

Chapter XXV: Reigns Of Jovian And Valentinian, Division Of The Empire.--Part I.

The Government And Death Of Jovian.--Election Of Valentinian, Who Associates His Brother Valens, And Makes The Final Division Of The Eastern And Western Empires.--Revolt Of Procopius.--Civil And Ecclesiastical Administration.--Germany. --Britain.--Africa.--The East.--The Danube.--Death Of Valentinian.--His Two Sons, Gratian And Valentinian II., Succeed To The Western Empire.

The death of Julian had left the public affairs of the empire in a very doubtful and dangerous situation. The Roman army was saved by an inglorious, perhaps a necessary treaty; [1] and the first moments of peace were consecrated by the pious Jovian to restore the domestic tranquility of the church and state. The indiscretion of his predecessor, instead of reconciling, had artfully fomented the religious war: and the balance which he affected to preserve between the hostile factions, served only to perpetuate the contest, by the vicissitudes of hope and fear, by the rival claims of ancient possession and actual favor. The Christians had forgotten the spirit of the gospel; and the Pagans had imbibed the spirit of the church. In private families, the sentiments of nature were extinguished by the blind fury of zeal and revenge: the majesty of the laws was violated or abused; the cities of the East were stained with blood; and the most implacable enemies of the Romans were in the bosom of their country. Jovian was educated in the profession of Christianity; and as he marched from Nisibis to Antioch,

the banner of the Cross, the Labarum of Constantine, which was again displayed at the head of the legions, announced to the people the faith of their new emperor. As soon as he ascended the throne, he transmitted a circular epistle to all the governors of provinces; in which he confessed the divine truth, and secured the legal establishment, of the Christian religion. The insidious edicts of Julian were abolished; the ecclesiastical immunities were restored and enlarged; and Jovian condescended to lament, that the distress of the times obliged him to diminish the measure of charitable distributions. [2] The Christians were unanimous in the loud and sincere applause which they bestowed on the pious successor of Julian. But they were still ignorant what creed, or what synod, he would choose for the standard of orthodoxy; and the peace of the church immediately revived those eager disputes which had been suspended during the season of persecution. The episcopal leaders of the contending sects, convinced, from experience, how much their fate would depend on the earliest impressions that were made on the mind of an untutored soldier, hastened to the court of Edessa, or Antioch. The highways of the East were crowded with Homoousian, and Arian, and Semi-Arian, and Eunomian bishops, who struggled to outstrip each other in the holy race: the apartments of the palace resounded with their clamors; and the ears of the prince were assaulted, and perhaps astonished, by the singular mixture of metaphysical argument and passionate invective. [3] The moderation of Jovian, who recommended concord and charity, and referred the disputants to the sentence of a future council, was interpreted as a symptom of indifference: but his attachment to the Nicene creed was at length discovered and declared,

by the reverence which he expressed for the celestial [4] virtues of the great Athanasius. The intrepid veteran of the faith, at the age of seventy, had issued from his retreat on the first intelligence of the tyrant's death. The acclamations of the people seated him once more on the archiepiscopal throne; and he wisely accepted, or anticipated, the invitation of Jovian. The venerable figure of Athanasius, his calm courage, and insinuating eloquence, sustained the reputation which he had already acquired in the courts of four successive princes. [5] As soon as he had gained the confidence, and secured the faith, of the Christian emperor, he returned in triumph to his diocese, and continued, with mature counsels and undiminished vigor, to direct, ten years longer, [6] the ecclesiastical government of Alexandria, Egypt, and the Catholic church. Before his departure from Antioch, he assured Jovian that his orthodox devotion would be rewarded with a long and peaceful reign. Athanasius, had reason to hope, that he should be allowed either the merit of a successful prediction, or the excuse of a grateful though ineffectual prayer. [7]

[Footnote 1: The medals of Jovian adorn him with victories, laurel crowns, and prostrate captives. Ducange, *Famil. Byzantin.* p. 52. Flattery is a foolish suicide; she destroys herself with her own hands.]

