

Chapter XIV: Six Emperors At The Same Time, Reunion Of The Empire.--Part III.

When Hannibal marched from Gaul into Italy, he was obliged, first to discover, and then to open, a way over mountains, and through savage nations, that had never yielded a passage to a regular army. [53]

The Alps were then guarded by nature, they are now fortified by art. Citadels, constructed with no less skill than labor and expense, command every avenue into the plain, and on that side render Italy almost inaccessible to the enemies of the king of Sardinia. [54] But in the course of the intermediate period, the generals, who have attempted the passage, have seldom experienced any difficulty or resistance. In the age of Constantine, the peasants of the mountains were civilized and obedient subjects; the country was plentifully stocked with provisions, and the stupendous highways, which the Romans had carried over the Alps, opened several communications between Gaul and Italy. [55] Constantine preferred the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of Mount Cenis, and led his troops with such active diligence, that he descended into the plain of Piedmont before the court of Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his departure from the banks of the Rhine. The city of Susa, however, which is situated at the foot of Mount Cenis, was surrounded with walls, and provided with a garrison sufficiently numerous to check the progress of an invader; but the impatience of Constantine's troops disdained the tedious forms of a siege. The same day that they appeared before Susa, they applied fire to the gates, and ladders to the walls; and mounting to the assault amidst a shower of stones and arrows, they entered the place sword in hand,

and cut in pieces the greatest part of the garrison. The flames were extinguished by the care of Constantine, and the remains of Susa preserved from total destruction. About forty miles from thence, a more severe contest awaited him. A numerous army of Italians was assembled under the lieutenants of Maxentius, in the plains of Turin. Its principal strength consisted in a species of heavy cavalry, which the Romans, since the decline of their discipline, had borrowed from the nations of the East. The horses, as well as the men, were clothed in complete armor, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies. The aspect of this cavalry was formidable, their weight almost irresistible; and as, on this occasion, their generals had drawn them up in a compact column or wedge, with a sharp point, and with spreading flanks, they flattered themselves that they could easily break and trample down the army of Constantine. They might, perhaps, have succeeded in their design, had not their experienced adversary embraced the same method of defence, which in similar circumstances had been practised by Aurelian. The skilful evolutions of Constantine divided and baffled this massy column of cavalry. The troops of Maxentius fled in confusion towards Turin; and as the gates of the city were shut against them, very few escaped the sword of the victorious pursuers. By this important service, Turin deserved to experience the clemency and even favor of the conqueror. He made his entry into the Imperial palace of Milan, and almost all the cities of Italy between the Alps and the Po not only acknowledged the power, but embraced with zeal the party, of Constantine. [56]

[Footnote 53: The three principal passages of the Alps between Gaul and Italy, are those of Mount St. Bernard, Mount Cenis, and Mount Genevre. Tradition, and a resemblance of names, (Alpes Penninoe,) had assigned the first of these for the march of Hannibal, (see Simler de Alpibus.) The Chevalier de Folard (Polyp. tom. iv.) and M. d'Anville have led him over Mount Genevre. But notwithstanding the authority of an experienced officer and a learned geographer, the pretensions of Mount Cenis are supported in a specious, not to say a convincing, manner, by M. Grosley. Observations sur l'Italie, tom. i. p. 40, &c. ----The dissertation of Messrs. Cramer and Wickham has clearly shown that the Little St. Bernard must claim the honor of Hannibal's passage. Mr. Long (London, 1831) has added some sensible corrections re Hannibal's march to the Alps.--M]

[Footnote 54: La Brunette near Suse, Demont, Exiles, Fenestrelles, Coni, &c.]

[Footnote 55: See Ammian. Marcellin. xv. 10. His description of the roads over the Alps is clear, lively, and accurate.]

[Footnote 56: Zosimus as well as Eusebius hasten from the passage of the Alps to the decisive action near Rome. We must apply to the two Panegyrics for the intermediate actions of Constantine.]

