

Chapter X: Emperors Decius, Gallus, Aemilianus, Valerian And Gallienus.--Part IV.

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

had revered its sanctity and enriched its splendor. [131] But the rude savages of the Baltic were destitute of a taste for the elegant arts, and they despised the ideal terrors of a foreign superstition. [132]

[Footnote 128: Hist. Aug. p. 178. Jornandes, c. 20.]

[Footnote 129: Strabo, l. xiv. p. 640. Vitruvius, l. i. c. i. praefat l vii. Tacit Annal. iii. 61. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvi. 14.]

[Footnote 130: The length of St. Peter's is 840 Roman palms; each palm is very little short of nine English inches. See Greaves's Miscellanies vol. i. p. 233; on the Roman Foot. * Note: St. Paul's Cathedral is 500 feet. Dallaway on Architecture--M.]

[Footnote 131: The policy, however, of the Romans induced them to abridge the extent of the sanctuary or asylum, which by successive privileges had spread itself two stadia round the temple. Strabo, l. xiv. p. 641. Tacit. Annal. iii. 60, &c.]

[Footnote 132: They offered no sacrifices to the Grecian gods. See Epistol Gregor. Thaummat.]

Another circumstance is related of these invasions, which might deserve our notice, were it not justly to be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist. We are told, that in the sack of Athens the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of setting fire

to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design; by the profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books, they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms. [133] The sagacious counsellor (should the truth of the fact be admitted) reasoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the most polite and powerful nations, genius of every kind has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.

[Footnote 133: Zonaras, l. xii. p. 635. Such an anecdote was perfectly suited to the taste of Montaigne. He makes use of it in his agreeable Essay on Pedantry, l. i. c. 24.]

IV. The new sovereign of Persia, Artaxerxes and his son Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already seen) over the house of Arsaces. Of the many princes of that ancient race. Chosroes, king of Armenia, had alone preserved both his life and his independence. He defended himself by the natural strength of his country; by the perpetual resort of fugitives and malecontents; by the alliance of the Romans, and above all, by his own courage.

Invincible in arms, during a thirty years' war, he was at length assassinated by the emissaries of Sapor, king of Persia. The patriotic satraps of Armenia, who asserted the freedom and dignity of the crown,

implored the protection of Rome in favor of Tiridates, the lawful heir. But the son of Chosroes was an infant, the allies were at a distance, and the Persian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irresistible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was saved by the fidelity of a servant, and Armenia continued above twenty-seven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy of Persia. [134] Elated with this easy conquest, and presuming on the distresses or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the strong garrisons of Carrhae and Nisibis [1341] to surrender, and spread devastation and terror on either side of the Euphrates.

[Footnote 134: Moses Chorenensis, l. ii. c. 71, 73, 74. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628. The authentic relation of the Armenian historian serves to rectify the confused account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children of Tiridates, who at that time was himself an infant. (Compare St Martin Memoires sur l'Armenie, i. p. 301.--M.)]

[Footnote 1341: Nisibis, according to Persian authors, was taken by a miracle, the wall fell, in compliance with the prayers of the army. Malcolm's Persia, l. 76.--M]

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

notwithstanding his advanced age, to march in person to the defence of the Euphrates.

During his progress through Asia Minor, the naval enterprises of the Goths were suspended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm. He passed the Euphrates, encountered the Persian monarch near the walls of Edessa, was vanquished, and taken prisoner by Sapor. The particulars of this great event are darkly and imperfectly represented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may discover a long series of imprudence, of error, and of deserved misfortunes on the side of the Roman emperor. He reposed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his Praetorian praefect. [135] That worthless minister rendered his master formidable only to the oppressed subjects, and contemptible to the enemies of Rome. [136] By his weak or wicked counsels, the Imperial army was betrayed into a situation where valor and military skill were equally unavailing. [137] The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Persian host was repulsed with great slaughter; [138] and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage of famine and pestilence had insured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamors demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and insisted on a personal conference with

the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of intrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and his astonished troops laid down their arms. [139] In such a moment of triumph, the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure. Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained with every vice, was chosen to dishonor the Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army. [140]

[Footnote 135: Hist. Aug. p. 191. As Macrianus was an enemy to the Christians, they charged him with being a magician.]

