

# THE DECLINE AND FALL

of the

## ROMAN EMPIRE

### CHAPTER 1

#### The Extent and Military Force of the Empire in the Age of the Antonines

##### *Introduction*

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century of the Christian era, the Empire of Rome made up the largest part of the earth, and had become the most civilized of kingdoms. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valor. The gentle, but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants both enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence. The Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and granted its emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period (AD 98—180), of more than 80 years, the public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this and the following two chapters to describe the prosperous condition of their empire. And afterward, from the death of Marcus Antonines, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall—a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth.

##### *Moderation of Augustus*

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and the martial enthusiasm of the people. The first 7 centuries were filled with a rapid succession of triumphs. But it was reserved for Augustus to give up the ambition of conquering the globe, and to introduce a spirit of moderation into the public councils. His peaceful viewpoint helped him discover that Rome, in her present exalted situation, had little to fear from war. By prosecuting wars in distant lands, the daily undertaking at home became more difficult, the event more doubtful, the possession more precarious, and less beneficial. Augustus' experience added weight to these salutary reflections, convinced by the prudent vigor of his counsels, that it would be easy to secure every concession which the safety or the dignity of Rome might require from the most formidable Barbarians. Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honorable treaty, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which had been taken in the defeat of Crassus.<sup>1</sup>

His generals, in the early part of his reign, attempted the reduction of Ethiopia and Arabia Felix.

<sup>1</sup> Dion Cassius (I. liv. p. 738), with the annotations of Reymar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the subject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Augustus recorded his own exploits, asserts that he compelled the Parthians to restore the ensigns of Crassus.

They marched almost a thousand miles to the south tropics; but the heat of the climate soon repelled the invaders, and protected the peaceful natives of those remote lands.<sup>2</sup> The northern countries of Europe simply were not worth the effort and expense of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom. Although they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power on the first attack, they soon regained their independence by a single act of despair, and reminded Augustus of the diversity of fortune.<sup>3</sup> Upon Augustus' death his testament was publicly read in the senate. As a valuable legacy to his successors, he bequeathed the advice of confining the empire within those limits which Nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries. On the west the Atlantic Ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and toward the south the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Happily for the tranquility of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Caesars seldom showed themselves to the armies or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer that those triumphs which their indolence neglected should be usurped by the conduct and valor of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered an insolent invasion of the Imperial prerogative. As a result, it became the duty and priority of every Roman general to guard the frontiers entrusted to his care, without aspiring to conquests which might have proved no less fatal to himself than to the vanquished barbarians.<sup>5</sup>

### *Conquest of Britain*

The only accession which the Roman Empire received during the 1<sup>st</sup> Century of the Christian era was the province of Britain. In this single instance the successors of Caesar and Augustus were persuaded to follow the example of the former rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its situation to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite an invasion. But it was the lure of Britain's pearl industry that attracted their avarice.<sup>6</sup> Since Britain was viewed in the light of a distinct and insulated world, the conquest scarcely formed any exception to the general system of continental measures. So, after a war of about 40 years, undertaken by the most stupid,<sup>7</sup> maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid of all the emperors, the far greater part of the island submitted to the Roman yoke.<sup>8</sup> The various tribes of Britons possessed valor without conduct, and the love of freedom

<sup>2</sup> Strabo (I. xvi. p. 780), Pliny the elder (Hist. Natur. 1 vi. c. 32, 35), and Dion Cassius (1. liii. p. 723, and I. liv. p. 734), have left us very curious details concerning these wars. The Romans made themselves masters of Mariaba, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals (see Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52). They were arrived within three days journey of the Spice country, the rich object of their invasion.

<sup>3</sup> By the slaughter of Varus and his three legions. First book of the Annals of Tacitus. Sueton. in August. c. 23, and Velleius Paterculus, I. ii. c. 117, etc. Augustus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmness that might have been expected from his character.

<sup>4</sup> Tacit. Annal. I. ii., Dion Cassius, 1. lvi. p. 833, and the speech of Augustus himself, in Julian's Caesars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French translator M. Spanheim.

<sup>5</sup> Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola, were checked and recalled in the course of their victories. Corbulo was put to death.

<sup>6</sup> Caesar himself conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The British pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid color. Tacitus observes, with reason (in Agricola, c. ~2), that it was an inherent defect.

<sup>7</sup> Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expressed by Pomponius Mela, i. ill. C. 6 (he wrote under Claudius), that, by the success of the Roman arms, the island and its savage inhabitants would soon be better known.

