All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, issuing from the Forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the distance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jerusalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication, from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire, was drawn out to the length if four thousand and eighty Roman miles. [85] The public roads were accurately divided by mile-stones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams. [86] The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace which commanded the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in some places near the capital, with granite. [87] Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; out their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish, throughout their extensive dominions, the

regular institution of posts. [88] Houses were every where erected at the distance only of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel a hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads. [89] [891] The use of posts was allowed to those who claimed it by an Imperial mandate; but though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or conveniency of private citizens. [90] Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean: and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake. The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbors; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tyber, and formed by the emperor Claudius, was a useful monument of Roman greatness. [91] From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favorable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten, to Alexandria in Egypt. [92]

[See Remains Of Claudian Aquaduct]

[Footnote 85: The following Itinerary may serve to convey some idea of the direction of the road, and of the distance between the principal towns. I. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. II. London, 227. III. Rhutupiae or Sandwich, 67. IV. The navigation to Boulogne, 45. V. Rheims, 174. VI. Lyons, 330. VII. Milan, 324. VIII.

Rome, 426. IX. Brundusium, 360. X. The navigation to Dyrrachium, 40. XI. Byzantium, 711. XII. Ancyra, 283. XIII. Tarsus, 301. XIV. Antioch, 141. XV. Tyre, 252. XVI. Jerusalem, 168. In all 4080 Roman, or 3740 English miles. See the Itineraries published by Wesseling, his annotations; Gale and Stukeley for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy.]

[Footnote 86: Montfaucon, l'Antiquite Expliquee, (tom. 4, p. 2, l. i. c. 5,) has described the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Nismes, &c.]

[Footnote 87: Bergier, Histoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, l. ii. c. l. l--28.]

[Footnote 88: Procopius in Hist. Arcana, c. 30. Bergier, Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv. Codex Theodosian. l. viii. tit. v. vol. ii. p. 506--563 with Godefroy's learned commentary.]

[Footnote 89: In the time of Theodosius, Caesarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was 725 Roman, or 665 English miles. See Libanius, Orat. xxii., and the Itineria, p. 572--581. Note: A courier is mentioned in Walpole's Travels, ii. 335, who was to travel from Aleppo to Constantinople, more than 700 miles, in eight days, an unusually short journey.--M.]

[Footnote 891: Posts for the conveyance of intelligence were established

by Augustus. Suet. Aug. 49. The couriers travelled with amazing speed. Blair on Roman Slavery, note, p. 261. It is probable that the posts, from the time of Augustus, were confined to the public service, and supplied by impressment Nerva, as it appears from a coin of his reign, made an important change; "he established posts upon all the public roads of Italy, and made the service chargeable upon his own exchequer. Hadrian, perceiving the advantage of this improvement, extended it to all the provinces of the empire." Cardwell on Coins, p. 220.--M.]

[Footnote 90: Pliny, though a favorite and a minister, made an apology for granting post-horses to his wife on the most urgent business. Epist. x. 121, 122.]

[Footnote 91: Bergier, Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv. c. 49.]

[Footnote 92: Plin. Hist. Natur. xix. i. [In Prooem.] * Note: Pliny says Puteoli, which seems to have been the usual landing place from the East. See the voyages of St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 13, and of Josephus, Vita, c. 3--M.]

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The East was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury; whilst the West

was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilized nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe from Asia and Egypt: [93] but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy, and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavor of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the island of Sicily, and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste, of the savage inhabitants. [94] A thousand years afterwards, Italy could boast, that of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two thirds were produced from her soil. [95] The blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was

thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul. [96] This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquished; and there is some reason to believe, that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines. [97] 3. The olive, in the western world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers to that useful plant: it was naturalized in those countries; and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighborhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience. [98] 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown. [99] 5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the Lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media. [100] The assured supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter, multiplied the number of the docks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added an assiduous attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich and the subsistence of the poor.

The elegant treatise of Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be observed, that those famines, which so frequently afflicted the infant republic, were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by

the plenty of its more fortunate neighbors.

