



tine came forth from the Catacombs, leaving them open as sanctuaries calculated to reanimate the piety of the faithful. It continued necessary to guard the entrance against the approach of barbarians and infidels; but this glorious cradle of the Roman Church, once more brought to light, was to offer to heretics in after ages the most convincing proofs that the first Christians admitted confession, the Eucharist, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and the other dogmas of Catholic faith.

Sec. 3. THE ANTONINES, or adopted Princes (A.D. 96–192), and the *Prætorian Emperors* (A.D. 192–193); the *Christian Apologists*; *decline of Latin Literature.*

NERVA (A.D. 96–98) AND TRAJAN (A.D. 98–117).—Nerva, placed on the throne by his colleagues of the senate, was the first emperor of foreign extraction, his family having come from the isle of Crete. During his reign of several months he used every means in his power to obliterate the remembrance of the crimes of his predecessor. He reopened the prisons, recalled exiles, prohibited the persecution of the Christians, and was as careful of the fortunes as he was of the lives of the Romans. His most praiseworthy action, however, was the adoption of Trajan and naming him his successor.

Trajan was considered the most accomplished



prince that ever ruled pagan Rome. Though one may cite his equals in goodness, and a few rivals in warlike merit, yet it is his peculiar glory to have united talents with virtue, and to have equally merited admiration and love.

When he took possession of the throne his entrance into Rome seemed less the coming of a sovereign to his capital than the return of a father to the bosom of his family. He came on foot; he recognized his former friends and took pleasure in being recognized by them, while he graciously saluted every one. All had leave to approach him, and he was often stopped by the crowd that pressed around to gain a nearer view of a prince so full of goodness and modesty. Such was the conduct of Trajan when he became emperor. He was given at once the surname of “Optimus” (Best), and he merited it to the end. Whenever he appeared the people expressed their love for him; sometimes they cried out in his presence: “Happy citizens! excellent emperor! May we long enjoy him!” At such tokens of affection a modest blush suffused the countenance of Trajan and he wept tears of joy.

CONQUESTS OF TRAJAN.—Meanwhile the Dacians, after binding Domitian to a shameful peace, still menaced the frontiers of the empire. Trajan marched against them, threw a bridge over the Danube, and, not content with having conquered them, reduced the whole country to a



Roman province (A.D. 102). Thence he advanced toward Armenia, which the Parthians, those perpetual enemies of the Romans, had just seized. The emperor was again victorious, and soon Armenia was conquered. Mesopotamia shared the same fate, as well as Assyria and a part of Arabia (A.D. 106). Trajan, after gratifying his curiosity to descend the Persian Gulf as far as the ocean, desired to visit the famous Babylon, in former times the queen of the East. He found it in the state of desolation predicted by the prophets; he saw there only ruins and the sad vestiges of what it had been. Trajan was about to destroy the Parthian empire when he suddenly died, after a reign of twenty years (A.D. 117).

As a prince he was irreproachable, but his private life is not exempt from blame. The intemperance and secret debaucheries of a prince so extolled for his great qualities teach us how feeble was pagan virtue.

THIRD PERSECUTION (A.D. 102-116).—The Emperor Trajan, notwithstanding his reputation for clemency, was the author of the third persecution. Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, consulted him as to the manner of dealing with the Christians. "Their only crime," wrote he, "consists in singing hymns in honor of Christ. There is a great number of them, of every age and condition, in the cities and fields so that the temples of our gods are deserted"



Otherwise, their conduct is pure and blameless." Trajan replied that the Christians were not to be sought out, but that if they were accused he should enforce the laws against them—that is to say, punish them with death; a remarkable proof of the injustice of the persecutor, for it was proper to seek out the Christians if they were guilty of crimes, but to spare them if they were innocent.

St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was the most illustrious martyr of this persecution. Trajan himself condemned him to be exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Rome. Ignatius, during his long voyage thither, edified the Christians by letters and discourses marked with the most ardent charity. "It is better," said he, "to die with Jesus Christ than to reign over the whole world." Arrived at the amphitheatre, he knelt down, prayed once more for all the faithful, and then delivered himself to the two lions, which rushed upon him and devoured him (A.D. 107). The reading of his eloquent letters and the recital of his glorious martyrdom was for a long time the consolation of the whole Church.

HADRIAN (A.D. 117-138); HIS PACIFIC CHARACTER; HIS QUALITIES AND FAULTS.—Hadrian, nephew and successor of Trajan, evinced as much inclination for peace as his predecessor had for war. His first care was to abandon the late conquests, and to confine the empire within its for-



mer limits by evacuating all the country beyond the Euphrates.

