

Chapter XXVI: Progress of The Huns.--Part III.

After Valens had terminated the Gothic war with some appearance of glory and success, he made a progress through his dominions of Asia, and at length fixed his residence in the capital of Syria. The five years [63] which he spent at Antioch was employed to watch, from a secure distance, the hostile designs of the Persian monarch; to check the depredations of the Saracens and Isaurians; [64] to enforce, by arguments more prevalent than those of reason and eloquence, the belief of the Arian theology; and to satisfy his anxious suspicions by the promiscuous execution of the innocent and the guilty. But the attention of the emperor was most seriously engaged, by the important intelligence which he received from the civil and military officers who were intrusted with the defence of the Danube. He was informed, that the North was agitated by a furious tempest; that the irruption of the Huns, an unknown and monstrous race of savages, had subverted the power of the Goths; and that the suppliant multitudes of that warlike nation, whose pride was now humbled in the dust, covered a space of many miles along the banks of the river. With outstretched arms, and pathetic lamentations, they loudly deplored their past misfortunes and their present danger; acknowledged that their only hope of safety was in the clemency of the Roman government; and most solemnly protested, that if the gracious liberality of the emperor would permit them to cultivate the waste lands of Thrace, they should ever hold themselves bound, by the strongest obligations of duty and gratitude, to obey the laws, and to guard the limits, of the republic. These assurances were confirmed by the ambassadors of the Goths, [64a]

who impatiently expected from the mouth of Valens an answer that must finally determine the fate of their unhappy countrymen. The emperor of the East was no longer guided by the wisdom and authority of his elder brother, whose death happened towards the end of the preceding year; and as the distressful situation of the Goths required an instant and peremptory decision, he was deprived of the favorite resources of feeble and timid minds, who consider the use of dilatory and ambiguous measures as the most admirable efforts of consummate prudence. As long as the same passions and interests subsist among mankind, the questions of war and peace, of justice and policy, which were debated in the councils of antiquity, will frequently present themselves as the subject of modern deliberation. But the most experienced statesman of Europe has never been summoned to consider the propriety, or the danger, of admitting, or rejecting, an innumerable multitude of Barbarians, who are driven by despair and hunger to solicit a settlement on the territories of a civilized nation. When that important proposition, so essentially connected with the public safety, was referred to the ministers of Valens, they were perplexed and divided; but they soon acquiesced in the flattering sentiment which seemed the most favorable to the pride, the indolence, and the avarice of their sovereign. The slaves, who were decorated with the titles of praefects and generals, dissembled or disregarded the terrors of this national emigration; so extremely different from the partial and accidental colonies, which had been received on the extreme limits of the empire. But they applauded the liberality of fortune, which had conducted, from the most distant countries of the globe, a numerous and invincible army of strangers, to

defend the throne of Valens; who might now add to the royal treasures the immense sums of gold supplied by the provincials to compensate their annual proportion of recruits. The prayers of the Goths were granted, and their service was accepted by the Imperial court: and orders were immediately despatched to the civil and military governors of the Thracian diocese, to make the necessary preparations for the passage and subsistence of a great people, till a proper and sufficient territory could be allotted for their future residence. The liberality of the emperor was accompanied, however, with two harsh and rigorous conditions, which prudence might justify on the side of the Romans; but which distress alone could extort from the indignant Goths. Before they passed the Danube, they were required to deliver their arms: and it was insisted, that their children should be taken from them, and dispersed through the provinces of Asia; where they might be civilized by the arts of education, and serve as hostages to secure the fidelity of their parents.

[Footnote 63: The Chronology of Ammianus is obscure and imperfect. Tillemont has labored to clear and settle the annals of Valens.]

[Footnote 64: Zosimus, l. iv. p. 223. Sozomen, l. vi. c. 38. The Isaurians, each winter, infested the roads of Asia Minor, as far as the neighborhood of Constantinople. Basil, Epist. cel. apud Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. v. p. 106.]

[Footnote 64a: Sozomen and Philostorgius say that the bishop Ulphilas

was one of these ambassadors.--M.]