[Footnote 93: It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phoenicians introduced some new arts and productions into the neighborhood of Marseilles and Gades.]

[Footnote 94: See Homer, Odyss. l. ix. v. 358.]

[Footnote 95: Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xiv.]

[Footnote 96: Strab. Geograph. l. iv. p. 269. The intense cold of a Gallic winter was almost proverbial among the ancients. * Note: Strabo only says that the grape does not ripen. Attempts had been made in the time of Augustus to naturalize the vine in the north of Gaul; but the cold was too great. Diod. Sic. edit. Rhodom. p. 304.--W. Diodorus (lib. v. 26) gives a curious picture of the Italian traders bartering, with the savages of Gaul, a cask of wine for a slave.--M. --It appears from the newly discovered treatise of Cicero de Republica, that there was a law of the republic prohibiting the culture of the vine and olive beyond the Alps, in order to keep up the value of those in Italy. Nos justissimi homines, qui transalpinas gentes oleam et vitem serere non sinimus, quo pluris sint nostra oliveta nostraeque vineae. Lib. iii. 9. The restrictive law of Domitian was veiled under the decent pretext of encouraging the cultivation of grain. Suet. Dom. vii. It was repealed by Probus Vopis Strobus, 18.--M.]

[Footnote 97: In the beginning of the fourth century, the orator Eumenius (Panegyr. Veter. viii. 6, edit. Delphin.) speaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the first plantation of which was totally unknown. The Pagus Arebrignus is supposed by M. d'Anville to be the district of Beaune, celebrated, even at present for one of the first growths of Burgundy. * Note: This is proved by a passage of Pliny the Elder, where he speaks of a certain kind of grape (vitis picata. vinum picatum) which grows naturally to the district of Vienne, and had recently been transplanted into the country of the Arverni, (Auvergne,) of the Helvii, (the Vivarias.) and the Burgundy and Franche Compte. Pliny wrote A.D. 77. Hist. Nat. xiv. 1.--W.]

[Footnote 98: Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xv.]

[Footnote 99: Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xix.]

[Footnote 100: See the agreeable Essays on Agriculture by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have said of Lucerne.]

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; since the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the Roman empire, the labor of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly, employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favorites of fortune united every

refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendor, whatever could soothe their pride or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities, of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forests of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the shores of the Baltic

to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. [101] There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets, and other manufactures of the East; but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of a hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt, on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon, [102] was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported on the backs of camels, from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire. [103] The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling; silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold; [104] precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond; [105] and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals. The labor and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expense of the public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only [1051] instrument of commerce. It was a

complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that, in the purchase of female ornaments, the wealth of the state was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations. [106] The annual loss is computed, by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling. [107] Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet, if we compare the proportion between gold and silver, as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine, we shall discover within that period a very considerable increase. [108] There is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce; it is therefore evident that silver was grown more common; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

[Footnote 101: Tacit. Germania, c. 45. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvii. 13. The latter observed, with some humor, that even fashion had not yet found out the use of amber. Nero sent a Roman knight to purchase great quantities on the spot where it was produced, the coast of modern Prussia.]

[Footnote 102: Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Serindib by the Arabs. It was discovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the East.]

[Footnote 103: Plin. Hist. Natur. l. vi. Strabo, l. xvii.]

[Footnote 104: Hist. August. p. 224. A silk garment was considered as an ornament to a woman, but as a disgrace to a man.]

[Footnote 105: The two great pearl fisheries were the same as at present, Ormuz and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Jumelpur, in Bengal, which is described in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. ii. p. 281.]

[Footnote 1051: Certainly not the only one. The Indians were not so contented with regard to foreign productions. Arrian has a long list of European wares, which they received in exchange for their own; Italian and other wines, brass, tin, lead, coral, chrysolith, storax, glass, dresses of one or many colors, zones, &c. See Periplus Maris Erythraei in Hudson, Geogr. Min. i. p. 27.--W. The German translator observes that Gibbon has confined the use of aromatics to religious worship and funerals. His error seems the omission of other spices, of which the Romans must have consumed great quantities in their cookery. Wenck, however, admits that silver was the chief article of exchange.--M.
In 1787, a peasant (near Nellore in the Carnatic) struck, in digging, on the remains of a Hindu temple; he found, also, a pot which contained Roman coins and medals of the second century, mostly Trajans, Adrians, and Faustinas, all of gold, many of them fresh and beautiful, others defaced or perforated, as if they had been worn as ornaments. (Asiatic Researches, ii. 19.)--M.]

