

THE longest period of the life of man is only equal to the intermediate space between these games. For an age, or the space of one hundred years, which we call *aiv_n*, is by the Romans called *seculum*. This is an excellent remedy for the plague, consumption and other diseases; of its origin receive this account. Valesus Valesius, from whom descended the Valerian family, was a great man among the Sabines, before whose house was a grove of very lofty trees, which were burnt with lightning. He was thus induced to enquire the meaning of such a portent. His children, moreover, falling sick, he consulted both the physicians and the soothsayers. He was told by them, that by the manner of the fire falling the gods were angry; which caused Valesius wisely to attempt by sacrifices to appease them. He and his wife being terrified, and expecting every moment the death of their children, he prostrated himself before Vesta, and promised to offer up two entire souls instead of their children, which were his own and that of their mother. But turning to the grove that had been burnt, he seemed to hear a voice that commanded him to carry the children to Tarentum, and there to warm some |36 Tiber water over the fire of Pluto and Proserpine, and to give it to the children to drink. On hearing this he despaired the more of the recovery of the children. For Tarentum was at a great distance, and besides there was no Tiber water to be had there: and it caused him to entertain more desponding thoughts of it, that the voice had told him the water must be warmed on the altar of the infernal deities, at which the soothsayers themselves were also startled. However, having heard it the second time, he obeyed the command of the gods. Putting his children on board a small river-vessel, he carried the fire along with him. The children were ready to faint through heat, while he sailed to that part of the river where the stream is most gentle; and taking up his lodging at a shepherd's cottage, he heard a voice say that he must stay at Tarentum, for that was the name of the place, which had the same name with Tarentum near the Iapygian promontory; On which Valesius, having paid due adoration to the gods for his good fortune, ordered the pilot to put to shore, and, landing, told the whole story to the shepherds. Presently taking some water out of the Tiber, and heating it on an altar erected by himself, he gave it to his children to drink; as soon as they had drunk it they fell asleep and were perfectly cured. But in that sleep they fancied that they saw a vision, which told them to offer black victims to Pluto and Proserpine, and to spend three nights in singing and dancing; which dream they communicated to their father, and that it was a huge man of a godlike presence, who ordered them to do it in the Campus Martius, where the horse-races are held. Valesius, therefore, intending to build an altar in that place, set the masons to dig, who found an altar ready made, on which was inscribed. "To Pluto and Proserpine". By which being more plainly instructed how to act, he sacrificed the black victims on the altar, and kept the vigils in that place.

This same altar, and the manner of sacrificing on it, thus originated. The Romans and the Albans being at war, and both prepared for battle, a monstrous figure appeared, clothed in a black skin, and crying out, that Pluto and Proserpine commanded sacrifices to be made to them before they fought, it disappeared. On which, the Romans, who were terrified at the sight, made an altar underground, and when they had sacrificed on it, buried it at the depth of twenty feet., in order that it might not be found by any but themselves.

Valesius having found it, according to command, sacrificed upon it, and kept the vigils; for which he was called Manius Valerius Tarentinus. For the Romans call the infernal gods *Manes*, and *Valere* signifies to be in good health; |37 and the surname of Tarentinus he derived from Tarentum where he sacrificed. Some time afterwards, when a plague happened in the city, which was the year after the expulsion of the kings, Publius Valerius Publicola sacrificed a black bull and a black heifer to Pluto and Proserpine, by which he freed the city from the disease. He wrote on the altar this inscription; "Publius Valerius Publicola dedicated fire to Pluto and Proserpine in the Campus Martius, and exhibited spectacles in honour of them, for the preservation of the Roman people."

But afterwards, when they were oppressed with diseases and wars, which was in the year 352 after the building of the city, the senate endeavoured to deliver themselves from those calamities by means of the oracles of the Sibyls, and therefore commanded those whose office it was to consult those oracles. Having so done they told the senate, that by sacrificing to Pluto and Proserpine an end would be put to all their miseries. They therefore chose a convenient place,

which they consecrated to Pluto and Proserpine as they were commanded, when Marcus Potitus was in his fourth consulate. And when the ceremony was completed, being delivered from their grievances, they again laid aside the altar in some extremity of the Campus Martius. These rites were afterwards neglected for many years, until some misfortunes befell them, and then Octavianus Augustus renewed the games which had before been celebrated, when Lucius. Censorinus and Marcus Manlius Puelius were consuls. They were again used under the consulate of Lucius Censorinus and Caius Sabinus, when Ateius Capito had explained the laws concerning them, and the fifteen men who had the care of the books of the Sibyls had found out the time when the sacrifice ought to be performed and the games held. After Augustus was dead, these games were celebrated by Claudius, without any regard to the due time. After him Domitian, who paid no regard to what Claudius had done, computed the years from the time when Augustus kept that festival, and seemed to observe their original institution. And after them Severus in the hundred and tenth year restored the same game, with his two sons Antoninus and Geta, when Chilo and Libo were consuls. This is said to be the manner in which these games were observed. The beadles went round at the time, and invited all the people to a spectacle, such as they had never witnessed and never would again. The Quindecimviri, in the summer season, a little before the games began, sat in the Capitol, and in the Palatine, temple, upon a tribunal, from which they distributed to the people a kind of purifying |38 preparations, called lustralia, which consisted of torches, brimstone and pitch, of which none but freemen are allowed to participate. And when the people assembled in the above mentioned places and in the temple of Diana, which is on mount Aventine, each person brought wheat, barley, and beans, and kept vigils to the fatal sisters. The time of the festival being arrived, which was celebrated three successive days and nights in the Campus Martins, the victims were consecrated near the bank of the Tiber at Tarentum. There they sacrificed to several deities; to Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Latona, and to the Parcae, Lucinae, Ceres, Pluto, and Proserpine, which was performed in this order. The first night that the spectacles were exhibited, the emperor with the Quindecimviri sacrificed three lambs on as many altars purposely placed on the side of the river, where having sprinkled the altars with blood he offered up the victims whole. Then, having prepared a scene without a theatre, they placed a great number of lights, and made a large fire, by which they sang a new hymn, to render the games more solemn. They who performed these ceremonies were rewarded for their labour with the first fruits of their wheat, barley, and beans. For these were as I stated distributed among the people. The following day they went up to the Capitol, where the usual sacrifices were offered, and going from thence to the appointed place, celebrated games in honour of Apollo and Diana. On the next day, the principal ladies entered the Capitol at the hour appointed by the oracle, where they conducted themselves with due reverence: and at the third hour, in the temple of Apollo near the palace, twenty-seven children of each sex, whose parents were all living, sang hymns, and spoke in Greek and Latin; by which the Roman empire was preserved. Besides these, however, there were other rites observed by the divine command, which as long as they were kept up preserved the Roman empire. And in confirmation of what I have stated, I will add the oracle of the Sibyl, which has been mentioned by others before my time;

But when a hundred years and ten are past
Which is the longest time man's age doth last,
Romans ! be sure (it is fatal to mistake
In any point) due offerings to make
To heaven, and see you bring the sacrifice
Into that field which on the Tiber lies:
And do it, in that season, when the night
Deprives men least of the diurnal light.
After sun set; Then to the Parcae pay
Your homage; and upon their altars lay |39
Young sheep and goats: next the Lucinae please
With decent rites, who childing women ease,
Those finished offer a black hog and sow
To Tellus, for the product of the plow,
But to Jove's altar bring the bulls milk-while
For victims, in the day-time, not by night:

(For heavenly deities accept of none
But what are offer'd in the day alone.)
And next to Juno sacrifice a cow
Spotless all o'er, and pure as fulling snow,
Then let Apollo, whom they call the sun,
And Phoebus, have his equal honours done.
Whilst in the temple Latin girls and boys
In sacred hymns make a triumphant noise.
But let them be apart, the girls to stand
And sing on this, the boys on t'other hand;
Besides this caution I must farther give
That all the parents of them be alive.
As for the married women, let them pray
To Juno on their knees, that each one may
Have their desire, both men and women too,
But chiefly women. Then, let all of you
Bring from your houses what is fit to bring,
(As the first-fruits of every useful thing)
To the immortal gods an offering.
And let all that upon your altars lie,
Whence you may men and women both supply.
But to attend the gods be sure there be
Both night and day a numerous company
Of votaries both serious and free.
These laws observ'd not Latium alone
But Italy's extent your sway shall own.

