

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

When the suffrage of the generals and of the army committed the sceptre of the Roman empire to the hands of Valentinian, his reputation in arms, his military skill and experience, and his rigid attachment to the forms, as well as spirit, of ancient discipline, were the principal motives of their judicious choice.

The eagerness of the troops, who pressed him to nominate his colleague, was justified by the dangerous situation of public affairs; and Valentinian himself was conscious, that the abilities of the most active mind were unequal to the defence of the distant frontiers of an invaded monarchy. As soon as the death of Julian had relieved the Barbarians from the terror of his name, the most sanguine hopes of rapine and conquest excited the nations of the East, of the North, and of the South. Their inroads were often vexatious, and sometimes formidable; but, during the twelve years of the reign of Valentinian, his firmness and vigilance protected his own dominions; and his powerful genius seemed to inspire and direct the feeble counsels of his brother. Perhaps the method of annals would more forcibly express the urgent and divided cares of the two emperors; but the attention of the reader, likewise, would be distracted by a tedious and desultory narrative. A separate view of the five great theatres of war; I. Germany; II. Britain; III. Africa; IV. The East; and, V. The Danube; will impress a more distinct image of the military state of the empire under the reigns of

Valentinian and Valens.

I. The ambassadors of the Alemanni had been offended by the harsh and haughty behavior of Ursacius, master of the offices; [88] who by an act of unseasonable parsimony, had diminished the value, as well as the quantity, of the presents to which they were entitled, either from custom or treaty, on the accession of a new emperor. They expressed, and they communicated to their countrymen, their strong sense of the national affront. The irascible minds of the chiefs were exasperated by the suspicion of contempt; and the martial youth crowded to their standard. Before Valentinian could pass the Alps, the villages of Gaul were in flames; before his general Degalaiphus could encounter the Alemanni, they had secured the captives and the spoil in the forests of Germany. In the beginning of the ensuing year, the military force of the whole nation, in deep and solid columns, broke through the barrier of the Rhine, during the severity of a northern winter. Two Roman counts were defeated and mortally wounded; and the standard of the Heruli and Batavians fell into the hands of the Heruli and Batavians fell into the hands of the conquerors, who displayed, with insulting shouts and menaces, the trophy of their victory. The standard was recovered; but the Batavians had not redeemed the shame of their disgrace and flight in the eyes of their severe judge. It was the opinion of Valentinian, that his soldiers must learn to fear their commander, before they could cease to fear the enemy. The troops were solemnly assembled; and the trembling Batavians were enclosed within the circle of the Imperial army.

Valentinian then ascended his tribunal; and, as if he disdained to

punish cowardice with death, he inflicted a stain of indelible ignominy on the officers, whose misconduct and pusillanimity were found to be the first occasion of the defeat. The Batavians were degraded from their rank, stripped of their arms, and condemned to be sold for slaves to the highest bidder. At this tremendous sentence, the troops fell prostrate on the ground, deprecated the indignation of their sovereign, and protested, that, if he would indulge them in another trial, they would approve themselves not unworthy of the name of Romans, and of his soldiers. Valentinian, with affected reluctance, yielded to their entreaties; the Batavians resumed their arms, and with their arms, the invincible resolution of wiping away their disgrace in the blood of the Alemanni. [89] The principal command was declined by Dagalaiphus; and that experienced general, who had represented, perhaps with too much prudence, the extreme difficulties of the undertaking, had the mortification, before the end of the campaign, of seeing his rival Jovinus convert those difficulties into a decisive advantage over the scattered forces of the Barbarians. At the head of a well-disciplined army of cavalry, infantry, and light troops, Jovinus advanced, with cautious and rapid steps, to Scarponna, [90] [90a] in the territory of Metz, where he surprised a large division of the Alemanni, before they had time to run to their arms; and flushed his soldiers with the confidence of an easy and bloodless victory. Another division, or rather army, of the enemy, after the cruel and wanton devastation of the adjacent country, reposed themselves on the shady banks of the Moselle. Jovinus, who had viewed the ground with the eye of a general, made a silent approach through a deep and woody vale, till he could distinctly