[Footnote 2: Jovian restored to the church a forcible and comprehensive expression, (*Philostorgius*, l. viii. c. 5, with *Godefroy's Dissertations*, p. 329. *Sozomen*, l. vi. c. 3.) The new law which condemned the rape or marriage of nuns (*Cod. Theod.* l. ix. tit. xxv.

leg. 2) is exaggerated by Sozomen; who supposes, that an amorous glance, the adultery of the heart, was punished with death by the evangelic legislator.]

[Footnote 3: Compare Socrates, l. iii. c. 25, and Philostorgius, l. viii. c. 6, with Godefroy's Dissertations, p. 330.]

[Footnote 4: The word celestial faintly expresses the impious and extravagant flattery of the emperor to the archbishop. (See the original epistle in Athanasius, tom. ii. p. 33.) Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. xxi. p. 392) celebrates the friendship of Jovian and Athanasius. The primate's journey was advised by the Egyptian monks, (Tillemont, Mem. Eccles. tom. viii. p. 221.)]

[Footnote 5: Athanasius, at the court of Antioch, is agreeably represented by La Bleterie, (Hist. de Jovien, tom. i. p. 121-148;) he translates the singular and original conferences of the emperor, the primate of Egypt, and the Arian deputies. The Abbe is not satisfied with the coarse pleasantry of Jovian; but his partiality for Athanasius assumes, in his eyes, the character of justice.]

[Footnote 6: The true area of his death is perplexed with some difficulties, (Tillemont, Mem. Eccles. tom. viii. p. 719-723.) But the date (A. D. 373, May 2) which seems the most consistent with history and reason, is ratified by his authentic life, (Maffei Osservazioni Letterarie, tom. iii. p. 81.)]

[Footnote 7: See the observations of Valesius and Jortin (Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. p. 38) on the original letter of Athanasius; which is preserved by Theodoret, (l. iv. c. 3.) In some Mss. this indiscreet promise is omitted; perhaps by the Catholics, jealous of the prophetic fame of their leader.]

The slightest force, when it is applied to assist and guide the natural descent of its object, operates with irresistible weight; and Jovian had the good fortune to embrace the religious opinions which were supported by the spirit of the times, and the zeal and numbers of the most powerful sect. [8] Under his reign, Christianity obtained an easy and lasting victory; and as soon as the smile of royal patronage was withdrawn, the genius of Paganism, which had been fondly raised and cherished by the arts of Julian, sunk irrecoverably in the. In many cities, the temples were shut or deserted: the philosophers who had abused their transient favor, thought it prudent to shave their beards, and disguise their profession; and the Christians rejoiced, that they were now in a condition to forgive, or to revenge, the injuries which they had suffered under the preceding reign. [9] The consternation of the Pagan world was dispelled by a wise and gracious edict of toleration; in which Jovian explicitly declared, that although he should severely punish the sacrilegious rites of magic, his subjects might exercise, with freedom and safety, the ceremonies of the ancient worship. The memory of this law has been preserved by the orator Themistius, who was deputed by the senate of Constantinople to express

their royal devotion for the new emperor. Themistius expatiates on the clemency of the Divine Nature, the facility of human error, the rights of conscience, and the independence of the mind; and, with some eloquence, inculcates the principles of philosophical toleration; whose aid Superstition herself, in the hour of her distress, is not ashamed to implore. He justly observes, that in the recent changes, both religions had been alternately disgraced by the seeming acquisition of worthless proselytes, of those votaries of the reigning purple, who could pass, without a reason, and without a blush, from the church to the temple, and from the altars of Jupiter to the sacred table of the Christians.

[10]

[Footnote 8: Athanasius (apud Theodoret, l. iv. c. 3) magnifies the number of the orthodox, who composed the whole world. This assertion was verified in the space of thirty and forty years.]