Experience assures us, that while these ceremonies were duly performed, according to the direction of the oracles, the empire was secure, and likely to retain its sovereignty over almost all the known world; and on the other hand, when they were neglected, about the time when Dioclesian laid down the imperial dignity, it fell to decay, and degenerated insensibly into barbarism. That I state nothing but truth I will prove from chronology. From the consulate of Chilo and Libo, in which Severus celebrated the secular games, or rites, to the ninth consulate of Dioclesian, and eighth of Maximianus, was a hundred and one years. Then Dioclesian from an emperor became a private individual, and Maximianus followed his example. But when Constantine and Licinius were in their third consulship, the 110 years were completed, and the festival ought to have been kept |40 according to custom; but it was neglected, and affairs consequently declined to their present unfortunate condition. Three years after Dioclesian died, and the reigning emperors, Constantius and Maximianus Gallerius declared Severus and Maximinus (who was nephew to Gallerius), the Caesars, giving all Italy to Severus, and the eastern provinces to Maximinus. Affairs being all regulated and the barbarians quiet, since the Romans had been so successful against them, Constantine, who was the son of Constantius by a concubine, and had previously an ambition of being emperor (but was more inflamed with that desire, since Severus and Maximinus had acquired the name and honour of Caesars), was now resolved to leave the place where he had resided, and to go to his father Constantius, who was beyond the Alps, and generally in Britain. But being apprehensive of seizure by the way, many persons being well acquainted of his anxiety for dominion, he maimed all the horses that were kept for public service, whenever he came to any stable where they were kept, except what he took for his own use. He continued to do this throughout his journey, by which means he prevented those that pursued him from going further, while he himself proceeded toward the country where his father was. It happened that Constantius died at that time; the guards, therefore, who thought none of his legitimate children to be fit for the imperial dignity, considered that Constantine was a person capable of sustaining it, and conferred the honour upon him, in hopes of being remunerated with handsome presents. When his effigy according to custom was exhibited at Rome, Maxentius, the son of Maximianus Herculeus, could not endure the sight of Constantine's good fortune, who was the son of a harlot, while himself, who was the son of so great an emperor, remained at home in indolence, and his father's empire was enjoyed by others. He therefore associated with himself in the enterprise Marcellianus and Marcellus, two military tribunes, and Lucianus, who distributed the swine's

flesh, with which the people of Rome were provided by the treasury, and the court-guards called Praetoriani. By them he was promoted to the imperial throne, having promised liberally to reward all that assisted him in it. For this purpose they first murdered Abellius, because he, being prefect of the city, opposed their enterprise.

Maximianus Gallerius, when he had learned this, sent Severus Caesar against Maxentius with an army. But while he advanced from Milan with several legions of Moors, Maxentius corrupted his troops with money, and even the prefect of the court, Anullinus, |41 and thereby conquered him with great ease. On which Severus fled to Ravenna, which is a strong and populous city, provided with necessaries sufficient for himself and soldiers. When Maximianus Herculeus knew this, he was doubtless greatly concerned for his son Maxentius, and therefore, leaving Lucania where he then was, he went to Ravenna. Finding that Severus could not by any means be forced out of this city, it being well fortified, and stored with provisions, he deluded him with false oaths, and persuaded him to go to Rome. But on his way thither, coming to a place called the Three Tabernae, he was taken by a stratagem of Maxentius and immediately executed. Maximianus Gallerius could not patiently endure these injuries done to Severus, and therefore resolved to go from the east to Rome, and to punish, Maxentius as he deserved. On his arrival in Italy, he found the soldiers about him so treacherous, that he returned into the east without fighting a battle.

At this period Maximianus Herculeus, who lamented the tumults which disturbed the public peace, came to Dioclesian who then lived at Carnutum, a town of Gallia Celtica, and endeavoured to persuade him to resume the empire, and not to suffer the government which they had preserved so long and with so much difficulty to be exposed to the madness and folly of those who had possessed themselves of it, and who had already brought it near to ruin. But Dioclesian refused to listen to him; for he wisely preferred his own quiet, and perhaps foresaw the troubles that would ensue, being a man well versed in matters of religion. Herculeus therefore, perceiving that he could not prevail with him, came to Ravenna, and so returned to the Alps to meet Constantine, who lay there. And being naturally a busy faithless man, he promised his daughter Fausta to Constantine, which he performed, but persuaded him to pursue Maximianus Gallerius, who was then leaving Italy, and to lay wait for Maxentius. To all which Constantine agreed. He then left him, designing if possible to recover the empire, as he hoped to create a quarrel between Constantine and his son Maxentius. But while he attempted these things, Maximianus Gallerius assumed Licinius, as his colleague in the empire, with whose assistance he hoped to cope with Maxentius. But while Gallerius deliberated on these affairs, he died of an incurable wound, and Licinius then also claimed the sole dominion. Maximianus Herculeus endeavoured, as I have said, to recover the empire by alienating the soldiers from Maxentius. For which purpose, by gifts and insinuating addresses, having brought them over to him, |42 he endeavoured to form a conspiracy against Constantine, in which his soldiers were to join. But Fausta revealed it to Constantine, and Herculeus, who was now overborne by so many disappointments, died of a distemper at Tarsus.

Maxentius, having escaped this danger, and being of opinion that he was now well enough established in the empire, sent persons into Africa, and in particular to Carthage, to carry his image about that country. But the soldiers in that country forbade it, out of regard to Maximianus Gallerius, and the respect they had for his memory, until they heard that Maxentius was coming to make war on them on the plea of an insurrection. They then went to Alexandria, but meeting with a great army with which they were not able to contend, they returned to Carthage. Maxentius, being disturbed at this, resolved to sail for Africa, and to punish the authors of the commotion. But the soothsayers having sacrificed and given him ill omens, he was afraid to go, not only because the entrails had that appearance, but also lest Alexander, who was prefect of the court in Africa, should be his enemy. To secure his passage thither from all doubt, he sent to Alexander, desiring him to send his son as an hostage. But he, suspecting that Maxentius did not desire his son for the mere purpose of an hostage, but to deceive him, denied the request. After this, Maxentius sending other agents to him to take him off by treachery and stratagem, the plot was discovered; and the soldiers, having then got a favourable opportunity to rebel, conferred the purple robe on Alexander, though he was by birth not only a

Phrygian, but a timid cowardly man, and unlit for any difficult undertaking, and was, moreover, of an advanced age.

At that time a fire happened at Rome; whether it came out of the air or earth is uncertain. It broke out in the temple of Fortune; and while the people ran to extinguish it, a soldier, speaking blasphemy against the goddess, was killed by the mob out of zeal, by which a mutiny was occasioned among the soldiers. They would have destroyed the whole city, had not Maxentius soon appeased their rage. Maxentius after this sought every occasion to make war on Constantine, and pretending grief for his father's death, of which Constantine was the cause, he designed to go towards Rhaetia, which is contiguous both to Gaul and Illyricum. For he imagined that he should subdue Dalmatia and Illyricum, by the assistance of the generals in those parts, and of the army of Licinius. But thinking it better first to arrange affairs in Africa, he raised an army, bestowing the command of it on Rufius Volusianus, prefect of the court, and sent |43 them into Africa. He sent Zeno also along with Rufius, who was a person not only expert in military affairs, but esteemed for his courtesy and affability. On the first charge, Alexander's troops retired on a body of men in the rear, nor was the other party left unconquered by the enemy. Alexander himself was taken and strangled.