He was one of the most remarkable of the Roman emperors for the extent and variety of his talents. He possessed an extraordinary memory; after once reading a book he could repeat it from beginning to end. He wrote equally well in prose and in verse, and was reputed one of the greatest orators of his age. To these talents he joined many virtues: firmness in government, justice, clemency, and frugality.

But Hadrian had his faults: a base jealousy of learned men who eclipsed him; an astonishing inconstancy in regard to his friends, none of whom long preserved this title; and an insatiable curiosity, which made his reign only a series of journeys to all parts of the empire; not to speak of the shameful debaucheries into which he plunged. Chastity was a virtue but little known to the pagans; Christianity alone has made known its merits.

REVOLT AND DISPERSION OF THE JEWS (A.D. 135).—The peace of Hadrian's reign was disturbed only by a revolt of the Jews. They had taken up arms against Trajan, who destroyed a great number of them. Being checked but not subdued, they again rose in arms under Barcochebas, a robber by profession, who called himself the Messiah. It was thus these unhappy people, who had rejected the true Messiah in the person of



Jesus Christ, blindly followed the most disreputable impostors, provided they assumed the august title of Messiah. This senseless revolt ended disastrously. The Jews were not spared; they perished by fire and sword to the number of six hundred thousand. Their overthrow was complete. Adrian rebuilt, under the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, a new Jerusalem, which enclosed Calvary within its limits. The Jews were excluded from it for ever and dispersed throughout the world.

ANTONINUS PIUS (A.D. 138–161).—Antoninus, the adopted son of Hadrian, proved himself worthy to succeed him. He was surnamed “Pius,” a title which he had merited by his tender affection for his parents. This good prince did not seek renown by brilliant deeds. It sufficed him to labor nearly twenty-five years for the prosperity of the empire. Happy if his virtues had been sanctified by the Christian religion, whose light then shone over all parts, and to which, by an inscrutable judgment of God, he closed his eyes until the end. His name was so venerated that all his successors, during more than a century, gloried in being called Antoninus.

MARCUS AURELIUS (A.D. 161–180); LUCIUS VERUS (A.D. 161–169).—Marcus Aurelius, son-in-law of Antoninus, and acknowledged sole heir of the throne, took as his colleague Lucius Verus, his adopted brother. It was the first time that



two brothers shared the supreme power, and each followed a very different line of conduct. Verus showed no other merit than an entire deference to his colleague, and signalized himself by the most shameful vices, of which he died a victim at an early age. Marcus Aurelius, on the contrary, gloried in walking in the footsteps of his predecessor, and surpassed him by the splendor of his virtues. Accustomed to practise the most admirable precepts of philosophy, he was careful nevertheless not to judge others with too much severity, because he knew the weakness of human nature. "As we cannot," said he, "make men such as we would have them, we must bear with them as they are, and try to make them better." The reign of so wise a prince was for the empire an epoch of glory and happiness.

WAR AGAINST THE PARTHIANS; FOURTH PERSECUTION (A.D. 166).—Vologeses, king of the Parthians, having invaded Armenia, then a tributary of the Romans, Marcus Aurelius, being himself detained in Italy, sent Avidius Cassius against him. He was a fiery and bold warrior. Not content with having defeated the Parthians, he forced the passage of the Euphrates and penetrated as far as the royal cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, which were sacked and burned. But such brilliant exploits were dearly purchased. The victorious army brought a pestilence into Europe. The scourge produced such dreadful



ravages, especially in Italy, that more persons were carried off by it within the space of a few months than would have perished during many years of the most disastrous war. The Christians were accused of producing it, and the Emperor allowed himself to be biassed by these calumnies and renewed the edicts of persecution. The first acts of violence were committed at Smyrna; they were horrible, but the faithful bore them with unshaken constancy. St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had been the disciple of St. John and the friend of St. Ignatius, was burned alive for having rendered a glorious testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ.