From Milan to Rome, the Aemilian and Flaminian highways offered an easy march of about four hundred miles; but though Constantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed his operations against

another army of Italians, who, by their strength and position, might either oppose his progress, or, in case of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pompeianus, a general distinguished by his valor and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were stationed in the province of Venetia. As soon as he was informed that Constantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry which was defeated in an engagement near Brescia, and pursued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona. The necessity, the importance, and the difficulties of the siege of Verona, immediately presented themselves to the sagacious mind of Constantine. [57] The city was accessible only by a narrow peninsula towards the west, as the other three sides were surrounded by the Adige, a rapid river, which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the besieged derived an inexhaustible supply of men and provisions. It was not without great difficulty, and after several fruitless attempts, that Constantine found means to pass the river at some distance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was less violent. He then encompassed Verona with strong lines, pushed his attacks with prudent vigor, and repelled a desperate sally of Pompeianus. That intrepid general, when he had used every means of defence that the strength of the place or that of the garrison could afford, secretly escaped from Verona, anxious not for his own, but for the public safety. With indefatigable diligence he soon collected an army sufficient either to meet Constantine in the field, or to attack him if he obstinately remained within his lines. The emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the approach of so formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the

siege, whilst, at the head of those troops on whose valor and fidelity he more particularly depended, he advanced in person to engage the general of Maxentius. The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines, according to the usual practice of war; but their experienced leader, perceiving that the numbers of the Italians far exceeded his own, suddenly changed his disposition, and, reducing the second, extended the front of his first line to a just proportion with that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confusion in a moment of danger, commonly prove decisive; but as this engagement began towards the close of the day, and was contested with great obstinacy during the whole night, there was less room for the conduct of the generals than for the courage of the soldiers. The return of light displayed the victory of Constantine, and a field of carnage covered with many thousands of the vanquished Italians. Their general, Pompeianus, was found among the slain; Verona immediately surrendered at discretion, and the garrison was made prisoners of war. [58] When the officers of the victorious army congratulated their master on this important success, they ventured to add some respectful complaints, of such a nature, however, as the most jealous monarchs will listen to without displeasure. They represented to Constantine, that, not contented with all the duties of a commander, he had exposed his own person with an excess of valor which almost degenerated into rashness; and they conjured him for the future to pay more regard to the preservation of a life in which the safety of Rome and of the empire was involved. [59]

[Footnote 57: The Marquis Maffei has examined the siege and battle of Verona with that degree of attention and accuracy which was due to a memorable action that happened in his native country. The fortifications of that city, constructed by Gallienus, were less extensive than the modern walls, and the amphitheatre was not included within their circumference. See Verona Illustrata, part i. p. 142 150.]

[Footnote 58: They wanted chains for so great a multitude of captives; and the whole council was at a loss; but the sagacious conqueror imagined the happy expedient of converting into fetters the swords of the vanquished. Panegy. Vet. ix. 11.]

[Footnote 59: Panegy. Vet. ix. 11.]

While Constantine signalized his conduct and valor in the field, the sovereign of Italy appeared insensible of the calamities and danger of a civil war which reigned in the heart of his dominions. Pleasure was still the only business of Maxentius. Concealing, or at least attempting to conceal, from the public knowledge the misfortunes of his arms, [60] he indulged himself in a vain confidence which deferred the remedies of the approaching evil, without deferring the evil itself. [61] The rapid progress of Constantine [62] was scarcely sufficient to awaken him from his fatal security; he flattered himself, that his well-known liberality, and the majesty of the Roman name, which had already delivered him from two invasions, would dissipate with the same facility the rebellious army of Gaul. The officers of experience and ability, who

had served under the banners of Maximian, were at length compelled to inform his effeminate son of the imminent danger to which he was reduced; and, with a freedom that at once surprised and convinced him, to urge the necessity of preventing his ruin, by a vigorous exertion of his remaining power. The resources of Maxentius, both of men and money, were still considerable. The Praetorian guards felt how strongly their own interest and safety were connected with his cause; and a third army was soon collected, more numerous than those which had been lost in the battles of Turin and Verona. It was far from the intention of the emperor to lead his troops in person. A stranger to the exercises of war, he trembled at the apprehension of so dangerous a contest; and as fear is commonly superstitious, he listened with melancholy attention to the rumors of omens and presages which seemed to menace his life and empire. Shame at length supplied the place of courage, and forced him to take the field. He was unable to sustain the contempt of the Roman people. The circus resounded with their indignant clamors, and they tumultuously besieged the gates of the palace, reproaching the pusillanimity of their indolent sovereign, and celebrating the heroic spirit of Constantine. [63] Before Maxentius left Rome, he consulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of these ancient oracles were as well versed in the arts of this world as they were ignorant of the secrets of fate; and they returned him a very prudent answer, which might adapt itself to the event, and secure their reputation, whatever should be the chance of arms. [64]

