

CHAPTER IV.

INSTITUTIONS, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS
OF THE ROMANS.

POLITICAL CONSTITUTION.—Under the Roman Republic the sovereignty belonged to the nation—that is, to the three orders of the state, which were, as we have seen, the patricians, knights, and plebeians. The national assemblies, or comitia, were at first held by curias in the Forum, then by centuries, and finally by tribes, in a field near the Tiber called the Field of Mars. In the assemblies by curias and tribes the votes were counted by polls. This placed the decision in the hands of the multitude; but in the other comitia the centuries had no other than a collective vote, and as the greater number were patricians, the latter had the majority. The nation reserved to itself in the comitia the right of making laws, of declaring peace or war, of judging the most important causes, and of appointing the magistrates of the republic.

The government was confided to the senate, the supreme and permanent council, and a large number of magistracies, all temporary except the priesthood, which was perpetual. These magis-

tracies conferred an unlimited power, even the right of life or death; but those who were invested with it knew that they were responsible—that is, they must render an account of their acts at the expiration of their term of office. We have already shown what were the functions of the various magistrates, from the dictatorship and consulate, the highest dignities of the republic, to the quæstorship, which was the lowest honor. A quæstor was required to be of the age of twenty-seven; the law exacted at least the age of thirty years for the tribuneship of the people, and thirty-seven years for the curule ædileship; forty for the prætorship, forty-two for the censorship, forty-three for the consulship, and forty-five for the dictatorship. The aspirants to public offices were called candidates (from *candidus*), because of a toga whitened with chalk in which they presented themselves at the comitia on the election days.

WAR; MILITARY SERVICE.—Among the Romans in time of war every citizen was a soldier, and this was common among all nations of antiquity. No one, except in the last years of the republic, could attain to dignities unless he had been ten years in the army. Service commenced at seventeen and lasted until forty-seven, unless a magistracy had been attained before the expiration of that term. When the consuls wished to levy troops, they published an edict and



planted a standard in the Capitol. At this signal every man, married or not, capable of carrying arms assembled, divided into tribes, at the appointed place, which was generally the Field of Mars. There the officers selected those whom they thought suitable, and whoever objected to being enrolled risked having his possessions confiscated and being himself reduced to servitude.

ROMAN LEGIONS.—The army was divided into legions. The legion, so called because it was composed of select Roman citizens, comprised at first one thousand two hundred men, next from four to five thousand, and finally, in the time of Marius, six thousand foot and three hundred mounted soldiers. The levy of soldiers being made, one was chosen from every legion to pronounce in a loud voice the military oath, which all the others repeated after him.

Each legion had a number according to its order, and a name, as the "Victorious," the "Martial," the "Rapacious," etc. The infantry formed ten cohorts, and the cavalry ten turmas, or squadrons. Each cohort was divided into three maniples and six centuries, so that there were thirty maniples and sixty centuries in each legion. The legion was commanded by six military tribunes, who gave orders in turn. Under the tribunes were the centurions.

ORDER OF BATTLE.—The infantry was drawn



up in three lines: in the front were the hastati; in the second, the principes; in the third, the triarii—all veterans or picked men. Every line was eight, twelve, or even sixteen men deep, according to circumstances. Outside the lines were the velites, or light-armed soldiers, who skirmished in front of the main body.

ARMS.—The weapon common to all the Roman soldiers was a very sharp two-edged sword. The light-armed soldier carried, besides the sword, seven javelins each three feet long, a small wooden shield, and a leather helmet. The heavily-armed soldier bore, besides the ordinary javelins, others five or six feet long, with an iron point, the thrusts of which were very dangerous. He had on his head a brass helmet which left the face uncovered; he also carried a cuirass made of scales of brass; finally, attached to the left arm with straps was a buckler four feet long and two and a half broad, and convex in form, so that by stooping a little he could shield himself entirely. The offensive arms of the cavalry were a long sword, a pike, and sometimes javelins.

MILITARY ENGINES.—The Romans had contrived, or borrowed from other nations, various machines which were used instead of artillery. Besides the battering ram and the movable turrets were the balista and catapult. The former was employed in casting large stones, blazing torches, etc.; the latter, in throwing javelins.



The power of these machines was immense; on one occasion the stone of a catapult having been ill-placed, it struck against one of the uprights of the machine, and rebounded on the engineer with such violence as to completely crush him. To form what was called the "tortoise," the Roman soldiers raised very thick square bucklers in such a manner that they closed over their heads like a roof, and so protected them from the missiles of the enemy. Thus they approached the walls they wished to undermine. To make a breach in this roof required the weight of beams or great fragments of rock. There were likewise wooden galleries, made of thick beams covered with earth and raw-hides to render them fireproof; sheltered by these galleries, the soldiers approached without much risk a wall or tower which they wished to undermine.