WAR AGAINST THE GERMANS; THE THUNDERING LEGION (A.D. 174).—The Germans, who, since the time of Augustus, had made only desultory attacks, now formed the first of those leagues which were to prove so fatal to the Romans. The Marcomanni, the Quadi, and other barbarians of the North, dispossessed by more powerful tribes or allured by the hope of pillage, precipitated themselves towards the Danube and the Alps, forced these natural barriers of the empire, and seized upon Aquileia, a city of Venetia. Marcus Aurelius, by his courage and skill, drove the enemy beyond the Danube. It was during this war that the emperor, becoming imprudently entangled amidst the mountains of Bohemia, found himself surround-

ed by the Quadi and on the point of perishing of thirst. In this critical and desperate situation the safety of the army and a brilliant victory over the enemy were due to the prayers of a legion composed entirely of Christians (A.D. 174). This prodigy, which pagan writers themselves relate, checked for a time the persecution which Marcus Aurelius had at first ordained against the Christians. The war against the barbarians continued to the end of his reign. He died at Vienna, near the Danube, having obtained a great reputation for political and military acquirements, but being still more celebrated for his moderation and mildness.

COMMODOUS (A.D. 180-192).—Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius, inherited his father's throne but none of his virtues. After having purchased peace from the barbarians, he hastened to return to Rome to give himself up to the basest debauchery. Endowed with prodigious strength, he sought glory in combat with the gladiators in the amphitheatre, under the eyes of the Roman people. Assembling there a number of sick and cripples, he would appear covered with a lion's skin, like Hercules, whose name he assumed and whom he pretended to imitate by slaying those hapless beings with blows of a club, which labor he called "exterminating the monsters." By his follies, debaucheries, and cruelties Commodus proved himself a monster rather than

a man; he took Caligula for his model, and he equalled him. His frenzies hastened his death; he was poisoned by a woman with whom he was enamored, and whom, in a fit of anger, he had just condemned to death.

PERTINAX AND DIDIUS (A.D. 193); THE EMPIRE SOLD AT AUCTION.—After the death of Commodus, Pertinax, a man of low birth but of uncommon merit, was elected emperor. The frugality, modesty, and mildness of the new prince seemed to promise happiness and peace; but these flattering hopes were soon blasted. At the end of three months the prætorian soldiers in Rome, incensed at the reforms which Pertinax contemplated, revolted and slew him.

After this outrage they were not ashamed to expose the empire for sale at public auction. Two bidders were found, one the father-in-law of Pertinax, and the other a rich senator named Didius Julianus. The latter was the highest bidder, offering twenty-five thousand sesterces, or about six hundred and twenty-five dollars, to each prætorian. This shameful transaction excited universal indignation. The armies on the frontiers, not content with protesting against the election, proclaimed at once three emperors. One of them, Septimius Severus, who commanded the troops in Illyria, forestalled the news of his election by the rapidity of his march, appearing in Italy before it was known, Didius, taken un-

awares, showed nothing but weakness and hesitation. Abandoned by the prætorians, he was condemned by the Senate, and his death rid Severus of a contemptible rival.

THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS.—By the middle of the second century Christianity had spread throughout all the provinces of the empire. The pagans, not content with persecuting it, heaped upon it the most atrocious calumnies. They represented the Christians as sacrilegious wretches, public enemies, and persons blackened with the most abominable crimes. But God raised up many writers, great in knowledge as well as sanctity, who defended the mysteries and morality of Christianity.

St. Justin Martyr composed two spirited and impressive apologies, which enlightened a multitude of pagans. The second, addressed to Marcus Aurelius, won for this noble man the crown of martyrdom. Some years later Tertullian wrote his eloquent apology, which inflicted a mortal wound on paganism. "They accuse us," said he, "of revolt and disobedience to emperors. But in what have we revolted? The people often throw stones at us; they burn our houses, torment us, and kill us with the most cruel tortures. What have we done that you should treat us with such injustice? Were we disposed to resist you, think you that we should lack men or courage? We are but of yesterday, and already we fill your

cities, your castles, your hamlets, your fields, your palaces, the senate; we leave you nothing but your temples! But it is our duty to suffer death rather than inflict it. Besides, we need take no deeper vengeance than to withdraw beyond the limits of the empire; we should leave you appalled by the solitude that would surround you."

Origen, an African priest like Tertullian, displayed the same zeal and talent in defence of the truth. The most solid and celebrated of his works is an apology for the Christian religion against Celsus, which he published to refute the calumnies of that pagan philosopher against the disciples of Jesus Christ.

