

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

Six years after the death of Constantine, the destructive inroads of the Scots and Picts required the presence of his youngest son, who reigned in the Western empire. Constantius visited his British dominions: but we may form some estimate of the importance of his achievements, by the language of panegyric, which celebrates only his triumph over the elements or, in other words, the good fortune of a safe and easy passage from the port of Boulogne to the harbor of Sandwich. [112] The calamities which the afflicted provincials continued to experience, from foreign war and domestic tyranny, were aggravated by the feeble and corrupt administration of the eunuchs of Constantius; and the transient relief which they might obtain from the virtues of Julian, was soon lost by the absence and death of their benefactor. The sums of gold and silver, which had been painfully collected, or liberally transmitted, for the payment of the troops, were intercepted by the avarice of the commanders; discharges, or, at least, exemptions, from the military service, were publicly sold; the distress of the soldiers, who were injuriously deprived of their legal and scanty subsistence, provoked them to frequent desertion; the nerves of discipline were relaxed, and the highways were infested with robbers. [113] The oppression of the good, and the impunity of the wicked, equally contributed to diffuse through the island a spirit of discontent and revolt; and every ambitious subject, every desperate exile, might entertain a reasonable hope of subverting the weak and distracted government of Britain. The

hostile tribes of the North, who detested the pride and power of the King of the World, suspended their domestic feuds; and the Barbarians of the land and sea, the Scots, the Picts, and the Saxons, spread themselves with rapid and irresistible fury, from the wall of Antoninus to the shores of Kent. Every production of art and nature, every object of convenience and luxury, which they were incapable of creating by labor or procuring by trade, was accumulated in the rich and fruitful province of Britain. [114] A philosopher may deplore the eternal discords of the human race, but he will confess, that the desire of spoil is a more rational provocation than the vanity of conquest. From the age of Constantine to the Plantagenets, this rapacious spirit continued to instigate the poor and hardy Caledonians; but the same people, whose generous humanity seems to inspire the songs of Ossian, was disgraced by a savage ignorance of the virtues of peace, and of the laws of war. Their southern neighbors have felt, and perhaps exaggerated, the cruel depredations of the Scots and Picts; [115] and a valiant tribe of Caledonia, the Attacotti, [116] the enemies, and afterwards the soldiers, of Valentinian, are accused, by an eye-witness, of delighting in the taste of human flesh. When they hunted the woods for prey, it is said, that they attacked the shepherd rather than his flock; and that they curiously selected the most delicate and brawny parts, both of males and females, which they prepared for their horrid repasts. [117] If, in the neighborhood of the commercial and literary town of Glasgow, a race of cannibals has really existed, we may contemplate, in the period of the Scottish history, the opposite extremes of savage and civilized life. Such reflections tend to enlarge

the circle of our ideas; and to encourage the pleasing hope, that New Zealand may produce, in some future age, the Hume of the Southern Hemisphere.

[Footnote 112: Hyeme tumentes ac saevientes undas calcastis Oceani sub remis vestris;... insperatam imperatoris faciem Britannus expavit. Julius Firmicus Maternus de Errore Profan. Relig. p. 464. edit. Gronov. ad calcem Minuc. Fael. See Tillemont, (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 336.)]

[Footnote 113: Libanius, Orat. Parent. c. xxxix. p. 264. This curious passage has escaped the diligence of our British antiquaries.]

[Footnote 114: The Caledonians praised and coveted the gold, the steeds, the lights, &c., of the stranger. See Dr. Blair's Dissertation on Ossian, vol ii. p. 343; and Mr. Macpherson's Introduction, p. 242-286.]

[Footnote 115: Lord Lyttelton has circumstantially related, (History of Henry II. vol. i. p. 182,) and Sir David Dalrymple has slightly mentioned, (Annals of Scotland, vol. i. p. 69,) a barbarous inroad of the Scots, at a time (A.D. 1137) when law, religion, and society must have softened their primitive manners.]