MILITARY ENSIGNS.—The first ensign of the Romans was a bundle of hay on the top of a pike. Afterwards small wooden discs were fastened to pikes; on the discs were representations of the gods, surmounted by a hand or some silver figure. From the time of Marius every legion had as ensign a golden eagle. The drum was not known; only coiled brazen trumpets of various sizes were used.

THE ROMAN CAMP.—In an enemy's country the Romans never failed to fortify their camp, were it only for a single night. The camp was



square, crossed by a regular system of streets; and the position assigned to each corps was so well determined that a soldier arriving after the others could not mistake the quarter in which his company was stationed. The tents were made of skins, were arranged in lines, and each contained ten soldiers with their chief. Towards the centre was the general's tent, called the *prætorium*. On the side facing the enemy was the *prætorian gate*; on the opposite side was the *decuman*; the two collateral sides of the camp had each its gate. Before the *prætorium* was a large space where the cattle and whatever was taken from the enemy were placed, and where the troops were assembled when the general wished to review or harangue them, on which occasion there was erected for him a seat of turf. The camp was surrounded by a palisade of interlaced stakes and a ditch nine feet deep. Finally, a space of two hundred paces was left between the tents and the entrenchments, which in case of an attack secured the tents from the darts and fire of the enemy. We thus see that the Roman camps were at the same time regular towns and fortresses; so that it is not surprising that many of these camps became the nuclei of cities.

On the march, the soldiers, besides three or four stakes intended to enclose the camp, carried provision for fifteen days or more. This con-



sisted of wheat, which they crushed with stones when they wished to have bread; later, they were supplied with biscuit. They also carried a saw, a basket, a spade, an axe, a scythe, a chain, and a stew-pan. Their arms were not deemed burdensome, as they looked upon them as, in some sense, their own members. Roman soldiers, thus equipped, have been known to march twenty-five miles in five hours.

DISCIPLINE.—The code of discipline was very strict. Whoever during a march wandered so far away as not to hear the blast of the trumpet was treated as a deserter. For a soldier to leave his post when he was on duty, to fight out of his rank without leave, or to pilfer the smallest piece of money were crimes punished with death. Lighter faults were punished with the bastinado, privation of pay, or exposure in public in a woman's garments; this latter penalty was reserved for cowards. Indiscriminate pillage of an enemy's country was not permitted; detachments were selected for this purpose. The spoils were held in common, and the tribunes distributed to each soldier his share. No one was allowed to eat before the signal, and this was given but twice a day. The soldiers dined standing, and very frugally; their supper was a little better. In the latter days of the republic they had salt, vegetables, or bacon. Their ordinary drink was water, either pure or mingled with a little vinegar.



EXERCISES.—The Roman soldiers were never idle; inured from boyhood to labor, they kept up under the standard their hard manner of life. They were accustomed to make long marches, carrying a weight of sixty pounds; to run and to leap when fully armed. In their exercises they were required to use arms twice as heavy as those ordinarily used, and these exercises were habitual. In time of peace they were occupied in clearing untilled lands, erecting fortresses, digging canals, building entire cities, and constructing highways which extended from Rome to the extremities of the empire. Is it astonishing that soldiers thus trained should become conquerors of the world?

MILITARY REWARDS.—The principal military rewards were the obsidional crown for having delivered a besieged city or camp; the civic crown, for having saved the life of a citizen; the mural crown, for having been the first in scaling the walls of a place besieged, etc. What gave value to these crowns was that they were distributed by the general in presence of the whole army.

The rewards reserved to the general himself were the title of imperator, or "victorious general," granted after a victory, and the greater or the lesser triumph, according to the importance of his exploits. The grand triumph was magnificent and imposing. The conqueror entered Rome crowned with laurel, arrayed in



a magnificent robe, and mounted upon a chariot drawn by four white horses. Taking the way to the Capitol, he was preceded by the entire senate and all the citizens. Before him were borne the spoils, the pictures of cities that had been taken, and of provinces that had been conquered; then followed the kings or the chiefs of the vanquished in golden or silver chains; after them came the oxen destined for the sacrifice. Near the chariot walked the kinsmen of the victor; then his soldiers, likewise crowned with laurels, who mingled with the public acclamations their joyful songs, which sometimes contained insolent expressions directed against the victor himself; policy permitted this, lest he should be too elated with vanity. When a general obtained the lesser triumph, he entered the city on foot or on horseback, and could offer but a sheep in sacrifice; hence this triumph was called an "ovation," from the Latin word *ovis*, sheep.