The war being thus at an end, a good opportunity was afforded to sycophants and informers of impeaching all the persons in Africa, who had good estates, as friends to Alexander: nor were any of the accused spared, but some of them put to death, and others deprived of all their possessions. After this he triumphed at Rome for the mischief done at Carthage. Such was the state of the affairs of Maxentius, who conducted himself with cruelty and licentiousness towards all the inhabitants of Italy, and even to Rome itself. Meantime Constantine, who had long been jealous of him, was then much more disposed to contention. Having therefore raised an army amongst the Barbarians, Germans, and Celts, whom he had conquered, and likewise drawn a force out of Britain, amounting in the whole to ninety thousand foot and eight thousand horse, he marched from the Alps into Italy, passing those towns that surrendered without doing them any damage, but taking by storm those which resisted. While he was making this progress, Maxentius had collected a much stronger army; consisting of eighty thousand Romans and Italians, all the Tuscans on the sea coast, forty thousand men from Carthage, besides what the Sicilians sent him; his whole force amounting to a hundred and seventy thousand foot and eighteen thousand horse.

Both being thus prepared, Maxentius threw a bridge over the Tiber, which was not of one entire piece, but divided into two parts, the centre of the bridge being made to fasten with irons, which might be drawn out upon occasion. He gave orders to the workmen, that as soon as they saw the army of Constantine upon the juncture of the bridge, they should draw out the iron fastenings, that the enemy who stood upon it might fall into the river.

Constantine, advancing with his army to Rome, encamped in a field before the city, which was broad and therefore convenient for cavalry. Maxentius in the mean time shut himself up within the walls, and sacrificed to the gods, and, moreover, consulted the Sibylline oracles concerning the event of the war. Finding a prediction, that whoever designed any harm to the Romans should die a miserable death, he applied it to himself, because he withstood those that came against Rome, and wished to take it. His application indeed proved just. For when Maxentius drew out |44 his army before the city, and was marching over the bridge that he himself had constructed, an infinite number of owls flew down and covered the wall. When Constantine saw this, he ordered his men to stand to their arms. And the two armies being drawn up opposite to each other, Constantine sent his cavalry against that of the enemy, whom they charged with such impetuosity that they threw them into disorder. The signal being given to the infantry, they likewise marched in good order towards the enemy. A furious battle having commenced, the Romans themselves, and their foreign allies, were unwilling to risk their lives, as they wished for deliverance from the bitter tyranny with which they were burdened; though the other troops were slain in great numbers, being either trod to death by the horse, or killed by the foot. As long as the cavalry kept their ground, Maxentius retained some hopes, but when they gave way, he tied with the rest over the bridge into the city. The beams not being strong enough to bear so great a weight, they broke; and Maxentius, with the others, was carried with the stream down the river.

When the news of this victory was reported in the city, none dared to shew any joy for what had happened, because many thought it was an unfounded report. But when the head of Maxentius was brought upon a spear, their fear and dejection were changed to joy and pleasure. On this occasion Constantine punished very few, and they were only some few of the nearest friends of Maxentius; but he abolished the praetorian troops, and destroyed the fortresses in which they used to reside. At length, having arranged all things in the city, he went towards Gallia Celtica; and on his way sent for Licinius to Milan, and gave him in marriage his sister Constantia, whom he had formerly promised him, when he wished him to unite with himself against Maxentius. That solemnity over, Constantine proceeded towards the Celtae. It was not long before a civil war broke out between Licinius and Maximianus, who had a severe engagement, in which Licinius at first appeared to have the disadvantage, but he presently rallied and put Maximianus to flight. This emperor, travelling through the east into Egypt, in hopes of raising a force to renew the war, died at Tarsus. The empire being thus devolved on Constantine and Licinius, they soon quarrelled. Not because Licinius gave any cause for it, but that Constantine, in his usual manner, was unfaithful to his agreement, by endeavouring to alienate from Licinius some nations that belonged to his dominions. By this means an open rupture ensued, and both prepared for war. Licinius |45 took up his headquarters at Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, which stands on a hill; the road to which is rugged and narrow. The greatest part of this road is through a deep morass, and the remainder up a mountain, on which stands the city. Below it extends a spacious plain, which entertains the view with a boundless prospect. On this Licinius fixed his camp, and extended the body of his army under the hill, that his flanks might be protected from the enemy. Constantine in the meantime drew up his men near the mountain, placing the horse in front, thinking that to be the best disposition lest the enemy should fall upon the foot, who moved but slowly, and hinder their advance. Having done this, he immediately gave the charge, and attacked the enemy. This engagement was one of the most furious that was ever fought; for when each side had expended their darts, they fought a long time with spears and javelins; and after the action had continued from morning to night, the right wing, where Constantine himself commanded, began to prevail. The enemy being routed, Licinius's troops, seeing him mounted and ready to fly, dared not stay to eat their portions, but left behind them all their cattle and provisions, taking only as much food as would suffice for one night, and marched with great precipitation along with Licinius to Sirmium, a city of Pannonia, by which runs a river which discharges itself into the Ister. In passing this town he broke down the bridge over the river, and marched on with an intention to levy troops in Thrace. Constantine, having taken Cibalis, and Sirmium, and all the towns that Licinius had abandoned, sent five thousand men in pursuit of him. But as these were ignorant of the course he had taken, they could not overtake him. Constantine however, having rebuilt the bridge over the Saus, which Licinius had broken down, was with his army almost at his heels. Having entered Thrace, he arrived at the plain where Licinius lay encamped. On the night of his arrival there he marshalled his army, and gave orders for his soldiers to be ready for battle by day-break. As soon as it was light, Licinius, perceiving Constantine with his army, drew up his forces also, having been joined by Valens, whom he styled Caesar, after the battle of Cibalis. When the armies engaged, they first fought with bows at a distance; but when their arrows were spent, they began to use their javelins, and poignards. Thus the battle continued very obstinately for a considerable time, until those whom Constantine had sent in pursuit of Licinius descended from an eminence upon the armies while they were engaged. These wheeled round the hill |46 before they arrived at them, deeming it best to join their own party from the higher ground, and to encompass the enemy. The troops of Licinius, being aware of them, courageously withstood against them all, so that many thousands were slain on both sides, and the advantage was equal, till the signal was given for both to retire. Next day they agreed on a truce, and entered into an alliance with each other, on condition that Constantine should possess Illyricum and all the nations westward, and that Licinius should have Thrace and the east; but that Valens, whom Licinius had made Caesar, should be put to death, because he was said to be the author of all the mischief which had happened. Having done this, and sworn on both sides to observe the conditions,

Constantine conferred the rank and title of Caesar on Crispus, his son by a concubine called Minervina, who was as yet but a youth, and on Constantine, who was born but a few days before at Arelatum. At the same time Licinianus, the son of Licinius, who was twenty months of age, was declared Caesar, Thus ended the second war.

