

Chapter II: The Internal Prosperity In The Age Of The Antonines.--Part II.

Till the privileges of Romans had been progressively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important distinction was preserved between Italy and the provinces. The former was esteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm basis of the constitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at least the residence, of the emperors and the senate. [26] The estates of the Italians were exempt from taxes, their persons from the arbitrary jurisdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital, [261] were intrusted, under the immediate eye of the supreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial distinctions were obliterated, and they insensibly coalesced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil institutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the merit and services of her adopted sons. Had she always confined the distinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of some of its noblest ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he should call himself an Apulian or a Lucanian; it was in Padua that an historian was found worthy to record the majestic series of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tusculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honor of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deserved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be styled the

Third Founder of Rome; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence. [27]

[Footnote 26: The senators were obliged to have one third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. l. vi. ep. 19. The qualification was reduced by Marcus to one fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had sunk nearer to the level of the provinces.]

[Footnote 261: It may be doubted whether the municipal government of the cities was not the old Italian constitution rather than a transcript from that of Rome. The free government of the cities, observes Savigny, was the leading characteristic of Italy. *Geschichte des Romischen Rechts*, i. p. G.--M.]

[Footnote 27: The first part of the *Verona Illustrata* of the Marquis Maffei gives the clearest and most comprehensive view of the state of Italy under the Caesars. * Note: Compare Denina, *Revol. d' Italia*, l. ii. c. 6, p. 100, 4 to edit.]

The provinces of the empire (as they have been described in the preceding chapter) were destitute of any public force, or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece, [28] and in Gaul, [29] it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies, which taught mankind that, as the Roman arms prevailed by division, they might be resisted by union. Those princes, whom the ostentation of gratitude

or generosity permitted for a while to hold a precarious sceptre, were dismissed from their thrones, as soon as they had performed their appointed task of fashioning to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was every where exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute, and without control. [291] But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the peace and obedience of Italy were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

[Footnote 28: See Pausanias, l. vii. The Romans condescended to restore the names of those assemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.]

[Footnote 29: They are frequently mentioned by Caesar. The Abbe Dubos attempts, with very little success, to prove that the assemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. *Histoire de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Francoise*, l. i. c. 4.]

[Footnote 291: This is, perhaps, rather overstated. Most cities retained the choice of their municipal officers: some retained valuable privileges; Athens, for instance, in form was still a confederate city. (Tac. Ann. ii. 53.) These privileges, indeed, depended entirely on the

arbitrary will of the emperor, who revoked or restored them according to his caprice. See Walther Geschichte les Romischen Rechts, i. 324--an admirable summary of the Roman constitutional history.--M.]

"Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits," is a very just observation of Seneca, [30] confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may remark, that, about forty years after the reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day, by the cruel orders of Mithridates. [31] These voluntary exiles were engaged, for the most part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled with their families in the country, where they had honorably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts, and the most convenient situations, were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent; and they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance, they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire, which was seldom disappointed, of sharing, in due time, its honors and advantages. [32] The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendor of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian, it was disputed

which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome. [33] The right of Latium, as it was called, [331] conferred on the cities to which it had been granted, a more partial favor. The magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families. [34] Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions; [35] those who exercised any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public service, or displayed any personal talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet even, in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to those whose pretensions were seconded by favor or merit. The grandsons of the Gauls, who had besieged Julius Caesar in Alcsia, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome. [36] Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.

[Footnote 30: Seneca in *Consolat. ad Helviam*, c. 6.]

[Footnote 31: Memnon apud Photium, (c. 33,) [c. 224, p. 231, ed Bekker.]

Valer. Maxim. ix. 2. Plutarch and Dion Cassius swell the massacre to 150,000 citizens; but I should esteem the smaller number to be more than sufficient.]

[Footnote 32: Twenty-five colonies were settled in Spain, (see Plin. Hist. Nat. iii. 3, 4; iv. 35;) and nine in Britain, of which London, Colchester, Lincoln, Chester, Gloucester, and Bath still remain considerable cities. (See Richard of Cirencester, p. 36, and Whittaker's History of Manchester, l. i. c. 3.)]