[Footnote 60: *Literas calamitatum suarum indices supprimebat.* Panegy

Vet. ix. 15.]

[Footnote 61: *Remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat*, is the fine censure which Tacitus passes on the supine indolence of Vitellius.]

[Footnote 62: The Marquis Maffei has made it extremely probable that Constantine was still at Verona, the 1st of September, A.D. 312, and that the memorable aera of the indications was dated from his conquest of the Cisalpine Gaul.]

[Footnote 63: See Panegy. Vet. xi. 16. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44.]

[Footnote 64: *Illo die hostem Romanorum esse periturum*. The vanquished became of course the enemy of Rome.]

The celerity of Constantine's march has been compared to the rapid conquest of Italy by the first of the Caesars; nor is the flattering parallel repugnant to the truth of history, since no more than fifty-eight days elapsed between the surrender of Verona and the final decision of the war. Constantine had always apprehended that the tyrant would consult the dictates of fear, and perhaps of prudence; and that, instead of risking his last hopes in a general engagement, he would shut himself up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines secured him against the danger of famine; and as the situation of Constantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the sad necessity of destroying with fire and sword the Imperial city, the noblest reward

of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive, or rather indeed the pretence, of the civil war. [65] It was with equal surprise and pleasure, that on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome, [66] he discovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle. [67] Their long front filled a very spacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tyber, which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed, and we may believe, that Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skill, and that he chose for himself the post of honor and danger. Distinguished by the splendor of his arms, he charged in person the cavalry of his rival; and his irresistible attack determined the fortune of the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was principally composed either of unwieldy cuirassiers, or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigor of the Gallic horse, which possessed more activity than the one, more firmness than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and the undisciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the standard of a tyrant whom they had always hated, and whom they no longer feared. The Praetorians, conscious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and despair. Notwithstanding their repeated efforts, those brave veterans were unable to recover the victory: they obtained, however, an honorable death; and it was observed that their bodies covered the same ground which had been occupied by their ranks. [68] The confusion then became general, and the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thousands into the deep and rapid stream of the Tyber. The emperor himself attempted to escape back

into the city over the Milvian bridge; but the crowds which pressed together through that narrow passage forced him into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armor. [69] His body, which had sunk very deep into the mud, was found with some difficulty the next day. The sight of his head, when it was exposed to the eyes of the people, convinced them of their deliverance, and admonished them to receive with acclamations of loyalty and gratitude the fortunate Constantine, who thus achieved by his valor and ability the most splendid enterprise of his life. [70]

[Footnote 65: See Panegy. Vet. ix. 16, x. 27. The former of these orators magnifies the hoards of corn, which Maxentius had collected from Africa and the Islands. And yet, if there is any truth in the scarcity mentioned by Eusebius, (in Vit. Constantin. l. i. c. 36,) the Imperial granaries must have been open only to the soldiers.]

[Footnote 66: Maxentius... tandem urbe in Saxa Rubra, millia ferme novem aegerrime progressus. Aurelius Victor. See Cellarius Geograph. Antiq. tom. i. p. 463. Saxa Rubra was in the neighborhood of the Cremera, a trifling rivulet, illustrated by the valor and glorious death of the three hundred Fabii.]

[Footnote 67: The post which Maxentius had taken, with the Tyber in his rear is very clearly described by the two Panegyrist, ix. 16, x. 28.]

[Footnote 68: Exceptis atrociniis illius primis auctoribus, qui desperata venia eorum quem pugnae sumpserant texere corporibus. Panegyri. Vet 17.]