[Footnote 136: Zosimus, l. i. p. 33.]

[Footnote 137: Hist. Aug. p. 174.]

[Footnote 138: Victor in Caesar. Eutropius, ix. 7.]

[Footnote 139: Zosimus, l. i. p. 33. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630. Peter Patricius, in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29.]

[Footnote 140: Hist. August. p. 185. The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most

inaccurate writer]

The Imperial slave was eager to secure the favor of his master by an act of treason to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and, by the way of Chalcis, to the metropolis of the East. So rapid were the motions of the Persian cavalry, that, if we may credit a very judicious historian, [141] the city of Antioch was surprised when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the amusements of the theatre. The splendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or destroyed; and the numerous inhabitants were put to the sword, or led away into captivity. [142] The tide of devastation was stopped for a moment by the resolution of the high priest of Emesa. Arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peasants, armed only with slings, and defended his god and his property from the sacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroaster. [143] But the ruin of Tarsus, and of many other cities, furnishes a melancholy proof that, except in this singular instance, the conquest of Syria and Cilicia scarcely interrupted the progress of the Persian arms. The advantages of the narrow passes of Mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader, whose principal force consisted in his cavalry, would have been engaged in a very unequal combat: and Sapor was permitted to form the siege of Caesarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the second rank, which was supposed to contain four hundred thousand inhabitants. Demosthenes commanded in the place, not so much by the commission of the emperor, as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and when at last Caesarea was

betrayed by the perfidy of a physician, he cut his way through the Persians, who had been ordered to exert their utmost diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief escaped the power of a foe who might either have honored or punished his obstinate valor; but many thousands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general massacre, and Sapor is accused of treating his prisoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty.

[144] Much should undoubtedly be allowed for national animosity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain, that the same prince, who, in Armenia, had displayed the mild aspect of a legislator, showed himself to the Romans under the stern features of a conqueror. He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the empire, and sought only to leave behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces. [145]

[Footnote 141: The sack of Antioch, anticipated by some historians, is assigned, by the decisive testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus, xxiii. 5. * Note: Heyne, in his note on Zosimus, contests this opinion of Gibbon and observes, that the testimony of Ammianus is in fact by no means clear, decisive. Gallienus and Valerian reigned together. Zosimus, in a passage, l. iiii. 32, 8, distinctly places this event before the capture of Valerian.--M.]

[Footnote 142: Zosimus, l. i. p. 35.]

[Footnote 143: John Malala, tom. i. p. 391. He corrupts this probable

event by some fabulous circumstances.]

[Footnote 144: Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630. Deep valleys were filled up with the slain. Crowds of prisoners were driven to water like beasts, and many perished for want of food.]

[Footnote 145: Zosimus, l. i. p. 25 asserts, that Sapor, had he not preferred spoil to conquest, might have remained master of Asia.]

At the time when the East trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a present not unworthy of the greatest kings; a long train of camels, laden with the most rare and valuable merchandises. The rich offering was accompanied with an epistle, respectful, but not servile, from Odenathus, one of the noblest and most opulent senators of Palmyra. "Who is this Odenathus," (said the haughty victor, and he commanded that the present should be cast into the Euphrates,) "that he thus insolently presumes to write to his lord? If he entertains a hope of mitigating his punishment, let him fall prostrate before the foot of our throne, with his hands bound behind his back. Should he hesitate, swift destruction shall be poured on his head, on his whole race, and on his country."

[146] The desperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced, called into action all the latent powers of his soul. He met Sapor; but he met him in arms.

Infusing his own spirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria [147] and the tents of the desert, [148] he hovered round the

Persian host, harassed their retreat, carried off part of the treasure, and, what was dearer than any treasure, several of the women of the great king; who was at last obliged to repass the Euphrates with some marks of haste and confusion. [149] By this exploit, Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortunes. The majesty of Rome, oppressed by a Persian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

[Footnote 146: Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29.]