perceive the indolent security of the Germans. Some were bathing their huge limbs in the river; others were combing their long and flaxen hair; others again were swallowing large draughts of rich and delicious wine. On a sudden they heard the sound of the Roman trumpet; they saw the enemy in their camp. Astonishment produced disorder; disorder was followed by flight and dismay; and the confused multitude of the bravest warriors was pierced by the swords and javelins of the legionaries and auxiliaries. The fugitives escaped to the third, and most considerable, camp, in the Catalonian plains, near Chalons in Champagne: the straggling detachments were hastily recalled to their standard; and the Barbarian chiefs, alarmed and admonished by the fate of their companions, prepared to encounter, in a decisive battle, the victorious forces of the lieutenant of Valentinian. The bloody and obstinate conflict lasted a whole summer's day, with equal valor, and with alternate success. The Romans at length prevailed, with the loss of about twelve hundred men. Six thousand of the Alemanni were slain, four thousand were wounded; and the brave Jovinus, after chasing the flying remnant of their host as far as the banks of the Rhine, returned to Paris, to receive the applause of his sovereign, and the ensigns of the consulship for the ensuing year. [91] The triumph of the Romans was indeed sullied by their treatment of the captive king, whom they hung on a gibbet, without the knowledge of their indignant general. This disgraceful act of cruelty, which might be imputed to the fury of the troops, was followed by the deliberate murder of Withicab, the son of Vadomair; a German prince, of a weak and sickly constitution, but of a daring and formidable spirit. The domestic assassin was instigated and

protected by the Romans; [92] and the violation of the laws of humanity and justice betrayed their secret apprehension of the weakness of the declining empire. The use of the dagger is seldom adopted in public councils, as long as they retain any confidence in the power of the sword.

[Footnote 88: Ammian, xxvi. 5. Valesius adds a long and good note on the master of the offices.]

[Footnote 89: Ammian. xxvii. 1. Zosimus, l. iv. p. 208. The disgrace of the Batavians is suppressed by the contemporary soldier, from a regard for military honor, which could not affect a Greek rhetorician of the succeeding age.]

[Footnote 90: See D'Anville, Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule, p. 587. The name of the Moselle, which is not specified by Ammianus, is clearly understood by Mascou, (Hist. of the Ancient Germans, vii. 2)]

[Footnote 90a: Charpeigne on the Moselle. Mannert--M.]

[Footnote 91: The battles are described by Ammianus, (xxvii. 2,) and by Zosimus, (l. iv. p. 209,) who supposes Valentinian to have been present.]

[Footnote 92: Studio solicitante nostrorum, occubuit. Ammian xxvii. 10.]

While the Alemanni appeared to be humbled by their recent calamities, the pride of Valentinian was mortified by the unexpected surprisal of Moguntiacum, or Mentz, the principal city of the Upper Germany. In the unsuspecting moment of a Christian festival, [92a] Rando, a bold and artful chieftain, who had long meditated his attempt, suddenly passed the Rhine; entered the defenceless town, and retired with a multitude of captives of either sex. Valentinian resolved to execute severe vengeance on the whole body of the nation. Count Sebastian, with the bands of Italy and Illyricum, was ordered to invade their country, most probably on the side of Rhaetia. The emperor in person, accompanied by his son Gratian, passed the Rhine at the head of a formidable army, which was supported on both flanks by Jovinus and Severus, the two masters-general of the cavalry and infantry of the West. The Alemanni, unable to prevent the devastation of their villages, fixed their camp on a lofty, and almost inaccessible, mountain, in the modern duchy of Wirtemberg, and resolutely expected the approach of the Romans. The life of Valentinian was exposed to imminent danger by the intrepid curiosity with which he persisted to explore some secret and unguarded path. A troop of Barbarians suddenly rose from their ambuscade: and the emperor, who vigorously spurred his horse down a steep and slippery descent, was obliged to leave behind him his armor-bearer, and his helmet, magnificently enriched with gold and precious stones. At the signal of the general assault, the Roman troops encompassed and ascended the mountain of Solicinium on three different sides. [92b] Every step which they gained, increased their ardor, and abated the resistance of the enemy: and after their united forces had occupied the summit of the