During the suspense of a doubtful and distant negotiation, the impatient Goths made some rash attempts to pass the Danube, without the permission of the government, whose protection they had implored. Their motions were strictly observed by the vigilance of the troops which were stationed along the river and their foremost detachments were defeated with considerable slaughter; yet such were the timid councils of the reign of Valens, that the brave officers who had served their country in the execution of their duty, were punished by the loss of their employments, and narrowly escaped the loss of their heads. The Imperial mandate was at length received for transporting over the Danube the whole body of the Gothic nation; [65] but the execution of this order was a task of labor and difficulty. The stream of the Danube, which in those parts is above a mile broad, [66] had been swelled by incessant rains; and in this tumultuous passage, many were swept away, and drowned, by the rapid violence of the current. A large fleet of vessels, of boats, and of canoes, was provided; many days and nights they passed and repassed with indefatigable toil; and the most strenuous diligence was exerted by the officers of Valens, that not a single Barbarian, of those who were reserved to subvert the foundations of Rome, should be left on the opposite shore. It was thought expedient that an accurate account should be taken of their numbers; but the persons who were employed soon desisted, with amazement and dismay, from the prosecution of the endless and impracticable task: [67] and the principal historian of the age most seriously affirms, that the prodigious armies of Darius

and Xerxes, which had so long been considered as the fables of vain and credulous antiquity, were now justified, in the eyes of mankind, by the evidence of fact and experience. A probable testimony has fixed the number of the Gothic warriors at two hundred thousand men: and if we can venture to add the just proportion of women, of children, and of slaves, the whole mass of people which composed this formidable emigration, must have amounted to near a million of persons, of both sexes, and of all ages. The children of the Goths, those at least of a distinguished rank, were separated from the multitude. They were conducted, without delay, to the distant seats assigned for their residence and education; and as the numerous train of hostages or captives passed through the cities, their gay and splendid apparel, their robust and martial figure, excited the surprise and envy of the Provincials. [67a] But the stipulation, the most offensive to the Goths, and the most important to the Romans, was shamefully eluded. The Barbarians, who considered their arms as the ensigns of honor and the pledges of safety, were disposed to offer a price, which the lust or avarice of the Imperial officers was easily tempted to accept. To preserve their arms, the haughty warriors consented, with some reluctance, to prostitute their wives or their daughters; the charms of a beauteous maid, or a comely boy, secured the connivance of the inspectors; who sometimes cast an eye of covetousness on the fringed carpets and linen garments of their new allies, [68] or who sacrificed their duty to the mean consideration of filling their farms with cattle, and their houses with slaves. The Goths, with arms in their hands, were permitted to enter the boats; and when their strength was collected on the other side of the river, the immense camp which

was spread over the plains and the hills of the Lower Maesia, assumed a threatening and even hostile aspect. The leaders of the Ostrogoths, Alatheus and Saphrax, the guardians of their infant king, appeared soon afterwards on the Northern banks of the Danube; and immediately despatched their ambassadors to the court of Antioch, to solicit, with the same professions of allegiance and gratitude, the same favor which had been granted to the suppliant Visigoths. The absolute refusal of Valens suspended their progress, and discovered the repentance, the suspicions, and the fears, of the Imperial council.

[Footnote 65: The passage of the Danube is exposed by Ammianus, (xxxii. 3, 4,) Zosimus, (l. iv. p. 223, 224,) Eunapius in Excerpt. Legat. (p. 19, 20,) and Jornandes, (c. 25, 26.) Ammianus declares (c. 5) that he means only, *ispas rerum digerere summitates*. But he often takes a false measure of their importance; and his superfluous prolixity is disagreeably balanced by his unseasonable brevity.]

[Footnote 66: Chishull, a curious traveller, has remarked the breadth of the Danube, which he passed to the south of Bucharest near the conflux of the Argish, (p. 77.) He admires the beauty and spontaneous plenty of Maesia, or Bulgaria.]