[Footnote 147: Syrorum agrestium manu. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus Victor the Augustan History, (p. 192,) and several inscriptions, agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra.]

[Footnote 148: He possessed so powerful an interest among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Persic. l. ii. c. 5) and John Malala, (tom. i. p. 391) style him Prince of the Saracens.]

[Footnote 149: Peter Patricius, p. 25.]

The voice of history, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuse of the rights of conquest. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but invested with the Imperial purple, was exposed to the multitude, a constant spectacle of fallen greatness; and that whenever the Persian monarch mounted on horseback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his allies, who repeatedly

advised him to remember the vicissitudes of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illustrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of insult, Sapor still remained inflexible.

When Valerian sunk under the weight of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and formed into the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia; a more real monument of triumph, than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity. [150] The tale is moral and pathetic, but the truth [1501] of it may very fairly be called in question. The letters still extant from the princes of the East to Sapor are manifest forgeries; [151] nor is it natural to suppose that a jealous monarch should, even in the person of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majesty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Persia, it is at least certain that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy, languished away his life in hopeless captivity.

[Footnote 150: The Pagan writers lament, the Christian insult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various testimonies are accurately collected by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 739, &c. So little has been preserved of eastern history before Mahomet, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory Sapor, an event so glorious to their nation. See *Bibliothèque Orientale*. * Note: Malcolm appears to write from Persian authorities, i. 76.--M.]

[Footnote 1501: Yet Gibbon himself records a speech of the emperor Galerius,

which alludes to the cruelties exercised against the living, and the indignities to which they exposed the dead Valerian, vol. ii. ch. 13. Respect for the kingly character would by no means prevent an eastern monarch from ratifying his pride and his vengeance on a fallen foe.--M.]

[Footnote 151: One of these epistles is from Artavasdes, king of Armenia; since Armenia was then a province of Persia, the king, the kingdom, and the epistle must be fictitious.]

The emperor Gallienus, who had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure and avowed indifference. "I knew that my father was a mortal," said he; "and since he has acted as it becomes a brave man, I am satisfied." Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic. [152] It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconstant character of Gallienus, which he displayed without constraint, as soon as he became sole possessor of the empire. In every art that he attempted, his lively genius enabled him to succeed; and as his genius was destitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a master of several curious, but useless sciences, a ready orator, an elegant poet, [153] a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and most contemptible prince. When the great emergencies of the state required his presence and attention, he was engaged in conversation with the philosopher Plotinus, [154]

wasting his time in trifling or licentious pleasures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian mysteries, or soliciting a place in the Arcopagus of Athens. His profuse magnificence insulted the general poverty; the solemn ridicule of his triumphs impressed a deeper sense of the public disgrace. [155] The repeated intelligence of invasions, defeats, and rebellions, he received with a careless smile; and singling out, with affected contempt, some particular production of the lost province, he carelessly asked, whether Rome must be ruined, unless it was supplied with linen from Egypt, and arras cloth from Gaul. There were, however, a few short moments in the life of Gallienus, when, exasperated by some recent injury, he suddenly appeared the intrepid soldier and the cruel tyrant; till, satiated with blood, or fatigued by resistance, he insensibly sunk into the natural mildness and indolence of his character. [156]

[Footnote 152: See his life in the Augustan History.]

[Footnote 153: There is still extant a very pretty Epithalamium, composed by Gallienus for the nuptials of his nephews:--"Ite ait, O juvenes, pariter sudate medullis Omnibus, inter vos: non murmura vestra columbae, Brachia non hederæ, non vincant oscula conchæ."]

[Footnote 154: He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Campania to try the experiment of realizing Plato's Republic. See the Life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius's Biblioth. Graec. 1. iv.]

