

## CHAPTER III

### The Constitution of the Roman Empire in the Age of the Antonines

#### *Idea of A Monarchy*

The obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is entrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But, unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism. The influence of the clergy, in an age of superstition, might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind. But so intimate is the connection between the throne and the altar that the banner of the church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people. A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against enterprises of an aspiring prince.

Every barrier of the Roman constitution had been leveled by the vast ambition of the dictator. Every fence had been abolished by the cruel hand of the Triumvir. After the victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, surnamed Caesar, by his uncle's adoption, and afterward Augustus, by the flattery of the senate. The conqueror was at the head of 44 veteran legions (Orosius, vi. 18), conscious of their own strength and of the weakness of the constitution. They habituated during 20 years of civil war, to every act of blood and violence, and passionately devoted to the house of Caesar, from whence alone they had received, and expected, the most lavish rewards. The provinces, long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, sighed for the government of a single person, who would be the master, not the accomplice, of those petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing, with a secret pleasure, the humiliation of the aristocracy, demanded only bread and public shows. They were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almost universally embraced the philosophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, and did not allow the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the senate had lost its dignity; many of the noblest families were extinct. The republicans of spirit and ability had perished in the field of battle, or in the prohibition. The door of the assembly had been designedly left open for a mixed multitude of more than a thousand persons, who reflected disgrace upon their rank, instead of deriving honor from it.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Situation of Augustus: Reforming the Senate*

The reformation of the senate was one of the first steps in which Augustus laid aside the tyrant, and professed himself the father of his country. He was elected censor, and, in concert with his faithful Agrippa, examined the list of the senators, expelling those few whose vices or obstinacy required a public example. He persuaded nearly 200 to avoid the shame of an expulsion by a voluntary retreat. He also raised the qualification of a senator to about 10,000 pounds, created a sufficient number of Patrician families, and accepted for himself the honorable title of Prince of the Senate. Such a title had always been bestowed by the censors on the person most eminent for his honors and services. (Dion Cassius, 1. iii. p. 693; Suetonius in August. c. 55) But while he restored the senate's dignity, he also destroyed their independence. The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost when the legislative power is nominated by the executive.

<sup>1</sup> Julius Caesar introduced soldiers, strangers, and half-barbarians into the senate (Sueton. in Caesar. c. 77, 80). The abuse became still more scandalous after his death.

Before an assembly thus modeled and prepared, Augustus pronounced a studied oration, which displayed his patriotism while disguising his ambition.

He lamented, yet excused, his past conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge of his father's murder. The humanity of his own nature had sometimes given way to the stern laws of necessity, and to a forced connection with two unworthy colleagues. As long as Antony lived, the republic forbade him to abandon her to a degenerate Roman and a barbarian queen. He was now at liberty to satisfy his duty and his inclination. He solemnly restored the senate and people to all their ancient rights. He wished only to mingle with the crowd of his fellow citizens, and to share the blessings which he had obtained for his country.<sup>2</sup>

### *Under the Title of Emperor or General*

It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had assisted at this assembly) to describe the various emotions of the senate, those who were suppressed and those who were affected. It was dangerous to trust Augustus' sincerity and even more dangerous to distrust it. The respective advantages of monarchy and a republic have often divided speculative inquirers. The present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the license of the soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy. These general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amid this confusion of sentiments, the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept Augustus' resignation, convincing him not to desert the republic which he had saved. After an appropriate time of resistance, the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate. He consented to receive the government of the provinces, the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known titles of Proconsul and Imperator.<sup>3</sup> But he would receive them only for 10 years. Even before the expiration of that period, he hoped that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed, and that the republic, restored to its pristine health and vigor, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was preserved to the last ages of the empire by the peculiar pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnized the 10<sup>th</sup> years of their reign. (Dion, 1. liii. p. 703, etc.)

### *The Roman Generals*

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator (consul), had a right to command the service of the Roman youth, and to punish obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious penalties. They could cancel a person's citizenship, confiscate their property, and sell them into slavery. (Livy Epitom. 1. xiv. Valer. Maxim. vi. 3) The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were suspended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exercised an absolute power of life and death. His jurisdiction was not confined by any forms of trial, or rules of proceeding—execution of his sentence was immediate

<sup>2</sup> Dion (1. iii. p. 698) gives us a prolix and bombast speech on this great occasion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the general language of Augustus.

<sup>3</sup> *Imperator* (from which we have derived Emperor) signified under the republic no more than general, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman emperors assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it.

and without appeal.<sup>4</sup> The choice of Rome's enemies was regularly decided by the legislative authority. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great distance from Italy, the generals assumed the liberty of directing them in whatever method against whoever they judged most advantageous for the public service. It was from the success, not from the justice, of their enterprises that they expected the honors of a triumph. In the use of victory, especially after they were no longer controlled by the commissioners of the senate, they exercised the most unbounded despotism. When Pompey commanded in the east, he rewarded his soldiers and allies, dethroned princes, divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and distributed the treasures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome, he obtained, by a single act of the senate and people, the universal ratification of all his proceedings.<sup>5</sup> Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or assumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the same time, the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the state.