[Footnote 67:

Quem sci scire velit, Libyci velit aequoris idem
Discere quam multae Zephyro turbentur harenae.

Ammianus has inserted, in his prose, these lines of Virgil, (Georgia l. ii. 105,) originally designed by the poet to express the impossibility of numbering the different sorts of vines. See Plin. Hist. Natur l. xiv.]

[Footnote 67a: A very curious, but obscure, passage of Eunapius, appears to me to have been misunderstood by M. Mai, to whom we owe its discovery. The substance is as follows: "The Goths transported over the river their native deities, with their priests of both sexes; but concerning their rites they maintained a deep and 'adamantine silence.' To the Romans they pretended to be generally Christians, and placed certain persons to represent bishops in a conspicuous manner on their wagons. There was even among them a sort of what are called monks, persons whom it was not difficult to mimic; it was enough to wear black raiment, to be wicked, and held in respect." (Eunapius hated the "black-robed monks," as appears in another passage, with the cordial detestation of a heathen philosopher.) "Thus, while they faithfully but secretly adhered to their own religion, the Romans were weak enough to suppose them perfect Christians." Mai, 277. Eunapius in Niebuhr, 82.--M]

[Footnote 68: Eunapius and Zosimus curiously specify these articles of Gothic wealth and luxury. Yet it must be presumed, that they were the manufactures of the provinces; which the Barbarians had acquired as the spoils of war; or as the gifts, or merchandise, of peace.]

An undisciplined and unsettled nation of Barbarians required the firmest temper, and the most dexterous management. The daily subsistence of near a million of extraordinary subjects could be supplied only by constant and skilful diligence, and might continually be interrupted by mistake or accident. The insolence, or the indignation, of the Goths, if they conceived themselves to be the objects either of fear or of contempt, might urge them to the most desperate extremities; and the fortune of the state seemed to depend on the prudence, as well as the integrity, of the generals of Valens. At this important crisis, the military government of Thrace was exercised by Lupicinus and Maximus, in whose venal minds the slightest hope of private emolument outweighed every consideration of public advantage; and whose guilt was only alleviated by their incapacity of discerning the pernicious effects of their rash and criminal administration.

Instead of obeying the orders of their sovereign, and satisfying, with decent liberality, the demands of the Goths, they levied an ungenerous and oppressive tax on the wants of the hungry Barbarians. The vilest food was sold at an extravagant price; and, in the room of wholesome and substantial provisions, the markets were filled with the flesh of dogs, and of unclean animals, who had died of disease. To obtain the valuable acquisition of a pound of bread, the Goths resigned the possession of an expensive, though serviceable, slave; and a small quantity of meat was greedily purchased with ten pounds of a precious, but useless metal, [69] when their property was exhausted, they continued this necessary traffic by the sale of their sons and daughters; and notwithstanding the

love of freedom, which animated every Gothic breast, they submitted to the humiliating maxim, that it was better for their children to be maintained in a servile condition, than to perish in a state of wretched and helpless independence. The most lively resentment is excited by the tyranny of pretended benefactors, who sternly exact the debt of gratitude which they have cancelled by subsequent injuries: a spirit of discontent insensibly arose in the camp of the Barbarians, who pleaded, without success, the merit of their patient and dutiful behavior; and loudly complained of the inhospitable treatment which they had received from their new allies. They beheld around them the wealth and plenty of a fertile province, in the midst of which they suffered the intolerable hardships of artificial famine. But the means of relief, and even of revenge, were in their hands; since the rapaciousness of their tyrants had left to an injured people the possession and the use of arms. The clamors of a multitude, untaught to disguise their sentiments, announced the first symptoms of resistance, and alarmed the timid and guilty minds of Lupicinus and Maximus. Those crafty ministers, who substituted the cunning of temporary expedients to the wise and salutary counsels of general policy, attempted to remove the Goths from their dangerous station on the frontiers of the empire; and to disperse them, in separate quarters of cantonment, through the interior provinces. As they were conscious how ill they had deserved the respect, or confidence, of the Barbarians, they diligently collected, from every side, a military force, that might urge the tardy and reluctant march of a people, who had not yet renounced the title, or the duties, of Roman subjects. But the generals of Valens, while their attention was solely directed to

the discontented Visigoths, imprudently disarmed the ships and the fortifications which constituted the defence of the Danube. The fatal oversight was observed, and improved, by Alatheus and Saphrax, who anxiously watched the favorable moment of escaping from the pursuit of the Huns. By the help of such rafts and vessels as could be hastily procured, the leaders of the Ostrogoths transported, without opposition, their king and their army; and boldly fixed a hostile and independent camp on the territories of the empire. [70]