hill, they impetuously urged the Barbarians down the northern descent, where Count Sebastian was posted to intercept their retreat. After this signal victory, Valentinian returned to his winter quarters at Treves; where he indulged the public joy by the exhibition of splendid and triumphal games. [93] But the wise monarch, instead of aspiring to the conquest of Germany, confined his attention to the important and laborious defence of the Gallic frontier, against an enemy whose strength was renewed by a stream of daring volunteers, which incessantly flowed from the most distant tribes of the North. [94] The banks of the Rhine [94a] from its source to the straits of the ocean, were closely planted with strong castles and convenient towers; new works, and new arms, were invented by the ingenuity of a prince who was skilled in the mechanical arts; and his numerous levies of Roman and Barbarian youth were severely trained in all the exercises of war. The progress of the work, which was sometimes opposed by modest representations, and sometimes by hostile attempts, secured the tranquillity of Gaul during the nine subsequent years of the administration of Valentinian. [95]

[Footnote 92a: Probably Easter. Wagner.--M.]

[Footnote 92b: Mannert is unable to fix the position of Solicinium. Haefelin (in *Comm Acad Elect. Palat. v. 14*) conjectures Schwetzingen, near Heidelberg. See Wagner's note. St. Martin, Sultz in Wirtemberg, near the sources of the Neckar St. Martin, iii. 339.--M.]

[Footnote 93: The expedition of Valentinian is related by Ammianus,

(xxvii. 10;) and celebrated by Ausonius, (Mosell. 421, &c.,) who foolishly supposes, that the Romans were ignorant of the sources of the Danube.]

[Footnote 94: Immanis enim natio, jam inde ab incunabulis primis varietate casuum imminuta; ita saepius adolescit, ut fuisse longis saeculis aestimetur intacta. Ammianus, xxviii. 5. The Count de Buat (Hist. des Peuples de l'Europe, tom. vi. p. 370) ascribes the fecundity of the Alemanni to their easy adoption of strangers. ----Note: "This explanation," says Mr. Malthus, "only removes the difficulty a little farther off. It makes the earth rest upon the tortoise, but does not tell us on what the tortoise rests. We may still ask what northern reservoir supplied this incessant stream of daring adventurers. Montesquieu's solution of the problem will, I think, hardly be admitted, (Grandeur et Decadence des Romains, c. 16, p. 187.) \* \* \* The whole difficulty, however, is at once removed, if we apply to the German nations, at that time, a fact which is so generally known to have occurred in America, and suppose that, when not checked by wars and famine, they increased at a rate that would double their numbers in twenty-five or thirty years. The propriety, and even the necessity, of applying this rate of increase to the inhabitants of ancient Germany, will strikingly appear from that most valuable picture of their manners which has been left us by Tacitus, (Tac. de Mor. Germ. 16 to 20.) \* \*

\* With these manners, and a habit of enterprise and emigration, which would naturally remove all fears about providing for a family, it is difficult to conceive a society with a stronger principle of increase



in it, and we see at once that prolific source of armies and colonies against which the force of the Roman empire so long struggled with difficulty, and under which it ultimately sunk. It is not probable that, for two periods together, or even for one, the population within the confines of Germany ever doubled itself in twenty-five years. Their perpetual wars, the rude state of agriculture, and particularly the very strange custom adopted by most of the tribes of marking their barriers by extensive deserts, would prevent any very great actual increase of numbers. At no one period could the country be called well peopled, though it was often redundant in population. \* \* \* Instead of clearing their forests, draining their swamps, and rendering their soil fit to support an extended population, they found it more congenial to their martial habits and impatient dispositions to go in quest of food, of plunder, or of glory, into other countries." Malthus on Population, i. p. 128.--G.]