Constantine hearing that the Sauromatae, who dwelt near the Palus Maeotis, had passed the Ister in boats, and pillaged his territories, led his army against them, and was met by the barbarians, under their king Rausimodus. The Sauromatae attacked a town which was sufficiently garrisoned, but its wall was built in the lower part of stone, and in the upper part of wood. They therefore thought that they might easily take the town by burning all the wooden part of the wall; and with that view set it on fire, and in the mean time shot at those who stood on the walls. The defenders threw down darts and stones upon the barbarians, and killed many of them; and Constantine then coming up and falling on them from a higher ground, slew a great number, took some alive, and put the rest to flight. Rausimodus, having lost the greater part of his army, took shipping and crossed the Ister, with an intention of once more plundering the Roman dominions. Constantine, hearing of his design, followed them over the Ister, and attacked them in a thick wood upon a hill, to which they had fled, where he killed many of them, amongst whom was Rausimodus. He also took many of them prisoners, giving quarter to those that would submit; and returned to his head-quarters with an immense number of captives. These he distributed into the different cities, and then came to Thessalonica, where having constructed a harbour (this city not possessing one before), he made new preparations for war against Licinius. For this purpose, he fitted out two hundred galleys of war; each with thirty oars, 147 besides two thousand transport vessels, and raised a force of a hundred and twenty thousand foot, and ten thousand horsemen and sailors. Licinius, hearing of the great preparations of Constantine, sent messengers to every nation, commanding them to prepare a sufficient number of men for the navy, besides horse and foot soldiers. The Egyptians therefore sent out eighty galleys, the Phoenicians an equal number, the Ionians and Dorians of Asia sixty, the Cyprians thirty, the Carians twenty, the Bithynians thirty, and the Africans fifty. His foot-soldiers amounted to nearly a hundred and fifty thousand, but his horse only to fifteen thousand, which were sent to him from Phrygia and Cappadocia. Constantine's navy lay at Piraeus, that of Licinius in the Hellespont. When they had thus established their naval and military forces, Licinius encamped at Adrianople in Thrace, whilst Constantine sent for his navy from Piraeus, which was built and manned chiefly in Greece. Advancing with his infantry from Thessalonica, he encamped on the bank of the river Hebrus, which runs to the left of Adrianople. At the same time, Licinius drew up his army in order of battle, extending from a mountain which is above the town two hundred stadia, as far as the junction of another river with the Hebrus; thus the armies continued opposite to each other for several days. Constantine, observing where the river was least broad, concerted this plan. He ordered his men to bring trees from the mountain, and to tie ropes around them, as if he intended to throw a bridge over the river for the passage of his army. By this stratagem he deluded the enemy, and, ascending a hill on which were thick woods sufficient to conceal any that were in them, he planted there five thousand archers and eight hundred horse. Having done this, he crossed the Hebrus at the narrowest place, and so surprised the enemy that many fled with all their speed, while others, who were amazed at his unexpected approach, were struck with wonder at his coming over so suddenly. In the meantime, the rest of his army crossed the river in security, and a great slaughter commenced. Nearly thirty thousand fell; and about sunset Constantine took their camp, while Licinius, with all the forces he could muster, hastened through Thrace to his ships.

As soon as day appeared, the whole army of Licinius, or as many of them as had fled to the neighbouring mountains and vallies, together with those that Licinius through haste had left behind him, surrendered themselves to Constantine. Licinius being arrived at Byzantium, Constantine followed and besieged him in that city. His navy, as before related, had now left Piraeus and 148 lay at Macedon. He therefore sent orders to his admirals to bring the ships into the Hellespont. This being effected according to the command of Constantine, the officers of his navy thought it not prudent to engage with more than eighty of their best sailing vessels, which were gallies of thirty oars

each, because the place was too narrow for the reception of a greater number. Upon which Abantus, the admiral of Licinius, making use of two hundred ships, despised the smallness of the enemy's fleet, which he thought he could easily surround. But the signals on both sides being given, and the vessels meeting stern to stern, the seamen of Constantine managed their ships so as to engage in good order; but the ships of Abantus, sailing against the enemy without any order, and being confined by the narrowness of the place, became exposed to the enemy, who sunk and otherwise destroyed them. Many were thrown overboard; till at length night put an end to the engagement. The fleets then separated and put in at different places, the one at Eleus in Thrace, and the other at the Aeantian harbour. The following day, the wind blowing hard from the north, Abantus put out from the Aeantian port and prepared for action. But the galleys of fifty oars being come to Eleus by order of the admirals, Abantus was alarmed at the number of vessels, and hesitated whether to sail against the enemy. About noon the north wind subsided; the south wind then blew with such violence, that the ships of Licinius, which lay on the Asiatic coast, were some driven on shore, others broken against the rocks, and others foundered with all on board. In this affair five thousand men perished, together with a hundred and thirty ships filled with men, whom Licinius had sent out of Thrace to Asia accompanied by a part of his army; Byzantium being too small to contain all that were besieged with Licinius. The sea-fight being thus concluded, Abantus effected his escape with only four ships into Asia. The navy of Constantine, having arrived in the Hellespont laden with abundance of provisions and stores for his troops, weighed anchor in order to join in the siege of Byzantium, and to blockade the city by sea. The foot-soldiers of Licinius, being alarmed at the sight of such a navy, procured ships in which they sailed to Eleus.

Meantime Constantine continued intent upon the siege, and raised a mound of equal height, with the wall, on which he placed wooden towers that overlooked the wall, from which his soldiers shot: those who defended it, in order that he might with greater security bring battering rams and other engines of war near it. By these means he thought himself sure to take the city. At which Licinius, being terrified, and not knowing how to act, resolved to leave Byzantium, and the weaker part of his army therein, and to take with him only such men as were fit for active service, and had given proofs of their attachment to himself, and to hasten without delay to Chalcedon in Bithynia. He flattered himself that another army might be raised in Asia, which would enable him again to contend with his adversary. Arriving therefore at Chalcedon, and having appointed Martinianus to the command of the court guards, whom the Romans call *Magister officiorum*, his associate in this dangerous enterprize, he declared him Caesar, and sent him with an army to Lampsacus, to hinder the passage of the enemy from Thrace into the Hellespont. He posted his own men on the hills and passes about Chalcedon.

While Licinius was thus occupied, Constantine, who had a great number of transports as well as warlike vessels, and was desirous to make use of them in crossing over and possessing himself of the opposite shore, fearing that the Bithynian coast might be inaccessible to ships of burden, immediately constructed some small vessels, with which he sailed to the sacred promontory, which lies at the entrance of the Pontus, two hundred stadia from Chalcedon. He there landed his army, which, having done, he drew them up upon some adjacent hills. Licinius, though he then saw that Bithynia was already in the hands of his enemy, was rendered so desperate by danger, that he sent for Martinianus from Lampsacus, and in order to encourage his men to fight, told them that he himself would lead them. Having said what he thought necessary to encourage them, he drew them up in order of battle, and marching out of the city, met the enemy, who were prepared for him. A sharp engagement taking place between Chalcedon and the sacred promontory, Constantine had the superiority; for he fell on the enemy with such resolution, that of a hundred and thirty thousand men, scarcely thirty thousand escaped. When the Byzantines heard of this, they immediately threw open their gates to Constantine, as did the Chalcedonians also. Licinius after this defeat went to Nicomedia with what horse were left him, and a few thousands of foot.

At this time a Persian named Hormisdas, of the royal family, came over to Constantine for refuge, under these circumstances. His father had been king of Persia. He was once celebrating his own birth-day after the Persian manner, when

Hormisdas entered the palace, bringing with him a large quantity of venison. But as the guests at the table did not rise, and pay him the respect and honour due to him, he became enraged, and told them he would |50 punish them with the death of Marsyas. This saying most of them did not understand, because it related to a foreign story; but one of them, who had lived in Phrygia, and had heard the story of Marsyas, explained to them the meaning of Hormisdas's menace, while they sat at table. It was therefore so treasured up in their recollection, that when his father died, they remembered his threat, and chose his younger brother king, though according to law the elder should be preferred above the other children. Not contented with that, they put Hormisdas in chains, and confined him on a hill which lies before their city. But after some time had elapsed, his wife effected his escape in this manner. She procured a large fish, and put a file in its belly, and, sewing it up again, delivered it to the most trusty of her eunuchs, charging him to tell Hormisdas, that he must eat the fish when no one was present, and use what he should find in its belly for his escape. When she had formed this contrivance, she sent several camels loaded with wine, and abundance of meat, to entertain her husband's keepers. While they were enjoying the feast she gave them, Hormisdas cut open the fish, and found the file; having with that filed off the shackles from his legs, he put on the robe of the eunuch, and passed through the midst of his keepers, who were by that time perfectly intoxicated. Taking one of the eunuchs along with him, he fled to the king of Armenia, who was his particular friend. By these means he got safe to Constantine, who shewed him all possible kindness and respect.