<sup>8</sup> The admirable abridgment given by Tacitus, in the Life of Agricola, and copiously, though perhaps not completely,

without the spirit of union. They took up arms with savage fierceness; they laid them down, or turned them against each other with wild inconstancy; and while they fought singly, they were successively subdued. Neither the fortitude of Caractacus, nor the despair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticism of the Druids, could avert the slavery of their country. Nor could they resist the steady progress of the Imperial generals, who maintained the national glory when the throne was disgraced by the weakest or the most vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inspired, his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills. His fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, displayed the Roman arms around every part of the island. The conquest of Britain was considered a success. It was Agricola's design to complete and insure his success by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were sufficient.<sup>9</sup> The western isle might be improved into a valuable possession, and the Britons would wear their chains with the less reluctance, if the prospect and example of freedom were on every side removed from before their eyes.

But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain, and permanently cancelled this rational albeit extensive scheme of conquest. Before his departure, the prudent general had provided for security as well as for dominion. He had observed that the island is almost divided into two unequal parts by the opposite gulfs, or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Across the narrow interval of about 40 miles, he had drawn a line of military stations, which was afterward fortified in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart erected on foundations of stone.<sup>10</sup> This wall of Antoninus, at a small distance beyond the modern cities of Edinburg<sup>11</sup> and Glasgow<sup>12</sup>, was fixed as the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preserved their wild independence in the northern extremity of the island, driven more by poverty and hunger rather than bravery. Their incursions were frequently repelled and chastised but their country was never subdued.<sup>13</sup>

The Romans, used to fair weather and luxury, turned from the gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest with contempt; from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold and lonely fields, over which the deer of the forest were chased by troops of naked barbarians.<sup>14</sup>

Such was the state of the Roman frontiers, and such the maxims of Imperial policy, from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had a soldier's education, and possessed the talents of a general.<sup>15</sup> The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head.

### *Conquest of Dacia*

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illustrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horsley.

<sup>9</sup> The Irish writers, jealous of their national honor, are extremely provoked on this occasion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola.

<sup>10</sup> Horsley's *Britannia Romana*, 1. I. C. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Abercorn, on the Forth, 22 m. NE of Edinburgh.

<sup>12</sup> Dunglass, on the Clyde, 12 m. NW of Glasgow

<sup>13</sup> The poet Buchanan celebrates, with elegance and spirit (see his *Syfvæ v.*), the unviolated independence of his native country. But, if the single testimony of Richard of Cirencester was sufficient to create a Roman province of Vespasiana to the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits.

<sup>14</sup> Appian (in *Procem.*) and the uniform imagery of Ossian's Poems, which, according to every hypothesis, were composed by a native Caledonian.

<sup>15</sup> Pliny's Panegyric, which seems founded on facts.

The first exploits of Trajan were against the Dacians, the most warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had insulted with impunity the Majesty of Rome. (Dion Cassius, 1. lxvii) To the strength and fierceness of barbarians they added a contempt for life which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality and transmigration of the soul.<sup>16</sup> The Dacian king, Decebalus, fancied himself a rival worthy of Trajan. Nor did he despair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confession of his enemies, he had exhausted every resource, both of valor and policy (Pliny's Epistles viii. 9). This memorable war, with a very short suspension of hostilities, lasted 5 years. The whole force of the state, was brought to bear, without control, by the emperor, until it was terminated by absolute submission of the barbarians.<sup>17</sup> The new province of Dacia, which formed a second exception to the precept of Augustus, was about thirteen hundred miles in circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Niester, the Teyss or Tibiscus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. The vestiges of a military road may still be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighborhood of Bender, a place famous in modern history, and the actual frontier of the Turkish and Russian empires.<sup>18</sup>

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him the Roman emperor undertook an expedition against the nations of the east, but he lamented with a sigh, that his advanced age scarcely left him any hopes of equaling the renown of the son of Philip.<sup>19</sup> Yet the success of Trajan, however transient, was rapid and specious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by intestine discord, fled before his arms. He descended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian Gulf. He enjoyed the honor of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals, who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravaged the coasts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching toward the confines of India.<sup>20</sup> Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had accepted their diadems from the emperor's hands. The independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection. The rich countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria were reduced to provinces (Dion Cassius, 1. lxxviii). But the death of Trajan soon clouded the splendid prospect. Thus, it was feared that so many distant nations would throw off the unaccustomed yoke when they were no longer restrained by the powerful hand which had imposed it.

It was an ancient tradition, that when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus, an inferior pagan god, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself. (The god Terminus presided over boundaries, and was represented according to the fashion of that age by a large stone.) A favorable inference was drawn from his obstinacy, which was interpreted by Roman prophets that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede.<sup>21</sup> Many times, these became self-fulfilling prophecies. Although Terminus had resisted the majesty of Jupiter, he submitted to the authority of

<sup>16</sup> Herodotus, L iv. c. 94. Julian in the Caesars, with Spanheim's observations.