[Footnote 106: Tacit. Annal. iii. 53. In a speech of Tiberius.]

[Footnote 107: Plin. Hist. Natur. xii. 18. In another place he computes half that sum; Quingenties H. S. for India exclusive of Arabia.]

[Footnote 108: The proportion, which was 1 to 10, and 12 1/2, rose to 14 2/5, the legal regulation of Constantine. See Arbuthnot's Tables of ancient Coins, c. 5.]

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past, and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt, and honestly confessed, by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true principles of social life, laws, agriculture, and science, which had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly established by the power of Rome, under whose auspicious influence the fiercest barbarians were united by an equal government and common language. They affirm, that with the improvement of arts, the human species were visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing splendor of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden; and the long festival of peace which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of the ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger." [109] Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation, which seems to prevail in these passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

[Footnote 109: Among many other passages, see Pliny, (Hist. Natur. iii. 5.) Aristides, (de Urbe Roma,) and Tertullian, (de Anima, c. 30.)]

It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valor remained, but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independence, the sense of national honor, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for their defence to a mercenary army. The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and refinement, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole

extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit. [110] The sciences of physic and astronomy were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are studied by those who have improved their discoveries and corrected their errors; but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, still reigned in the schools; and their systems, transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exercise the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile mitations: or if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigor of the imagination, after a long repose, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by a uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with those bold ancients, who, by expressing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honor. The name of Poet was almost forgotten; that of Orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning,

and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.[1101]

[Footnote 110: Herodes Atticus gave the sophist Polemo above eight thousand pounds for three declamations. See Philostrat. l. i. p. 538. The Antonines founded a school at Athens, in which professors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great sects of philosophy were maintained at the public expense for the instruction of youth. The salary of a philosopher was ten thousand drachmae, between three and four hundred pounds a year. Similar establishments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuch. tom. ii. p. 352, edit. Reitz. Philostrat. l. ii. p. 566. Hist. August. p. 21. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. p. 1195. Juvenal himself, in a morose satire, which in every line betrays his own disappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to say,--"--O Juvenes, circumspicit et stimulat vos. Materiamque sibi Ducis indulgentia quaerit."--Satir. vii. 20. Note: Vespasian first gave a salary to professors: he assigned to each professor of rhetoric, Greek and Roman, centena sestertia. (Sueton. in Vesp. 18). Hadrian and the Antonines, though still liberal, were less profuse.--G. from W. Suetonius wrote annua centena L. 807, 5, 10.--M.]

[Footnote 1101: This judgment is rather severe: besides the physicians, astronomers, and grammarians, among whom there were some very distinguished men, there were still, under Hadrian, Suetonius, Florus, Plutarch; under the Antonines, Arrian, Pausanias, Appian, Marcus Aurelius himself, Sextus Empiricus, &c. Jurisprudence gained much by the

labors of Salvius Julianus, Julius Celsus, Sex. Pomponius, Caius, and others.--G. from W. Yet where, among these, is the writer of original genius, unless, perhaps Plutarch? or even of a style really elegant?--M.]

The sublime Longinus, who, in somewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," says he, "as some children always remain pygmies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined, thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand themselves, or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients; who, living under a popular government, wrote with the same freedom as they acted." [111] This diminutive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pygmies; when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

[Footnote 111: Longin. de Sublim. c. 44, p. 229, edit. Toll. Here, too, we may say of Longinus, "his own example strengthens all his laws." Instead of proposing his sentiments with a manly boldness, he insinuates them with the most guarded caution; puts them into the mouth of a

friend, and as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a show of refuting them himself.]