PRINCIPAL LATIN WRITERS AFTER AUGUSTUS.—The Latin language, which attained such perfection in the age of Augustus, soon showed signs of decline. Phædrus, in his *Fables*, still combined elegance with simplicity; Martial, though often disgustingly obscene, succeeded in pointing his *Epigrams* with as much purity of expression as wit; and Juvenal, indignant at the shameful excesses of Domitian, displayed in his *Satires* the masculine vigor of his genius; but Persius, who pretended to imitate Horace, enveloped his thoughts in such obscurity as rendered his *Satires* so many enigmas; and Lucan, contemporary of Nero, infused into his *Pharsalia* so much sameness that we cannot compare

his poem with those of Virgil. We find the same faults, as well as a lack of serious thought, partly redeemed by brilliancy and grace, in the *Thebaid* of Statius, in the *Civil War* of Petronius, the *Punic War* of Silius Italicus, and in the works of poets subsequent to the first century of the Christian era.

Among the great Latin prose writers is undoubtedly to be classed the historian Tacitus (A.D. 54-134), as much for the breadth of his genius as for the brilliancy and vigor of his style. Critics reproach him, however, with the abuse of poetical tropes and a love of brevity carried even to obscurity—faults more perceptible in his histories and *Annals* than in his two chief works, the *Manners of the Germans* and the *Life of Agricola*, his father-in-law. It is needless to compare with Tacitus the abridger Florus, or the biographer Suetonius, or even Quintus Curtius, a brilliant romancer rather than historian, in his *Life of Alexander*. Eloquence was uncultivated after Cicero, notwithstanding the lessons of the judicious Quintilian, who had taken that great orator as a model in his *Oratorical Institutes*. Pliny the Younger, in composing the *Panegyric* on his friend Trajan, did but imitate the vain exercises then used in the schools under the name of “declamations.” His *Letters* are more esteemed, but they are deficient in naturalness and simplicity. An abrupt and senten-

tious style, studied satire and antithesis are the most ordinary signs of decadence; they are detected in the works of Seneca the Philosopher, the preceptor of Nero, though his treatises on morality have given him the first rank, after Cicero, among Roman philosophers.

Sec. 4. THE SYRIAN PRINCES (A.D. 193-235); *Military Anarchy* (A.D. 235-268); *the Illyrian Princes* (A.D. 268-284).

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (A.D. 193-211); FIFTH PERSECUTION (A.D. 303).—Septimius Severus, of African extraction, was the first of the princes designated Syrian, because he had married a Syrian woman whose accession to the throne astrologers had predicted. After the defeat of Didius the new emperor had to contend with two other more dangerous rivals who had arisen against him. He crushed both—Niger in the East, in the defiles of Mount Taurus, and Albinus in Gaul, near Lyons. He was cruel and inexorable towards the partisans of his competitors; he proscribed them by thousands, and they perished in all parts of the empire. On this occasion he received a striking lesson from his young son, Geta. “They are enemies from whom I am going to deliver you,” said Severus. “But,” said the child, “have these unhappy men any relations or friends alive?” “Yes, without doubt,” replied Severus. “Alas!” said the young Geta, “there



will be more persons to lament our victory than to partake of our joy." So judicious a remark did not check the cruel inclinations of Severus, who joined thereto perfidy and rapine, and to crown his excesses he became one of the most violent persecutors of the Christian religion. Lyons alone furnished several thousands of martyrs, among whom was St. Irenæus, who had been the disciple of St. Polycarp.

CHARACTER OF SEVERUS.—Severus had, however, some commendable qualities which distinguished him above Nero and Domitian. Frugality, vigilance, activity, military science, and valor entitle him to rank with the great emperors. He made successful campaigns against the Parthians, who were obliged to surrender Mesopotamia. His last expedition was against the Caledonians, in the north of Britain (A.D. 208). In order to confine them within due limits he raised a wall extending from one sea to the other, and which still bears the name of this emperor.

CARACALLA (A.D. 211-217).—Caracalla, son and successor of Severus, had attempted to murder his father. As soon as he was on the throne he meditated the death of his brother, Geta, who had been given him as a colleague, and strangled him in the arms of their mother. This prince was human only in form. Efforts had been made to correct his youthful faults, and to cultivate his mind and develop his body



by suitable teaching and exercises, but all in vain. He learned to mount a horse, to use arms, and to swim, which latter was his study and his passion; but in all that relates to mental acquirements—morality, Greek and Latin literature, the science of law and government—he made no progress; and the little that was forced into his mind he soon completely forgot. By recalling Nero, Caligula, and Tiberius, a correct idea may be formed of a reign which was marked only by infamy and horrors. Caracalla's death was in keeping with his life. Macrinus, the commander of the imperial guards, condemned to death by this cruel prince, was his murderer and successor.