[Footnote 69: Decem libras; the word silver must be understood.

Jornandes betrays the passions and prejudices of a Goth. The servile Gecks, Eunapius and Zosimus, disguise the Roman oppression, and execrate the perfidy of the Barbarians. Ammianus, a patriot historian, slightly, and reluctantly, touches on the odious subject. Jerom, who wrote almost on the spot, is fair, though concise. *Per avaritaim aximi ducis, ad rebellionem fame coacti sunt*, (in Chron.) * Note: A new passage from the history of Eunapius is nearer to the truth. 'It appeared to our commanders a legitimate source of gain to be bribed by the Barbarians: Edit. Niebuhr, p. 82.--M.]

[Footnote 70: Ammianus, xxxi. 4, 5.]

Under the name of Judges, Alavivus and Fritigern were the leaders of the Visigoths in peace and war; and the authority which they derived from their birth was ratified by the free consent of the nation. In a season of tranquility, their power might have been equal, as well as their

rank; but, as soon as their countrymen were exasperated by hunger and oppression, the superior abilities of Fritigern assumed the military command, which he was qualified to exercise for the public welfare. He restrained the impatient spirit of the Visigoths till the injuries and the insults of their tyrants should justify their resistance in the opinion of mankind: but he was not disposed to sacrifice any solid advantages for the empty praise of justice and moderation. Sensible of the benefits which would result from the union of the Gothic powers under the same standard, he secretly cultivated the friendship of the Ostrogoths; and while he professed an implicit obedience to the orders of the Roman generals, he proceeded by slow marches towards Marcianopolis, the capital of the Lower Maesia, about seventy miles from the banks of the Danube. On that fatal spot, the flames of discord and mutual hatred burst forth into a dreadful conflagration. Lupicinus had invited the Gothic chiefs to a splendid entertainment; and their martial train remained under arms at the entrance of the palace. But the gates of the city were strictly guarded, and the Barbarians were sternly excluded from the use of a plentiful market, to which they asserted their equal claim of subjects and allies. Their humble prayers were rejected with insolence and derision; and as their patience was now exhausted, the townsmen, the soldiers, and the Goths, were soon involved in a conflict of passionate altercation and angry reproaches. A blow was imprudently given; a sword was hastily drawn; and the first blood that was spilt in this accidental quarrel, became the signal of a long and destructive war. In the midst of noise and brutal intemperance, Lupicinus was informed, by a secret messenger, that many of his soldiers

were slain, and despoiled of their arms; and as he was already inflamed by wine, and oppressed by sleep he issued a rash command, that their death should be revenged by the massacre of the guards of Fritigern and Alavivus.

The clamorous shouts and dying groans apprised Fritigern of his extreme danger; and, as he possessed the calm and intrepid spirit of a hero, he saw that he was lost if he allowed a moment of deliberation to the man who had so deeply injured him. "A trifling dispute," said the Gothic leader, with a firm but gentle tone of voice, "appears to have arisen between the two nations; but it may be productive of the most dangerous consequences, unless the tumult is immediately pacified by the assurance of our safety, and the authority of our presence." At these words, Fritigern and his companions drew their swords, opened their passage through the unresisting crowd, which filled the palace, the streets, and the gates, of Marcianopolis, and, mounting their horses, hastily vanished from the eyes of the astonished Romans. The generals of the Goths were saluted by the fierce and joyful acclamations of the camp; war was instantly resolved, and the resolution was executed without delay: the banners of the nation were displayed according to the custom of their ancestors; and the air resounded with the harsh and mournful music of the Barbarian trumpet. [71] The weak and guilty Lupicinus, who had dared to provoke, who had neglected to destroy, and who still presumed to despise, his formidable enemy, marched against the Goths, at the head of such a military force as could be collected on this sudden emergency. The Barbarians expected his approach about nine miles from