ROMAN ROADS.—To facilitate the rapid movement of troops and to afford easier communication with conquered countries, military roads were constructed extending from Rome through Italy and the neighboring countries to the frontiers of the empire.

These roads, ordinarily laid out in right lines, crossed valleys over viaducts of masonry; they were formed of three layers of stones and cement,



which gave them great solidity. In the middle arose a kind of causeway about fifteen feet wide, well paved, and convex to facilitate drainage. This was the chariot-way. On each side was a foot-path nearly as wide, for pedestrians. At intervals of twelve feet were stepping-stones to assist the traveller to mount his horse—a very useful precaution, as the ancients did not know the use of stirrups. Mile-stones at every mile indicated to passengers the distance from Rome, or from any other important city.

In the midst of the Forum stood the gilded mile-stone, whence diverged the great roads leading to the three seas, and, over the Alps, to the frontiers of the Roman Empire. The most ancient and celebrated of the Roman roads was the Appian Way, constructed by the censor Appius when the Samnite war was at its height. It led through the Pontine marshes from Rome to Capua, and thence, later on, to Brundisium. The Æmilian Way ended at Rimini; the Aurelian Way at Civita Vecchia, and, later, at the city of Arles.

ROMAN COLONIES.—To countries conquered by arms Rome sent plebeians and veteran soldiers, to the number of two or three thousand, to settle and to found what was called a colony. To them was given in fee-simple a certain portion of the territory taken from the vanquished. These colonists, who retained in part the rights of



Roman citizens, formed a sort of permanent garrison, very useful to the metropolis. Thus the republic, to secure its domination, established in Samnium the colony of Beneventum, in Apulia that of Venusia, in Cisalpine Gaul those of Placentia, Cremona, etc. Under the empire there were many military colonies, formed of veterans, and intended to guard the frontier against the barbarians.

MUNICIPALITIES.—A municipality was a city which was situated in a conquered country and upon which had been conferred the rights of a Roman city. The right of citizenship, though apparently assimilating the inhabitants of the municipality to those of Rome, conferred upon them only a certain number of privileges, the greater part pecuniary and honorary. The most precious of all was that which rendered their person inviolable; from the moment they had the right of citizenship they could not be reduced to servitude or beaten with rods. It sufficed for St. Paul to appeal to his right as a Roman citizen to arrest the hands of his executioners. In nearly all the municipalities were found the same government and the same magistracies as in the city of Rome.

PATERNAL RIGHTS.—Custom and law among the Romans gave to the father absolute authority over all the members of his family. Should there have been born to him a deformed child,



he could put it to death. He was always allowed, whatever might be the age of his children, either to punish them as he pleased or to sell them as often as three times; but after the third sale his children were *emancipated*—that is to say, withdrawn from his authority. Several instances in Roman history prove that filial piety was not weakened by the extent of the paternal power. A tribune of the people, named Flaminius, insensible to the threats and entreaties of the patricians, was about to obtain the passage of an agrarian law, when his father, suddenly going up to the tribune, brought him down in face of the multitude, who admired the docility of the son.

The father of the family had no less authority over his wife than over his children. In many cases he could condemn her to death—as, for instance, if she fabricated false keys or sinned against sobriety. Roman laws interdicted wine to women; a woman who had violated the prohibition was condemned to die of starvation, and the sentence was executed. This absolute power of the husband does not appear to have rendered households more unhappy, since divorce, though authorized by the laws, was unknown among the Romans during more than five hundred years. Neither the wife nor the children had the right of property, which belonged solely to the father of the family, who could even disinherit his



children without other reason than his good pleasure.

SLAVERY.—Slaves, few in number in the beginning, multiplied in proportion as Rome made more prisoners of war and contained within her borders more insolvent debtors. In the latter days of the republic slaves formed one-half of the population. In rich families there were as many as ten to twenty thousand. Some were sent to the country, where they underwent the most painful toil; others remained in the city, there to serve their master according to his caprices. All had lost, in the eyes of the law, the title of human beings; consequently the right to possess property, to appear in courts of justice, or to perform any civil act. The slave was simply property which the law allowed to be sold or bought in the market, and having value according to the proportion of services hoped to be derived therefrom. A master, therefore, could make of his slaves what use he pleased—overwhelm them with labor, lacerate, mutilate, kill them even, like beasts of burden; and, more horrible still, when old age or sickness had disabled them for service, he could rid himself of them by turning them out to die on an island of the Tiber. If to this trait of inhumanity we add many others equally revolting which we shall yet have occasion to cite, we shall cease to regard the Romans as a model people, and shall realize



what the most vaunted nations are under the empire of idolatry.