[Footnote 155: A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed

the antiquarians by its legend and reverse; the former Gallienoe Augustoe, the latter Ubique Pax. M. Spanheim supposes that the coin was struck by some of the enemies of Gallienus, and was designed as a severe satire on that effeminate prince. But as the use of irony may seem unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has deduced from a passage of Trebellius Pollio (Hist. Aug. p. 198) an ingenious and natural solution. Galliena was first cousin to the emperor. By delivering Africa from the usurper Celsus, she deserved the title of Augusta. On a medal in the French king's collection, we read a similar inscription of Faustina Augusta round the head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the Ubique Pax, it is easily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who seized, perhaps, the occasion of some momentary calm. See *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*, Janvier, 1700, p. 21--34.]

[Footnote 156: This singular character has, I believe, been fairly transmitted to us. The reign of his immediate successor was short and busy; and the historians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Constantine could not have the most remote interest to misrepresent the character of Gallienus.]

At the time when the reins of government were held with so loose a hand, it is not surprising, that a crowd of usurpers should start up in every province of the empire against the son of Valerian. It was probably some ingenious fancy, of comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers of the Augustan History to select that celebrated number, which has been gradually received into

a popular appellation. [157] But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What resemblance can we discover between a council of thirty persons, the united oppressors of a single city, and an uncertain list of independent rivals, who rose and fell in irregular succession through the extent of a vast empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed, unless we include in the account the women and children who were honored with the Imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne: Cyriades, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, and Zenobia, in the East; in Gaul, and the western provinces, Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus, and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus; in Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus, [158] Saturninus; in Isauria, Trebellianus; Piso in Thessaly; Valens in Achaia; Aemilianus in Egypt; and Celsus in Africa. [1581] To illustrate the obscure monuments of the life and death of each individual, would prove a laborious task, alike barren of instruction and of amusement. We may content ourselves with investigating some general characters, that most strongly mark the condition of the times, and the manners of the men, their pretensions, their motives, their fate, and their destructive consequences of their usurpation. [159]

[Footnote 157: Pollio expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the number. * Note: Compare a dissertation of Manso on the thirty tyrants at the end of his *Leben Constantius des Grossen*. Breslau, 1817.--M.]

[Footnote 158: The place of his reign is somewhat doubtful; but there

was a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the seat of all the others.]

[Footnote 1581: Captain Smyth, in his "Catalogue of Medals," p. 307, substitutes two new names to make up the number of nineteen, for those of Odenathus and Zenobia. He subjoins this list:--1. 2. 3. Of those whose coins Those whose coins Those of whom no are undoubtedly true. are suspected. coins are known. Posthumus. Cyriades. Valens. Laelianus, (Lollianus, G.) Ingenuus. Balista Victorinus Celsus. Saturninus. Marius. Piso Frugi. Trebellianus. Tetricus. --M. 1815 Macrianus. Quietus. Regalianus (Regillianus, G.) Alex. Aemilianus. Aureolus. Sulpicius Antoninus]

[Footnote 159: Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1163, reckons them somewhat differently.]

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

beloved for frankness and generosity. The field of victory was often the scene of their election; and even the armorer Marius, the most contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was distinguished, however by intrepid courage, matchless strength, and blunt honesty. [160] His mean and recent trade cast, indeed, an air of ridicule on his elevation; [1601] but his birth could not be more obscure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peasants, and enlisted in the army as private soldiers. In times of confusion, every active genius finds the place assigned him by nature: in a general state of war, military merit is the road to glory and to greatness. Of the nineteen tyrants Tetricus only was a senator; Piso alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight successive generations, ran in the veins of Calphurnius Piso, [161] who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting, in his house, the images of Crassus and of the great Pompey. [162] His ancestors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honors which the commonwealth could bestow; and of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had survived the tyranny of the Caesars. The personal qualities of Piso added new lustre to his race. The usurper Valens, by whose order he was killed, confessed, with deep remorse, that even an enemy ought to have respected the sanctity of Piso; and although he died in arms against Gallienus, the senate, with the emperor's generous permission, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of so virtuous a rebel. [163] [See Roman Coins: From The British Museum. Number four depicts Crassus.]

[Footnote 160: See the speech of Marius in the Augustan History, p. 197.]

The accidental identity of names was the only circumstance that could tempt Pollio to imitate Sallust.]