[Footnote 33: Aul. Gel. Noctes Atticae, xvi 13. The Emperor Hadrian expressed his surprise, that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Italica, which already enjoyed the rights of Municipia, should solicit the title of colonies. Their example, however, became fashionable, and the empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum Dissertat. xiii.]

[Footnote 331: The right of Latium conferred an exemption from the government of the Roman praefect. Strabo states this distinctly, l. iv. p. 295, edit. Caesar's. See also Walther, p. 233.--M]

[Footnote 34: Spanheim, Orbis Roman. c. 8, p. 62.]

[Footnote 35: Aristid. in Romae Encomio. tom. i. p. 218, edit. Jebb.]

[Footnote 36: Tacit. Annal. xi. 23, 24. Hist. iv. 74.]

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue. [37] The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the east was less docile than the west to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colors, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendor of prosperity, became gradually more visible, as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were open to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul Britain, and Pannonia, [38] that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains, or among the peasants. [39] Education and study insensibly inspired the natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They solicited with more ardor, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honors of the state; supported the national dignity in letters [40] and in arms; and at length, in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have disowned for their countryman. The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long since civilized and

corrupted. They had too much taste to relinquish their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues, of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power.

[41] Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and sentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progress of colonies and conquest, had been diffused from the Adriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Asia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts, those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the East, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects. Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and especially in Egypt, the use of their ancient dialects, by secluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians. [42] The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the contempt, the sullen ferociousness of the latter excited the aversion, of the conquerors. [43] Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city: and it was remarked, that more than two hundred and thirty years elapsed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome. [44]

[Footnote 37: See Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5. Augustin. de Civitate Dei, xix 7 Lipsius de Pronunciatione Linguae Latinae, c. 3.]

[Footnote 38: Apuleius and Augustin will answer for Africa; Strabo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus, for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inscriptions. * Note: Mr. Hallam contests this assertion as regards Britain. "Nor did the Romans ever establish their language--I know not whether they wished to do so--in this island, as we perceive by that stubborn British tongue which has survived two conquests." In his note, Mr. Hallam examines the passage from Tacitus (Agric. xxi.) to which Gibbon refers. It merely asserts the progress of Latin studies among the higher orders. (Midd. Ages, iii. 314.) Probably it was a kind of court language, and that of public affairs and prevailed in the Roman colonies.--M.]

[Footnote 39: The Celtic was preserved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica. We may observe, that Apuleius reproaches an African youth, who lived among the populace, with the use of the Punic; whilst he had almost forgot Greek, and neither could nor would speak Latin, (Apolog. p. 596.) The greater part of St. Austin's congregations were strangers to the Punic.]

[Footnote 40: Spain alone produced Columella, the Senecas, Lucan, Martial, and Quintilian.]

[Footnote 41: There is not, I believe, from Dionysius to Libanus, a single Greek critic who mentions Virgil or Horace. They seem ignorant that the Romans had any good writers.]

[Footnote 42: The curious reader may see in Dupin, (*Bibliothèque Ecclesiastique*, tom. xix. p. 1, c. 8,) how much the use of the Syriac and Egyptian languages was still preserved.]

[Footnote 43: See Juvenal, Sat. iii. and xv. Ammian. Marcellin. xxii. 16.]

[Footnote 44: Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii. p. 1275. The first instance happened under the reign of Septimius Severus.]

It is a just though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe, soon became the favorite object of study and imitation in Italy and the western provinces. But the elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government. [45] The two languages exercised at the same time their separate jurisdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business were equally

conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

[Footnote 45: See Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 2, n. 2. The emperor Claudius disfranchised an eminent Grecian for not understanding Latin.