[Footnote 69: A very idle rumor soon prevailed, that Maxentius, who had not taken any precaution for his own retreat, had contrived a very artful snare to destroy the army of the pursuers; but that the wooden bridge, which was to have been loosened on the approach of Constantine, unluckily broke down under the weight of the flying Italians. M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 576) very seriously examines whether, in contradiction to common sense, the testimony of Eusebius and Zosimus ought to prevail over the silence of Lactantius, Nazarius, and the anonymous, but contemporary orator, who composed the ninth Panegyric. * Note: Manso (Beilage, vi.) examines the question, and adduces two manifest allusions to the bridge, from the Life of Constantine by Praxagoras, and from Libanius. Is it not very probable that such a bridge was thrown over the river to facilitate the advance, and to secure the retreat, of the army of Maxentius? In case of defeat, orders were given for destroying it, in order to check the pursuit: it broke down accidentally, or in the confusion was destroyed, as has not unfrequently been the case, before the proper time.--M.]

[Footnote 70: Zosimus, l. ii. p. 86-88, and the two Panegyrics, the former of which was pronounced a few months afterwards, afford the clearest notion of this great battle. Lactantius, Eusebius, and even the Epitomes, supply several useful hints.]

In the use of victory, Constantine neither deserved the praise of clemency, nor incurred the censure of immoderate rigor. [71] He inflicted the same treatment to which a defeat would have exposed his own person and family, put to death the two sons of the tyrant, and carefully extirpated his whole race. The most distinguished adherents of Maxentius must have expected to share his fate, as they had shared his prosperity and his crimes; but when the Roman people loudly demanded a greater number of victims, the conqueror resisted with firmness and humanity, those servile clamors, which were dictated by flattery as well as by resentment. Informers were punished and discouraged; the innocent, who had suffered under the late tyranny, were recalled from exile, and restored to their estates. A general act of oblivion quieted the minds and settled the property of the people, both in Italy and in Africa. [72] The first time that Constantine honored the senate with his presence, he recapitulated his own services and exploits in a modest oration, assured that illustrious order of his sincere regard, and promised to reestablish its ancient dignity and privileges. The grateful senate repaid these unmeaning professions by the empty titles of honor, which it was yet in their power to bestow; and without presuming to ratify the authority of Constantine, they passed a decree to assign him the first rank among the three Augusti who governed the Roman world. [73] Games and festivals were instituted to preserve the fame of his victory, and several edifices, raised at the expense of Maxentius, were dedicated to the honor of his successful rival. The triumphal arch of Constantine still remains a melancholy proof of the decline of the arts, and a

singular testimony of the meanest vanity. As it was not possible to find in the capital of the empire a sculptor who was capable of adorning that public monument, the arch of Trajan, without any respect either for his memory or for the rules of propriety, was stripped of its most elegant figures. The difference of times and persons, of actions and characters, was totally disregarded. The Parthian captives appear prostrate at the feet of a prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates; and curious antiquarians can still discover the head of Trajan on the trophies of Constantine. The new ornaments which it was necessary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient sculpture are executed in the rudest and most unskillful manner. [74]

[Footnote 71: Zosimus, the enemy of Constantine, allows (l. ii. p. 88) that only a few of the friends of Maxentius were put to death; but we may remark the expressive passage of Nazarius, (Panegy. Vet. x. 6.) Omnibus qui labefactari statum ejus poterant cum stirpe deletis. The other orator (Panegy. Vet. ix. 20, 21) contents himself with observing, that Constantine, when he entered Rome, did not imitate the cruel massacres of Cinna, of Marius, or of Sylla. * Note: This may refer to the son or sons of Maxentius.--M.]

[Footnote 72: See the two Panegyrics, and the laws of this and the ensuing year, in the Theodosian Code.]

[Footnote 73: Panegy. Vet. ix. 20. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44. Maximin, who was confessedly the eldest Caesar, claimed, with some show of

reason, the first rank among the Augusti.]

[Footnote 74: Adhuc cuncta opera quae magnifice construxerat, urbis fanum atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere. Aurelius Victor. With regard to the theft of Trajan's trophies, consult Flaminus Vacca, apud Montfaucon, *Diarium Italicum*, p. 250, and *l'Antiquite Expliquee* of the latter, tom. iv. p. 171.]

