

HISTORY
OF
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HISTORY OF ROME,

REVISED, CORRECTED, AND COMPLETED.

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH OF

REV. F. GAZEAU,

Of the Society of Jesus.

WITH REVIEW QUESTIONS AT THE END OF EACH
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P R E F A C E.



Of all the nations of profane antiquity there is not one whose history inspires so great and varied an interest as that of the Roman people; not one whose annals form so long and serried a chain of brilliant, memorable, even extraordinary deeds. Rome pursued a system of policy and conquests during many centuries with a skill and perseverance which have had no parallel and which have found no imitators. The Roman people present the most remarkable instance in antiquity of a union of those qualities, civil, political, and military, which ensure the success of great enterprises: prudence in council, vigor in execution, perseverance against obstacles, intrepidity in danger, fortitude amidst reverses, clemency towards the vanquished, devotion to country, dignity of manners, contempt of riches, temperance, frugality, strict probity, at least in early times—in a word, eminence in all virtues of which pagans are capable.

Even the vices of the Romans were imposing—nay, seductive, many of them being but the exaggeration of virtues. Thus, with them the love of country was carried to such excess as led them to glory in trampling under foot the tenderest sentiments and the most sacred rights



of nature; while the love of liberty degenerated into haughty arrogance and jealous defiance, which left them no peace with neighboring peoples, and which sometimes armed the different orders of the state against each other; the love of glory became restless and insatiable ambition which led them to attempt to wrest from other nations that liberty of which they themselves were so jealous. The vices of the Romans were real but brilliant, because they were for the most part the incentive to those deeds which men call great and heroic; their virtues too, not less brilliant, though purely human and defective both in their principle and their end, were real, and consequently worthy of some reward.

Hence the just and supreme Arbiter of all things gave to the Romans the empire of the world—"a prize," says St. Augustine, "as vain as those who grasped it." Indeed, scarcely had they obtained it when it escaped them; scarcely had they achieved the conquest of the world when they themselves, and with them other nations, fell a prey to the cunning ambition of Augustus. That nothing might be wanting to the lesson which God wished to give mankind on the emptiness of human virtues and the nothingness of the grandeur which is their recompense, the sceptre of Rome after the death of Augustus successively passed to the gloomy Tiberius, the half-mad Caligula, the imbecile Claudius, and the cruel Nero.

It needs a Bossuet to interpret worthily these grand lessons, to fathom the depths of the counsels of God, and to develop the designs of his providence in the succession



of empires. As for us, who have no other aim than the instruction of youth, it is our duty only to present the leading events of the period from the foundation of Rome till the fall of the Western Empire (B.C. 753 to A.D. 476.) We shall limit ourselves to the relation of these events of Roman history, till the last days of the republic, as Titus Livy records them. It does not belong to an elementary work to reproduce the conjectures, more or less founded, of Niebuhr and other critics of our century. It will suffice occasionally to adduce the testimony of ancient historians who corroborate the authority of Titus Livy.

Roman history, which comprises a duration of 1,229 years, is divided into three distinct epochs: the *Monarchy* (B.C. 753-509); the *Republic* (B.C. 509-29); the *Empire*, Pagan and Christian (B.C. 29 to A.D. 476).