He was probably in some public office. Suetonius in Claud. c. 16. *

Note: Causes seem to have been pleaded, even in the senate, in both languages. Val. Max. loc. cit. Dion. l. lvii. c. 15.--M]

It was by such institutions that the nations of the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity, the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigor of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, [451] taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price, [46] accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction, [47] the most severe [471] regulations, [48] and the most cruel treatment, seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less

abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. [481] In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. [482] The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude. [49] The existence of a slave became an object of greater value, and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance, or a less cruel master. [50]

[Footnote 451: It was this which rendered the wars so sanguinary, and the battles so obstinate. The immortal Robertson, in an excellent discourse on the state of the world at the period of the establishment of Christianity, has traced a picture of the melancholy effects of slavery, in which we find all the depth of his views and the strength of his mind. I shall oppose successively some passages to the reflections of Gibbon. The reader will see, not without interest, the truths which

Gibbon appears to have mistaken or voluntarily neglected, developed by one of the best of modern historians. It is important to call them to mind here, in order to establish the facts and their consequences with accuracy. I shall more than once have occasion to employ, for this purpose, the discourse of Robertson. "Captives taken in war were, in all probability, the first persons subjected to perpetual servitude; and, when the necessities or luxury of mankind increased the demand for slaves, every new war recruited their number, by reducing the vanquished to that wretched condition. Hence proceeded the fierce and desperate spirit with which wars were carried on among ancient nations. While chains and slavery were the certain lot of the conquered, battles were fought, and towns defended with a rage and obstinacy which nothing but horror at such a fate could have inspired; but, putting an end to the cruel institution of slavery, Christianity extended its mild influences to the practice of war, and that barbarous art, softened by its humane spirit, ceased to be so destructive. Secure, in every event, of personal liberty, the resistance of the vanquished became less obstinate, and the triumph of the victor less cruel. Thus humanity was introduced into the exercise of war, with which it appears to be almost incompatible; and it is to the merciful maxims of Christianity, much more than to any other cause, that we must ascribe the little ferocity and bloodshed which accompany modern victories."--G.]

[Footnote 46: In the camp of Lucullus, an ox sold for a drachma, and a slave for four drachmae, or about three shillings. Plutarch. in Lucull. p. 580. * Note: Above 100,000 prisoners were taken in the Jewish

war.--G. Hist. of Jews, iii. 71. According to a tradition preserved by S. Jerom, after the insurrection in the time of Hadrian, they were sold as cheap as horse. Ibid. 124. Compare Blair on Roman Slavery, p. 19.--M., and Dureau de la blalle, Economie Politique des Romains, l. i. c. 15. But I cannot think that this writer has made out his case as to the common price of an agricultural slave being from 2000 to 2500 francs, (80l. to 100l.) He has overlooked the passages which show the ordinary prices, (i. e. Hor. Sat. ii. vii. 45,) and argued from extraordinary and exceptional cases.--M. 1845.]

[Footnote 47: Diodorus Siculus in Eclog. Hist. l. xxxiv. and xxxvi. Florus, iii. 19, 20.]

[Footnote 471: The following is the example: we shall see whether the word "severe" is here in its place. "At the time in which L. Domitius was praetor in Sicily, a slave killed a wild boar of extraordinary size. The praetor, struck by the dexterity and courage of the man, desired to see him. The poor wretch, highly gratified with the distinction, came to present himself before the praetor, in hopes, no doubt, of praise and reward; but Domitius, on learning that he had only a javelin to attack and kill the boar, ordered him to be instantly crucified, under the barbarous pretext that the law prohibited the use of this weapon, as of all others, to slaves." Perhaps the cruelty of Domitius is less astonishing than the indifference with which the Roman orator relates this circumstance, which affects him so little that he thus expresses himself: "Durum hoc fortasse videatur, neque ego in ullam partem

disputo." "This may appear harsh, nor do I give any opinion on the subject." And it is the same orator who exclaims in the same oration, "Facinus est cruciare civem Romanum; scelus verberare; prope parricidium necare: quid dicam in crucem tollere?" "It is a crime to imprison a Roman citizen; wickedness to scourge; next to parricide to put to death, what shall I call it to crucify?"

In general, this passage of Gibbon on slavery, is full, not only of blamable indifference, but of an exaggeration of impartiality which resembles dishonesty. He endeavors to extenuate all that is appalling in the condition and treatment of the slaves; he would make us consider those cruelties as possibly "justified by necessity." He then describes, with minute accuracy, the slightest mitigations of their deplorable condition; he attributes to the virtue or the policy of the emperors the progressive amelioration in the lot of the slaves; and he passes over in silence the most influential cause, that which, after rendering the slaves less miserable, has contributed at length entirely to enfranchise them from their sufferings and their chains,--Christianity. It would be easy to accumulate the most frightful, the most agonizing details, of the manner in which the Romans treated their slaves; whole works have been devoted to the description. I content myself with referring to them. Some reflections of Robertson, taken from the discourse already quoted, will make us feel that Gibbon, in tracing the mitigation of the condition of the slaves, up to a period little later than that which witnessed the establishment of Christianity in the world, could not have avoided the acknowledgment of the influence of that beneficent cause, if

he had not already determined not to speak of it.