[Footnote 94a: The course of the Neckar was likewise strongly guarded. The hyperbolic eulogy of Symmachus asserts that the Neckar first became known to the Romans by the conquests and fortifications of Valentinian. *Nunc primum victoriis tuis externus fluvius publicatur. Gaudeat servitute, captivus innotuit.* Symm. Orat. p. 22.--M.]

[Footnote 95: Ammian. xxviii. 2. Zosimus, 1. iv. p. 214. The younger Victor mentions the mechanical genius of Valentinian, *nova arma meditari fingere terra seu limo simulacra.*]

That prudent emperor, who diligently practised the wise maxims of Diocletian, was studious to foment and excite the intestine divisions of the tribes of Germany. About the middle of the fourth century, the countries, perhaps of Lusace and Thuringia, on either side of the Elbe, were occupied by the vague dominion of the Burgundians; a warlike and numerous people, [95a] of the Vandal race, [96] whose obscure name insensibly swelled into a powerful kingdom, and has finally settled on a flourishing province. The most remarkable circumstance in the ancient manners of the Burgundians appears to have been the difference of their civil and ecclesiastical constitution. The appellation of Hendinos was given to the king or general, and the title of Sinistus to the high priest, of the nation. The person of the priest was sacred, and his dignity perpetual; but the temporal government was held by a very precarious tenure. If the events of war accuses the courage or conduct of the king, he was immediately deposed; and the injustice of his subjects made him responsible for the fertility of the earth, and the regularity of the seasons, which seemed to fall more properly within the sacerdotal department. [97] The disputed possession of some salt-pits [98] engaged the Alemanni and the Burgundians in frequent contests: the latter were easily tempted, by the secret solicitations and liberal offers of the emperor; and their fabulous descent from the Roman soldiers, who had formerly been left to garrison the fortresses of Drusus, was admitted with mutual credulity, as it was conducive to mutual interest. [99] An army of fourscore thousand Burgundians soon appeared on the banks of the Rhine; and impatiently required the support and subsidies which Valentinian had promised: but they were amused with

excuses and delays, till at length, after a fruitless expectation, they were compelled to retire. The arms and fortifications of the Gallic frontier checked the fury of their just resentment; and their massacre of the captives served to imbitter the hereditary feud of the Burgundians and the Alemanni. The inconstancy of a wise prince may, perhaps, be explained by some alteration of circumstances; and perhaps it was the original design of Valentinian to intimidate, rather than to destroy; as the balance of power would have been equally overturned by the extirpation of either of the German nations. Among the princes of the Alemanni, Macrianus, who, with a Roman name, had assumed the arts of a soldier and a statesman, deserved his hatred and esteem. The emperor himself, with a light and unencumbered band, condescended to pass the Rhine, marched fifty miles into the country, and would infallibly have seized the object of his pursuit, if his judicious measures had not been defeated by the impatience of the troops. Macrianus was afterwards admitted to the honor of a personal conference with the emperor; and the favors which he received, fixed him, till the hour of his death, a steady and sincere friend of the republic. [100]

[Footnote 95a: According to the general opinion, the Burgundians formed a Gothic or Vandalic tribe, who, from the banks of the Lower Vistula, made incursions, on one side towards Transylvania, on the other towards the centre of Germany. All that remains of the Burgundian language is Gothic. \* \* \* Nothing in their customs indicates a different origin.

Malte Brun, Geog. tom. i. p. 396. (edit. 1831.)--M.]

[Footnote 96: *Bellicosos et pubis immensae viribus affluentibus; et ideo metuendos finitimis universis. Ammian. xxviii. 5.*]

[Footnote 97: I am always apt to suspect historians and travellers of improving extraordinary facts into general laws. Ammianus ascribes a similar custom to Egypt; and the Chinese have imputed it to the Ta-tsin, or Roman empire, (De Guignes, *Hist. des Huns*, tom. ii. part. 79.)]