But Licinius being besieged by Constantine at Nicomedia also, knew not what to do, being sensible that he had not an army equal to engage. Going, therefore, out of the city, he submitted himself to Constantine, and brought him the purple robe, proclaiming him his emperor and lord, and intreating pardon for what was past. He presumed that he certainly should escape with life, because Constantine had sworn to his wife that he would spare him. But Constantine delivered Martinianus to the guards that they might put him to death, and sent Licinius to Thessalonica, as if he were to live there in security. However, he afterwards broke his oath, which was usual with Constantine, and caused him to be executed. |51

Now that the whole empire had fallen into the hands of Constantine, he no longer concealed his evil disposition and vicious inclinations, but acted as he pleased, without controul. He indeed used the ancient worship of his country 2; though not so much out of honour or veneration as of necessity. Therefore he believed the soothsayers, who were expert in their art, as men who predicted the truth concerning all the great actions which he ever performed. But when he came to Rome, he was filled with pride and arrogance. He resolved to begin his impious actions at home. For he put to death his son Crispus, stiled (as I mentioned) Caesar, on suspicion of debauching his mother-in-law Fausta, without any regard to the ties of nature. And when his own mother Helena expressed much sorrow for this atrocity, lamenting the young man's death with great bitterness, Constantine under pretence of comforting her, applied a remedy worse than the disease. For causing a bath to be heated to an extraordinary degree, he shut up Fausta in it, and a short time after took her out dead. Of which his conscience accusing him, as also of violating his oath, he went to the priests to be purified from his crimes. But they told him, that there was no kind of lustration that was sufficient to clear him of such enormities. A Spaniard, named Aegyptius, very familiar with the court-ladies, being at Rome, happened to fall into converse with Constantine, and assured him, that the Christian doctrine would teach him how to cleanse himself from all his offences, and that they who received it were immediately absolved from all their sins. Constantine had no sooner heard this than he easily believed what was told him, and forsaking the rites of his country, received those which Aegyptius offered him; and for the first instance of his impiety, suspected the truth of divination. For since many fortunate occurrences had been thereby predicted to him, and really had happened according to such prediction, he was afraid that others might be told something which should fall out to his misfortune; and for that | 52 reason applied himself to the abolishing of the practice. And on a particular festival, when the army was to go up to the Capitol, he very indecently reproached the solemnity, and treading the holy ceremonies, as it were, under his feet, incurred the hatred of the senate and people 3.

Being unable to endure the curses of almost the whole city, he sought for another city as large as Rome, where he might build himself a palace. Having, therefore, discovered a convenient scite between Troas and old Ilium, he there accordingly laid a foundation, and built part of a wall to a considerable height, which may still be seen by any that sail towards the Hellespont. Afterwards changing his purpose, he left his work unfinished, and went to Byzantium, where he admired the situation of the place, and therefore resolved, when he had considerably enlarged it, to make it a residence worthy of an emperor. The city stands on a rising ground, which is part of the isthmus inclosed on each side by the Ceras and Propontis, two arms of the sea. It had formerly a gate, at the end of the porticos, which the emperor Sevtrus built after he was reconciled to the Byzantines, who had provoked his resentment by admitting his enemy Niger into their city. At that time the wall reached down from the west side of the hill at the temple of Venus to the sea side, opposite to Chrysopolis. On the north side of the hill it reached to the dock, and beyond that to the shore, which lies opposite the passage into the Euxine sea. This narrow neck of land, between there and the Pontus, is nearly three hundred stadia in length. This was the extent of the old city. Constantine built a circular market-place where the old gate had stood, and surrounded it with double roofed porticos, erecting two great arches of Praeconnesian marble against each other, through which was a passage into the porticos of Severus, and out of the old city. Intending to increase the magnitude of the city, he surrounded it. with a wall which was fifteen stadia beyond the former, and inclosed all the isthmus from sea to sea. Having thus enlarged the city, he built a palace little inferior to that of Rome, and very much embellished the hippodrome, or horse-course, taking into it the temple of Castor and Pollux, whose statues are still standing in the porticos of the hippodrome. He placed on one side of it the tripod that belonged to the Delphian Apollo, on which stood an image of the deity. |53 As there was at Byzantium a very large market-place, consisting of four porticos, at the end of one of them, to which a numerous flight of steps ascends, he erected two temples; in one of which was placed the statue of Rhea, the mother of the gods, which Jason's companions had formerly fixed on Mount Dindymus, which is near the city of Cyzicus. It is said, that through his contempt of religion he impaired this statue by taking away the lions that were on each side, and, changing the position of the hands. For it formerly rested each hand on a lion, but was now altered into a supplicating posture, looking towards the city, and seeming to observe what the people were doing. In the other temple he placed the statue of the Fortune of Rome. He afterwards built convenient dwellings for the senators who followed him from Rome. He engaged in no more wars; and even when the Thaifalians, a Scythian tribe, made an incursion into his dominions, he not only neglected to lead his army against them, but after he had lost most of his troops, and saw the enemy plundering all before them, even to his very intrenchments, was contented to save himself by flight.

When he was delivered from the distractions of war, he yielded himself to voluptuousness, and distributed to the people of Byzantium a present of corn, which is continued to this day. As he expended the public treasure in unnecessary and unprofitable buildings, he likewise built some which in a short time were taken down again, because being erected hastily they could not stand long. He likewise made a great change in the ancient magistracy. Till that time there had been only two prefects of the court, whose authority was equal; not only were the court soldiers under their controul, but those also which guarded the city, and who were stationed in its neighbourhood. The person who had the office of prefect of the court, which was esteemed the next post of honour to that of emperor, distributed the gifts of corn, and punished all offences against military discipline, as he thought convenient. Constantine altered this good institution, and of one office or magistracy formed four. To one of those prefects he committed all Egypt and Pentapolis in Libya, and all the east as far as Mesopotamia, with Cilicia, Cappadocia, Armenia, and all the coast from Pamphylia to Trapezus and the castles near Phasis; to the same person was given all Thrace and Moesia, as far as the mountains Haemus and Rhodope, and the town of Doberus. He likewise added Cyprus and all the Cyclades, except Lemnos, Imbrus, and Samothracia. To another he assigned Macedon, Thessaly, Crete, and Greece, with the adjacent islands, |54 both the Epiruses, the Illyrians, the

Dacians, the Triballi, and the Pannonians as far as Valeria, besides the upper Moesia. To the third prefect he entrusted Italy and Sicily, with the neighbouring islands, and Sardinia and Corsica, together with all Africa westward of the Syrtes. To the fourth he committed all beyond the Alps, Gaul, Spain, and Britain. Having thus divided the power of these prefects, he invented other methods likewise of diminishing their influence. For as there used to be in all places, centurions, tribunes, and generals, he appointed officers called *Magistri militum*, some over the horse and others over the foot, to whom he gave authority to discipline the soldiers, and punish those that had offended, by which the power of the prefects was diminished. That this innovation was productive of great injury to public affairs both in peace and war I will immediately prove 4. The prefects had hitherto collected the tribute in all places by their officers, and disposed of it in war expences, the soldiers at the same time being subject to their authority, whose offences they punished at discretion. Under these circumstances, the soldiers, considering that the same person who gave them their pay had the infliction of punishments whenever they offended, did not dare to act contrary to their duty, for fear of their stipend being withheld, and of being duly punished. But now since one person is paymaster and another inspector of discipline, they act according to their own inclination.

Constantine likewise adopted another measure, which gave the Barbarians free access into the Roman dominions. For the Roman empire, as I have related, was, by the care of Dioclesian, protected on its remote frontiers by towns and fortresses, in which soldiers were placed; it was consequently impossible for the Barbarians to pass them, there being always a sufficient force to oppose their inroads. But Constantine destroyed that security by removing the greater part of the soldiers from those barriers of the frontiers, and placing them in towns that had no need of defenders; thus depriving those who were exposed to the Barbarians of all defence, and oppressing the towns that were quiet with so great a multitude of soldiers, that many of them were totally forsaken by the inhabitants. He likewise rendered his soldiers effeminate by accustoming them to public spectacles and pleasures. To speak in plain terms, he was the first cause of the affairs of the empire declining to their present miserable state.

However, I must not omit to relate, that having given to his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, the title of Caesars, he so greatly enlarged the city of Constantinople, that many of the succeeding emperors, who made it their residence, drew to it too great a number of inhabitants, who flocked there from all parts, as soldiers, merchants, and in other occupations. On this account, its walls were rendered more capacious than those which Constantine built, and the buildings were permitted to be placed so near to each other, that the inhabitants are exposed to much inconvenience and danger both in their houses and in the streets. Besides this a considerable portion of the sea was added to the land by driving down piles, thus forming dry ground, on which was built a sufficient number of houses to form of themselves a considerable city.