<sup>17</sup> Dion Cassius, 1. lxxviii. pp. 1123, 1131. Julian is a Caesaribus. Eutropius, viii. 2, 6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome.

<sup>18</sup> Memoir of M. d'Anville, on the Province of Dada, in the Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii. pp. 444—468.

<sup>19</sup> Trajan's sentiments are represented in a very just and lively manner in the Caesars of Julian.

<sup>20</sup> O Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavored to perpetuate the illusion. See a very sensible dissertation of M. Freret in the Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxi. p. 55

<sup>21</sup> Ovid. Past. L ii. var. 667. Livy, under the reign of Tarquin.

the emperor Hadrian.<sup>22</sup> The resignation of all the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his reign. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign, withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, and, in compliance with the precept of Augustus, once more established the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire.<sup>23</sup> Censure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has ascribed to envy a conduct which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. His personality and character could be very charitable or very hostile, and afford some color to the suspicion. It was, however, scarcely in his power to place the superiority of his predecessor in a more conspicuous light, than by thus confessing himself unequal to the task of defending the conquests of Trajan.

#### *Conquests of Trajan in the East Resigned by Hadrian*

Trajan's war-like and ambitious spirit formed a very singular contrast with the moderation of his successor. Hadrian's restless activity was no less remarkable when compared with the gentle repose of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty. Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bare-headed, over the snows of Caledonia and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt. Nor was there a province of the empire which, in the course of his reign, was not honored with the presence of the monarch.<sup>24</sup> But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was spent in the bosom of Italy. During his 23 years of public administration, his longest journeys extended no further than from his palace in Rome to the retirement of his Lanuvian Villa (Augustan History).

#### *Contrast of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius*

Nevertheless, this difference in their personal conduct, the general system of Augustus was equally adopted and uniformly pursued by Hadrian and the two Antonines. They persisted in the design of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honorable expedient they invited the friendship of the barbarians, and endeavored to convince mankind that Roman power, raised above the temptation of conquest, was actuated only by the love of order and justice. During a long period of 43 years their virtuous labors were crowned with success; and if we except a few slight hostilities that served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace.<sup>25</sup> The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor. Even so, there were some sought the honor of

<sup>22</sup> St. Augustin is highly delighted with the proof of the weakness of Terminus, and the vanity of the Roman seers. *Be Civitate Dei*, iv. 29.

<sup>23</sup> *Augustan History*, p. 5. *Jerome's Chronicle*, and all the *Epitomizers*. It is somewhat surprising that this memorable event should be omitted by *Dion*, or rather by *Xiphilin*.

<sup>24</sup> *Dion*, I. lxi. p. 1158. *Hist. August.* pp. 5, 8. If all our historians were lost, medals, inscriptions and other monuments would be sufficient to record the travels of Hadrian.

<sup>25</sup> We must, however, remember that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a single province. *Pausanias* (1. viii. c. 43) mentions two necessary and successful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius. 1. Against the wandering Moors, who were driven into the solitude of Atlas. 2. Against the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province. Both these wars (with several other hostilities) are mentioned in the *Augustan History*, p. 19, VOL. 1-2.

being admitted into the rank of subjects, but were refused.<sup>26</sup>

### *Military Establishment of the Roman Emperors*

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines, that it was easier to punish a non-compliant country than to put up with any petty hostilities. The military strength, which it had been sufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to display, was exerted against the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hostilities of the barbarians provoked the resentment of that philosophic monarch, and, in the prosecution of a just defense, Marcus and his generals obtained many signal victories, both on the Euphrates and on the Danube.<sup>27</sup> The military establishment of the Roman Empire, which thus assured either its tranquillity or success, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws which it was their interest, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade.<sup>28</sup> The legions themselves, even at the time when they were recruited in the most distant provinces, were supposed to consist of Roman citizens. That distinction was generally considered, either as a legal qualification, or as a proper recompense for the soldier. However, the real criteria became age, strength, and military stature.<sup>29</sup> In all levies, a just preference was given to the climates of the North over those of the South. The race of men born to the exercise of arms was sought for in the country rather than in cities. Thus, it was very reasonably presumed, that the hardy occupations of smiths, carpenters and hunters would supply more vigor and resolution than the sedentary trades which are employed in the service of luxury.<sup>30</sup> After every qualification of property had been laid aside, the armies of the Roman emperors were still commanded, for the most part, by officers of a liberal birth and education. However, the common soldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate, of mankind.

That public virtue which among the ancients was denominated patriotism is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince; and it became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature—honor and religion. The peasant or laborer believed the idea that being in the military was dignified, that his rank and reputation depended on his own valor. However, although private soldier's the prowess may often escape notice of fame, his own behavior might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honors he was associated.