Marcianopolis; and on this occasion the talents of the general were found to be of more prevailing efficacy than the weapons and discipline of the troops. The valor of the Goths was so ably directed by the genius of Fritigern, that they broke, by a close and vigorous attack, the ranks of the Roman legions. Lupicinus left his arms and standards, his tribunes and his bravest soldiers, on the field of battle; and their useless courage served only to protect the ignominious flight of their leader. "That successful day put an end to the distress of the Barbarians, and the security of the Romans: from that day, the Goths, renouncing the precarious condition of strangers and exiles, assumed the character of citizens and masters, claimed an absolute dominion over the possessors of land, and held, in their own right, the northern provinces of the empire, which are bounded by the Danube." Such are the words of the Gothic historian, [72] who celebrates, with rude eloquence, the glory of his countrymen. But the dominion of the Barbarians was exercised only for the purposes of rapine and destruction. As they had been deprived, by the ministers of the emperor, of the common benefits of nature, and the fair intercourse of social life, they retaliated the injustice on the subjects of the empire; and the crimes of Lupicinus were expiated by the ruin of the peaceful husbandmen of Thrace, the conflagration of their villages, and the massacre, or captivity, of their innocent families. The report of the Gothic victory was soon diffused over the adjacent country; and while it filled the minds of the Romans with terror and dismay, their own hasty imprudence contributed to increase the forces of Fritigern, and the calamities of the province. Some time before the great emigration, a numerous body of Goths, under

the command of Suerid and Colias, had been received into the protection and service of the empire. [73] They were encamped under the walls of Hadrianople; but the ministers of Valens were anxious to remove them beyond the Hellespont, at a distance from the dangerous temptation which might so easily be communicated by the neighborhood, and the success, of their countrymen. The respectful submission with which they yielded to the order of their march, might be considered as a proof of their fidelity; and their moderate request of a sufficient allowance of provisions, and of a delay of only two days was expressed in the most dutiful terms. But the first magistrate of Hadrianople, incensed by some disorders which had been committed at his country-house, refused this indulgence; and arming against them the inhabitants and manufacturers of a populous city, he urged, with hostile threats, their instant departure. The Barbarians stood silent and amazed, till they were exasperated by the insulting clamors, and missile weapons, of the populace: but when patience or contempt was fatigued, they crushed the undisciplined multitude, inflicted many a shameful wound on the backs of their flying enemies, and despoiled them of the splendid armor, [74] which they were unworthy to bear. The resemblance of their sufferings and their actions soon united this victorious detachment to the nation of the Visigoths; the troops of Colias and Suerid expected the approach of the great Fritigern, ranged themselves under his standard, and signalized their ardor in the siege of Hadrianople. But the resistance of the garrison informed the Barbarians, that in the attack of regular fortifications, the efforts of unskillful courage are seldom effectual. Their general acknowledged his error, raised the siege, declared that

"he was at peace with stone walls," [75] and revenged his disappointment on the adjacent country. He accepted, with pleasure, the useful reinforcement of hardy workmen, who labored in the gold mines of Thrace, [76] for the emolument, and under the lash, of an unfeeling master: [77] and these new associates conducted the Barbarians, through the secret paths, to the most sequestered places, which had been chosen to secure the inhabitants, the cattle, and the magazines of corn. With the assistance of such guides, nothing could remain impervious or inaccessible; resistance was fatal; flight was impracticable; and the patient submission of helpless innocence seldom found mercy from the Barbarian conqueror. In the course of these depredations, a great number of the children of the Goths, who had been sold into captivity, were restored to the embraces of their afflicted parents; but these tender interviews, which might have revived and cherished in their minds some sentiments of humanity, tended only to stimulate their native fierceness by the desire of revenge. They listened, with eager attention, to the complaints of their captive children, who had suffered the most cruel indignities from the lustful or angry passions of their masters, and the same cruelties, the same indignities, were severely retaliated on the sons and daughters of the Romans. [78]