"Upon establishing despotic government in the Roman empire, domestic tyranny rose, in a short time, to an astonishing height. In that rank soil, every vice, which power nourishes in the great, or oppression engenders in the mean, thrived and grew up apace. * * * It is not the authority of any single detached precept in the gospel, but the spirit and genius of the Christian religion, more powerful than any particular command, which hath abolished the practice of slavery throughout the world. The temper which Christianity inspired was mild and gentle; and the doctrines it taught added such dignity and lustre to human nature, as rescued it from the dishonorable servitude into which it was sunk."

It is in vain, then, that Gibbon pretends to attribute solely to the desire of keeping up the number of slaves, the milder conduct which the Romans began to adopt in their favor at the time of the emperors. This cause had hitherto acted in an opposite direction; how came it on a sudden to have a different influence? "The masters," he says, "encouraged the marriage of their slaves; * * * the sentiments of nature, the habits of education, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude." The children of slaves were the property of their master, who could dispose of or alienate them like the rest of his property. Is it in such a situation, with such notions, that the sentiments of nature unfold themselves, or habits of education become mild and peaceful? We must not attribute to causes inadequate or altogether without force, effects which require to explain them a reference to more influential

causes; and even if these slighter causes had in effect a manifest influence, we must not forget that they are themselves the effect of a primary, a higher, and more extensive cause, which, in giving to the mind and to the character a more disinterested and more humane bias, disposed men to second or themselves to advance, by their conduct, and by the change of manners, the happy results which it tended to produce.--G.

I have retained the whole of M. Guizot's note, though, in his zeal for the invaluable blessings of freedom and Christianity, he has done Gibbon injustice. The condition of the slaves was undoubtedly improved under the emperors. What a great authority has said, "The condition of a slave is better under an arbitrary than under a free government," (Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, iv. 7,) is, I believe, supported by the history of all ages and nations. The protecting edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines are historical facts, and can as little be attributed to the influence of Christianity, as the milder language of heathen writers, of Seneca, (particularly Ep. 47,) of Pliny, and of Plutarch. The latter influence of Christianity is admitted by Gibbon himself. The subject of Roman slavery has recently been investigated with great diligence in a very modest but valuable volume, by Wm. Blair, Esq., Edin. 1833. May we be permitted, while on the subject, to refer to the most splendid passage extant of Mr. Pitt's eloquence, the description of the Roman slave-dealer. on the shores of Britain, condemning the island to irreclaimable barbarism, as a perpetual and prolific nursery of slaves? *Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 80.

Gibbon, it should be added, was one of the first and most consistent opponents of the African slave-trade. (See Hist. ch. xxv. and Letters to Lor Sheffield, Misc. Works)--M.]

[Footnote 48: See a remarkable instance of severity in Cicero in Verrem, v. 3.]

[Footnote 481: An active slave-trade, which was carried on in many quarters, particularly the Euxine, the eastern provinces, the coast of Africa, and British must be taken into the account. Blair, 23--32.--M.]

[Footnote 482: The Romans, as well in the first ages of the republic as later, allowed to their slaves a kind of marriage, (contubernium:) notwithstanding this, luxury made a greater number of slaves in demand. The increase in their population was not sufficient, and recourse was had to the purchase of slaves, which was made even in the provinces of the East subject to the Romans. It is, moreover, known that slavery is a state little favorable to population. (See Hume's Essay, and Malthus on population, i. 334.--G.) The testimony of Appian (B.C. 1. i. c. 7) is decisive in favor of the rapid multiplication of the agricultural slaves; it is confirmed by the numbers engaged in the servile wars. Compare also Blair, p. 119; likewise Columella l. viii.--M.]