<sup>26</sup> Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his History of the Roman wars.

<sup>27</sup> Dion, l. lxxi. 1-Hist. August. in Marco. The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible historians, whose memory has been rescued from oblivion, and exposed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticism of Lucian.

<sup>28</sup> The poorest rank of soldiers possessed above 40 pounds sterling (Dionys. Halicarn. iv. 17), a very high qualification, at a time when money was so scarce that an ounce of silver was equivalent to 70 pounds of brass. The populace, excluded by the ancient constitution, was indiscriminately admitted by Marius. Sallust. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 91

<sup>29</sup> Caesar formed his legion Alauda of Gauls and strangers: but it was during the license of civil war; and after the victory he gave them the freedom of the city for their reward.

<sup>30</sup> Vegetius de Re Military I. i. c. 2—7.

### *Military Discipline*

On his first entrance into the service, an oath was administered to him, with every circumstance of solemnity. He promised never to desert his unit, to submit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the emperor and the empire.<sup>31</sup> The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards (flags) was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honor. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion; nor was it esteemed less impious, than it was ignominious, to abandon that sacred ensign in the hour of danger.<sup>32</sup> These motives, which derived their strength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more substantial kind. Regular pay, occasional donations, and a guaranteed retirement after the time of service alleviated the hardships of the military life.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, it was impossible for cowardice or disobedience to escape the severest punishment. The centurions were authorized to chastise with blows, the generals had a right to punish with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. From such laudable arts did the valor of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmness and docility unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians.

### *Military Exercises*

So sensitive were the Romans of the imperfection of valor without skill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise.<sup>34</sup> Military exercises were the sole object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained both in the morning and in the evening. Nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learned. Large sheds were erected in the winter for troop barracks, that their useful labors might not be interrupted by weather. It was carefully observed, that the practice weapons used in exercises should be double the weight of the real thing.<sup>35</sup> It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark, that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, run, leap, swim, and carry heavy burdens. They were trained to handle every species of arms used either for offense or for defense, either in distant engagement or in a closer onset; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes, in the Pyrrhic or martial dance.<sup>36</sup> In the midst of peace,

<sup>31</sup> The oath of service and fidelity to the emperor was annually renewed by the troops on the first of January.

<sup>32</sup> Tacitus calls the Roman eagles *Bellorum Deos*. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worship of the troops.

<sup>33</sup> Gronovius *de Pecunia vetere*, 1. iii. p. 120, etc. The Emperor Domitian raised the annual stipend of the legionaries to twelve pieces of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, somewhat higher than our own, had been, and was afterward, gradually increased, according to the progress of wealth and military government. After 20 years of service, a veteran received three thousand denarii (about one hundred pounds sterling), or a proportionate allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general about double those of the legions.

<sup>34</sup> *Exercitus ab exercitamento*, Varro *de Lingua Latina*, 1. iv. Cicero in *Tusculan.* 1. ii. 37. There is room for a very interesting work, which should lay open the connection between the languages and manners of nations.

<sup>35</sup> Vegetius, 1. ii. and the rest of his first book.

<sup>36</sup> The Pyrrhic dance is extremely well illustrated by M. le Beau, in the *Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxxv. p. 262, etc. That learned academician, in a series of memoirs, has collected all the passages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion.

the Roman troops familiarized themselves with the practice of war. It is remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the only circumstance which distinguished a field of battle from a field of exercise.<sup>37</sup> It was the policy of the ablest generals, and even of the emperors themselves, to encourage these military studies by their presence and example. Both Hadrian and Trajan frequently condescended to instruct the inexperienced soldiers, to reward the diligent, and sometimes to dispute with them the prize of superior strength or dexterity.<sup>38</sup> Under the reigns of those princes, the science of tactics was cultivated with success; and as long as the empire retained any vigor, their military instructions were respected as the most perfect model of Roman discipline.

### *Legions, Arms*

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the service many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are described by Polybius,<sup>39</sup> in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from those which achieved the victories of Caesar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The constitution of the Imperial legion may be described in a few words.<sup>40</sup> The heavy-armed infantry, which composed its principal strength,<sup>41</sup> was divided into 10 cohorts, and 55 companies, under the orders of a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honor and the custody of the eagle, was formed of 1,105 soldiers, the most approved for valor and fidelity. The remaining 9 cohorts consisted each of 555; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to 6,100 men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their service: an open helmet, with a lofty crest; a breast-plate, or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable pilum, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about six feet, and which was terminated by a massy triangular point of steel of 18 inches.<sup>42</sup> This instrument was indeed inferior to our modern firearms, since it was exhausted by a single discharge at the distance of only 10 or 12 paces. Yet when it was launched by a firm and skillful hand, there was not any cavalry that dared venture within its range, nor any shield or corslet that could sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the Roman had darted his pilum, he drew his sword, and rushed forward to close with the enemy. His sword was a short well-tempered Spanish blade that carried a double edge, and was alike suited to the purpose of striking or of pushing. The soldier was always instructed to prefer the latter use of his weapon, as his own body remained less exposed, while he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adversary.<sup>43</sup> The legion was usually

<sup>37</sup> Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, 1. iii. e. 5. We are indebted to this Jew for some very curious details of Roman discipline.