[Footnote 98: *Salinarum finiumque causa Alemannis saepe jurgabant. Ammian. xxviii. 5.* Possibly they disputed the possession of the Sala, a river which produced salt, and which had been the object of ancient contention. Tacit. *Annal.* xiii. 57, and Lipsius *ad loc.*]

[Footnote 99: *Jam inde temporibus priscis sobolem se esse Romanam Burgundii sciunt:* and the vague tradition gradually assumed a more regular form, (Oros. l. vii. c. 32.) It is annihilated by the decisive authority of Pliny, who composed the *History of Drusus*, and served in Germany, (Plin. *Secund. Epist.* iii. 5,) within sixty years after the death of that hero. *Germanorum genera quinque; Vindili, quorum pars Burgundiones, &c., (Hist. Natur. iv. 28.)*]

[Footnote 100: The wars and negotiations relative to the Burgundians and Alemanni, are distinctly related by Ammianus Marcellinus, (xxviii. 5, xxix 4, xxx. 3.) Orosius, (l. vii. c. 32,) and the *Chronicles of Jerom* and Cassiodorus, fix some dates, and add some circumstances.]

The land was covered by the fortifications of Valentinian; but the sea-coast of Gaul and Britain was exposed to the depredations of the Saxons. That celebrated name, in which we have a dear and domestic interest, escaped the notice of Tacitus; and in the maps of Ptolemy, it faintly marks the narrow neck of the Cimbric peninsula, and three small islands towards the mouth of the Elbe. [101] This contracted territory, the present duchy of Sleswig, or perhaps of Holstein, was incapable of pouring forth the inexhaustible swarms of Saxons who reigned over the ocean, who filled the British island with their language, their laws, and their colonies; and who so long defended the liberty of the North against the arms of Charlemagne. [102] The solution of this difficulty is easily derived from the similar manners, and loose constitution, of the tribes of Germany; which were blended with each other by the slightest accidents of war or friendship. The situation of the native Saxons disposed them to embrace the hazardous professions of fishermen and pirates; and the success of their first adventures would naturally excite the emulation of their bravest countrymen, who were impatient of the gloomy solitude of their woods and mountains. Every tide might float down the Elbe whole fleets of canoes, filled with hardy and intrepid associates, who aspired to behold the unbounded prospect of the ocean, and to taste the wealth and luxury of unknown worlds. It should seem probable, however, that the most numerous auxiliaries of the Saxons were furnished by the nations who dwelt along the shores of the Baltic. They possessed arms and ships, the art of navigation, and the habits of naval war; but the difficulty of issuing through the northern columns of Hercules [103] (which, during several months of the year, are obstructed

with ice) confined their skill and courage within the limits of a spacious lake. The rumor of the successful armaments which sailed from the mouth of the Elbe, would soon provoke them to cross the narrow isthmus of Sleswig, and to launch their vessels on the great sea. The various troops of pirates and adventurers, who fought under the same standard, were insensibly united in a permanent society, at first of rapine, and afterwards of government. A military confederation was gradually moulded into a national body, by the gentle operation of marriage and consanguinity; and the adjacent tribes, who solicited the alliance, accepted the name and laws, of the Saxons. If the fact were not established by the most unquestionable evidence, we should appear to abuse the credulity of our readers, by the description of the vessels in which the Saxon pirates ventured to sport in the waves of the German Ocean, the British Channel, and the Bay of Biscay. The keel of their large flat-bottomed boats were framed of light timber, but the sides and upper works consisted only of wicker, with a covering of strong hides. [104] In the course of their slow and distant navigations, they must always have been exposed to the danger, and very frequently to the misfortune, of shipwreck; and the naval annals of the Saxons were undoubtedly filled with the accounts of the losses which they sustained on the coasts of Britain and Gaul. But the daring spirit of the pirates braved the perils both of the sea and of the shore: their skill was confirmed by the habits of enterprise; the meanest of their mariners was alike capable of handling an oar, of rearing a sail, or of conducting a vessel, and the Saxons rejoiced in the appearance of a tempest, which concealed their design, and dispersed the fleets of the enemy. [105]