[Footnote 116: Attacotti bellicosa hominum natio. Ammian. xxvii. 8. Camden (Introduct. p. clii.) has restored their true name in the text of Jerom. The bands of Attacotti, which Jerom had seen in Gaul, were

afterwards stationed in Italy and Illyricum, (Notitia, S. viii. xxxix. xl.)]

[Footnote 117: Cum ipse adolescentulus in Gallia viderim Attacottos (or Scotos) gentem Britannicam humanis vesci carnibus; et cum per silvas porcorum greges, et armentorum percudumque reperiant, pastorum nates et feminarum papillas solere abscindere; et has solas ciborum delicias arbitrari. Such is the evidence of Jerom, (tom. ii. p. 75,) whose veracity I find no reason to question. * Note: See Dr. Parr's works, iii. 93, where he questions the propriety of Gibbon's translation of this passage. The learned doctor approves of the version proposed by a Mr. Gaches, who would make out that it was the delicate parts of the swine and the cattle, which were eaten by these ancestors of the Scotch nation. I confess that even to acquit them of this charge. I cannot agree to the new version, which, in my opinion, is directly contrary both to the meaning of the words, and the general sense of the passage. But I would suggest, did Jerom, as a boy, accompany these savages in any of their hunting expeditions? If he did not, how could he be an eye-witness of this practice? The Attacotti in Gaul must have been in the service of Rome. Were they permitted to indulge these cannibal propensities at the expense, not of the flocks, but of the shepherds of the provinces? These sanguinary trophies of plunder would scarce'y have been publicly exhibited in a Roman city or a Roman camp. I must leave the hereditary pride of our northern neighbors at issue with the veracity of St. Jerom.]

Every messenger who escaped across the British Channel, conveyed the most melancholy and alarming tidings to the ears of Valentinian; and the emperor was soon informed that the two military commanders of the province had been surprised and cut off by the Barbarians. Severus, count of the domestics, was hastily despatched, and as suddenly recalled, by the court of Treves. The representations of Jovinus served only to indicate the greatness of the evil; and, after a long and serious consultation, the defence, or rather the recovery, of Britain was intrusted to the abilities of the brave Theodosius. The exploits of that general, the father of a line of emperors, have been celebrated, with peculiar complacency, by the writers of the age: but his real merit deserved their applause; and his nomination was received, by the army and province, as a sure presage of approaching victory. He seized the favorable moment of navigation, and securely landed the numerous and veteran bands of the Heruli and Batavians, the Jovians and the Victors. In his march from Sandwich to London, Theodosius defeated several parties of the Barbarians, released a multitude of captives, and, after distributing to his soldiers a small portion of the spoil, established the fame of disinterested justice, by the restitution of the remainder to the rightful proprietors. The citizens of London, who had almost despaired of their safety, threw open their gates; and as soon as Theodosius had obtained from the court of Treves the important aid of a military lieutenant, and a civil governor, he executed, with wisdom and vigor, the laborious task of the deliverance of Britain. The vagrant soldiers were recalled to their standard; an edict of amnesty dispelled the public apprehensions; and his cheerful example alleviated the

rigor of martial discipline. The scattered and desultory warfare of the Barbarians, who infested the land and sea, deprived him of the glory of a signal victory; but the prudent spirit, and consummate art, of the Roman general, were displayed in the operations of two campaigns, which successively rescued every part of the province from the hands of a cruel and rapacious enemy. The splendor of the cities, and the security of the fortifications, were diligently restored, by the paternal care of Theodosius; who with a strong hand confined the trembling Caledonians to the northern angle of the island; and perpetuated, by the name and settlement of the new province of Valentia, the glories of the reign of Valentinian. [118] The voice of poetry and panegyric may add, perhaps with some degree of truth, that the unknown regions of Thule were stained with the blood of the Picts; that the oars of Theodosius dashed the waves of the Hyperborean ocean; and that the distant Orkneys were the scene of his naval victory over the Saxon pirates. [119] He left the province with a fair, as well as splendid, reputation; and was immediately promoted to the rank of master-general of the cavalry, by a prince who could applaud, without envy, the merit of his servants. In the important station of the Upper Danube, the conqueror of Britain checked and defeated the armies of the Alemanni, before he was chosen to suppress the revolt of Africa.