LEGISLATION.—The Romans, like other nations, had at first but few laws; so that in many cases the fortunes of the citizens depended on the natural equity or the caprice of the magistrates. These laws were very severe in whatever regarded religion, the authority of the father of a family, and the rights of property. A law condemned to death whoever during the night led his flocks into a cultivated field or reaped the grain.

The laws enacted at different epochs after the decemvirate mitigated in certain points the severity of the ancient legislation. Thus, the Porcian law during the second Punic war prohibited the beating of a Roman citizen with rods. Thenceforth every Roman cited before the tribunals had the right of preventing his condemnation by leaving Rome; or, if he thought proper to await the judgment, the greatest penalty that could be inflicted on him was exile, with the confiscation of his property. The consuls themselves had no power over the lives of the citizens except in two cases: in the army, in quality of generals; at Rome, when urgent danger impelled the senate to enjoin them *to beware that the republic received no injury*; this formula armed them with the right of life or death.

The laws at Rome bore the name of him who had enacted them. The *Roman law* was not



drawn up nor did it form a complete code until the reign of the emperors Theodosius the Younger and Justinian.

RELIGION.—The religion of the Romans was the grossest and most superstitious paganism; it admitted a host of divinities, of which the principal was Jupiter. Different species of animals and sometimes human victims were offered them in sacrifice. Nothing of importance in the state or family was undertaken without consulting the aruspices, or augurs, a kind of diviners charged to foretell the future by inspecting the entrails of victims, or to seek omens by observing the song, flight, or feeding of birds. The vestals, or priestesses of Vesta, were maidens destined to keep up the sacred fire that burned night and day on the altar of that goddess.

One of the most noted feasts was that of Saturn, in December. The three days of the Saturnalia were spent in continual debauchery, in which slaves became masters, and masters slaves. The libations, a kind of sacrifice much in use among the Romans, consisted in pouring wine or some other liquor on the table during repasts, in honor of the gods. Superstition caused some days (*fasti*) at Rome to be considered lucky, on which justice was administered, etc.; others unlucky, on which no public affair was undertaken. Festal days were called *ferias*, on several of which labor was prohibited.



GAMES AND SHOWS.—The Romans, as well as the Greeks, had a passion for public games; but they did not fully give themselves up to it till after the second Punic war. The principal games were wrestling, foot, horse, and chariot racing, naval combats, and combats of wild beasts. These games ordinarily took place in the circus. It is said that the great circus had around its enclosure seats for more than three hundred thousand spectators; it was three and a half stadia (or furlongs) long, and one stadium wide. In chariot races it was required to make seven circuits. For the naval combat, aqueducts constructed for the purpose poured water into the interior of the circus, converting it into a mimic sea. For the combats of wild beasts vast numbers of animals were brought to Rome. Pompey displayed in one day six hundred lions in the circus. Sometimes the spectators slew these beasts with arrows; at other times they were made to fight one another, or else were fought by men called *bestiarii*, who made this combat their business, or were condemned to it, as the Christians often were; though the latter never fought, but allowed themselves to be torn to pieces by the beasts.

Another kind of show, not less atrocious and equally pleasing to the Roman people, was that of the gladiators. At first the gladiators were malefactors condemned to death, or prisoners of



war. Afterwards there were men who made it their profession, either to gain money or to have the pleasure of fighting; finally there were persons of high condition who were not-ashamed to descend into the arena to traffic with their blood; and, what seems nearly incredible, even women were seized with this frightful mania. When a gladiator was wounded, the spectators cried out: *Hoc habet* ("He has it"—*i.e.*, the thrust has reached him). They were absolute masters of his life. If they wished to spare him, they held down their thumbs; if they wished him to die under the blows of the victor they held up their thumbs, and the wretched gladiator acquiesced in the sentence. Many of the combatants lost their lives. The Emperor Trajan, whose goodness history has so lauded, gave an entertainment in which ten thousand gladiators figured.

The Romans had a passion for these horrible games that amounted to frenzy; it seemed that they could not sate themselves with blood. The laws of Constantine could not wholly abolish the games; they ceased only under the reign of Honorius, when a hermit, named Telemachus, having thrown himself between two gladiators to separate them, was struck dead by one of them. This heroic sacrifice of Christian charity finally led to the abolition of these games, which for more than six hundred years had been a disgrace to humanity. The gladiatorial combats, and



sometimes even those of savage beasts, took place in the amphitheatre. The amphitheatre was oval in form, differing in this from the circus, which was oval at one end and rectangular at the other. The amphitheatre built by Vespasian and Titus still exists in part, and its ruins are of astonishing grandeur and magnitude. It was often moistened with the blood of martyrs. It is now known by the name of Coliseum.