[Footnote 49: See in Gruter, and the other collectors, a great number of inscriptions addressed by slaves to their wives, children,

fellow-servants, masters, &c. They are all most probably of the Imperial age.]

[Footnote 50: See the Augustan History, and a Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxvth volume of the Academy of Inscriptions, upon the Roman slaves.]

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse. [51] It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honorable distinction was confined to such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honors. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons,

they likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation. [52] Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honors was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

[Footnote 51: See another Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxviith volume, on the Roman freedmen.]

[Footnote 52: Spanheim, Orbis Roman. l. i. c. 16, p. 124, &c.] It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit; but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers. [53] Without interpreting, in their utmost strictness, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads, [54] we may venture to pronounce, that the proportion of slaves, who were valued as property, was more considerable than that of servants, who can be computed only as an expense. [55] The youths of a promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and their price was ascertained by the degree of their skill and talents. [56] Almost every profession, either liberal [57] or mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury. [58] It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase, than to hire his workmen; and in the country, slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general

observation, and to display the multitude of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were maintained in a single palace of Rome. [59] The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her property. [60] A freedman, under the name of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves. [61]

[Footnote 53: Seneca de Clementia, l. i. c. 24. The original is much stronger, "Quantum periculum immineret si servi nostri numerare nos coepissent."]

[Footnote 54: See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii.) and Athenaeus (Deipnosophist. l. vi. p. 272.) The latter boldly asserts, that he knew very many Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves.]

[Footnote 55: In Paris there are not more than 43,000 domestics of every sort, and not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. Messange, Recherches sui la Population, p. 186.]

[Footnote 56: A learned slave sold for many hundred pounds sterling:

Atticus always bred and taught them himself. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. c. 13, [on the prices of slaves. Blair, 149.]--M.]

[Footnote 57: Many of the Roman physicians were slaves. See Dr. Middleton's Dissertation and Defence.]

[Footnote 58: Their ranks and offices are very copiously enumerated by Pignorius de Servis.]

[Footnote 59: Tacit. Annal. xiv. 43. They were all executed for not preventing their master's murder. * Note: The remarkable speech of Cassius shows the proud feelings of the Roman aristocracy on this subject.--M]

[Footnote 60: Apuleius in Apolog. p. 548. edit. Delphin]

[Footnote 61: Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. 47.]

The number of subjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of slaves, cannot now be fixed with such a degree of accuracy, as the importance of the object would deserve. We are informed, that when the Emperor Claudius exercised the office of censor, he took an account of six millions nine hundred and forty-five thousand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, must have amounted to about twenty millions of souls. The multitude of subjects of an inferior rank was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after

weighing with attention every circumstance which could influence the balance, it seems probable that there existed, in the time of Claudius, about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either sex, and of every age; and that the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. [611] The total amount of this imperfect calculation would rise to about one hundred and twenty millions of persons; a degree of population which possibly exceeds that of modern Europe, [62] and forms the most numerous society that has ever been united under the same system of government.

[Footnote 611]: According to Robertson, there were twice as many slaves as free citizens.--G. Mr. Blair (p. 15) estimates three slaves to one freeman, between the conquest of Greece, B.C. 146, and the reign of Alexander Severus, A. D. 222, 235. The proportion was probably larger in Italy than in the provinces.--M. On the other hand, Zumpt, in his Dissertation quoted below, (p. 86,) asserts it to be a gross error in Gibbon to reckon the number of slaves equal to that of the free population. The luxury and magnificence of the great, (he observes,) at the commencement of the empire, must not be taken as the groundwork of calculations for the whole Roman world. "The agricultural laborer, and the artisan, in Spain, Gaul, Britain, Syria, and Egypt, maintained himself, as in the present day, by his own labor and that of his household, without possessing a single slave." The latter part of my note was intended to suggest this consideration. Yet so completely was slavery rooted in the social system, both in the east and the west, that in the great diffusion of wealth at this time, every one, I doubt not,