[Footnote 118: Ammianus has concisely represented (xx. 1. xxvi. 4, xxvii. 8 xxviii. 3) the whole series of the British war.]

[Footnote 119: Horrescit.... ratibus.... impervia Thule. Ille.... nec

falso nomine Pictos Edomuit. Scotumque vago mucrone secutus, Fregit
Hyperboreas remis audacibus undas. Claudian, in iii. Cons. Honorii, ver.
53, &c--Madurunt Saxone fuso Orcades: incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule,
Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne. In iv. Cons. Hon. ver. 31, &c.
-----See likewise Pacatus, (in Panegy. Vet. xii. 5.) But it is not easy
to appreciate the intrinsic value of flattery and metaphor. Compare
the British victories of Bolanus (Statius, Silv. v. 2) with his real
character, (Tacit. in Vit. Agric. c. 16.)]

III. The prince who refuses to be the judge, instructs the people to
consider him as the accomplice, of his ministers. The military command
of Africa had been long exercised by Count Romanus, and his abilities
were not inadequate to his station; but, as sordid interest was the sole
motive of his conduct, he acted, on most occasions, as if he had been
the enemy of the province, and the friend of the Barbarians of the
desert. The three flourishing cities of Oea, Leptis, and Sobrata, which,
under the name of Tripoli, had long constituted a federal union, [120]
were obliged, for the first time, to shut their gates against a hostile
invasion; several of their most honorable citizens were surprised and
massacred; the villages, and even the suburbs, were pillaged; and the
vines and fruit trees of that rich territory were extirpated by the
malicious savages of Getulia. The unhappy provincials implored the
protection of Romanus; but they soon found that their military governor
was not less cruel and rapacious than the Barbarians. As they were
incapable of furnishing the four thousand camels, and the exorbitant
present, which he required, before he would march to the assistance of

Tripoli; his demand was equivalent to a refusal, and he might justly be accused as the author of the public calamity. In the annual assembly of the three cities, they nominated two deputies, to lay at the feet of Valentinian the customary offering of a gold victory; and to accompany this tribute of duty, rather than of gratitude, with their humble complaint, that they were ruined by the enemy, and betrayed by their governor. If the severity of Valentinian had been rightly directed, it would have fallen on the guilty head of Romanus. But the count, long exercised in the arts of corruption, had despatched a swift and trusty messenger to secure the venal friendship of Remigius, master of the offices. The wisdom of the Imperial council was deceived by artifice; and their honest indignation was cooled by delay. At length, when the repetition of complaint had been justified by the repetition of public misfortunes, the notary Palladius was sent from the court of Treves, to examine the state of Africa, and the conduct of Romanus. The rigid impartiality of Palladius was easily disarmed: he was tempted to reserve for himself a part of the public treasure, which he brought with him for the payment of the troops; and from the moment that he was conscious of his own guilt, he could no longer refuse to attest the innocence and merit of the count. The charge of the Tripolitans was declared to be false and frivolous; and Palladius himself was sent back from Treves to Africa, with a special commission to discover and prosecute the authors of this impious conspiracy against the representatives of the sovereign. His inquiries were managed with so much dexterity and success, that he compelled the citizens of Leptis, who had sustained a recent siege of eight days, to contradict the truth of their own decrees, and to censure

the behavior of their own deputies. A bloody sentence was pronounced, without hesitation, by the rash and headstrong cruelty of Valentinian. The president of Tripoli, who had presumed to pity the distress of the province, was publicly executed at Utica; four distinguished citizens were put to death, as the accomplices of the imaginary fraud; and the tongues of two others were cut out, by the express order of the emperor. Romanus, elated by impunity, and irritated by resistance, was still continued in the military command; till the Africans were provoked, by his avarice, to join the rebellious standard of Firmus, the Moor. [121]

[Footnote 120: Ammianus frequently mentions their concilium annuum, legitimum, &c. Leptis and Sabrata are long since ruined; but the city of Oea, the native country of Apuleius, still flourishes under the provincial denomination of Tripoli. See Cellarius (Geograph. Antiqua, tom. ii. part ii. p. 81,) D'Anville, (Geographie Ancienne, tom. iii. p. 71, 72,) and Marmol, (Arrique, tom. ii. p. 562.)]