<sup>38</sup> Plin. Panegy. c. 13. Life of Hadrian, in the Augustan History.

<sup>39</sup> See an admirable digression on the Roman discipline in the sixth book of his history.

<sup>40</sup> Vegetius de Re Militari, 1. ii. c. 4, etc. Considerable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he describes it, cannot suit any other age of the Roman empire.

<sup>41</sup> Vegetius de Re Militari 1. ii. c. 1. In the purer age of Caesar and Cicero the word *miles* was almost confined to the infantry. Under the lower empire, and in the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almost as exclusively to the men at arms who fought on horseback.

<sup>42</sup> In the time of Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (I. v. c. 45) the steel point of the pilum seems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius it was reduced to a foot, or even nine inches. I have chosen a medium.

<sup>43</sup> For the legionary arms, see Lipsius de Militia Romana, 1. iii. c. 2—7.

drawn up eight deep; and the regular distance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks.<sup>44</sup> A body of troops, habituated to preserve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themselves prepared to execute every disposition which the circumstances of war, or the skill of their leader might suggest. The soldier possessed a free space for his arms and motions, and sufficient intervals were allowed, through which seasoned reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhausted combatants.<sup>45</sup> The tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians were formed on very different principles. The strength of the phalanx depended on sixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the closest array.<sup>46</sup> But it was soon discovered by reflection, as well as by the event, that the strength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion (Polybius 1. xvii).

### *Roman Cavalry*

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into 10 troops or squadrons. The first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of 132 men, while each of the other 9 amounted only to 66. The entire establishment formed a regiment—if we may use the modern expression—of 726 horses, naturally connected with its respective legion. These were sometimes separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the army's flanks.<sup>47</sup> Unlike like the ancient republic, the emperors' cavalry was no longer composed of Rome's and Italy's noblest youths. By performing their military service on horseback, these prepared themselves for the offices of senator and consul, and solicited, by deeds of valor, the future votes of their countrymen.<sup>48</sup> Since the alteration of manners and government, the most wealthy of the equestrian order were engaged in the administration of justice, and of the revenue.<sup>49</sup> Whenever they embraced the profession of arms, they were immediately entrusted with a troop of horse, or a cohort of foot.<sup>50</sup> Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the same provinces, and the same class of their subjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horses were bred, for the most part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers despised the complete armor with which the cavalry of the East was encumbered. Their more useful arms consisted in a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad-sword, were their principal weapons of offense. The use of lances and of iron maces they seem to have borrowed from the barbarians (Arrian's Tactics).

### *Auxiliaries*

The safety and honor of the empire were principally entrusted to the legions, but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honorable distinction of Romans. Many

<sup>44</sup> See the beautiful comparison of Virgil, *Georgic*. ii. v. 279.

<sup>45</sup> M. Guichard, *Memoires Militaires*, tom. i. c. 4, and *Nouveaux Memoires*, tom. i. pp. 293—311, has treated the subject like a scholar and an officer.

<sup>46</sup> Arrian's *Tactics*. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather chose to describe the phalanx, of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded.

<sup>47</sup> Veget. *do Re Militari*, I. ii. e. 6. His positive testimony, which might be supported by circumstantial evidence, ought surely to silence those critics who refuse the Imperial legion its proper body of cavalry.

<sup>48</sup> Livy almost throughout, particularly xlii. 61.

<sup>49</sup> Plin. *Hist. Natur.* xxxiii. 2. The true sense of that very curious passage was first discovered and illustrated by M. de Beaufort, *Republique Romaine*, 1, II. C. 2.