I have, indeed, often wondered, since the city of Byzantium is become so great that no other is equal to it either in felicity or magnitude, that our ancestors had not any prophecy concerning its good fortune. Having directed my thoughts some time to this enquiry, I consulted many historians and collections of oracles, and at length, after much difficulty and taking great pains to interpret them, discovered an oracle, which is attributed to Sibylla Erythraea, or Phaello of Epirus. Nicomedes the son of Prusias relying upon this, and interpreting it to his own advantage, by the counsel of Attalus made war upon his father. The oracle I speak of is this:

Thou among sheep, O King of Thrace, shalt dwell,
But breed a savage lion, fierce and fell,
Who all the product of thy land shall spoil,
And reap thy fruitful harvest without toil.
But thou shalt not enjoy thy honour long,
Torn by wild dogs, which shall about thee throng.
Then a fierce, hungry, sleeping wolf shall thou
Awake, to whom thy conquered neck shall bow.
Next a whole herd of wolves Bithynia's land,
By Jove's decree shall ravage, and the hand

To which obedience the Byzantines yield
Shall in short time her royal sceptre wield. |56
Bless'd Hellespont! whose buildings by the hand
Of heaven were rais'd, and by its order stand.
Yet shall that cruel wolf my forces fear,
For all shall know me, who inhabit here.
My sire's designs no longer I'll conceal
But heaven's intent in oracles reveal.
Thrace shall e're long a monstrous birth produce,
Baneful to all by course of time and use:
A swelling ulcer by the sea shall grow,
Which when it breaks, with putrid gore shall flow.

This oracle, in an obscure manner, points out all the particular evils that were to befall Bythynia through the heavy impositions laid upon it; and that the government was to devolve on those to whom the Byzantines were then subject, in this distich:

————— and the hand
To which obedience the Byzantines yield
Shall in short time her royal sceptre wield.

And though the events foretold did not occur until many ages afterwards, no one can suppose that the prophecy related to any other place; for all time is short in respect of the deity, who exists through all ages. This conjecture I have formed both from the words of the prophecy and from the event. Should any believe that this prophecy has a different import, they have liberty to enjoy their own opinion.

Constantine, having done this, not only continued to waste the revenue of the empire in useless expences, and in presents to mean and worthless persons, but oppressed those who paid the tributes, and enriched those that were useless to the state. For he mistook prodigality for magnificence 5. He also laid a tax of gold and silver on all merchants and tradesmen, even to the lowest classes, nor did he even spare the poorest prostitute 6. Thus, on the return of every fourth year, when the tax was to be paid, nothing could be heard through the whole city but lamentations and complaints. When the time arrived |57 nothing but whips and tortures, provided for those who on account of their extreme poverty could not pay the money. Mothers were even forced to part with their children, and fathers to prostitute their daughters, for money to satisfy the collectors of this exaction. Wishing likewise to invent some trouble for the rich, he summoned them all and made them praetors, for which dignity he demanded a sum of money. Upon this account when they who had the management of this affair arrived in any city the people fled into other countries, in the fear of gaining this honour with the loss of all they possessed. He had the schedules of all the best estates, and imposed a tribute on each of them, which he called a purse. With these exactions he exhausted all the towns; for they continued in force so long even after the time of Constantine, that the cities were completely drained of money, and many of them forsaken by their inhabitants.

After Constantine had oppressed and tormented the people in these various modes, he died of a disease, and was succeeded by his three sons, who were not born of Fausta the daughter of Maximianus Herculus, but of another woman, whom he had put to death for adultery. They devoted themselves more to the pleasures of youth than to the service of the state. They began by dividing the nations between them. Constantine the eldest, and Constans the youngest, having for their share all beyond the Alps, together with Italy and Illyricum, the countries bordering on the Euxine sea and all that belonged to Carthage in Africa; Constantius obtained all Asia, the east, and Egypt. There were likewise others who shared in the government; Dalmatius, whom Constantine made Caesar, Constantius his brother, and Anabllianus, who had all worn robes of purple embroidered with gold, and were promoted to the order of Nobilissimates by Constantine, from respect to their being of his own family.

The empire being thus divided, Constantius who appeared to take pains not to fall short of his father in impiety, began by shedding the blood of his nearest relations. He first caused Constantius, his father's brother, to be murdered by the soldiers; next to whom he treated Dalmatius in the same manner, as also Optatus whom Constantine had raised to the rank of a Nobilissimate. Constantine indeed first introduced that order, and made a law, that every Nobilissimate

should have precedence over of the prefects of the court. At that time, Ablabius prefect of the court was also put to death; and fate was just in his punishment, because he had concerted the murder of Sopatrus the philosopher, from envy of his familiarity with Constantine. Being unnatural |58 towards all his relations, he included Anaballianus with the rest, suborning the soldiers to cry out, that they would have no governors but the children of Constantine. Such were the exploits of Constantius.

In the mean time Constantine and Constans were disputing for that part of Africa which belonged to Carthage, and for Italy. Constans, who wished to surprise, his brother, concealed his enmity for three years. He took occasion, when he was in a province that was attached to himself, to send soldiers to him, on pretence of assisting him in the war against the Persians, but in reality to assassinate him by surprise. This they accordingly performed. Such was the end of Constantine. Constans, having thus removed his brother, exercised every species of cruelty toward his subjects, exceeding the most intolerable tyranny. He purchased some well favoured Barbarians, and had others with him as hostages, to whom he gave liberty to harrass his subjects as they pleased, in order to gratify his vicious disposition. In this manner he reduced all the nations that were subject to him to extreme misery. This gave uneasiness to the court guards, who perceiving that he was much addicted to hunting placed themselves under the conduct of Marcellinus prefect of the treasury, and Magnentius who commanded the Joviani and Herculiani (two legions so termed), and formed a plot against him in the following manner. Marcellinus reported that he meant to keep the birth-day of his sons, and invited many of the superior officers to a feast. Amongst the rest Magnentius rose from table and left the room; he presently returned, and as it were in a drama stood before them clothed in an imperial robe. Upon this all the guests saluted him with the title of king, and the inhabitants of Augustodunum, where it was done, concurred in the same sentiment. This transaction being rumoured abroad, the country people flocked into the city; while at the same time a party of Illyrian cavalry who came to supply the Celtic legions, joined themselves with those that were concerned in the enterprize. When the officers of the army were met together, and heard the leaders of the conspiracy proclaim their new emperor, they scarcely knew the meaning of it; they all, however, joined in the acclamation, and saluted Magnentius with the appellation of Augustus. When this became known to Constans, he endeavoured to escape to a small town called Helena, which lies near the Pyrenean mountains. He was taken by Gaision, who was sent with some other select persons for that purpose, and being destitute of all aid, was killed. Magnentius thus gained the empire, and possessed himself all |59 the nations beyond the Alps, and the whole of Italy. Vetricus, general of the Pannonian army, upon hearing of the good fortune of Magnentius, was himself inflamed with the same desire, and was declared emperor by the legions that were with him, at Mursa, a city of Pannonia. While affairs were thus situated, the Persians plundered the eastern countries, particularly Mesopotamia. But Constantine, though he was defeated by the Persians, yet resolved to subdue the factions of Magnentius and Vetricus. While he was forming these resolutions, and was very intent on warlike preparations, Magnentius still remaining in Gallia Celtica, Nepotianus, nephew to Constantius, by his sister Eutropia, collected a band of persons addicted to robbery and all kinds of debauchery, with whom he came to Rome, and appeared in an imperial dress. Anicetus, whom Magnentius had made prefect of the court, armed some of the common people, and led them out of the city to engage with Nepotianus. A sharp conflict ensued between them. The Romans being undisciplined, and observing no order, were easily routed; and when the prefect saw them fly, he shut the gates, for fear the enemy should follow them into the city. The troops of Nepotianus pursued them, and as they had no way of escape, killed every man. In a few days after, Magnentius sent an army under the command of Marcellinus, and Nepotianus was put to death. Meantime Constantius advanced from the east against Magnentius, but deemed it best first to win over Vetricus to his interest, as it was difficult to oppose two rebels at once. On the other hand, Magnentius used great endeavours to make Vetricus his friend, and thus to put an end to the war against Constantius. Both therefore sent agents to Vetricus, who chose to adopt the friendship of Constantius rather than that of Magnentius. The ambassadors of Magnentius returned without effecting their purpose. Constantius desired that both armies