[Footnote 121: Ammian. xviii. 6. Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. v. p 25, 676) has discussed the chronological difficulties of the history of Count Romanus.]

His father Nabal was one of the richest and most powerful of the Moorish princes, who acknowledged the supremacy of Rome. But as he left, either by his wives or concubines, a very numerous posterity, the wealthy inheritance was eagerly disputed; and Zamma, one of his sons, was slain in a domestic quarrel by his brother Firmus. The implacable zeal, with

which Romanus prosecuted the legal revenge of this murder, could be ascribed only to a motive of avarice, or personal hatred; but, on this occasion, his claims were just; his influence was weighty; and Firmus clearly understood, that he must either present his neck to the executioner, or appeal from the sentence of the Imperial consistory, to his sword, and to the people. [122] He was received as the deliverer of his country; and, as soon as it appeared that Romanus was formidable only to a submissive province, the tyrant of Africa became the object of universal contempt. The ruin of Caesarea, which was plundered and burnt by the licentious Barbarians, convinced the refractory cities of the danger of resistance; the power of Firmus was established, at least in the provinces of Mauritania and Numidia; and it seemed to be his only doubt whether he should assume the diadem of a Moorish king, or the purple of a Roman emperor. But the imprudent and unhappy Africans soon discovered, that, in this rash insurrection, they had not sufficiently consulted their own strength, or the abilities of their leader. Before he could procure any certain intelligence, that the emperor of the West had fixed the choice of a general, or that a fleet of transports was collected at the mouth of the Rhone, he was suddenly informed that the great Theodosius, with a small band of veterans, had landed near Igililis, or Gigeri, on the African coast; and the timid usurper sunk under the ascendant of virtue and military genius. Though Firmus possessed arms and treasures, his despair of victory immediately reduced him to the use of those arts, which, in the same country, and in a similar situation, had formerly been practised by the crafty Jugurtha. He attempted to deceive, by an apparent submission, the vigilance of the

Roman general; to seduce the fidelity of his troops; and to protract the duration of the war, by successively engaging the independent tribes of Africa to espouse his quarrel, or to protect his flight. Theodosius imitated the example, and obtained the success, of his predecessor Metellus. When Firmus, in the character of a suppliant, accused his own rashness, and humbly solicited the clemency of the emperor, the lieutenant of Valentinian received and dismissed him with a friendly embrace: but he diligently required the useful and substantial pledges of a sincere repentance; nor could he be persuaded, by the assurances of peace, to suspend, for an instant, the operations of an active war. A dark conspiracy was detected by the penetration of Theodosius; and he satisfied, without much reluctance, the public indignation, which he had secretly excited. Several of the guilty accomplices of Firmus were abandoned, according to ancient custom, to the tumult of a military execution; many more, by the amputation of both their hands, continued to exhibit an instructive spectacle of horror; the hatred of the rebels was accompanied with fear; and the fear of the Roman soldiers was mingled with respectful admiration. Amidst the boundless plains of Getulia, and the innumerable valleys of Mount Atlas, it was impossible to prevent the escape of Firmus; and if the usurper could have tired the patience of his antagonist, he would have secured his person in the depth of some remote solitude, and expected the hopes of a future revolution. He was subdued by the perseverance of Theodosius; who had formed an inflexible determination, that the war should end only by the death of the tyrant; and that every nation of Africa, which presumed to support his cause, should be involved in his ruin. At the head of a