[Footnote 71: *Vexillis de more sublatis, auditisque trisie sonantibus classicis*. Ammian. xxxi. 5. These are the *rauca cornua* of Claudian, (in *Rufin. ii. 57.*) the large horns of the Uri, or wild bull; such as have been more recently used by the Swiss Cantons of Uri and Underwald. (*Simler de Republica Helvet, l. ii. p. 201, edit. Fuselin. Tigur 1734.*)

Their military horn is finely, though perhaps casually, introduced in an original narrative of the battle of Nancy, (A.D. 1477.) "Attendant le combat le dit cor fut corne par trois fois, tant que le vent du souffler pouvoit durer: ce qui esbahit fort Monsieur de Bourgoigne; car deja a Morat l'avoit ouy." (See the Pieces Justificatives in the 4to. edition of Philippe de Comines, tom. iii. p. 493.)]

[Footnote 72: Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 26, p. 648, edit. Grot. These splendidi panm (they are comparatively such) are undoubtedly transcribed from the larger histories of Priscus, Ablavius, or Cassiodorus.]

[Footnote 73: Cum populis suis longe ante suscepti. We are ignorant of the precise date and circumstances of their transmigration.]

[Footnote 74: An Imperial manufacture of shields, &c., was established at Hadrianople; and the populace were headed by the Fabricenses, or workmen. (Vales. ad Ammian. xxxi. 6.)]

[Footnote 75: Pacem sibi esse cum parietibus memorans. Ammian. xxxi. 7.]

[Footnote 76: These mines were in the country of the Bessi, in the ridge of mountains, the Rhodope, that runs between Philippi and Philippopolis; two Macedonian cities, which derived their name and origin from the father of Alexander. From the mines of Thrace he annually received the value, not the weight, of a thousand talents, (200,000l.) a revenue

which paid the phalanx, and corrupted the orators of Greece. See Diodor. Siculus, tom. ii. l. xvi. p. 88, edit. Wesseling. Godefroy's Commentary on the Theodosian Code, tom. iii. p. 496. Cellarius, Geograph. Antiq. tom. i. p. 676, 857. D Anville, Geographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 336.]

[Footnote 77: As those unhappy workmen often ran away, Valens had enacted severe laws to drag them from their hiding-places. Cod. Theodosian, l. x. tit xix leg. 5, 7.]

[Footnote 78: See Ammianus, xxxi. 5, 6. The historian of the Gothic war loses time and space, by an unseasonable recapitulation of the ancient inroads of the Barbarians.]

The imprudence of Valens and his ministers had introduced into the heart of the empire a nation of enemies; but the Visigoths might even yet have been reconciled, by the manly confession of past errors, and the sincere performance of former engagements. These healing and temperate measures seemed to concur with the timorous disposition of the sovereign of the East: but, on this occasion alone, Valens was brave; and his unseasonable bravery was fatal to himself and to his subjects. He declared his intention of marching from Antioch to Constantinople, to subdue this dangerous rebellion; and, as he was not ignorant of the difficulties of the enterprise, he solicited the assistance of his nephew, the emperor Gratian, who commanded all the forces of the West. The veteran troops were hastily recalled from the defence of Armenia; that important frontier was abandoned to the discretion of Sapor;