[Footnote 9: Socrates, l. iii. c. 24. Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. iv. p. 131) and Libanius (Orat. Parentalis, c. 148, p. 369) expresses the living sentiments of their respective factions.]

[Footnote 10: Themistius, Orat. v. p. 63-71, edit. Harduin, Paris, 1684. The Abbe de la Bleterie judiciously remarks, (Hist. de Jovien, tom. i. p. 199,) that Sozomen has forgot the general toleration; and Themistius the establishment of the Catholic religion. Each of them turned away from the object which he disliked, and wished to suppress the part of the edict the least honorable, in his opinion, to the emperor.]

In the space of seven months, the Roman troops, who were now returned to Antioch, had performed a march of fifteen hundred miles; in which they had endured all the hardships of war, of famine, and of climate. Notwithstanding their services, their fatigues, and the approach of winter, the timid and impatient Jovian allowed only, to the men and horses, a respite of six weeks. The emperor could not sustain the indiscreet and malicious raillery of the people of Antioch. [11] He was impatient to possess the palace of Constantinople; and to prevent the ambition of some competitor, who might occupy the vacant allegiance of Europe. But he soon received the grateful intelligence, that his authority was acknowledged from the Thracian Bosphorus to the Atlantic Ocean. By the first letters which he despatched from the camp of Mesopotamia, he had delegated the military command of Gaul and Illyricum to Malarich, a brave and faithful officer of the nation of the Franks; and to his father-in-law, Count Lucillian, who had formerly distinguished his courage and conduct in the defence of Nisibis. Malarich had declined an office to which he thought himself unequal; and Lucillian was massacred at Rheims, in an accidental mutiny of the Batavian cohorts. [12] But the moderation of Jovinus, master-general of the cavalry, who forgave the intention of his disgrace, soon appeased the tumult, and confirmed the uncertain minds of the soldiers. The oath of fidelity was administered and taken, with loyal acclamations; and the deputies of the Western armies [13] saluted their new sovereign as he descended from Mount Taurus to the city of Tyana in Cappadocia. From Tyana he continued his hasty march to Ancyra, capital of the province of

Galatia; where Jovian assumed, with his infant son, the name and ensigns of the consulship. [14] Dadastana, [15] an obscure town, almost at an equal distance between Ancyra and Nice, was marked for the fatal term of his journey and life. After indulging himself with a plentiful, perhaps an intemperate, supper, he retired to rest; and the next morning the emperor Jovian was found dead in his bed. The cause of this sudden death was variously understood. By some it was ascribed to the consequences of an indigestion, occasioned either by the quantity of the wine, or the quality of the mushrooms, which he had swallowed in the evening. According to others, he was suffocated in his sleep by the vapor of charcoal, which extracted from the walls of the apartment the unwholesome moisture of the fresh plaster. [16] But the want of a regular inquiry into the death of a prince, whose reign and person were soon forgotten, appears to have been the only circumstance which countenanced the malicious whispers of poison and domestic guilt. [17] The body of Jovian was sent to Constantinople, to be interred with his predecessors, and the sad procession was met on the road by his wife Charito, the daughter of Count Lucillian; who still wept the recent death of her father, and was hastening to dry her tears in the embraces of an Imperial husband. Her disappointment and grief were imbittered by the anxiety of maternal tenderness. Six weeks before the death of Jovian, his infant son had been placed in the curule chair, adorned with the title of Nobilissimus, and the vain ensigns of the consulship. Unconscious of his fortune, the royal youth, who, from his grandfather, assumed the name of Varronian, was reminded only by the jealousy of the government, that he was the son of an emperor. Sixteen years afterwards



he was still alive, but he had already been deprived of an eye; and his afflicted mother expected every hour, that the innocent victim would be torn from her arms, to appease, with his blood, the suspicions of the reigning prince. [18]

[Footnote 11: Johan. Antiochen. in Excerpt. Valesian. p. 845. The libels of Antioch may be admitted on very slight evidence.]