A third sort of spectacles were scenic plays, which consisted of tragedies, comedies, farces, etc. They were represented in semi-circular theatres. The most magnificent theatre of Rome seated eighty thousand spectators; it was built entirely of marble and without a roof. When rain or sunshine was apprehended linen or silk awnings were extended over the vast enclosure; sometimes, by a refinement of luxury, it was bedewed with scented waters. The theatrical plays equalled in obscenity the cruelty of the combats of the amphitheatre. They were performed in honor of the gods and by decree of the pontiffs. By such infamous performances the divinities of paganism were honored in success and appeased in public calamities.

NAMES.—The Romans had several names, ordinarily three, sometimes four, as *Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus*. The first was the prenominal, which served to distinguish Scipio from his brother; the second was the proper



name, which designated the *Cornelian* race whence he sprang; the third was the surname, and indicated that, among the different families issued from the *Cornelian* race, he belonged to the family of the *Scipios*; finally, the fourth was given to designate adoption in another family, some great deed, or some natural defect.

The titles of "duke" and "count" date from the age of Constantine. At the same epoch appear the appellations of "most noble," "most illustrious," etc., imposing titles which suppose merit but which do not confer it.

GARMENTS.—The clothing of the Romans consisted of the *indusium*, or shirt, the *tunic*, or undergarment, and the *toga*. All these garments were of wool, which obliged the Romans to bathe frequently. The *tunic* was a short robe reaching to the middle of the leg, and confined by a girdle on going abroad. The *toga* was a long robe, nearly white, closed in front and without sleeves; it enveloped the entire person, leaving the right arm exposed and the left arm free to raise the lower border of the *toga*. It was worn only in public. After the reign of Augustus this robe fell into disuse. The Roman ladies, instead of the *toga*, wore a trailing robe of divers colors, called *stola*, and above it, when they went outdoors, a kind of mantle, called *palla*. They covered the head with a yellow veil.

The *prætexta*, or tunic bordered with purple,



was the garment worn by children of distinction, with a small golden ball suspended from the neck. At seventeen they laid both aside to take the *toga*. On this occasion they were conducted by a number of their friends to the public square; this was called making their entrance into the world.

The chief distinctive marks of the senators were the *laticlave*, or *prætexta* bordered with a wide purple stripe, and a kind of black stocking that reached half way up the leg.

The knights, besides the gold ring which they wore on their finger, were distinguished by a *prætexta*, the purple stripe of which was not so wide as that of the senators and first magistrates. In war the knights laid aside the *toga* to take the cloak (*chlamys*). The *sagum* was the garment of the foot-soldier. Travellers also used it. The cowl (*cucullus*), which covered the head and shoulders, was worn in case of rain. Stockings were not used; but delicate or infirm persons covered their legs with bands of stuff. The feet were protected by sandals or buskins.

DWELLINGS.—Rome at first was but a collection of huts. The works of Tarquin the Elder gave to it the appearance of a city and a capital. In the course of ages it became so embellished and enlarged as to enclose seven hills within its walls; and though it was not paved throughout until the war of Antiochus, still it was not un-



worthy to be the home of the rulers of the world. After the conquests made in Greece and Asia the fine arts and letters took up their abode in Rome, and brought with them the wants and pleasures of luxury. But it was reserved to Augustus to confer on it that degree of grandeur and magnificence whose remains after eighteen centuries astonish the world. He himself boasted that "he had found Rome of brick and left it of marble."

The houses of private citizens differed from modern ones. Entering the outer gate, a round or square court was seen, about which extended a colonnade, like the cloister of an ancient monastery. There were the warm or cold baths, halls for tennis, or for various exercises then in vogue. The Romans were acquainted with glass and crystal, and possessed many articles made of them, even columns, but did not use the former for windows. The poor used linen or parchment for their windows; the rich, translucent stones hewn into very thin plates. Glass panes were known only from the time of Theodosius. There were no keys or locks to secure houses; the doors of apartments were fastened within by an iron bar; coffers and cupboards were sealed with a signet ring, and every time they were opened the operation had to be repeated.

The gardens, at first simple kitchen gardens cultivated by the hand of the master, followed the revolution of manners. To useful plants



succeeded boxwood, myrtle, yew, and other evergreens cut to represent different kinds of animals. There were grottos, walks, fountains, cascades, statues of marble and brass; all that luxury could devise that was sumptuous and delightful was gathered there. This is not to be wondered at, as the riches and treasures of nations had become the booty of this people.