After they had acquired an accurate knowledge of the maritime provinces of the West, they extended the scene of their depredations, and the most sequestered places had no reason to presume on their security. The Saxon boats drew so little water that they could easily proceed fourscore or a hundred miles up the great rivers; their weight was so inconsiderable, that they were transported on wagons from one river to another; and the pirates who had entered the mouth of the Seine, or of the Rhine, might descend, with the rapid stream of the Rhone, into the Mediterranean. Under the reign of Valentinian, the maritime provinces of Gaul were afflicted by the Saxons: a military count was stationed for the defence of the sea-coast, or Armorican limit; and that officer, who found his strength, or his abilities, unequal to the task, implored the assistance of Severus, master-general of the infantry. The Saxons, surrounded and outnumbered, were forced to relinquish their spoil, and to yield a select band of their tall and robust youth to serve in the Imperial armies. They stipulated only a safe and honorable retreat; and the condition was readily granted by the Roman general, who meditated an act of perfidy, [106] imprudent as it was inhuman, while a Saxon remained alive, and in arms, to revenge the fate of their countrymen. The premature eagerness of the infantry, who were secretly posted in a deep valley, betrayed the ambuscade; and they would perhaps have fallen the victims of their own treachery, if a large body of cuirassiers, alarmed by the noise of the combat, had not hastily advanced to extricate their companions, and to overwhelm the undaunted valor of the Saxons. Some of the prisoners were saved from the edge of the sword, to shed their blood in the amphitheatre; and the orator Symmachus complains, that

twenty-nine of those desperate savages, by strangling themselves with their own hands, had disappointed the amusement of the public. Yet the polite and philosophic citizens of Rome were impressed with the deepest horror, when they were informed, that the Saxons consecrated to the gods the tithe of their human spoil; and that they ascertained by lot the objects of the barbarous sacrifice. [107]

[Footnote 101: At the northern extremity of the peninsula, (the Cimbric promontory of Pliny, iv. 27,) Ptolemy fixes the remnant of the Cimbri. He fills the interval between the Saxons and the Cimbri with six obscure tribes, who were united, as early as the sixth century, under the national appellation of Danes. See Cluver. German. Antiq. 1. iii. c. 21, 22, 23.]

[Footnote 102: M. D'Anville (Etablissement des Etats de l'Europe, &c., p. 19-26) has marked the extensive limits of the Saxony of Charlemagne.]

[Footnote 103: The fleet of Drusus had failed in their attempt to pass, or even to approach, the Sound, (styled, from an obvious resemblance, the columns of Hercules,) and the naval enterprise was never resumed, (Tacit. de Moribus German. c. 34.) The knowledge which the Romans acquired of the naval powers of the Baltic, (c. 44, 45) was obtained by their land journeys in search of amber.]

[Footnote 104:



Quin et Aremoricus piratam Saxona tractus  
Sperabat; cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum  
Ludus; et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo  
Sidon. in Panegy. Avit. 369.

The genius of Caesar imitated, for a particular service, these rude, but light vessels, which were likewise used by the natives of Britain. (Comment. de Bell. Civil. i. 51, and Guichardt, Nouveaux Memoires Militaires, tom. ii. p. 41, 42.) The British vessels would now astonish the genius of Caesar.]

[Footnote 105: The best original account of the Saxon pirates may be found in Sidonius Apollinaris, (l. viii. epist. 6, p. 223, edit. Sirmond,) and the best commentary in the Abbe du Bos, (Hist. Critique de la Monarchie Francoise, &c. tom. i. l. i. c. 16, p. 148-155. See likewise p. 77, 78.)]