The final abolition of the Praetorian guards was a measure of prudence as well as of revenge. Those haughty troops, whose numbers and privileges had been restored, and even augmented, by Maxentius, were forever suppressed by Constantine. Their fortified camp was destroyed, and the few Praetorians who had escaped the fury of the sword were dispersed among the legions, and banished to the frontiers of the empire, where they might be serviceable without again becoming dangerous. [75] By suppressing the troops which were usually stationed in Rome, Constantine gave the fatal blow to the dignity of the senate and people, and the disarmed capital was exposed without protection to the insults or neglect of its distant master. We may observe, that in this last effort to preserve their expiring freedom, the Romans, from the apprehension of a tribute, had raised Maxentius to the throne. He exacted that tribute from the senate under the name of a free gift. They implored the assistance of Constantine. He vanquished the tyrant, and converted the free gift into a perpetual tax. The senators, according to the declaration which was required of their property, were divided into several classes. The most opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold,

the next class paid four, the last two, and those whose poverty might have claimed an exemption, were assessed, however, at seven pieces of gold. Besides the regular members of the senate, their sons, their descendants, and even their relations, enjoyed the vain privileges, and supported the heavy burdens, of the senatorial order; nor will it any longer excite our surprise, that Constantine should be attentive to increase the number of persons who were included under so useful a description. [76] After the defeat of Maxentius, the victorious emperor passed no more than two or three months in Rome, which he visited twice during the remainder of his life, to celebrate the solemn festivals of the tenth and of the twentieth years of his reign. Constantine was almost perpetually in motion, to exercise the legions, or to inspect the state of the provinces. Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Sirmium, Naissus, and Thessalonica, were the occasional places of his residence, till he founded a new Rome on the confines of Europe and Asia. [77]

[Footnote 75: Praetoriae legiones ac subsidia factionibus aptiora quam urbi Romae, sublata penitus; simul arma atque usus indumenti militaris Aurelius Victor. Zosimus (l. ii. p. 89) mentions this fact as an historian, and it is very pompously celebrated in the ninth Panegyric.]

[Footnote 76: Ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros Curiae tuae pigneraveris ut Senatus dignitas.... ex totius Orbis flore consisteret. Nazarius in Panegyri. Vet x. 35. The word pigneraveris might almost seem maliciously chosen. Concerning the senatorial tax, see Zosimus, l. ii. p. 115, the second title of the sixth book of the Theodosian Code, with

Godefroy's Commentary, and Memoires de l'Academic des Incriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 726.]

[Footnote 77: From the Theodosian Code, we may now begin to trace the motions of the emperors; but the dates both of time and place have frequently been altered by the carelessness of transcribers.]

Before Constantine marched into Italy, he had secured the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of Licinius, the Illyrian emperor. He had promised his sister Constantia in marriage to that prince; but the celebration of the nuptials was deferred till after the conclusion of the war, and the interview of the two emperors at Milan, which was appointed for that purpose, appeared to cement the union of their families and interests. [78] In the midst of the public festivity they were suddenly obliged to take leave of each other. An inroad of the Franks summoned Constantine to the Rhine, and the hostile approach of the sovereign of Asia demanded the immediate presence of Licinius. Maximin had been the secret ally of Maxentius, and without being discouraged by his fate, he resolved to try the fortune of a civil war. He moved out of Syria, towards the frontiers of Bithynia, in the depth of winter. The season was severe and tempestuous; great numbers of men as well as horses perished in the snow; and as the roads were broken up by incessant rains, he was obliged to leave behind him a considerable part of the heavy baggage, which was unable to follow the rapidity of his forced marches. By this extraordinary effort of diligence, he arrived with a harassed but formidable army, on the banks of the