[Footnote 12: Compare Ammianus, (xxv. 10,) who omits the name of the Batarians, with Zosimus, (l. iii. p. 197,) who removes the scene of action from Rheims to Sirmium.]

[Footnote 13: Quos capita scholarum ordo castrensis appellat. Ammian. xxv. 10, and Vales. ad locum.]

[Footnote 14: Cugus vagitus, pertinaciter reluctantis, ne in curuli sella veheretur ex more, id quod mox accidit protendebat. Augustus and his successors respectfully solicited a dispensation of age for the sons or nephews whom they raised to the consulship. But the curule chair of the first Brutus had never been dishonored by an infant.]

[Footnote 15: The Itinerary of Antoninus fixes Dadastana 125 Roman miles from Nice; 117 from Ancyra, (Wesseling, Itinerar. p. 142.) The pilgrim of Bourdeaux, by omitting some stages, reduces the whole space from 242 to 181 miles. Wesseling, p. 574. \* Note: Dadastana is supposed to be Castabat.--M.]

[Footnote 16: See Ammianus, (xxv. 10,) Eutropius, (x. 18.) who might likewise be present, Jerom, (tom. i. p. 26, ad Heliodorum,) Orosius, (vii. 31,) Sozomen, (l. vi. c. 6,) Zosimus, (l. iii. p. 197, 198,) and Zonaras, (tom. ii. l. xiii. p. 28, 29.) We cannot expect a perfect agreement, and we shall not discuss minute differences.]

[Footnote 17: Ammianus, unmindful of his usual candor and good sense, compares the death of the harmless Jovian to that of the second Africanus, who had excited the fears and resentment of the popular faction.]

[Footnote 18: Chrysostom, tom. i. p. 336, 344, edit. Montfaucon. The Christian orator attempts to comfort a widow by the examples of illustrious misfortunes; and observes, that of nine emperors (including the Caesar Gallus) who had reigned in his time, only two (Constantine and Constantius) died a natural death. Such vague consolations have never wiped away a single tear.]

After the death of Jovian, the throne of the Roman world remained ten days, [19] without a master. The ministers and generals still continued to meet in council; to exercise their respective functions; to maintain the public order; and peaceably to conduct the army to the city of Nice in Bithynia, which was chosen for the place of the election. [20] In a solemn assembly of the civil and military powers of the empire, the diadem was again unanimously offered to the praefect Sallust. He enjoyed

the glory of a second refusal: and when the virtues of the father were alleged in favor of his son, the praefect, with the firmness of a disinterested patriot, declared to the electors, that the feeble age of the one, and the unexperienced youth of the other, were equally incapable of the laborious duties of government. Several candidates were proposed; and, after weighing the objections of character or situation, they were successively rejected; but, as soon as the name of Valentinian was pronounced, the merit of that officer united the suffrages of the whole assembly, and obtained the sincere approbation of Sallust himself. Valentinian [21] was the son of Count Gratian, a native of Cibalis, in Pannonia, who from an obscure condition had raised himself, by matchless strength and dexterity, to the military commands of Africa and Britain; from which he retired with an ample fortune and suspicious integrity. The rank and services of Gratian contributed, however, to smooth the first steps of the promotion of his son; and afforded him an early opportunity of displaying those solid and useful qualifications, which raised his character above the ordinary level of his fellow-soldiers. The person of Valentinian was tall, graceful, and majestic. His manly countenance, deeply marked with the impression of sense and spirit, inspired his friends with awe, and his enemies with fear; and to second the efforts of his undaunted courage, the son of Gratian had inherited the advantages of a strong and healthy constitution. By the habits of chastity and temperance, which restrain the appetites and invigorate the faculties, Valentinian preserved his own and the public esteem. The avocations of a military life had diverted his youth from the elegant pursuits of literature; [21a] he was ignorant of the Greek language,

