. But a rich childless old man was a domestic tyrant, and his power increased with his years and infirmities. A fervile crowd, in which he frequently reckoned prætors and consuls, courted his smiles, pampered his avarice, applauded his follies, served his passions, and waited with impatience for his

<sup>103</sup> The sum is only fixed by conjecture.

<sup>104</sup> As the Roman law subsisted for many ages, the *Cognati*, or relations on the mother's side, were not called to the succession. This harsh institution was gradually undermined by humanity, and finally abolished by Justinian.

<sup>105</sup> Plin. Panegyric. c. 37.

<sup>106</sup> See Heineccius in the *Antiquit. Juris Romani*, l. ii.

death.

death. The arts of attendance and flattery were formed into a most lucrative science; those who professed it acquired a peculiar appellation; and the whole city, according to the lively descriptions of satire, was divided between two parties, the hunters and their game<sup>107</sup>. Yet, while so many unjust and extravagant wills were every day dictated by cunning, and subscribed by folly, a few were the result of rational esteem and virtuous gratitude. Cicero, who had so often defended the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens, was rewarded with legacies to the amount of an hundred and seventy thousand pounds<sup>108</sup>; nor do the friends of the younger Pliny seem to have been less generous to that amiable orator<sup>109</sup>. Whatever was the motive of the testator, the treasury claimed, without distinction, the twentieth part of his estate; and in the course of two or three generations, the whole property of the subject must have gradually passed through the coffers of the state.

In the first and golden years of the reign of Nero, that prince, from a desire of popularity, and perhaps from a blind impulse of benevolence, conceived a wish of abolishing the oppression of the customs and excise. The wisest senators applauded his magnanimity; but they diverted him

Regulations of the emperors.

<sup>107</sup> Horat. l. ii. Sat. v. Petron. c. 116, &c. Plin. l. ii. Epist. 20.

<sup>108</sup> Cicero in Philipp. ii. c. 16.

<sup>109</sup> See his epistles. Every such will gave him an occasion of displaying his reverence to the dead, and his justice to the living. He reconciled both, in his behaviour to a son who had been disinherited by his mother (v. 1.).

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from the execution of a design, which would have dissolved the strength and resources of the republic<sup>110</sup>. Had it indeed been possible to realize this dream of fancy, such princes as Trajan and the Antonines would surely have embraced with ardor the glorious opportunity of conferring so signal an obligation on mankind. Satisfied, however, with alleviating the public burden, they attempted not to remove it. The mildness and precision of their laws ascertained the rule and measure of taxation, and protected the subject of every rank against arbitrary interpretations, antiquated claims, and the insolent vexation of the farmers of the revenue<sup>111</sup>. For it is somewhat singular that, in every age, the best and wisest of the Roman governors persevered in this pernicious method of collecting the principal branches at least of the excise and customs<sup>112</sup>.

Edict of  
Caracalla.

The sentiments, and, indeed, the situation of Caracalla, were very different from those of the Antonines. Inattentive, or rather averse to the welfare of his people, he found himself under the necessity of gratifying the insatiate avarice, which he had excited in the army. Of the several impositions introduced by Augustus, the twentieth on inheritances and legacies was the most fruitful, as well as the most comprehensive. As its

<sup>110</sup> Tacit. *Annal.* xiii. 50. *Esprit des Loix*, l. xii. c. 19.

<sup>111</sup> See Pliny's *Panegyric*, the *Augustan History*, and *Burman de Vestigal. passim*.

<sup>112</sup> The tributes (properly so called) were not farmed; since the good princes often remitted many millions of arrears.

influ-

influence was not confined to Rome or Italy, the produce continually increased with the gradual extension of the ROMAN CITY. The new citizens, though charged, on equal terms<sup>113</sup>, with the payment of new taxes, which had not affected them as subjects, derived an ample compensation from the rank they obtained, the privileges they acquired, and the fair prospect of honours and fortune that was thrown open to their ambition. But the favour which implied a distinction, was lost in the prodigality of Caracalla, and the reluctant provincials were compelled to assume the vain title, and the real obligations, of Roman citizens. Nor was the rapacious son of Severus contented with such a measure of taxation, as had appeared sufficient to his moderate predecessors. Instead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances; and during his reign (for the ancient proportion was restored after his death) he crushed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron sceptre<sup>114</sup>.

The freedom of the city given to all the provincials, for the purpose of taxation.

When all the provincials became liable to the peculiar impositions of Roman citizens, they seemed to acquire a legal exemption from the tributes which they had paid in their former condition of subjects. Such were not the maxims of government adopted by Caracalla and his pretended son. The old as well as the new taxes were, at the same time, levied in the provinces.

Temporary reduction of the tribute.

<sup>113</sup> The situation of the new citizens is minutely described by Pliny (Panegyric, c. 37, 38, 39.). Trajan published a law very much in their favour.

<sup>114</sup> Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1295.

It was reserved for the virtue of Alexander to relieve them in a great measure from this intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the sum exacted at the time of his accession<sup>115</sup>. It is impossible to conjecture the motive that engaged him to spare so trifling a remnant of the public evil; but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again sprang up with the most luxuriant growth, and in the succeeding age darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history, we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital.

Consequences of the universal freedom of Rome.

As long as Rome and Italy were respected as the centre of government, a national spirit was preserved by the ancient, and insensibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men who had received a liberal education, were well instructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had risen, by equal steps, through the regular succession of civil and military honours<sup>116</sup>. To their influence and example we may partly ascribe the modest obedience of the legions during the two first centuries of the Imperial history.

<sup>115</sup> He who paid ten *aurei*, the usual tribute, was charged with no more than the third part of an aureus, and proportional pieces of gold were coined by Alexander's order. Hist. August. p. 127. with the commentary of Salmastius.

<sup>116</sup> See the lives of Agricola, Vespasian, Trajan, Severus, and his three competitors; and indeed of all the eminent men of those times.

But

But when the last enclosure of the Roman constitution was trampled down by Caracalla, the separation of professions gradually succeeded to the distinction of ranks. The more polished citizens of the internal provinces were alone qualified to act as lawyers and magistrates. The rougher trade of arms was abandoned to the peasants and barbarians of the frontiers, who knew no country but their camp, no science but that of war, no civil laws, and scarcely those of military discipline. With bloody hands, savage manners, and desperate resolutions, they sometimes guarded, but much oftener subverted, the throne of the emperors.

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## C H A P. VII.

*The Elevation and Tyranny of Maximin.—Rebellion in Africa and Italy, under the Authority of the Senate.—Civil Wars and Seditions.—Violent Deaths of Maximin and his Son, of Maximus and Balbinus, and of the three Gordians.—Usurpation and secular Games of Philip.*

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The appa-  
rent ridi-  
cule

OF the various forms of government, which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that, on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master.

and solid  
advantages  
of heredi-  
tary suc-  
cession.

In the cool shade of retirement, we may easily devise imaginary forms of government, in which  
the