Thracian Bosphorus before the lieutenants of Licinius were apprised of his hostile intentions. Byzantium surrendered to the power of Maximin, after a siege of eleven days. He was detained some days under the walls of Heraclea; and he had no sooner taken possession of that city, than he was alarmed by the intelligence, that Licinius had pitched his camp at the distance of only eighteen miles. After a fruitless negotiation, in which the two princes attempted to seduce the fidelity of each other's adherents, they had recourse to arms. The emperor of the East commanded a disciplined and veteran army of above seventy thousand men; and Licinius, who had collected about thirty thousand Illyrians, was at first oppressed by the superiority of numbers. His military skill, and the firmness of his troops, restored the day, and obtained a decisive victory. The incredible speed which Maximin exerted in his flight is much more celebrated than his prowess in the battle. Twenty-four hours afterwards he was seen, pale, trembling, and without his Imperial ornaments, at Nicomedia, one hundred and sixty miles from the place of his defeat. The wealth of Asia was yet unexhausted; and though the flower of his veterans had fallen in the late action, he had still power, if he could obtain time, to draw very numerous levies from Syria and Egypt. But he survived his misfortune only three or four months. His death, which happened at Tarsus, was variously ascribed to despair, to poison, and to the divine justice. As Maximin was alike destitute of abilities and of virtue, he was lamented neither by the people nor by the soldiers. The provinces of the East, delivered from the terrors of civil war, cheerfully acknowledged the authority of Licinius. [79]

[Footnote 78: Zosimus (l. ii. p. 89) observes, that before the war the sister of Constantine had been betrothed to Licinius. According to the younger Victor, Diocletian was invited to the nuptials; but having ventured to plead his age and infirmities, he received a second letter, filled with reproaches for his supposed partiality to the cause of Maxentius and Maximin.]

[Footnote 79: Zosimus mentions the defeat and death of Maximin as ordinary events; but Lactantius expatiates on them, (de M. P. c. 45-50,) ascribing them to the miraculous interposition of Heaven. Licinius at that time was one of the protectors of the church.]

The vanquished emperor left behind him two children, a boy of about eight, and a girl of about seven, years old. Their inoffensive age might have excited compassion; but the compassion of Licinius was a very feeble resource, nor did it restrain him from extinguishing the name and memory of his adversary. The death of Severianus will admit of less excuse, as it was dictated neither by revenge nor by policy. The conqueror had never received any injury from the father of that unhappy youth, and the short and obscure reign of Severus, in a distant part of the empire, was already forgotten. But the execution of Candidianus was an act of the blackest cruelty and ingratitude. He was the natural son of Galerius, the friend and benefactor of Licinius. The prudent father had judged him too young to sustain the weight of a diadem; but he hoped that, under the protection of princes who were indebted to his favor for the Imperial purple, Candidianus might pass a secure and honorable life.

He was now advancing towards the twentieth year of his age, and the royalty of his birth, though unsupported either by merit or ambition, was sufficient to exasperate the jealous mind of Licinius. [80] To these innocent and illustrious victims of his tyranny, we must add the wife and daughter of the emperor Diocletian. When that prince conferred on Galerius the title of Caesar, he had given him in marriage his daughter Valeria, whose melancholy adventures might furnish a very singular subject for tragedy. She had fulfilled and even surpassed the duties of a wife. As she had not any children herself, she condescended to adopt the illegitimate son of her husband, and invariably displayed towards the unhappy Candidianus the tenderness and anxiety of a real mother. After the death of Galerius, her ample possessions provoked the avarice, and her personal attractions excited the desires, of his successor, Maximin. [81] He had a wife still alive; but divorce was permitted by the Roman law, and the fierce passions of the tyrant demanded an immediate gratification. The answer of Valeria was such as became the daughter and widow of emperors; but it was tempered by the prudence which her defenceless condition compelled her to observe. She represented to the persons whom Maximin had employed on this occasion, "that even if honor could permit a woman of her character and dignity to entertain a thought of second nuptials, decency at least must forbid her to listen to his addresses at a time when the ashes of her husband, and his benefactor were still warm, and while the sorrows of her mind were still expressed by her mourning garments. She ventured to declare, that she could place very little confidence in the professions of a man whose cruel inconstancy was capable of repudiating a faithful and affectionate