and the arts of rhetoric; but as the mind of the orator was never disconcerted by timid perplexity, he was able, as often as the occasion prompted him, to deliver his decided sentiments with bold and ready elocution. The laws of martial discipline were the only laws that he had studied; and he was soon distinguished by the laborious diligence, and inflexible severity, with which he discharged and enforced the duties of the camp. In the time of Julian he provoked the danger of disgrace, by the contempt which he publicly expressed for the reigning religion; [22] and it should seem, from his subsequent conduct, that the indiscreet and unseasonable freedom of Valentinian was the effect of military spirit, rather than of Christian zeal. He was pardoned, however, and still employed by a prince who esteemed his merit; [23] and in the various events of the Persian war, he improved the reputation which he had already acquired on the banks of the Rhine. The celerity and success with which he executed an important commission, recommended him to the favor of Jovian; and to the honorable command of the second school, or company, of Targetiers, of the domestic guards. In the march from Antioch, he had reached his quarters at Ancyra, when he was unexpectedly summoned, without guilt and without intrigue, to assume, in the forty-third year of his age, the absolute government of the Roman empire.

[Footnote 19: Ten days appear scarcely sufficient for the march and election. But it may be observed, 1. That the generals might command the expeditious use of the public posts for themselves, their attendants, and messengers. 2. That the troops, for the ease of the cities, marched

in many divisions; and that the head of the column might arrive at Nice, when the rear halted at Ancyra.]

[Footnote 20: Ammianus, xxvi. 1. Zosimus, l. iii. p. 198. Philostorgius, l. viii. c. 8, and Godefroy, Dissertat. p. 334. Philostorgius, who appears to have obtained some curious and authentic intelligence, ascribes the choice of Valentinian to the praefect Sallust, the master-general Arintheus, Dagalaiphus count of the domestics, and the patrician Datianus, whose pressing recommendations from Ancyra had a weighty influence in the election.]

[Footnote 21: Ammianus (xxx. 7, 9) and the younger Victor have furnished the portrait of Valentinian, which naturally precedes and illustrates the history of his reign. \* Note: Symmachus, in a fragment of an oration published by M. Mai, describes Valentinian as born among the snows of Illyria, and habituated to military labor amid the heat and dust of Libya: *genitus in frigoribus, educatus in solibus* Sym. Orat. Frag. edit. Niebuhr, p. 5.--M.]

[Footnote 21a: According to Ammianus, he wrote elegantly, and was skilled in painting and modelling. *Scribens decore, venustequae pingens et fingens.* xxx. 7.--M.]

[Footnote 22: At Antioch, where he was obliged to attend the emperor to the table, he struck a priest, who had presumed to purify him with lustral water, (Sozomen, l. vi. c. 6. Theodoret, l. iii. c. 15.) Such

public defiance might become Valentinian; but it could leave no room for the unworthy delation of the philosopher Maximus, which supposes some more private offence, (Zosimus, l. iv. p. 200, 201.)]

[Footnote 23: Socrates, l. iv. A previous exile to Melitene, or Thebais (the first might be possible,) is interposed by Sozomen (l. vi. c. 6) and Philostorgius, (l. vii. c. 7, with Godefroy's Dissertations, p. 293.)]

The invitation of the ministers and generals at Nice was of little moment, unless it were confirmed by the voice of the army.

The aged Sallust, who had long observed the irregular fluctuations of popular assemblies, proposed, under pain of death, that none of those persons, whose rank in the service might excite a party in their favor, should appear in public on the day of the inauguration. Yet such was the prevalence of ancient superstition, that a whole day was voluntarily added to this dangerous interval, because it happened to be the intercalation of the Bissextile. [24] At length, when the hour was supposed to be propitious, Valentinian showed himself from a lofty tribunal; the judicious choice was applauded; and the new prince was solemnly invested with the diadem and the purple, amidst the acclamation of the troops, who were disposed in martial order round the tribunal. But when he stretched forth his hand to address the armed multitude, a busy whisper was accidentally started in the ranks, and insensibly swelled into a loud and imperious clamor, that he should name, without