[Footnote 1601: Marius was killed by a soldier, who had formerly served as a workman in his shop, and who exclaimed, as he struck, "Behold the sword which thyself hast forged." *Trob vita.--G.*]

[Footnote 161: "Vos, O Pompilius sanguis!" is Horace's address to the Pisos See *Art. Poet. v. 292*, with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.]

[Footnote 162: *Tacit. Annal. xv. 48. Hist. i. 15.* In the former of these passages we may venture to change *paterna* into *materna*. In every generation from Augustus to Alexander Severus, one or more Pisos appear as consuls. A Piso was deemed worthy of the throne by Augustus, (*Tacit. Annal. i. 13*;) a second headed a formidable conspiracy against Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Caesar, by Galba.]

[Footnote 163: *Hist. August. p. 195.* The senate, in a moment of enthusiasm, seems to have presumed on the approbation of Gallienus.]

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father, whom they esteemed. They disdained to serve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy son. The throne of the Roman world was unsupported by any principle of loyalty; and treason against such a prince might easily be considered as patriotism to the state. Yet if we examine with candor the conduct of these usurpers, it will appear, that they were much oftener

driven into rebellion by their fears, than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel suspicions of Gallienus; they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favor of the army had imprudently declared them deserving of the purple, they were marked for sure destruction; and even prudence would counsel them to secure a short enjoyment of empire, and rather to try the fortune of war than to expect the hand of an executioner.

When the clamor of the soldiers invested the reluctant victims with the ensigns of sovereign authority, they sometimes mourned in secret their approaching fate. "You have lost," said Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you have lost a useful commander, and you have made a very wretched emperor." [164]

[Footnote 164: Hist. August p. 196.]

The apprehensions of Saturninus were justified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who started up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As soon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they inspired their adherents with the same fears and ambition which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These precarious monarchs received, however, such honors as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could

bestow; but their claim, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the senate, constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended, indeed, to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honorable distinction, by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans, and the consent of Gallienus, the senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to intrust him with the government of the East, which he already possessed, in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow, Zenobia. [165]

[Footnote 165: The association of the brave Palmyrenian was the most popular act of the whole reign of Gallienus. Hist. August. p. 180.]

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher; were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops by an immense donative, drawn from the bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent

acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum.

"It is not enough," says that soft but inhuman prince, "that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms; the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; provided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has dropped an expression, who has entertained a thought against me, against me, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes. [166] Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor: tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings." [167] Whilst the public forces of the state were dissipated in private quarrels, the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every invader. The bravest usurpers were compelled, by the perplexity of their situation, to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchase with oppressive tributes the neutrality or services of the Barbarians, and to introduce hostile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy. [168]

[Footnote 166: Gallienus had given the titles of Caesar and Augustus to his son Saloninus, slain at Cologne by the usurper Posthumus. A second son of Gallienus succeeded to the name and rank of his elder brother Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was also associated to the empire:

several other brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces of the emperor formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom iii, and M. de Brequigny in the Memoires de l'Academie, tom xxxii p. 262.]

[Footnote 167: Hist. August. p. 188.]

[Footnote 168: Regillianus had some bands of Roxolani in his service; Posthumus a body of Franks. It was, perhaps, in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themselves into Spain.]

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

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by success and impunity, publicly defy, instead of eluding the justice of their country, we may safely infer, that the excessive weakness of the government is felt and abused by the lowest ranks of the community. The situation of Sicily preserved it from the Barbarians; nor could the

disarmed province have supported a usurper. The sufferings of that once flourishing and still fertile island were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times. [169] Devastations, of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal estates were the property of the opulent senators of Rome, who often enclosed within a farm the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable, that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply, than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians.

[Footnote 169: The Augustan History, p. 177. See Diodor. Sicul. l. xxxiv.]