might join, to undertake the war against Magnentius. To which proposal Vetrano readily assented; and they seated themselves on a throne provided for the occasion. Constantius, speaking first according to his dignity, endeavoured to remind the soldiers of his father's munificence, and of the oaths they had taken to be true to his children. He then told them, that they ought not to suffer Magnentius to go unpunished, who had murdered the son of Constantine, with whom they had fought many battles, and had been generously remunerated. When the soldiers heard this, having been previously corrupted by valuable presents, they cried out, that they would have no mock emperors, and immediately began to strip the purple from Vetrano, and pulled him from the throne |60 with the determination to reduce him to a private station. Constantius would not suffer them to injure him, and therefore sent him into Bithynia, where he allowed him a competency for life. He had not remained there long without employment before he died.

Constantius, having so well succeeded in his design against Vetrano, marched against Magnentius, having first conferred the title of Caesar on Gallus, the son of his uncle, and brother to Julian who was afterwards emperor, and given him in marriage his sister Constantia; either in order that he might oppose the Persians, or as seems more probable, that he might have an opportunity of taking him off. He and his brothers were the only remaining persons of the family whom Constantius had not put to death, as I have related. When he had clothed Gallus with the Caesarean robe, and appointed Lucilianus general in the Persian war, he marched towards Magnentius with his own troops and those of Vetrano in one body. Magnentius, on the other hand, resolved to meet him with a larger force. He declared his kinsman Caesar, and appointed him to govern the nations beyond the Alps. The armies meeting in Pannonia, and coming near to each other at a town called Mursa, Magnentius placed an ambuscade in the defiles near to Adrana, and sent a messenger to the officers of the army of Constantine to retard their march, saying, that they might proceed to Siscia, where he intended to give them battle, the fields in that neighbourhood being spacious and open. When Constantius heard this, he was much pleased that he was to fight in a place where there was room for the cavalry to manoeuvre, being superior to the enemy in that kind of force. He accordingly led his army to Siscia. As they were marching unarmed and without order, not suspecting any thing, the troops that lay in ambush attacked them, and blocked up their passage with stones, which they threw upon them in such quantities that great part of them were killed. Magnentius, perceiving that many of his enemies were thus slain, was so elated, that being now unwilling to defer the war, he mustered his forces, and immediately marched towards Pannonia. Arriving in the plain before Cius, through the midst of which runs the river Draus, which, passing by Noricum and Pannonia, discharges itself into the Ister, he led his troops into Pannonia, intending to engage near Sirmium. His mother is said to have enjoined him not to go that way, or over into Illyricum, but he disregarded her injunctions, though on many former occasions he had found her a true prophetess. Meantime he deliberated whether to construct a bridge over the Saus, or to pass over on |61 boats joined together for that purpose. At the same time, Constantius sent one of the principal persons in his service, named Philip, a man of extraordinary prudence, under pretence of treating for peace and an alliance, but in reality to observe the state and disposition of the army of Magnentius, and to discover their intended movements. Approaching the camp, he met Marcellinus, the principal confidant of Magnentius, and by him was conducted to Magnentius. The army being drawn up, Philip was desired to explain the cause of his coming. Upon which he directed himself to the soldiers, telling them, that it did not become them, who were Roman subjects, to make war on Romans, especially as the emperor was the son of Constantine, with whom they had erected many trophies over the Barbarians. That Magnentius, moreover, ought to remember Constantine, and the kindness he had shewn to him and to his parents. That it was Constantine who had protected him when in imminent danger, and exalted him to the highest dignities. Having made these observations, he requested Magnentius to depart from Italy, and to be content with the government of the nations beyond the Alps. This speech of Philip nearly occasioned a mutiny of the whole army. Magnentius, therefore, being alarmed, with much difficulty prevailed on the soldiers to attend to him. He said, that he likewise was desirous of concluding a peace, but would then dismiss the assembly, until he had deliberated how to act. Upon

which, the assembly being dissolved, Marcellianus entertained Philip as one whom he was desirous of obliging by the laws of hospitality. Meanwhile, Magnentius debated with himself, whether to dismiss Philip without the purpose of his embassy being effected, or, in violation of the law of nations, detain him. He determined, after much hesitation, to invite all the officers of his army to sup with him, and at table inform them of his opinion. The following day he again convened the army; he reminded them of the injuries they received from Constans when furious and intoxicated. That the soldiers could not sustain the enormities with which he oppressed the state contrary to all law and justice, but had inclined to what was most for the public advantage; and that after they had freed the cities from so savage a monster, they had compelled him to become their emperor.

He had scarcely concluded this address, when they all rose, and displayed their willingness to continue the war by arming themselves immediately, in order to cross the Saus. The centinels who were on the watch in Siscia, a town that lies on the Saus, perceived their approach, and gave notice of it, to the garrison, who shot some of them as they were landing on the bank of |62 the river, and stopped others who were coming over; so that many of them were slain, hut more pushed into the river, either by each other or by the enemy. By which means a great slaughter was made amongst them, and while one party fell from the bridge in their haste to escape, the other pursued with the greatest speed: so that Magnentius, who was reduced to his last device, had only one method of avoiding the present danger. He struck a spear into the ground, and beckoned with his right hand to the enemy as if he wished to treat for peace. When he saw that they attended to this, he said he would not pass the Saus without the emperor's permission. As soon as he had said this, Philip told him, that if he would treat for peace, he must leave Italy and Noricum, and go into Illyricum. Constantius, having heard what was said, commanded his soldiers to continue their pursuit no longer, and permitted Magnentius to bring his troops into the plains between Noricum, Pannonia, Moesia, and Dacia; having a wish to leave those rugged places, and to contend where his horse would have room to manoeuvre, for in that species of force he had the advantage of the enemy. His design succeeded; and he appointed Cibalis which he thought a convenient place for his purpose; it being the place where Constantine conquered Licinius. In that town, which is situated as I have described in my narrative of those times, he kept part of his army. And having erected a bulwark between the hill on which the town stands, and the plain through which the river Saus flows, he inclosed all that part of it which is not encompassed by the river, with a deep ditch and a strong rampart. He then made a bridge of boats over that part of the river which surrounds the place, which bridge he could disjoin when he pleased, and put together again with the same ease. Here he placed tents for his army, and in the midst of them a royal tent of exceeding magnificence. The emperor then invited his officers to a banquet, at which all except Latinus and Thalassius were present. These were absent, though they were the greatest favourites of the emperor, because they were officiating for Philip, who was detained by Magnentius, notwithstanding his being an ambassador.

While they were consulting about this affair, Titianus, a man of the senatorian order at Rome, came with an insolent message from Magnentius. He employed ninny absurd expressions against Constantine and his children, charging the destruction of the cities on the emperor's negligence, and commanded Constantius to make way for Magnentius by abdicating the empire, and to be contented with his life being granted him. But |63 the emperor only desired the gods and fate to be the avengers of Constans, saying that he would fight with their assistance. He suffered Titianus to return to Magnentius, though Philip still remained in his custody. Magnentius now drew out his army, and taking Siscia on the first assault, razed it to the ground. Having overrun all the country near the Saus, and acquired great plunder, he marched towards Sirmium, which he hoped likewise to take without bloodshed. But failing in his attempt, being repulsed by the inhabitants and the troops that defended the town, he marched with his whole army to Mursa. Finding that those in the town had shut the gates against him and mounted the walls, he was at a loss how to act on the occasion, having no engines nor any other method of getting near the wall. He was assailed with stones and darts by those that stood on the battlements. When Constantius heard that the place was besieged, he marched with all his forces to its relief,

having passed by Cibalis and all the country through which the river Draus passes.