delay, a colleague in the empire. The intrepid calmness of Valentinian obtained silence, and commanded respect; and he thus addressed the assembly: "A few minutes since it was in your power, fellow-soldiers, to have left me in the obscurity of a private station. Judging, from the testimony of my past life, that I deserved to reign, you have placed me on the throne. It is now my duty to consult the safety and interest of the republic. The weight of the universe is undoubtedly too great for the hands of a feeble mortal. I am conscious of the limits of my abilities, and the uncertainty of my life; and far from declining, I am anxious to solicit, the assistance of a worthy colleague. But, where discord may be fatal, the choice of a faithful friend requires mature and serious deliberation. That deliberation shall be my care. Let your conduct be dutiful and consistent. Retire to your quarters; refresh your minds and bodies; and expect the accustomed donative on the accession of a new emperor." [25] The astonished troops, with a mixture of pride, of satisfaction, and of terror, confessed the voice of their master.

Their angry clamors subsided into silent reverence; and Valentinian, encompassed with the eagles of the legions, and the various banners of the cavalry and infantry, was conducted, in warlike pomp, to the palace of Nice. As he was sensible, however, of the importance of preventing some rash declaration of the soldiers, he consulted the assembly of the chiefs; and their real sentiments were concisely expressed by the generous freedom of Dagalaiphus. "Most excellent prince," said that officer, "if you consider only your family, you have a brother; if you love the republic, look round for the most deserving of the Romans."

[26] The emperor, who suppressed his displeasure, without altering his intention, slowly proceeded from Nice to Nicomedia and Constantinople. In one of the suburbs of that capital, [27] thirty days after his own elevation, he bestowed the title of Augustus on his brother Valens; [27a] and as the boldest patriots were convinced, that their opposition, without being serviceable to their country, would be fatal to themselves, the declaration of his absolute will was received with silent submission. Valens was now in the thirty-sixth year of his age; but his abilities had never been exercised in any employment, military or civil; and his character had not inspired the world with any sanguine expectations. He possessed, however, one quality, which recommended him to Valentinian, and preserved the domestic peace of the empire; devout and grateful attachment to his benefactor, whose superiority of genius, as well as of authority, Valens humbly and cheerfully acknowledged in every action of his life. [28]

[Footnote 24: Ammianus, in a long, because unseasonable, digression, (xxvi. 1, and Valesius, ad locum,) rashly supposes that he understands an astronomical question, of which his readers are ignorant. It is treated with more judgment and propriety by Censorinus (de Die Natali, c. 20) and Macrobius, (Saturnal. i. c. 12-16.) The appellation of Bissextile, which marks the inauspicious year, (Augustin. ad Januarium, Epist. 119,) is derived from the repetition of the sixth day of the calends of March.]

[Footnote 25: Valentinian's first speech is in Ammianus, (xxvi. 2;)]



concise and sententious in Philostorgius, (l. viii. c. 8.)]

[Footnote 26: Si tuos amas, Imperator optime, habes fratrem; si Rempublicam quaere quem vestias. Ammian. xxvi. 4. In the division of the empire, Valentinian retained that sincere counsellor for himself, (c.6.)]

[Footnote 27: In suburbano, Ammian. xxvi. 4. The famous Hebdomon, or field of Mars, was distant from Constantinople either seven stadia, or seven miles. See Valesius, and his brother, ad loc., and Ducange, Const. l. ii. p. 140, 141, 172, 173.]

[Footnote 27a: Symmachus praises the liberality of Valentinian in raising his brother at once to the rank of Augustus, not training him through the slow and probationary degree of Caesar. Exigui animi vices munerum partiuntur, liberalitas desiderii nihil reliquit. Symm. Orat. p. 7. edit. Niebuhr, 1816, reprinted from Mai.--M.]

[Footnote 28: Participem quidem legitimum potestatis; sed in modum apparitoris morigerum, ut progrediens aperiet textus. Ammian. xxvi. 4.]