MACRINUS (A.D. 217-218); FEARFUL REIGN OF HELIOGABALUS (A.D. 218-222).—Macrinus did not long enjoy the fruit of his crime; the soldiers, whom he had offended, massacred him and set on the throne the youthful Heliogabalus, cousin-german to Caracalla, and high-priest of the sun in Syria. The new emperor, by his luxury, effeminacy, debauchery, ferocity, and contempt of honor and decency, was one of the most infamous princes that ever disgraced the throne of the Cæsars. Aware of the dangers to which he was exposed, he prepared silken strings and golden swords for the purpose of either strangling himself or cutting his throat, if necessary. Moreover, a tower was built for



him, surrounded by a pavement of precious stones, in order that, should he be obliged to precipitate himself from the top, he might at least meet his death in a splendid manner. All these precautions were useless; he was slain most ignominiously.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS (A.D. 222-235).—The life of Alexander Severus strongly contrasts with that of Heliogabalus. A natural inclination to virtue, fostered by an excellent education, rendered him one of the most amiable princes mentioned in Roman annals. Goodness and justice were his especial virtues. He often repeated this maxim of the Christians: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you"; and he caused it to be engraved on the walls of his palace, and made it the rule of his conduct. He gloried in showing clemency to such as had offended him. Being informed that a senator named Ovinus had set on foot a plot to raise himself to the throne, Alexander sent for him, thanked him for his willingness to share the troubles of government, and began to treat him as his colleague. He offered him the command of an army against some barbarians who had revolted. On his refusal the emperor invited him to partake at least in the glory of the campaign. They started together on foot. Ovinus, being soon tired, was advised by the emperor to take a horse for the rest of the journey, and afterwards



to make use of a carriage. These proceedings, so flattering in appearance, mortified Ovinus so much that he abdicated his honors and returned to his country-seat, where Alexander permitted him to live unmolested.

RESPECT OF THE EMPEROR FOR VIRTUE.—A prince so virtuous delighted to honor virtue. He had in his palace a chapel, where he kept the image of our Saviour, together with those of Abraham, Orpheus, and other benefactors of humanity. This is indeed a medley of names, but the incident shows the inclination of Alexander to honor virtue wherever he found it sincere.

WARS OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS.—Alexander had to defend the empire against the Persians in the east and the Germans in the north. The Parthian empire, founded by Arsaces, had resisted all the efforts of the Romans, when it fell under the blows of Artaxerxes, a disgraced general who in revenge dethroned his sovereign. To the Parthian empire, which had lasted five centuries (B.C. 225—A.D. 226), succeeded the kingdom of Persia, which lasted 426 years (A.D. 226—652).

The dynasty of the Arsacidæ was succeeded by that of the Sassanidæ, so called from Sassan, father of Artaxerxes. The Emperor Alexander, exasperated by the new king of the Persians, took Mesopotamia from him, but the want of



discipline among his troops checked the course of the emperor's conquests. On the other hand, the German barbarians had invaded Gaul. Alexander Severus was engaged in driving them back beyond the Rhine, when he was assassinated, in the flower of his age, by Maximin, who took the title of emperor.

MILITARY USURPERS (A.D. 235-268).—No greater misfortune could have befallen the empire than Alexander's premature death. From this fatal epoch till the time of Diocletian, an interval of fifty years, there were fifty Cæsars who, under this title, legitimate or usurped, appeared upon the scene as claimants to the throne. Civil wars endlessly multiplied and ever renewed, invasions of barbarians, emperors named by the arbitrary choice of the army and immediately after massacred—such was the state of desolation to which the most powerful empire of ancient times was reduced by the license of the soldiery, the ambition of generals, and the want of fixed principles of government and of succession.

MAXIMIN I. (A.D. 235-238); SIXTH PERSECUTION.—Maximin had been a herdsman and had risen to the rank of soldier, tribune, and finally to that of emperor. He was of extraordinary size and strength, and drank, it is said, eight bottles of wine and ate forty pounds of meat every day. As soon as he had received the dia-



dem he put to death all who knew the meanness of his extraction, not sparing even his most intimate friends. This brutal prince was one of the most ferocious persecutors of the Christians. A crime similar to that which had elevated him to the throne deprived him of the empire and his life.