wife." [82] On this repulse, the love of Maximin was converted into fury; and as witnesses and judges were always at his disposal, it was easy for him to cover his fury with an appearance of legal proceedings, and to assault the reputation as well as the happiness of Valeria. Her estates were confiscated, her eunuchs and domestics devoted to the most inhuman tortures; and several innocent and respectable matrons, who were honored with her friendship, suffered death, on a false accusation of adultery. The empress herself, together with her mother Prisca, was condemned to exile; and as they were ignominiously hurried from place to place before they were confined to a sequestered village in the deserts of Syria, they exposed their shame and distress to the provinces of the East, which, during thirty years, had respected their august dignity. Diocletian made several ineffectual efforts to alleviate the misfortunes of his daughter; and, as the last return that he expected for the Imperial purple, which he had conferred upon Maximin, he entreated that Valeria might be permitted to share his retirement of Salona, and to close the eyes of her afflicted father. [83] He entreated; but as he could no longer threaten, his prayers were received with coldness and disdain; and the pride of Maximin was gratified, in treating Diocletian as a suppliant, and his daughter as a criminal. The death of Maximin seemed to assure the empresses of a favorable alteration in their fortune. The public disorders relaxed the vigilance of their guard, and they easily found means to escape from the place of their exile, and to repair, though with some precaution, and in disguise, to the court of Licinius. His behavior, in the first days of his reign, and the honorable reception which he gave to young Candidianus, inspired Valeria

with a secret satisfaction, both on her own account and on that of her adopted son. But these grateful prospects were soon succeeded by horror and astonishment; and the bloody executions which stained the palace of Nicomedia sufficiently convinced her that the throne of Maximin was filled by a tyrant more inhuman than himself. Valeria consulted her safety by a hasty flight, and, still accompanied by her mother Prisca, they wandered above fifteen months [84] through the provinces, concealed in the disguise of plebeian habits. They were at length discovered at Thessalonica; and as the sentence of their death was already pronounced, they were immediately beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the sea. The people gazed on the melancholy spectacle; but their grief and indignation were suppressed by the terrors of a military guard. Such was the unworthy fate of the wife and daughter of Diocletian. We lament their misfortunes, we cannot discover their crimes; and whatever idea we may justly entertain of the cruelty of Licinius, it remains a matter of surprise that he was not contented with some more secret and decent method of revenge. [85]

[Footnote 80: Lactantius de M. P. c. 50. Aurelius Victor touches on the different conduct of Licinius, and of Constantine, in the use of victory.]

[Footnote 81: The sensual appetites of Maximin were gratified at the expense of his subjects. His eunuchs, who forced away wives and virgins, examined their naked charms with anxious curiosity, lest any part of their body should be found unworthy of the royal embraces. Coyness and

disdain were considered as treason, and the obstinate fair one was condemned to be drowned. A custom was gradually introduced, that no person should marry a wife without the permission of the emperor, "ut ipse in omnibus nuptiis praegustator esset." Lactantius de M. P. c. 38.]

[Footnote 82: Lactantius de M. P. c. 39.]

[Footnote 83: Diocletian at last sent cognatum suum, quendam militarem ae potentem virum, to intercede in favor of his daughter, (Lactantius de M. P. c. 41.) We are not sufficiently acquainted with the history of these times to point out the person who was employed.]

[Footnote 84: Valeria quoque per varias provincias quindecim mensibus plebeio cultu pervagata. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. There is some doubt whether we should compute the fifteen months from the moment of her exile, or from that of her escape. The expression of parvagata seems to denote the latter; but in that case we must suppose that the treatise of Lactantius was written after the first civil war between Licinius and Constantine. See Cuper, p. 254.]

[Footnote 85: Ita illis pudicitia et conditio exitio fuit. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. He relates the misfortunes of the innocent wife and daughter of Discretian with a very natural mixture of pity and exultation.]