<sup>50</sup> As in the instance of Horace and Agricola. This appears to have been a defect in the Roman discipline; which Hadrian endeavored to remedy by ascertaining the legal age of a tribune.

dependent princes and communities, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service.<sup>51</sup> Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valor in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state.<sup>52</sup> All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom inferior to those of the legions themselves.<sup>53</sup> Among the auxiliaries, the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of prefects and centurions, and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline. But the far greater part retained those arms to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this institution each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons. It was capable of encountering every nation, with the advantages of its respective arms and discipline<sup>54</sup>

### *Artillery*

Nor was the legion destitute of what, in modern language, would be styled a train of artillery. It consisted of 10 military engines of the largest, and 55 of a smaller size; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, discharged stones and darts with irresistible violence.<sup>55</sup>

### *Encampment*

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city.<sup>56</sup> As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully leveled the ground and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate, that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of 20,000 Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than triple that extent. In the midst of the camp, the pretorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others. The cavalry, infantry and auxiliaries occupied their respective stations. The streets were broad and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of 200 feet was left on all sides, between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually 12 feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of 12 feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labor was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves, to whom the use of spade and pick-axe was no less familiar than that of the sword or pilum. Active valor may often be the present of nature, but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Such, in particular, was the state of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

<sup>52</sup> Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquished Quadi and Marcomanni to supply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately sent into Britain. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi.

<sup>53</sup> Tacit. Annal. iv. 5. Those who fix a regular proportion of so many foot, and twice as many horse, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors with the Italian allies of the republic.

<sup>54</sup> Vegetius, ii. 2. Arrian, in his order of march and battle against the Alani

<sup>55</sup> The subject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the Chevalier Folard (Polybe, tom. ii. pp. 233—290). He prefers them in many respects to our modern cannon and mortars. We may observe that the use of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as personal valor and military skill declined with the Roman Empire. When men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines. See Vegetius, ii. 25. Arrian.

<sup>56</sup> Vegetius finishes his second book and the description of the legion with the following emphatic words: (Latin text deleted)

<sup>57</sup> For the Roman Castrametation, Polybius, l. vi. with Lipsius de Militia Romana, Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 5.

### *March, Number, and Disposition of the Legions*

Whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantly broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confusion. Besides their arms, which the legionaries scarcely considered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days.<sup>58</sup> Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of a modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance, in about 6 hours, near 20 miles.<sup>59</sup> On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aside their baggage, and by easy and rapid evolutions converted the column of march into an order of battle.<sup>60</sup> The slingers and archers skirmished in the front. The auxiliaries formed the first line, and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the legions. The cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

Such were the arts of war by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests and preserved a military spirit at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism. If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their numbers, we shall not find it easy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itself a body of 6,831 Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about 12,500 men. The peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors was composed of no less than 30 of these formidable brigades; and most probably formed a standing force of 375,000 men. Instead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or cowardice, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. Their stations, for the most part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to describe the distribution of the troops. Three legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and consisted of 16 legions, in the following proportions: 2 in the Lower, 3 in upper Germany; 1 in Rhaetia, 1 in Noricum, 4 in Pannonia, 3 in Maesia, and 2 in Dacia. The defense of the Euphrates was entrusted to 8 legions, 6 of whom were planted in Syria, the other 2 in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquility of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. More than 20,000 chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of City Cohorts and Pretorian Guards, watched over the safety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the Pretorians will, very soon, and very loudly, demand our attention. But in their arms and institutions we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance and a less rigid discipline.<sup>61</sup>

### *Roman Navy*

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the

Vegetius, i. 21—25, iii. 9, and Memoires de Guichard, tom. i. c. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Cicero in Tusculan. ii. 37. Joseph. do Bell. Jud. I. iii. 5. Frontinus, iv. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Vegetius, 1. 9. Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxv. p. 18'r.

<sup>60</sup> Those evolutions are admirably well explained by M. Guichard, Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. pp. 141—234.

<sup>61</sup> Tacitus (Annal. iv. 5) has given us a state of the legions under Tiberius and Dion Cassius (1. iv. p. 794) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavored to fix on the proper medium between these two periods. See likewise Lipsius do Magnitudine Romana, 1. i. c. 4, 5.

land. Neither was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, Carthage, or even Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the most remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than curiosity;<sup>62</sup> the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage, and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views, Augustus stationed two permanent fleets in the most convenient ports of Italy: one at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, the other at Misenum, in the Bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients that as soon as their galleys exceeded two, or at the most three ranks of oars, they were suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival.<sup>63</sup> Of these Liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to command, the one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean. To each of the squadrons he attached a body of several thousand mariners. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence. The Euxine was guarded by 40 ships and 3,000 soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians.<sup>64</sup>

#### *Amount of the Whole Establishment*

If we review this general state of the Imperial forces; of the cavalry as well as infantry; legions, auxiliaries, guards, and the navy, the most liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land at more than 450,000 men. This military power, however formidable it may seem, was equaled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman Empire.<sup>65</sup>

We have attempted to explain the spirits which both moderated and supported the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavor, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway. At present, however, they were divided into many independent and hostile states.