small body of troops, which seldom exceeded three thousand five hundred men, the Roman general advanced, with a steady prudence, devoid of rashness or of fear, into the heart of a country, where he was sometimes attacked by armies of twenty thousand Moors. The boldness of his charge dismayed the irregular Barbarians; they were disconcerted by his seasonable and orderly retreats; they were continually baffled by the unknown resources of the military art; and they felt and confessed the just superiority which was assumed by the leader of a civilized nation. When Theodosius entered the extensive dominions of Igmazen, king of the Isafenses, the haughty savage required, in words of defiance, his name, and the object of his expedition. "I am," replied the stern and disdainful count, "I am the general of Valentinian, the lord of the world; who has sent me hither to pursue and punish a desperate robber. Deliver him instantly into my hands; and be assured, that if thou dost not obey the commands of my invincible sovereign, thou, and the people over whom thou reignest, shall be utterly extirpated." [122a] As soon as Igmazen was satisfied, that his enemy had strength and resolution to execute the fatal menace, he consented to purchase a necessary peace by the sacrifice of a guilty fugitive. The guards that were placed to secure the person of Firmus deprived him of the hopes of escape; and the Moorish tyrant, after wine had extinguished the sense of danger, disappointed the insulting triumph of the Romans, by strangling himself in the night. His dead body, the only present which Igmazen could offer to the conqueror, was carelessly thrown upon a camel; and Theodosius, leading back his victorious troops to Sitifi, was saluted by the warmest acclamations of joy and loyalty. [123]

[Footnote 122: The Chronology of Ammianus is loose and obscure; and Orosius (i. vii. c. 33, p. 551, edit. Havercamp) seems to place the revolt of Firmus after the deaths of Valentinian and Valens. Tillemont (Hist. des. Emp. tom. v. p. 691) endeavors to pick his way. The patient and sure-foot mule of the Alps may be trusted in the most slippery paths.]

[Footnote 122a: The war was longer protracted than this sentence would lead us to suppose: it was not till defeated more than once that Igmazen yielded Amm. xxix. 5.--M]

[Footnote 123: Ammian xxix. 5. The text of this long chapter (fifteen quarto pages) is broken and corrupted; and the narrative is perplexed by the want of chronological and geographical landmarks.]

Africa had been lost by the vices of Romanus; it was restored by the virtues of Theodosius; and our curiosity may be usefully directed to the inquiry of the respective treatment which the two generals received from the Imperial court. The authority of Count Romanus had been suspended by the master-general of the cavalry; and he was committed to safe and honorable custody till the end of the war. His crimes were proved by the most authentic evidence; and the public expected, with some impatience, the decree of severe justice. But the partial and powerful favor of Mellobaudes encouraged him to challenge his legal judges, to obtain repeated delays for the purpose of procuring a crowd of friendly

witnesses, and, finally, to cover his guilty conduct, by the additional guilt of fraud and forgery. About the same time, the restorer of Britain and Africa, on a vague suspicion that his name and services were superior to the rank of a subject, was ignominiously beheaded at Carthage. Valentinian no longer reigned; and the death of Theodosius, as well as the impunity of Romanus, may justly be imputed to the arts of the ministers, who abused the confidence, and deceived the inexperienced youth, of his sons. [124]

[Footnote 124: Ammian xxviii. 4. Orosius, l. vii. c. 33, p. 551, 552. Jerom. in Chron. p. 187.]

If the geographical accuracy of Ammianus had been fortunately bestowed on the British exploits of Theodosius, we should have traced, with eager curiosity, the distinct and domestic footsteps of his march. But the tedious enumeration of the unknown and uninteresting tribes of Africa may be reduced to the general remark, that they were all of the swarthy race of the Moors; that they inhabited the back settlements of the Mauritanian and Numidian province, the country, as they have since been termed by the Arabs, of dates and of locusts; [125] and that, as the Roman power declined in Africa, the boundary of civilized manners and cultivated land was insensibly contracted. Beyond the utmost limits of the Moors, the vast and inhospitable desert of the South extends above a thousand miles to the banks of the Niger. The ancients, who had a very faint and imperfect knowledge of the great peninsula of Africa, were sometimes tempted to believe, that the torrid zone must ever remain