The Roman world was now divided between Constantine and Licinius, the

former of whom was master of the West, and the latter of the East. It might perhaps have been expected that the conquerors, fatigued with civil war, and connected by a private as well as public alliance, would have renounced, or at least would have suspended, any further designs of ambition. And yet a year had scarcely elapsed after the death of Maximin, before the victorious emperors turned their arms against each other. The genius, the success, and the aspiring temper of Constantine, may seem to mark him out as the aggressor; but the perfidious character of Licinius justifies the most unfavorable suspicions, and by the faint light which history reflects on this transaction, [86] we may discover a conspiracy fomented by his arts against the authority of his colleague. Constantine had lately given his sister Anastasia in marriage to Bassianus, a man of a considerable family and fortune, and had elevated his new kinsman to the rank of Caesar. According to the system of government instituted by Diocletian, Italy, and perhaps Africa, were designed for his department in the empire. But the performance of the promised favor was either attended with so much delay, or accompanied with so many unequal conditions, that the fidelity of Bassianus was alienated rather than secured by the honorable distinction which he had obtained. His nomination had been ratified by the consent of Licinius; and that artful prince, by the means of his emissaries, soon contrived to enter into a secret and dangerous correspondence with the new Caesar, to irritate his discontents, and to urge him to the rash enterprise of extorting by violence what he might in vain solicit from the justice of Constantine. But the vigilant emperor discovered the conspiracy before it was ripe for execution; and after solemnly renouncing the alliance of

Bassianus, despoiled him of the purple, and inflicted the deserved punishment on his treason and ingratitude. The haughty refusal of Licinius, when he was required to deliver up the criminals who had taken refuge in his dominions, confirmed the suspicions already entertained of his perfidy; and the indignities offered at Aemona, on the frontiers of Italy, to the statues of Constantine, became the signal of discord between the two princes. [87]

[Footnote 86: The curious reader, who consults the Valesian fragment, p. 713, will probably accuse me of giving a bold and licentious paraphrase; but if he considers it with attention, he will acknowledge that my interpretation is probable and consistent.]

[Footnote 87: The situation of Aemona, or, as it is now called, Laybach, in Carniola, (D'Anville, *Geographie Ancienne*, tom. i. p. 187,) may suggest a conjecture. As it lay to the north-east of the Julian Alps, that important territory became a natural object of dispute between the sovereigns of Italy and of Illyricum.]

The first battle was fought near Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, situated on the River Save, about fifty miles above Sirmium. [88] From the inconsiderable forces which in this important contest two such powerful monarchs brought into the field, it may be inferred that the one was suddenly provoked, and that the other was unexpectedly surprised. The emperor of the West had only twenty thousand, and the sovereign of the East no more than five and thirty thousand, men. The inferiority

of number was, however, compensated by the advantage of the ground. Constantine had taken post in a defile about half a mile in breadth, between a steep hill and a deep morass, and in that situation he steadily expected and repulsed the first attack of the enemy. He pursued his success, and advanced into the plain. But the veteran legions of Illyricum rallied under the standard of a leader who had been trained to arms in the school of Probus and Diocletian. The missile weapons on both sides were soon exhausted; the two armies, with equal valor, rushed to a closer engagement of swords and spears, and the doubtful contest had already lasted from the dawn of the day to a late hour of the evening, when the right wing, which Constantine led in person, made a vigorous and decisive charge. The judicious retreat of Licinius saved the remainder of his troops from a total defeat; but when he computed his loss, which amounted to more than twenty thousand men, he thought it unsafe to pass the night in the presence of an active and victorious enemy. Abandoning his camp and magazines, he marched away with secrecy and diligence at the head of the greatest part of his cavalry, and was soon removed beyond the danger of a pursuit. His diligence preserved his wife, his son, and his treasures, which he had deposited at Sirmium. Licinius passed through that city, and breaking down the bridge on the Save, hastened to collect a new army in Dacia and Thrace. In his flight he bestowed the precarious title of Caesar on Valens, his general of the Illyrian frontier. [89]

[Footnote 88: Cibalis or Cibalae (whose name is still preserved in the obscure ruins of Swilei) was situated about fifty miles from Sirmium,

the capital of Illyricum, and about one hundred from Taurunum, or Belgrade, and the conflux of the Danube and the Save. The Roman garrisons and cities on those rivers are finely illustrated by M. d'Anville in a memoir inserted in l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii.]

[Footnote 89: Zosimus (l. ii. p. 90, 91) gives a very particular account of this battle; but the descriptions of Zosimus are rhetorical rather than military]