who could afford a domestic slave, kept one; and generally, the number of slaves was in proportion to the wealth. I do not believe that the cultivation of the soil by slaves was confined to Italy; the holders of large estates in the provinces would probably, either from choice or necessity, adopt the same mode of cultivation. The latifundia, says Pliny, had ruined Italy, and had begun to ruin the provinces. Slaves were no doubt employed in agricultural labor to a great extent in Sicily, and were the estates of those six enormous landholders who were said to have possessed the whole province of Africa, cultivated altogether by free coloni? Whatever may have been the case in the rural districts, in the towns and cities the household duties were almost entirely discharged by slaves, and vast numbers belonged to the public establishments. I do not, however, differ so far from Zumpt, and from M. Dureau de la Malle, as to adopt the higher and bolder estimate of Robertson and Mr. Blair, rather than the more cautious suggestions of Gibbon. I would reduce rather than increase the proportion of the slave population. The very ingenious and elaborate calculations of the French writer, by which he deduces the amount of the population from the produce and consumption of corn in Italy, appear to me neither precise nor satisfactory bases for such complicated political arithmetic. I am least satisfied with his views as to the population of the city of Rome; but this point will be more fitly reserved for a note on the thirty-first chapter of Gibbon. The work, however, of M. Dureau de la Malle is very curious and full on some of the minuter points of Roman statistics.--M. 1845.]

[Footnote 62: Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy with its islands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Russia, six in Poland, six in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five, or one hundred and seven millions. See Voltaire, de l'Histoire Generale. * Note: The present population of Europe is estimated at 227,700,000. Malts Bran, Geogr. Trans edit. 1832 See details in the different volumes Another authority, (Almanach de Gotha,) quoted in a recent English publication, gives the following details:--

France, 32,897,521 Germany, (including Hungary, Prussian and Austrian Poland,) 56,136,213 Italy, 20,548,616 Great Britain and Ireland, 24,062,947 Spain and Portugal, 13,953,959. 3,144,000 Russia, including Poland, 44,220,600 Cracow, 128,480 Turkey, (including Pachalic of Dschesair,) 9,545,300 Greece, 637,700 Ionian Islands, 208,100 Sweden and Norway, 3,914,963 Denmark, 2,012,998 Belgium, 3,533,538 Holland, 2,444,550 Switzerland, 985,000. Total, 219,344,116

Since the publication of my first annotated edition of Gibbon, the subject of the population of the Roman empire has been investigated by two writers of great industry and learning; Mons. Dureau de la Malle, in his *Economie Politique des Romains*, liv. ii. c. 1. to 8, and M. Zumpt, in a dissertation printed in the *Transactions of the Berlin Academy*, 1840. M. Dureau de la Malle confines his inquiry almost entirely to

the city of Rome, and Roman Italy. Zumpt examines at greater length the axiom, which he supposes to have been assumed by Gibbon as unquestionable, "that Italy and the Roman world was never so populous as in the time of the Antonines." Though this probably was Gibbon's opinion, he has not stated it so peremptorily as asserted by Mr. Zumpt. It had before been expressly laid down by Hume, and his statement was controverted by Wallace and by Malthus. Gibbon says (p. 84) that there is no reason to believe the country (of Italy) less populous in the age of the Antonines, than in that of Romulus; and Zumpt acknowledges that we have no satisfactory knowledge of the state of Italy at that early age. Zumpt, in my opinion with some reason, takes the period just before the first Punic war, as that in which Roman Italy (all south of the Rubicon) was most populous. From that time, the numbers began to diminish, at first from the enormous waste of life out of the free population in the foreign, and afterwards in the civil wars; from the cultivation of the soil by slaves; towards the close of the republic, from the repugnance to marriage, which resisted alike the dread of legal punishment and the offer of legal immunity and privilege; and from the depravity of manners, which interfered with the procreation, the birth, and the rearing of children. The arguments and the authorities of Zumpt are equally conclusive as to the decline of population in Greece. Still the details, which he himself adduces as to the prosperity and populousness of Asia Minor, and the whole of the Roman East, with the advancement of the European provinces, especially Gaul, Spain, and Britain, in civilization, and therefore in populousness, (for I have no confidence in the vast numbers sometimes assigned to the barbarous

inhabitants of these countries,) may, I think, fairly compensate for any deduction to be made from Gibbon's general estimate on account of Greece and Italy. Gibbon himself acknowledges his own estimate to be vague and conjectural; and I may venture to recommend the dissertation of Zumpt as deserving respectful consideration.--M 1815.]