destitute of inhabitants; [126] and they sometimes amused their fancy by filling the vacant space with headless men, or rather monsters; [127] with horned and cloven-footed satyrs; [128] with fabulous centaurs; [129] and with human pygmies, who waged a bold and doubtful warfare against the cranes. [130] Carthage would have trembled at the strange intelligence that the countries on either side of the equator were filled with innumerable nations, who differed only in their color from the ordinary appearance of the human species: and the subjects of the Roman empire might have anxiously expected, that the swarms of Barbarians, which issued from the North, would soon be encountered from the South by new swarms of Barbarians, equally fierce and equally formidable. These gloomy terrors would indeed have been dispelled by a more intimate acquaintance with the character of their African enemies. The inaction of the negroes does not seem to be the effect either of their virtue or of their pusillanimity. They indulge, like the rest of mankind, their passions and appetites; and the adjacent tribes are engaged in frequent acts of hostility. [131] But their rude ignorance has never invented any effectual weapons of defence, or of destruction; they appear incapable of forming any extensive plans of government, or conquest; and the obvious inferiority of their mental faculties has been discovered and abused by the nations of the temperate zone. Sixty thousand blacks are annually embarked from the coast of Guinea, never to return to their native country; but they are embarked in chains; [132] and this constant emigration, which, in the space of two centuries, might have furnished armies to overrun the globe, accuses the guilt of Europe, and the weakness of Africa.

[Footnote 125: Leo Africanus (in the *Viaggi di Ramusio*, tom. i. fol. 78-83) has traced a curious picture of the people and the country; which are more minutely described in the *Afrique de Marmol*, tom. iii. p. 1-54.]

[Footnote 126: This uninhabitable zone was gradually reduced by the improvements of ancient geography, from forty-five to twenty-four, or even sixteen degrees of latitude. See a learned and judicious note of Dr. Robertson, *Hist. of America*, vol. i. p. 426.]

[Footnote 127: *Intra, si credere libet, vix jam homines et magis semiferi...* Blemmyes, Satyri, &c. Pomponius Mela, i. 4, p. 26, edit. Voss. in 8vo. Pliny philosophically explains (vi. 35) the irregularities of nature, which he had credulously admitted, (v. 8.)]

[Footnote 128: If the satyr was the Orang-outang, the great human ape, (Buffon, *Hist. Nat.* tom. xiv. p. 43, &c.,) one of that species might actually be shown alive at Alexandria, in the reign of Constantine. Yet some difficulty will still remain about the conversation which St. Anthony held with one of these pious savages, in the desert of Thebais. (Jerom. in *Vit. Paul. Eremit.* tom. i. p. 238.)]

[Footnote 129: St. Anthony likewise met one of these monsters; whose existence was seriously asserted by the emperor Claudius. The public laughed; but his praefect of Egypt had the address to send an artful

preparation, the embalmed corpse of a Hippocentaur, which was preserved almost a century afterwards in the Imperial palace. See Pliny, (Hist. Natur. vii. 3,) and the judicious observations of Freret. (Memoires de l'Acad. tom. vii. p. 321, &c.)]

[Footnote 130: The fable of the pygmies is as old as Homer, (Iliad. iii. 6) The pygmies of India and Aethiopia were (trispithami) twenty-seven inches high. Every spring their cavalry (mounted on rams and goats) marched, in battle array, to destroy the cranes' eggs, aliter (says Pliny) futuris gregibus non resisti. Their houses were built of mud, feathers, and egg-shells. See Pliny, (vi. 35, vii. 2,) and Strabo, (l. ii. p. 121.)]

[Footnote 131: The third and fourth volumes of the valuable Histoire des Voyages describe the present state of the Negroes. The nations of the sea-coast have been polished by European commerce; and those of the inland country have been improved by Moorish colonies. * Note: The martial tribes in chain armor, discovered by Denham, are Mahometan; the great question of the inferiority of the African tribes in their mental faculties will probably be experimentally resolved before the close of the century; but the Slave Trade still continues, and will, it is to be feared, till the spirit of gain is subdued by the spirit of Christian humanity.--M.]

[Footnote 132: Histoire Philosophique et Politique, &c., tom. iv. p. 192.]