#### *The Provinces of Spain and Gaul*

Spain, the western extremity of the empire, Europe, and the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits: the Pyrenean mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided between two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Baetica, and Tarraconensis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians. The loss sustained by the former on the eastern side, is compensated by an accession of territory toward the North. The confines of Granada and Andalusia correspond with those of ancient Baetica. The remainder of

<sup>62</sup> The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretense of religious awe, their ignorance and terror. Tacit. Germania, c. 34.

<sup>63</sup> Plutarch, in Marc. Anton. And yet, if we may credit Orosius, these monstrous castles were no more than 10 feet above the water, vi. 19.

<sup>64</sup> Lipsius, de Magnitud. Rom. I. i. c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.

<sup>65</sup> Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It must, however, be remembered that France still feels that extraordinary effort.

Spain, Glacial and the Asturias, Biscay and Navarre, Leon and the two Castiles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Aragon, all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona.<sup>66</sup> Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs.

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the Ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the duchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburgh, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father, he introduced a division of Gaul equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to the principal national distinctions, which had comprehended above a hundred independent states.<sup>67</sup> The seacoast of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphine, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Caesar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valor, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Basil to Leyden, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany.<sup>68</sup> Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the six provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, the Celtic (or Lyonnese), the Belgic, and the two Germanys.

### *Province of Britain*

We have already had occasion to mention the conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this island. It comprehended all of England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland, as far as the Friths of the Clyde and the Forth. Before Britain lost her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between 30 tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgae in the West, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk.<sup>69</sup> As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

<sup>66</sup> Strabo, l. ii. It is natural enough to suppose that Aragon is derived from Tarraconensis, and several moderns who have written in Latin use those words as synonymous. It is, however, certain that the Aragon, a little stream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, first gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. D'Anville, *Geographie du Moyen Age*, p. 181.

<sup>67</sup> 67 One hundred and fifteen cities appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this appellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each state. But Plutarch and Appian increase the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

<sup>68</sup> D'Anville. *Notice do l' Ancienne Gaule*.

<sup>69</sup> Whitaker's *History of Manchester*, vol. i. c. 3.

### *Province of Italy*

Before the Roman conquest, the country which is now called Lombardy was not considered part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the Apennine. The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice had yet to be born; but the territories of that state, which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians.<sup>70</sup> The middle part of the peninsula that now composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of civilized life (Maffei Verona illustrata, l. 1). The Tiber rolled at the foot of the Seven Hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theater of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs; their successors adorned villas, and their posterity has erected convents.<sup>71</sup> Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of Naples; the rest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations: the Marsi, Samnites, Apulians, and Lucanians. The seacoasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Augustus divided Italy into 11 regions, the little province of Istria was annexed to that seat of Roman sovereignty.<sup>72</sup>

### *The Danube and Illyrian Frontier*

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at only 30 miles from the former, flows above 1,300 miles, for the most part, to the southeast. It collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is, at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears scarcely equal to such an accession of waters.<sup>73</sup> The provinces of the Danube soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum (Illyrian frontier),<sup>74</sup> and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire. They deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhaetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Maesia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The province of Raetia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its source, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augsburg is protected by the constitution of the German empire; the Grisons are safe in their mountains, and the country of Tyrol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the House of Austria.

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save—Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Sclavonia—was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence, their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German

<sup>70</sup> The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. M. Freret, *Memoires do l'Academie de Incriptions*, tom. xviii.

<sup>71</sup> The first contrast was observed by the ancients. Florus l. 11. The second must strike every modern traveler.

<sup>72</sup> Pliny (*Mist. Natur.* l. iii.) follows the division of Italy by Augustus.

<sup>73</sup> Tournefort, *Voyages en Grece et Asie Mineure*, lettre xviii.

<sup>74</sup> The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the seacoast of the Hadriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine Sea. *Serverini Pannonia*, l. i. c. 3.

prince, who styles himself Emperor of the Romans, and form the center, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe, that if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and part of Hungary, between the Teyss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the House of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman Empire.

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long but narrow tract between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the seacoast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa. The inland parts have assumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the latter a Turkish pasha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Christian and Mohammedan power.<sup>75</sup>

After the Danube had received the waters of the Teyss and the Save, it acquired, at least among the Greeks, the name of Ister.<sup>76</sup> It formerly divided Maesia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already seen, was a conquest of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the present state of those countries, we shall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeswar and Transylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; while the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia acknowledge the supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Maesia, which, during the Middle Ages, was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkish slavery.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preserves the memory of their ancient state under the Roman Empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Haemus and Rhodope, to the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province. Notwithstanding the change of masters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has ever since remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia, derived more solid advantages from the policy of the two Philips; and, with its dependencies of Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Aegean to the Ionian Sea. When we famous cities such as Thebes, Argos, Sparta, and Athens, it's hard to believe that so many immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in a single province of the Roman empire, which, from the superior influence of the Achaean league, became known as the province of Achaia.

Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But, instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed with some propriety to the peninsula which, confined between the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates toward Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district, westward of Mount Taurus and the river Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equaled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The

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<sup>75</sup> A Venetian traveler, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us some account of those very obscure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the western Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its sovereign.

<sup>76</sup> The Save rises near the confines of Istria, and was considered by the more early Greeks as the principal stream of the Danube

kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus possessed the northern side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side, the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria: the inland country, separated from the Roman Asia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe that the northern shores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Asia, and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries.<sup>77</sup>

### *Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine*

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria was the seat of the Seleucidae, who reigned over Upper Asia, till the successful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became subject to the Romans, it formed the eastern frontier of their empire; nor did that province, in its utmost latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and toward the south the confines of Egypt and the Red Sea. Phoenicia and Palestine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The former of these was a narrow and rocky coast; the latter was a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent. Yet Phoenicia and Palestine will forever live in the memory of mankind; since America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other.<sup>78</sup> A sandy desert alike destitute of wood and water skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence; and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to form any settled habitation, they soon became subjects to the Roman Empire (Dion Cassius, lib. Levi. p. 1131).

### *Egypt and Africa*

The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt.<sup>79</sup> By its situation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman prefect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron scepter of the Mamalukes is now in the hands of a Turkish pasha. The Nile flows down the country, 500 miles from the Tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks, on either side, the extent of fertility by the measure of its inundation. Cyrene, situated toward the west, and along the seacoast, was first a Greek colony, afterward a province of Egypt, and is now lost in the desert of Barca.

From Cyrene to the ocean, the coast of Africa extends 1,500 miles; yet so closely is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or sandy desert, that its breadth seldom exceeds between 80 and a 100 miles. The eastern division was considered by the Romans as the more peculiar and

<sup>77</sup> Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coasts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.

<sup>78</sup> The progress of religion is well known. The use of letters was introduced among the savages of Europe about 1,500 years before Christ; and the Europeans carried them to America, about 15 centuries after the Christian Era. But in a period of 3,000 years the Phoenician alphabet received considerable alterations, as it passed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.

<sup>79</sup> Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the Isthmus of Suez as the boundary of Asia and Africa. Dionysius, Mela, Pliny, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for that purpose the western branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or descent, which last would assign to Asia not only Egypt, but part of Libya.

proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phoenician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage, it became the center of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and disorderly states of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppresses the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Massinissa and Jugurtha: but, in the time of Augustus, the limits of Numidia were contracted; and, at least, two-thirds of the country acquiesced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Caesariensis. The genuine Mauritania (country of the Moors), which, from the ancient city of Tingi (Tangier), was distinguished by the appellation of Tingitana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Sallé, on the ocean, long infamous for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the Emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear that his more southern dominions, Morocco itself and Segelmessa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of Mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets;<sup>80</sup> but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent.<sup>81</sup>

### *The Mediterranean*

Having now finished the circuit of the Roman Empire, we may observe that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about 12 miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, so famous among the ancients, were two mountains which seemed to have been torn asunder by some convulsion of the elements; and at the foot of the European mountain the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean Sea, its coasts, and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baeaes, which derive their name of Majorca and Minorca from their respective size, is subject at present, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. It is easier to deplore the fate, than to describe the actual condition of Corsica. Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms; while the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military Order, into fame and opulence.

### *The Roman Empire*

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to forget, the outlying countries which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence. They gradually usurped the license of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth.<sup>82</sup> But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a

<sup>80</sup> The long range, moderate height, and gentle declivity of Mount Atlas are very unlike a solitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and seems to support the heavens. The peak of Teneriffe, on the contrary, rises a league and a half above the surface of the sea, and as it was frequently visited by the Phoenicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle*, tom. i. p. 312. *Histoire des Voyages*, tom. ii.

<sup>81</sup> M. de Voltaire, tom. xiv. p. 297, unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary Islands on the Roman empire.

<sup>82</sup> des Grands Chemins, 1. iii, c. 1, 2, 3, 4; a very useful collection.

modern historian, requires a more sober and accurate language. He may impress a more just image of Rome's greatness by observing that the empire was more than 2,000 miles in breadth: from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to Mount Atlas and the Tropic of Cancer. It extended, in length, more than 3,000 miles from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates. It was situated in the finest part of the Temperate Zone, between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> degrees of northern latitude. It was also supposed to have contained more than 1,600,000 square miles of fertile, well-cultivated land.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Templeman's *Survey of the Globe*; but I distrust both the doctor's learning and his maps.