[Footnote 106: Ammian. (xxviii. 5) justifies this breach of faith to pirates and robbers; and Orosius (l. vii. c. 32) more clearly expresses their real guilt; virtute atque agilitate terribiles.]

[Footnote 107: Symmachus (l. ii. epist. 46) still presumes to mention the sacred name of Socrates and philosophy. Sidonius, bishop of Clermont, might condemn, (l. viii. epist. 6,) with less inconsistency, the human sacrifices of the Saxons.]

II. The fabulous colonies of Egyptians and Trojans, of Scandinavians and Spaniards, which flattered the pride, and amused the credulity, of our rude ancestors, have insensibly vanished in the light of science and philosophy. [108] The present age is satisfied with the simple and rational opinion, that the islands of Great Britain and Ireland were gradually peopled from the adjacent continent of Gaul. From the coast of Kent, to the extremity of Caithness and Ulster, the memory of a Celtic origin was distinctly preserved, in the perpetual resemblance of language, of religion, and of manners; and the peculiar characters of the British tribes might be naturally ascribed to the influence of accidental and local circumstances. [109] The Roman Province was reduced to the state of civilized and peaceful servitude; the rights of savage freedom were contracted to the narrow limits of Caledonia. The inhabitants of that northern region were divided, as early as the reign of Constantine, between the two great tribes of the Scots and of the Picts, [110] who have since experienced a very different fortune. The power, and almost the memory, of the Picts have been extinguished by their successful rivals; and the Scots, after maintaining for ages the dignity of an independent kingdom, have multiplied, by an equal and voluntary union, the honors of the English name. The hand of nature had contributed to mark the ancient distinctions of the Scots and Picts. The former were the men of the hills, and the latter those of the plain. The eastern coast of Caledonia may be considered as a level and fertile country, which, even in a rude state of tillage, was capable of producing a considerable quantity of corn; and the epithet of cruitnich, or wheat-eaters, expressed the contempt or envy of the carnivorous

highlander. The cultivation of the earth might introduce a more accurate separation of property, and the habits of a sedentary life; but the love of arms and rapine was still the ruling passion of the Picts; and their warriors, who stripped themselves for a day of battle, were distinguished, in the eyes of the Romans, by the strange fashion of painting their naked bodies with gaudy colors and fantastic figures. The western part of Caledonia irregularly rises into wild and barren hills, which scarcely repay the toil of the husbandman, and are most profitably used for the pasture of cattle. The highlanders were condemned to the occupations of shepherds and hunters; and, as they seldom were fixed to any permanent habitation, they acquired the expressive name of Scots, which, in the Celtic tongue, is said to be equivalent to that of wanderers, or vagrants. The inhabitants of a barren land were urged to seek a fresh supply of food in the waters. The deep lakes and bays which intersect their country, are plentifully supplied with fish; and they gradually ventured to cast their nets in the waves of the ocean. The vicinity of the Hebrides, so profusely scattered along the western coast of Scotland, tempted their curiosity, and improved their skill; and they acquired, by slow degrees, the art, or rather the habit, of managing their boats in a tempestuous sea, and of steering their nocturnal course by the light of the well-known stars. The two bold headlands of Caledonia almost touch the shores of a spacious island, which obtained, from its luxuriant vegetation, the epithet of Green; and has preserved, with a slight alteration, the name of Erin, or Ierne, or Ireland. It is probable, that in some remote period of antiquity, the fertile plains of Ulster received a colony of hungry Scots; and that the strangers of the