DECIUS (A.D. 249-251); SEVENTH PERSECUTION.—Among Maximin's immediate successors, who all died violent deaths, the two principal were Gordian III. (A.D. 238-244) and Philip the Arab (A.D. 244-249). Gordian III., proclaimed emperor after his grandfather and his father (Gordian I. and Gordian II.), routed the Persians, while the tribune Aurelian vanquished, near Mayence, the *Franks* (A.D. 241), whose name now appears for the first time and designated several German tribes between the Rhine and the Weser. Philip the Arab restored Mesopotamia to the Persians, and celebrated (A.D. 247) the thousandth anniversary of Rome by secular games, which were the last. Decius then appeared, of whom nothing more memorable is recorded than the cruel persecution that he enkindled against the Christian religion and the miserable termination of his life. He had set out in pursuit of the Goths, resolving to exterminate them, that they might never again set foot on Roman territory; but a traitor aspiring to the throne entangled him in an impassable marsh, where,



hemmed in by the Goths, he perished together with the Roman army.

GALLUS (A.D. 251–253), ÆMILIAN (A.D. 253), AND VALERIAN I. (A.D. 253–260); EIGHTH PERSECUTION (A.D. 256).—Gallus, lieutenant of Decius, having caused himself to be proclaimed emperor, proved unworthy of the title by the disgraceful peace that he concluded with the Goths. His soldiers put him to death and acknowledged his rival, Æmilian, who soon suffered the same fate.

Valerian, third successor of Decius, had just ascended the blood-stained throne of the Cæsars when Sapor I., King of Persia, profiting by the divisions of the empire, attacked the provinces of Asia, and took Nisibis and Edessa. Valerian hastened to the rescue of the latter city. Sapor, who could employ perfidy as well as force, decoyed the emperor to a conference and made him prisoner. It could scarcely be believed, had history not authenticated the fact, what indignities this hapless prince was compelled to undergo. His haughty conqueror dragged him about everywhere loaded with chains, and, to fill the measure of his ignominy, robed him in imperial purple. When Sapor wished to mount his horse he forced his captive to bend to the earth, that his neck might serve as a stirrup. After languishing at least three years in this horrible slavery Valerian was put to



death and then flayed, and his skin, dyed red, was suspended in a temple to serve as a lasting monument of the disgrace of the Romans.

GALLIENUS (A.D. 260–268) AND THE THIRTY TYRANTS.—Gallienus, son of Valerian, gave himself up to selfish indulgences, and took no pains to repel the Persians, to deliver his father, or to avenge the outrages offered, in the person of that emperor, to the majesty of the empire. While barbarians ravaged the frontiers a dreadful pestilence, called the “Fifteen-years plague” (A.D. 250–265), desolated the provinces, and sometimes carried off five thousand victims a day in the city of Rome. Civil war completed these woes; many governors and generals took the title of emperor and maintained it with arms in hand. This epoch has been styled the “Reign of the thirty tyrants.” (This is doubtless an allusion to the thirty magistrates or tyrants whom Lysander the Spartan appointed in Athens, B.C. 404; the number of usurpers under Gallienus did not amount to thirty. The following were the principal: Odenatus and Zenobia in Syria; Macrinus in Egypt; Piso and Valens in Greece; Aureolus in Rhetia; Posthumius, Victorinus, and Tetricus in Gaul.) Gallienus was engaged in combating one of these usurpers when he was massacred by his soldiers, who proclaimed Claudius, the Illyrian, emperor.

CLAUDIUS II. (A.D. 268–270).—Claudius is the

first of those generals who, having successively risen to the throne by their bravery, retarded the downfall of the empire by repelling the barbarians. They are called Illyrian princes from their origin, and their government is often denominated the "military aristocracy." Claudius, fairly comparable with Trajan for talent and virtue, was on the throne just long enough to destroy an army of three hundred thousand Goths and a fleet of two thousand sail that had invaded Macedonia. After this exploit, one of the greatest ever achieved by any Roman emperor, Claudius died of the plague and left the crown to Aurelian.

AURELIAN (A.D. 270-275) AND ZENOBIA.—Aurelian, already famous for the victory which he had achieved over the Franks, began by driving out the Vandals, Germans, and other barbarians who had penetrated into Italy; he then directed his eyes towards the East.

Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, had profited by the disturbances in the empire to seize a part of Asia. This spirited, intrepid, and magnanimous princess possessed all the virtues compatible with ambition. She continually praised Semiramis and Cleopatra, whom she equalled in talents and far surpassed in moral character. Her attire combined the ornaments of a woman with the equipage of a warrior. She wore, with the diadem, the imperial coat of arms, and ha-

rangued the soldiers helmeted and bare-armed. Inured to the fatigues of the chase, she ignored all weaknesses. Though temperate, yet, as her affairs put her in relation with men, she could be as convivial as they, and in the grand banquets that she gave she presided over her generals and the Persian and Armenian lords. This princess was fond of letters; she had near her person the celebrated rhetorician Longinus, who was also her prime minister. Besides the Syriac, her native tongue, she spoke the Egyptian, Greek, and Latin languages. She was a student of history, which is the school of princes, and wrote an abridgment for her own use. Such was Zenobia, whom Aurelian, with reason, regarded as an enemy worthy of himself.

DEFEAT OF ZENOBIA; NINTH PERSECUTION (A.D. 274).—Zenobia, vanquished in two battles, shut herself up in Palmyra. This city, famous in antiquity, was founded by King Solomon. Its situation in a fertile spot, surrounded by arid and barren deserts, rendered it strong and very difficult to take by the Romans. At last provisions began to fail in the city, and Zenobia went in quest of help to the Persians (A.D. 273). Aurelian, apprised of her flight, sent after her a detachment of cavalry. She was about to cross the Euphrates, and was already in a boat, when the Romans came up with her. They brought her to Aurelian, who sharply demanded why she

had dared to brave the emperors. Her reply was flattering but not servile. "You I consider an emperor," said she. "You know how to conquer; but your predecessors I have never thought worthy of that title." Aurelian granted Zenobia a delightful villa at Tibur, where she spent the remainder of her life as a Roman lady. It is supposed that her religion was Judaism. The emperor did not long survive his great victories. Aurelian's character was unfeeling and inexorable, and he issued an edict of persecution against the Christians, which circumstance tarnishes his reputation with posterity.

TACITUS (A. D. 275-276).—After the death of Aurelian a singular contest arose between the senate and the army. For six months they deferred to each other in the election of an emperor, and during all that interval no one usurped the supreme power, and affairs remained quiet. At last the senate, yielding, named Tacitus, one of its own members, an old man of great wisdom and related to the historian of the same name. He accepted with reluctance the dangerous post, and with reason, for after several months he was slain.

PROBUS (A. D. 276-282); VICTORIES OVER THE BARBARIANS AND PERSIANS.—The army now proclaimed their commander, Probus, a man of obscure birth but of rare merit, and who to probity, signified by his name, joined courage and

greatness of soul. The barbarians on all sides strove to weaken the barriers of the empire. Probus marched against them, and successively vanquished them. Those that escaped by flight were so restrained by the terror of his arms that during his lifetime they no more dared emerge from their forests. Probus also determined to check the Persians, and set out for the East; he was already encamped on the mountains of Armenia, from which the enemy's country was seen, when the king of Persia, astonished at his approach, sent him ambassadors. The audience which Probus gave them recalls to mind the simplicity, frugality, and haughtiness of the ancient Romans. He was seated on the grass, taking his repast, which consisted of pea-soup and salt pork, when the Persian ambassadors were announced. He bade them approach, saying: "I am the emperor. Tell your master that if he does not, this very day, pledge himself to redress the grievances which he has inflicted on the Romans, he will see before the end of the month all the lands in his kingdom as shorn and bare as my head." At the same time he took off his cap to show them his head, which was entirely bald. He added that if they were hungry they might share his meal; if not, they must withdraw immediately. The king of Persia, in consternation, hastened in person to the camp of the Romans and concluded a peace on the conditions laid down by Probus. Not long



after this the soldiers, whom the emperor employed to drain a marsh near Sirmium, revolted and killed him. This excellent prince and great commander had restored the glory of the Roman empire, and, had not the crime of his soldiers cut short his life, he would have secured its prosperity.

CARUS (A.D. 282-283), NUMERIAN (A.D. 283-284), AND CARINUS.—Carus, commander of the prætorian guard, whom the army proclaimed emperor, showed himself worthy of succeeding Probus. Already master of Mesopotamia, he was making the Persian king tremble, when he was found dead in his tent on the banks of the Tigris. Aper spread the report that in a storm the emperor had been struck by lightning. This ambitious minister, the better to conceal his villainy, hastened to acknowledge Carinus and Numerian, the sons of his victim; but soon after the assassination of Numerian so exasperated the generals that they proclaimed one of themselves, named Diocletian. The latter, to wash his hands of all suspicion of complicity with Aper, summoned him to appear before the whole army. "Behold," he exclaimed, "the real assassin of the emperor"; and he plunged his sword into Aper's heart. It is related that the new emperor cared less to punish a criminal or to prove his own innocence than to accomplish an oracle which had predicted his accession to the throne



when he had killed a wild boar (in Latin, *aper*). However this may be, Carinus having perished a short time after by the hand of an officer, Diocletian remained sole master of the imperial dignity, which had cost so dear to all who had been invested with it since the reign of Commodus; twenty-two of the twenty-five occupants of the throne having perished by assassination.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