REPASTS.—The early Romans lived on barley mush instead of bread, and ate seated; but when the luxury of Asia had penetrated to Rome, they imitated the Orientals and took their repasts reclining on couches. There were ordinarily three couches in the *triclinium*, or banqueting-hall, and three guests on each. Table-cloths were not used. Tables were brought in on which the repast was already spread. They were round, of precious wood, and supported by a single foot of ivory. Cicero possessed one of citron-wood which had cost him 200,000 sesterces (about \$8,000).

At entertainments meals were served in three courses. In the first appeared entire boars, surrounded by other dishes calculated to whet the appetite; eggs always forming a part of these. Honeyed wine was drunk. Then came the essential part of the repast, composed of all kinds of pastry and viands. The Romans delighted to serve together the most incongruous food—the crane, the peacock, the hedge-hog, the parrot,



etc.; young ass even was sometimes eaten. Finally came the dessert, consisting, as ours, of fruits, sweetmeats, etc.

The honeyed wine of the first course was succeeded by other kinds. As their strength did not allow them to be drunk pure, warm water was mingled with them in winter; in summer they were iced. The "king of the banquet," appointed by lot, ordered the libations, caused toasts to be drunk, and regulated the number of cups each one was to drink; whoever violated his orders was sentenced to drink a cup more. One of the laws of the banquet was not to take breath while drinking, whatever might be the size of the cup to be drained; if any one failed he had to recommence, intoxicated or not. The guests were crowned with myrtle and perfumed. At the beginning of the repast they amused themselves by tossing fruit-stones to the ceiling; if they touched it, it was considered a good omen for the pleasure party; if not, it augured bad luck. To divert them during the repast, a concert was given, lascivious dances were executed, or even gladiators fought.

The principal repast of the Romans was supper; it was served between the ninth and tenth hours. Dinner was for them but a second breakfast; afterwards they added to it a lunch; finally the custom of eating after supper was established among men of pleasure. It was only by disgorg-



ing that these professional eaters could take so many repasts; and it is surprising that men reputed temperate and virtuous blushed not to resort to such beastly practices.

Such was the life of the degenerate Romans. Between the second and third Punic wars a sumptuary law prohibited the eating of any other poultry than a fowl; and yet less than a hundred years after one dish that alone cost 100,000 sesterces (\$4,000) was seen upon the table of the comedian *Æsop*. Under Augustus, *Apicius*, the most famous glutton of antiquity, offered a considerable prize to any one that would invent the best sauce. This same *Apicius*, after having squandered 600,000,000 sesterces, found, on casting up his accounts, that only 10,000,000 remained; convinced that with so inconsiderable a sum he could never subsist, he poisoned himself to escape want.

At this shameful epoch Rome began to sustain herself at the expense of conquered nations. Egypt and Africa yearly sent her forty million bushels of wheat. Without this succor the capital of the world would have been exposed to famine. Not that Italy had lost its fertility; but it was covered with country seats, flower-gardens, groves, parks—in short, all those embellishments of luxury that supply no necessaries. Moreover, the Roman people, once so industrious, had become slothful and enervated, as well as haughty



and insolent, peremptorily demanding *bread and the circus*.

FUNERALS.—The rites of sepulture have been held sacred at all times and by all nations. When a Roman was about to die his nearest relations stood by his bed to receive his last sigh and to close his eyes. The moment he died they called him thrice by name, and put a coin in his mouth to pay his toll over the Styx. If the deceased was a person of distinction they embalmed him; then exposed him, crowned with flowers and arrayed in his most magnificent robes, on a bed of state. The obsequies were performed on the eighth day after death. A flute-player led the procession; then came the trumpeters, followed by the weepers. All the decorations and badges that the deceased had received during life were carried reversed; then the images in wax of his ancestors. His kindred followed; if his children were present, the sons walked with covered head and the daughters bareheaded. All the train wore mourning, with their hair dishevelled.

The corpse, borne on its bed of state and surrounded with a great number of torches, halted at the Forum. There the son of the deceased, or some other near kinsman, ascended the rostrum and pronounced the funeral oration. In early times the dead were usually buried; later, they were burned, which custom continued till the reign of Antonine. The nearest relatives with



averted countenance set fire to the pyre. While the corpse was burning human blood was poured out before the funeral-pile to appease the manes of the deceased. The blood thus spilled was at first that of prisoners of war; later, of gladiators. As soon as the corpse was consumed the ashes were enclosed in an urn, which was deposited in a tomb with an epitaph upon the sepulchral stone. Finally they addressed the last adieu to the deceased in these terms: "Farewell for ever; we shall all follow thee in the order appointed by nature."