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble design, at once conceived and executed by the son of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, second only to Rome itself, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles; [170] it was peopled by three hundred thousand free inhabitants, besides at least an equal number of slaves. [171] The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria, to the capital and provinces of the empire. [1711] Idleness was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glass, others in weaving of linen, others again manufacturing the papyrus. Either sex, and every age, was engaged in the pursuits of industry, nor did even the blind or

the lame want occupations suited to their condition. [172] But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconstancy of the Greeks with the superstition and obstinacy of the Egyptians. The most trifling occasion, a transient scarcity of flesh or lentils, the neglect of an accustomed salutation, a mistake of precedency in the public baths, or even a religious dispute, [173] were at any time sufficient to kindle a sedition among that vast multitude, whose resentments were furious and implacable. [174] After the captivity of Valerian and the insolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years. [175] All intercourse was cut off between the several quarters of the afflicted city, every street was polluted with blood, every building of strength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults subside till a considerable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The spacious and magnificent district of Bruchion, [1751] with its palaces and musaeum, the residence of the kings and philosophers of Egypt, is described above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its present state of dreary solitude. [176]

[Footnote 170: Plin. Hist. Natur. v. 10.]

[Footnote 171: Diodor. Sicul. l. xvii. p. 590, edit. Wesseling.]

[Footnote 1711: Berenice, or Myos-Hormos, on the Red Sea, received the

eastern commodities. From thence they were transported to the Nile, and down the Nile to Alexandria.--M.]

[Footnote 172: See a very curious letter of Hadrian, in the Augustan History, p. 245.]

[Footnote 173: Such as the sacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. l. i. * Note: The hostility between the Jewish and Grecian part of the population afterwards between the two former and the Christian, were unfailing causes of tumult, sedition, and massacre. In no place were the religious disputes, after the establishment of Christianity, more frequent or more sanguinary. See Philo. de Legat. Hist. of Jews, ii. 171, iii. 111, 198. Gibbon, iii c. xxi. viii. c. xlvii.--M.]

[Footnote 174: Hist. August. p. 195. This long and terrible sedition was first occasioned by a dispute between a soldier and a townsman about a pair of shoes.]

[Footnote 175: Dionysius apud. Euses. Hist. Eccles. vii. p. 21. Ammian xxii. 16.]

[Footnote 1751: The Bruchion was a quarter of Alexandria which extended along the largest of the two ports, and contained many palaces, inhabited by the Ptolemies. D'Anv. Geogr. Anc. iii. 10.--G.]

[Footnote 176: Scaliger. Animadver. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 258. Three dissertations of M. Bonamy, in the Mem. de l'Academie, tom. ix.]

III. The obscure rebellion of Trebellianus, who assumed the purple in Isauria, a petty province of Asia Minor, was attended with strange and memorable consequences. The pageant of royalty was soon destroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, despairing of mercy, resolved to shake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor, but to the empire, and suddenly returned to the savage manners from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide-extended Taurus, protected their inaccessible retreat. The tillage of some fertile valleys [177] supplied them with necessaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Isaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience, either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakness, by surrounding the hostile and independent spot with a strong chain of fortifications, [178] which often proved insufficient to restrain the incursions of these domestic foes. The Isaurians, gradually extending their territory to the sea-coast, subdued the western and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the nest of those daring pirates, against whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmost force, under the conduct of the great Pompey. [179]

[Footnote 177: Strabo, l. xiii. p. 569.]

[Footnote 178: Hist. August. p. 197.]

[Footnote 179: See Cellarius, Geogr Antiq. tom. ii. p. 137, upon the limits of Isauria.]

Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated. [180] But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and sixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family, of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns, that had escaped the hands of the Barbarians, were entirely depopulated. [181]

[Footnote 180: Hist August p 177.]

[Footnote 181: Hist. August. p. 177. Zosimus, l. i. p. 24. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 623. Euseb. Chronicon. Victor in Epitom. Victor in Caesar. Eutropius, ix. 5. Orosius, vii. 21.]

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found, that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy, had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus. [182] Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves, that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect, that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species. [183]

[Footnote 182: Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vii. 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionysius, who, in the time of those troubles, was bishop of Alexandria.]

[Footnote 183: In a great number of parishes, 11,000 persons were found between fourteen and eighty; 5365 between forty and seventy. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. ii. p. 590.]