How did Augustus Caesar gain the sovereignty of Rome? What is said of the Roman people in the meantime? What was the conduct of Octavius after taking the name of *Augustus*? What is said of his character? Of his family? What of the conspiracy of Cinna? What of the defeat of Varus? How did Augustus enlarge the empire? How was the empire divided? How were the provinces governed? What is said of the army and navy under Augustus? What of the *Age of Augustus*? What of Virgil? Of Horace? Of Ovid? What men of learning flourished at this epoch? Why is the age of Augustus particularly memorable? What is said of the birth of our Saviour? What of the reign of Tiberius? Of Germanicus? Relate his campaign in Germany. What was the conduct of Tiberius towards him? What of Tiberius at Capree? How did he end his life? What was taking place at this time in Judea? What is said of the successor of Tiberius? Give the anecdote of his gambling—of the banquet? What were his last follies? How was his death brought about? What is said of his campaigns? Who was his successor? What was his conduct on coming to the throne? What is said of his family? How did Nero behave at first? What is said of his crimes? What of Seneca? What crime did Nero add to his murders? What is said of the first persecution? What of the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul? Of the expedition of Corbulo? What of Nero's buffoonery? Of his death? Who were the three

military usurpers, and what is said of them? What of the luxury of Vitellius? Who was Vespasian? How did he acquire the sovereignty? What reforms did he introduce? What is said of his avarice? What of his successor? Describe the eruption of Vesuvius and the conduct of the two Plinys. What is said of Herculaneum? What of Domitian? Of the second persecution? What was the end of Domitian's reign? What were the Catacombs? Who was Domitian's successor? What is said of the character of Trajan? What of his conquests? What was the origin of the third persecution? What is said of St. Ignatius? What of Hadrian? Describe the revolt of the Jews. What is said of Hadrian's successor? What of the character of Marcus Aurelius? Of the war against the Parthians? What caused the fourth persecution? What is told of the Thundering Legion. What is said of Commodus? What of Pertinax? Of Didius? What Christian writers flourished in the second century? What is said of Latin literature after Augustus? What of Phædrus? Martial? Juvenal? Persius? Lucan? Statius? Petronius? Silius Italicus? What of Tacitus? Florus? Suetonius? Quintus Curtius? Quintilian? Pliny the Younger? Seneca? What is said of the reign of Septimius Severus? What was his character? What of his successor? Of Macrinus? Of Heliogabalus? Of Alexander Severus? How did he show his respect for virtue? What is said of his wars? What occurred after his death? What was the character of Maximin I.? What is said of the emperors immediately following him? Who was the author of the seventh persecution? What was the terrible fate of Valerian? What occurred during his successor's reign? What were the character and exploits of Claudius II.? What is said of Aurelian? Who was Zenobia? How was she defeated? What is said of the Emperor Tacitus? What of Probus and his victories? What of Carus? Of Numerian?

CHAPTER II.

THE MONARCHICAL (A.D. 284-312) AND
CHRISTIAN EMPIRE (A.D. 313-395).

THE empire was transformed into an absolute monarchy by Diocletian and Constantine. The latter secured the triumph of Christianity, but its political and religious unity was compromised under the successors of Constantine, and the final partition of the empire took place after the death of Theodosius the Great.

Sec. 1. DIOCLETIAN (A.D. 284-305); **CONSTANTINE** (A.D. 306-337); **EDICT OF MILAN** (A.D. 313); *New Imperial Constitution.*

POLICY OF DIOCLETIAN; THE TETRARCHY.—Diocletian, born at Salona, in Dalmatia, was both brave and skilful, and had risen from the lowest rank in the army to the supreme command. After he entered Rome he employed himself in strengthening his authority; the capricious influence of the senate was annulled, and the turbulent prætorian cohorts were replaced by Illyrian legions who were devoted to the new sovereign. But it was still necessary to defend the frontiers of his empire against the barbarians, and for this reason the emperor decided to associate with himself Maximian, likewise a soldier of fortune, and whose sole recom-