and the immediate conduct of the Gothic war was intrusted, during the absence of Valens, to his lieutenants Trajan and Profuturus, two generals who indulged themselves in a very false and favorable opinion of their own abilities. On their arrival in Thrace, they were joined by Richomer, count of the domestics; and the auxiliaries of the West, that marched under his banner, were composed of the Gallic legions, reduced indeed, by a spirit of desertion, to the vain appearances of strength and numbers. In a council of war, which was influenced by pride, rather than by reason, it was resolved to seek, and to encounter, the Barbarians, who lay encamped in the spacious and fertile meadows, near the most southern of the six mouths of the Danube. [79] Their camp was surrounded by the usual fortification of wagons; [80] and the Barbarians, secure within the vast circle of the enclosure, enjoyed the fruits of their valor, and the spoils of the province. In the midst of riotous intemperance, the watchful Fritigern observed the motions, and penetrated the designs, of the Romans. He perceived, that the numbers of the enemy were continually increasing: and, as he understood their intention of attacking his rear, as soon as the scarcity of forage should oblige him to remove his camp, he recalled to their standard his predatory detachments, which covered the adjacent country. As soon as they descried the flaming beacons, [81] they obeyed, with incredible speed, the signal of their leader: the camp was filled with the martial crowd of Barbarians; their impatient clamors demanded the battle, and their tumultuous zeal was approved and animated by the spirit of their chiefs. The evening was already far advanced; and the two armies prepared themselves for the approaching combat, which was deferred only

till the dawn of day.

While the trumpets sounded to arms, the undaunted courage of the Goths was confirmed by the mutual obligation of a solemn oath; and as they advanced to meet the enemy, the rude songs, which celebrated the glory of their forefathers, were mingled with their fierce and dissonant outcries, and opposed to the artificial harmony of the Roman shout. Some military skill was displayed by Fritigern to gain the advantage of a commanding eminence; but the bloody conflict, which began and ended with the light, was maintained on either side, by the personal and obstinate efforts of strength, valor, and agility. The legions of Armenia supported their fame in arms; but they were oppressed by the irresistible weight of the hostile multitude the left wing of the Romans was thrown into disorder and the field was strewed with their mangled carcasses. This partial defeat was balanced, however, by partial success; and when the two armies, at a late hour of the evening, retreated to their respective camps, neither of them could claim the honors, or the effects, of a decisive victory. The real loss was more severely felt by the Romans, in proportion to the smallness of their numbers; but the Goths were so deeply confounded and dismayed by this vigorous, and perhaps unexpected, resistance, that they remained seven days within the circle of their fortifications. Such funeral rites, as the circumstances of time and place would admit, were piously discharged to some officers of distinguished rank; but the indiscriminate vulgar was left unburied on the plain. Their flesh was greedily devoured by the birds of prey, who in that age enjoyed very frequent and delicious

feasts; and several years afterwards the white and naked bones, which covered the wide extent of the fields, presented to the eyes of Ammianus a dreadful monument of the battle of Salices. [82]

[Footnote 79: The Itinerary of Antoninus (p. 226, 227, edit. Wesseling) marks the situation of this place about sixty miles north of Tomi, Ovid's exile; and the name of Salices (the willows) expresses the nature of the soil.]

[Footnote 80: This circle of wagons, the Carrago, was the usual fortification of the Barbarians. (Vegetius de Re Militari, l. iii. c. 10. Valesius ad Ammian. xxxi. 7.) The practice and the name were preserved by their descendants as late as the fifteenth century. The Charroy, which surrounded the Ost, is a word familiar to the readers of Froissard, or Comines.]

[Footnote 81: Statim ut accensi malleoli. I have used the literal sense of real torches or beacons; but I almost suspect, that it is only one of those turgid metaphors, those false ornaments, that perpetually disfigure to style of Ammianus.]

[Footnote 82: Indicant nunc usque albentes ossibus campi. Ammian. xxxi. 7. The historian might have viewed these plains, either as a soldier, or as a traveller. But his modesty has suppressed the adventures of his own life subsequent to the Persian wars of Constantius and Julian. We are ignorant of the time when he quitted the service, and retired to Rome,

where he appears to have composed his History of his Own Times.]