CURRENCY.—It does not appear that the Romans originally used coined money; they transacted business by the barter of merchandise, or paid with metals whose value was determined by weight. Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, was the first to coin copper; on it was engraved a sheep (*pecus*), which gave Roman money the name of *pecunia*. The as, so called because it was of brass, was worth about two cents till the first Punic war, and somewhat less after. The denarius, which was of silver, was worth at first about thirty-five cents, afterwards sixteen or twenty cents. The sesterce, worth about four cents, was employed as the unit of value. The Romans had no gold money except the aureus, worth twenty-five denarii.

WEIGHTS.—The unit of weight among the Romans was, as elsewhere, the pound (*pondo*).



This pound was divided into twelve ounces, or three hundred and twenty-seven grammes.

MEASURES.—The principal measure for liquids was the amphora, which contained eighty pounds of water or wine; the amphora contained eight conges; the conge, forty-eight cyathi; and a cyathus as much wine as a man could drink in one draught. The son of Cicero, it is said, emptied ninety-eight cyathi at one repast; for this reason he was surnamed the "Conge." The principal dry measure was the bushel. Its capacity was but the third of the amphora; so that the Roman bushel was but half the size of ours.

The linear measures were the mile, containing a thousand paces; the pace, containing five feet; the foot, divided into four palms, and the palm, into four fingers. The Roman foot was almost equal to ours. The Romans reckoned distances by miles. Every mile was marked on the highways by a numbered stone, indicating the distance from Rome. The Gaulish league contained one thousand five hundred paces—that is to say, a little more than one mile and a half. The Greek stadium contained one hundred and twenty-five paces.

DIVISION OF TIME: YEAR, MONTH, DAY, AND NIGHT.—The Roman year anciently began in March; hence the names September, October, November, and December, because these months were the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth. But



soon after the first of January was fixed for the beginning of the year. To designate the days of the month three terms were employed—calends, nones, and ides. The calends were the first day of every month; the nones were the seventh of the months of March, May, July, October, and the fifth of the eight other months; the ides fell eight days after the nones, consequently on the fifteenth of the months of March, May, July, October, and the thirteenth of the eight other months. The days, by a usage as inconvenient as whimsical, were reckoned backward; thus, the twentieth of January was designated the twelfth of the calends of February, because the twentieth of January falls twelve days before the first of February, which was the day of the calends; so the eighth of April was called the fifth of the ides of April, because the eighth is five days before the thirteenth, the day of the ides of this month, etc.

The day was divided into twelve hours, of greater or less length according to the season. The first hour was at sunrise; the third ended towards nine o'clock A.M.; the sixth, at noon; the ninth, at three o'clock P.M.; the twelfth, at sunset. The night was divided into four watches of three hours each: the first watch began at sunset; the second, towards nine o'clock P.M.; the third, at midnight; the fourth, at three o'clock in the morning.



ARTS AND MANUFACTURES.—The early Romans, wholly devoted to warfare and agriculture, made little progress in the useful or the fine arts; but that little sufficed for the needs of a simple and frugal life. There were no bakers in Rome before the Persian war; every one made his own bread. Hand-mills, even, were unknown; wheat had to be pounded in mortars.

The cultivation of the vine was not neglected. The wines of the Roman Campania were famous in the time of Camillus; it is even said that their fame allured the Gauls into Italy. Pliny the naturalist, who relates this fact, adds that the invasion of the Gauls may be excused on account of the motive.

The Romans kept their wine in earthen vases or in leathern bottles. To the Gauls on the river Po is due the invention of casks, which has facilitated the preservation and transportation of wine.

Till the reign of Theodosius stirrups and saddles were not used at Rome; a simple housing served instead of a saddle, and stepping-stones at intervals on the highways instead of stirrups.

In the fine arts the Romans had for masters first the Etruscans, then the Greeks, whom they failed to equal. Their painters and sculptors have not produced any remarkable work; but their architects have constructed a number of monuments that present the principal features of



Roman genius—simple majesty combined with solidity and practical utility.

SCIENCES.—The first Roman who appears to have studied astronomy with success is Sulpicius Gallus; he was tribune of the soldiers, and he reassured the Roman army, terrified by an eclipse of the moon the night preceding the defeat of Persia (B. C. 168).

Towards the end of the first Punic war the first sun-dial was brought from Sicily. Rome had existed five hundred years without having any fixed time-pieces. A century later we find the clepsydra, or water-clock.

Medical science consisted simply of family recipes when, at the opening of the second Punic war, a Greek physician took up his abode in Rome.