Meanwhile Magnentius approached nearer to Mursa, and set fire to the gates, thinking if he could destroy the iron that covered the wood, which would soon yield to the flames, he might make a passage wide enough for the entrance of his army into the city. But this did not succeed to his wishes, the people on the wall extinguishing the flames with water which they poured down in large quantities. When he therefore heard that Constantius was near Mursa, he invented another stratagem to this effect. There was before the city a stadium or place of exercise, formerly used by those that fought for prizes, which was covered over with wood. In this he concealed four companies of Celtae, with orders when Constantius should come up, and they were ready to engage before the city, to attack the enemy by surprise, and to surround them and kill every man. This being discovered by those that were on the walls, Constantius immediately sent thither Scolidoas and Manadus, two of his officers. They first selected the choicest of their men, both heavy armed and archers, and taking them along with themselves, fastened up all the doors of the stadium. Having then possessed themselves of the upper steps leading into the; Stadium, and inclosed the soldiers that were within on all sides, they threw darts at them. And observing some of them with their shields placed over their heads attempting to force open the doors, they fell upon them and did not cease throwing darts or cutting at them with their swords until they had killed them all. This project of Magnentius being thus frustrated, the armies met and engaged in the plain before Mursa; |64 where such a battle was fought as had not occurred before in the course of this war, and great numbers fell on both sides.

Constantius, considering that as this was a civil war victory itself would be scarcely an advantage to him, now the Romans being so much weakened, as to be totally unable to resist the barbarians who attacked them on every side, began to think that it would be better to end the war by offering proposals for peace. While he was thus deliberating, the armies were still engaged; and that of Magnentius became more furious, nor would they cease fighting though night came on, but even their officers continued performing what belonged to common soldiers, and encouraging their men to oppose the enemy with vigour. On the other side likewise, the officers of Constantius called to mind the ancient bravery and renown of the Romans. Thus the battle continued until it was completely dark; nor did even darkness cause them to relax; but they wounded each other with spears, swords or whatever was in their reach; so that neither night nor any other obstacle which usually causes some respite in war, could put an end to the slaughter, as if they thought it the greatest felicity that could happen to them to perish beside each other. Amongst the officers, that shewed great bravery in this battle and fell in it were Arcadius, commander of the legion called Abulci, and Menelaus, who commanded the Armenian horse archers. What is said of Menelaus is worthy of being related. He could take three darts at once, and with one shot hit three men, by which manner of shooting he killed a great number of the enemy, and was himself almost the cause of their flight. He was killed by Romulus, who was the first in command in the army of Magnentius, and Romulus himself fell at the same time. He was wounded by a dart which Menelaus had thrown at him, yet continued fighting after he had received the wound, until he had killed the person who had given it to him.

Constantius now gaining the victory, by the army of Magnentius taking to flight, a terrible slaughter ensued. Magnentius, therefore being deprived of all hope, and apprehensive lest the remnant of his army should deliver him to Constantius, deemed it best to retire from Pannonia, and to enter Italy, in order to raise an army there for another attempt. But when he heard that the people of Rome were in favour of Constantius, either from hatred to himself, or because they had heard of the event of the battle, he resolved to cross the Alps, and seek for himself a refuge among the nations on that side. Hearing however that Constantius had likewise engaged the Barbarians near the Rhine against him, and that |65 he could not enter Gaul, as some officers had obstructed his passage thither in order to make their court to Constantius, nor through Spain into Mauritania, on account of the Roman allies there who studied to please Constantius. In these circumstances he preferred a voluntary death to a dishonourable life, and chose rather to die by his own hand than by that of his enemy.

Thus died Magnentius, having been emperor three years and six months. He was of Barbarian extraction, but lived among the Leti, a people of Gaul. He understood Latin, was bold when favoured by fortune, but cowardly in adversity, ingenious in concealing his natural evil disposition, and deemed by those who did not know him to be a man of candour and goodness. I have thought it just to make these observations concerning Magnentius, that the world may be acquainted with his true character, since it has been the opinion of some that he performed much good, who never in his life did any thing with a good intention.

Decentius, whom Magnentius had called to his assistance, being now on the road to Italy, soon heard of the misfortune, of Magnentius; meeting with some legions and troops from which he saw no hope of escaping, slew himself. After these occurrences, the whole empire being now in the hands of Constantius, he began to be more arrogant than before, and could not conduct himself with any moderation in his prosperity. The state-informers, with which such men are usually surrounded, and which are designed for the ruin of those that are in prosperity, were augmented. These sycophants, when they attempted to effect the downfall of a noble in hopes of sharing his wealth or honours, contrived some false accusation against him. This was the practice in the time of Constantius. Spies of this description, who made the eunuchs of the court their accomplices, flocked about Constantius, and persuaded him that his cousin german Gallus, who was a Caesar, was not satisfied with that honour, but wished to be emperor. They so far convinced him of the truth of this charge, that they made him resolve upon the destruction of Gallus. The contrivers of this design were Dynamius and Picentius, men of obscure condition, who endeavoured to raise themselves by such evil practises. Lampadius also, the Prefect of the court, was in the conspiracy, being a person who wished to engross more of the emperor's favour than any other. Constantius listened to those false insinuations, and Gallus was sent for, knowing nothing of what was intended against him. As soon as he arrived, Constantius first degraded him from the dignity of Caesar, and, having reduced him to private station, delivered him to the public executioners to be put to death. This was not the first time that Constantius imbrued his hands in the blood of his relations, but only one other in addition to many former.

[Footnotes moved to end]

1. * If what others say of Constantine, be true, Zosimus has no reason to impute to him the crime of perjury; for he did not seem so much to break an oath or promise, as to punish the violation of it in Licinius, who, after Constantine had gained so many victories, when he was reduced to a very low condition, omitted no opportunity of recovering the empire, of which he had been deprived by the just sentence of victory, but contrived all methods of making ill returns for the kindness of Euergetes; Euseb, Life of Constantine, l. i. c. 43. and Theodor, l. i. c. 7. To which this may likewise be added, that Licinius hated the christians as much as Constantine esteemed them, who consequently could not endure to see those exposed to injury whom he favoured. Nor should any one object, that these authors are not to be credited, because they were partial; since Zosimus himself cannot be excused in that particular, being an inveterate enemy to Christianity, and a violent bigot to the heathenish superstition.

2. * Among the Imperial laws or edicts, is one which Eusebius mentions, l. x. c. 5. "That every one may apply himself to that mode of worship he thinks suitable to his own reason." And therefore, though he did not abolish the old heathen institutions of his country at that time, yet he favoured the Christians most, and gave them liberty, of which almost all the former emperors used to deprive them.

3. * It is almost needless to say, that all that is here related of Constantine is the slander of Julian the Apostate, and is totally without any foundation in truth. Crispus was justly executed for an atrocious crime, and Fausta perished by an accidental suffocation by the fault of the bath keepers.

4. * Zosimus throws the odium of the insensible decay by which the Roman empire fell to ruin upon Constantine; but he ought to have more cautiously weighed his arguments, and have reflected how ready those persons, who have gained the highest office under their sovereign, are to use all their endeavours to acquire the attachment of the soldiers, and from the hope of becoming emperors themselves, to throw every thing into confusion. Indeed when both the care of military discipline, and the distribution of the public money are committed to the same individual, it is probable that he will take some opportunity of acquiring the empire to himself, having every thing in his power which can influence the soldiers with the hope of reward and dread of punishment. Constantine therefore wisely adopted that political maxim, Divide and Rule.

5. * We must admit that Constantine was extravagant in his expences, whence Julian took occasion to ridicule him in his book called Caesares, where he introduces Mercury asking

Constantine, "What do you think a commendable action?" Constantine replies, "For a man who possesses much to give much away."

6. + See Evagrius Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 39, where he commends Anastasius, in whose reign this tax was taken off. But he inveighs against Zosimus for saying that Constantine was the author of it in these words, "Who would wonder that this should be done in the very infancy of christianity, since his holiness the Pope suffers the same things now it has attained riper years."