The progress of the Goths had been checked by the doubtful event of that bloody day; and the Imperial generals, whose army would have been consumed by the repetition of such a contest, embraced the more rational plan of destroying the Barbarians by the wants and pressure of their own multitudes. They prepared to confine the Visigoths in the narrow angle of land between the Danube, the desert of Scythia, and the mountains of Haemus, till their strength and spirit should be insensibly wasted by the inevitable operation of famine. The design was prosecuted with some conduct and success: the Barbarians had almost exhausted their own magazines, and the harvests of the country; and the diligence of Saturninus, the master-general of the cavalry, was employed to improve the strength, and to contract the extent, of the Roman fortifications. His labors were interrupted by the alarming intelligence, that new swarms of Barbarians had passed the unguarded Danube, either to support the cause, or to imitate the example, of Fritigern. The just apprehension, that he himself might be surrounded, and overwhelmed, by the arms of hostile and unknown nations, compelled Saturninus to relinquish the siege of the Gothic camp; and the indignant Visigoths, breaking from their confinement, satiated their hunger and revenge by the repeated devastation of the fruitful country, which extends above three hundred miles from the banks of the Danube to the straits of the Hellespont. [83] The sagacious Fritigern had successfully appealed to the passions, as well as to the interest, of his Barbarian allies; and the love of rapine, and the hatred of Rome, seconded, or even prevented,

the eloquence of his ambassadors. He cemented a strict and useful alliance with the great body of his countrymen, who obeyed Alatheus and Saphrax as the guardians of their infant king: the long animosity of rival tribes was suspended by the sense of their common interest; the independent part of the nation was associated under one standard; and the chiefs of the Ostrogoths appear to have yielded to the superior genius of the general of the Visigoths. He obtained the formidable aid of the Taifalae, [83a] whose military renown was disgraced and polluted by the public infamy of their domestic manners. Every youth, on his entrance into the world, was united by the ties of honorable friendship, and brutal love, to some warrior of the tribe; nor could he hope to be released from this unnatural connection, till he had approved his manhood by slaying, in single combat, a huge bear, or a wild boar of the forest. [84] But the most powerful auxiliaries of the Goths were drawn from the camp of those enemies who had expelled them from their native seats. The loose subordination, and extensive possessions, of the Huns and the Alani, delayed the conquests, and distracted the councils, of that victorious people. Several of the hords were allured by the liberal promises of Fritigern; and the rapid cavalry of Scythia added weight and energy to the steady and strenuous efforts of the Gothic infantry. The Sarmatians, who could never forgive the successor of Valentinian, enjoyed and increased the general confusion; and a seasonable irruption of the Alemanni, into the provinces of Gaul, engaged the attention, and diverted the forces, of the emperor of the West. [85]

[Footnote 83: Ammian. xxxi. 8.]

[Footnote 83a: The Taifalae, who at this period inhabited the country which now forms the principality of Wallachia, were, in my opinion, the last remains of the great and powerful nation of the Dacians, (Daci or Dahae.) which has given its name to these regions, over which they had ruled so long. The Taifalae passed with the Goths into the territory of the empire. A great number of them entered the Roman service, and were quartered in different provinces. They are mentioned in the Notitia Imperii. There was a considerable body in the country of the Pictavi, now Poithou. They long retained their manners and language, and caused the name of the Theofalgius pagus to be given to the district they inhabited. Two places in the department of La Vendee, Tiffanges and La Tiffardiere, still preserve evident traces of this denomination. St. Martin, iv. 118.--M.]

[Footnote 84: Hanc Taifalorum gentem turpem, et obscenae vitae flagitiis ita accipimus mersam; ut apud eos nefandi concubitus foedere copulentur mares puberes, aetatis viriditatem in eorum pollutis usibus consumpturi. Porro, siqui jam adultus aprum exceperit solus, vel interemit ursum immanem, colluvione liberatur incesti. Ammian. xxxi. 9. ----Among the Greeks, likewise, more especially among the Cretans, the holy bands of friendship were confirmed, and sullied, by unnatural love.]

[Footnote 85: Ammian. xxxi. 8, 9. Jerom (tom. i. p. 26) enumerates the nations and marks a calamitous period of twenty years. This epistle to Heliodorus was composed in the year 397, (Tillemont, Mem. Eccles tom

xii. p. 645.)]