LATIN LITERATURE UNDER THE REPUBLIC.—The Romans, whose language had the same derivation as that of the Greeks, began to write with purity by imitating Homer and the masterly authors of the age of Pericles. Their first poets appeared at the close of the second Punic war. Ennius, the most ancient, wrote, in verse often uncouth and fantastic, sometimes noble and energetic, the leading events of Roman history. Terence (B. C. 192–159), who was, like Ennius, the friend and client of the Scipios, excelled in comedy by the naturalness of his characters and the charm of his invariably pure and elegant



style; nor must we forget Plautus, almost his contemporary, who had more originality and wit. At the same epoch Cato the Elder, in his *Treatise on Agriculture* and in the *Seven Books on Roman Origins*, gave to Latin prose the qualities of his clear, vigorous, and practical mind. In eloquence he had no equal till the two Gracchi swayed the multitude by the vehemence of their discourses.

LETTERS DURING THE LAST AGE OF THE REPUBLIC.—The writers of the last age of the Republic surpassed all their predecessors. It seemed as if Rome was destined to sway nations by the perfection of her literature, while she subjected them to her rule by the power of her arms. Cæsar, the greatest of her generals, was also one of her greatest writers, as is proved by his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*. This is, moreover, attested by a most competent judge, Cicero, who was himself the most prolific writer of Rome, and perhaps the most able if not the most eloquent of orators. Cicero composed many admirable discourses, and has also left us profound philosophical works and a great number of letters, justly esteemed; but he did not attempt history, in which his contemporary Sallust, author of the *Jugurthine War* and *Catiline's Conspiracy*, excelled. To Cicero, too, is attributed the invention, or at least the perfecting, of short-hand writing, which has been revived in our times under the name of *stenography*.



Cicero also obtained some success in poetry; but he was surpassed by Catullus, a graceful and vivacious writer, and by Lucretius, an atheistic and materialistic poet, who debased his talents by writing beautiful verses on the most shameful doctrines, and who ended his life by suicide.

These writers by their labors prepared the way for the production of those masterpieces that appeared during the reign of the first Roman emperor, commonly called the *Augustan Age*. Cicero alone had no successor in eloquence, because the tribune became mute after the loss of liberty.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

What is said of the sovereignty in the Roman republic? What of the comitia? How were the functions of government divided? What were the requisite ages for the different offices? How was the Roman army composed? How was it levied? What is said of the legion? The cohort? The turma? The manipule? The century? Who were the military tribunes? The centurions? What is said of the order of battle? What of the weapons? The armor? Describe the various military engines—the "tortoise," etc. Describe the military ensigns. How was a Roman camp laid out? What is said of the Roman soldiers on the march? What of the discipline? How were the soldiers employed when not in battle? What is said of the system of military rewards? What of the triumph? The ovation? What of the roads? Name and describe the most famous ones. How were the colonies organized? What were the municipalities? What were some of the rights of Roman citizenship? What is said of the family among the Romans? What of slavery? What of the laws? When and by whom was the Roman law first codified? What of religion? Of feasts? Lucky and unlucky days? What of the games?



and shows? Of the gladiators? Relate the episode of Telemachus. What is said of the theatres? What of names? Titles? Describe the clothing—the distinctive marks of the various dignities. What is said of the dwellings? Describe the Roman manner at meals—the courses, the drinking. What is said of luxurious living? What was the result? Describe the treatment of the dead—funerals. How did coined money come into use in Rome? What was the as? The denarius? The sesterce? The aureus? What is said of weights? Measures? Of the division of the year? The calends? The ides? The nones? How was the day divided? What of the manufactures? What of the arts? Of the sciences? What is said of the origin of Latin literature? What of Ennius? Terence? Plautus? Cato the Elder? Cæsar? Sallust? Cicero? Catullus? Lucretius?

THE EMPIRE,

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN (B.C. 29—A.D. 476).

The history of the Roman Empire is divided into three grand periods: in the first (B.C. 29—A.D. 284), called the Principate, the emperor governed with the support of the army and the concurrence of the Senate, of which he was the prince; in the second (A.D. 284—395) the Empire became monarchical and Christian—that is to say, the emperor himself governed with absolute authority, and established a regular hierarchy of civil and military officers, but admitting as lawful the influence of Christianity on Roman society; finally, in the third period (A.D. 395—476), the Empire was divided into the Western or Roman Empire, properly so called, which lasted eighty-one years, and the Eastern Empire, or that of Constantinople, which lasted until 1453. The duration of this epoch was five hundred and five years.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRINCIPATE (B.C. 29—A.D. 284).

During this period, which embraced three hundred and thirteen years, the empire was governed, 1st, by the princes of the family of Augustus (B.C. 29—A.D. 68); 2d, by three military usurpers (A.D. 68—69), and by princes of the first family of Flavius (A.D. 69—96); 3d, by the Antonines, or the adopted princes (A.D. 96—192); 4th, by the Syrian