North, who had dared to encounter the arms of the legions, spread their conquests over the savage and unwarlike natives of a solitary island. It is certain, that, in the declining age of the Roman empire, Caledonia, Ireland, and the Isle of Man, were inhabited by the Scots, and that the kindred tribes, who were often associated in military enterprise, were deeply affected by the various accidents of their mutual fortunes. They long cherished the lively tradition of their common name and origin; and the missionaries of the Isle of Saints, who diffused the light of Christianity over North Britain, established the vain opinion, that their Irish countrymen were the natural, as well as spiritual, fathers of the Scottish race. The loose and obscure tradition has been preserved by the venerable Bede, who scattered some rays of light over the darkness of the eighth century. On this slight foundation, a huge superstructure of fable was gradually reared, by the bards and the monks; two orders of men, who equally abused the privilege of fiction. The Scottish nation, with mistaken pride, adopted their Irish genealogy; and the annals of a long line of imaginary kings have been adorned by the fancy of Boethius, and the classic elegance of Buchanan. [111]

[Footnote 108: In the beginning of the last century, the learned Camden was obliged to undermine, with respectful scepticism, the romance of Brutus, the Trojan; who is now buried in silent oblivion with Scota the daughter of Pharaoh, and her numerous progeny. Yet I am informed, that some champions of the Milesian colony may still be found among the original natives of Ireland. A people dissatisfied with their present condition, grasp at any visions of their past or future glory.]

[Footnote 109: Tacitus, or rather his father-in-law, Agricola, might remark the German or Spanish complexion of some British tribes. But it was their sober, deliberate opinion: "In universum tamen aestimanti Gallos cicinum solum occupasse credibile est. Eorum sacra deprehendas.... ermo haud multum diversus," (in Vit. Agricol. c. xi.) Caesar had observed their common religion, (Comment. de Bello Gallico, vi. 13;) and in his time the emigration from the Belgic Gaul was a recent, or at least an historical event, (v. 10.) Camden, the British Strabo, has modestly ascertained our genuine antiquities, (Britannia, vol. i. Introduction, p. ii.--xxxii.)]

[Footnote 110: In the dark and doubtful paths of Caledonian antiquity, I have chosen for my guides two learned and ingenious Highlanders, whom their birth and education had peculiarly qualified for that office. See Critical Dissertations on the Origin and Antiquities, &c., of the Caledonians, by Dr. John Macpherson, London 1768, in 4to.; and Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland, by James Macpherson, Esq., London 1773, in 4to., third edit. Dr. Macpherson was a minister in the Isle of Sky: and it is a circumstance honorable for the present age, that a work, replete with erudition and criticism, should have been composed in the most remote of the Hebrides.]

[Footnote 111: The Irish descent of the Scots has been revived in the last moments of its decay, and strenuously supported, by the Rev. Mr. Whitaker, (Hist. of Manchester, vol. i. p. 430, 431; and Genuine History

of the Britons asserted, &c., p. 154-293) Yet he acknowledges, 1. That the Scots of Ammianus Marcellinus (A.D. 340) were already settled in Caledonia; and that the Roman authors do not afford any hints of their emigration from another country. 2. That all the accounts of such emigrations, which have been asserted or received, by Irish bards, Scotch historians, or English antiquaries, (Buchanan, Camden, Usher, Stillingfleet, &c.) are totally fabulous. 3. That three of the Irish tribes, which are mentioned by Ptolemy, (A.D. 150,) were of Caledonian extraction. 4. That a younger branch of Caledonian princes, of the house of Fingal, acquired and possessed the monarchy of Ireland. After these concessions, the remaining difference between Mr. Whitaker and his adversaries is minute and obscure. The genuine history, which he produces, of a Fergus, the cousin of Ossian, who was transplanted (A.D. 320) from Ireland to Caledonia, is built on a conjectural supplement to the Erse poetry, and the feeble evidence of Richard of Cirencester, a monk of the fourteenth century. The lively spirit of the learned and ingenious antiquarian has tempted him to forget the nature of a question, which he so vehemently debates, and so absolutely decides. \*

Note: This controversy has not slumbered since the days of Gibbon. We have strenuous advocates of the Phoenician origin of the Irish, and each of the old theories, with several new ones, maintains its partisans. It would require several pages fairly to bring down the dispute to our own days, and perhaps we should be no nearer to any satisfactory theory than Gibbon was.]