From what has been already observed in the first chapter of this work, some notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus entrusted to the ruling hand of Augustus. But as it was impossible that he could personally command the legions of so many distant frontiers, he was indulged by the senate, as Pompey had already been, in the permission of devolving the execution of his great office on a sufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority these officers seemed superior to the ancient proconsuls. Their position, however, was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commissions at the will of a superior, to whose auspicious influence the merit of their action was legally attributed.<sup>6</sup> They were the representatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his jurisdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conquests of Rome. It was with some satisfaction to the senate however, that he always delegated his power to their members. The Imperial lieutenants were of consular or Pretorian dignity. The legions were commanded by senators, and the prefecture of Egypt was the only important trust committed to a Roman knight.

#### *Division of the Provinces Between the Emperor and the Senate*

Six days after Augustus had been compelled to accept so very liberal a grant, he resolved to gratify the pride of the senate by an easy sacrifice. He represented to them, that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuse the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers. He did insist on being allowed to restore the more peaceful and secure provinces to the mild administration of the civil magistrate. In the division of the provinces, Augustus provided for his own power and for the dignity of the republic. The proconsuls of the senate, particularly those of Asia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honorable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The

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<sup>4</sup> See in the 8<sup>th</sup> book of Livy the conduct of Manlius Torquatus and Papirius Cursor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they asserted those of military discipline; and the people, who abhorred the action, were obliged to respect the principle.

<sup>5</sup> By the lavish but unconstrained suffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command scarcely inferior to that of Augustus. Among the extraordinary acts of power executed by the former, we may remark the foundation of 29 cities, and the distribution of 3 or 4 million sterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with some opposition and delays in the senate. See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Cassius, and the first book of the epistles to Atticus.

<sup>6</sup> Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general who was authorized to take the Auspices in the name of the people. By an exact consequence drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reserved to the emperor; and his most successful lieutenants were satisfied with some marks of distinction which, under the name of triumphal honors, were invented in their favor.

former was attended by Roman functionaries, the latter by soldiers. A law was passed that wherever the emperor was present his extraordinary commission should supersede the ordinary jurisdiction of the governor. A custom was introduced, whereby the new conquest belonged to the Imperial portion. It was soon discovered that the Prince's authority— Augustus' favorite epithet—was the same in every part of the empire.

In return for this imaginary concession, Augustus obtained an important privilege that rendered him master of Rome and Italy. By a dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he was authorized to preserve his military command, supported by a numerous body of guards, even in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital. His command, indeed, was confined to those citizens who were engaged in the service by military oath. But such was the propensity of the Romans to servitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magistrates, the senators, and the equestrian order, until the honor of flattery was unwittingly exchanged for an annual solemn admission of allegiance.

### *Consular and Tribunal Powers*

Although Augustus considered a military force as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it as a very odious instrument of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect in his own person all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the consular<sup>7</sup> and tribunal offices,<sup>8</sup> which were, in the same manner, continued to all his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome and represented the dignity of the state. They superintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and presided in the assemblies both of the senate and people. The general control of the finances was entrusted to their care. Although they seldom had leisure to administer justice in person, they were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction. But whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised by that degree above the laws, and exercised, in the defense of liberty, a temporary despotism.<sup>9</sup> The character of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. The appearance of the former was modest and humble, but their persons were sacred and inviolable. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offenses, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, stop, by a single word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic subsisted, the dangerous influence which either the consul or the tribune might derive from their respective jurisdiction was diminished by several important restrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected. The former office was divided between two, the latter among ten persons. As both in their private and public interest they were averse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution. But when the consular and tribunal powers were united, when they were vested for life in a single person. When the general of the army was also the minister of the senate and the representative

<sup>7</sup> Cicero (*de Legibus*, iii. 3) gives the consular office the name of *Regia potestas*; and Polybius (1. vi. c. 3) observes three powers in the Roman constitution. The monarchical was represented and exercised by the Consuls.

<sup>8</sup> As the tribunal power (distinct from the annual office) was first invented for the Dictator Caesar (*Dion*, I. xliv. p. 384), we may easily conceive that it was given as a reward for having so nobly asserted, by arms, the sacred rights of the tribunes and people. *Commentaries*, *De Bell. Civil.* 1. i.

<sup>9</sup> Augustus exercised nine annual consulships without interruption. He then most artfully refused that magistracy, as well as the dictatorship, absented himself from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the senate to invest him with a perpetual consulship. Augustus, as well as his successors, affected, however, to conceal so offensive a title.

of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his Imperial prerogative.

### *Imperial Prerogatives*

To these accumulated honors, the policy of Augustus soon added the splendid as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff and of censor. By the former he acquired the management of religion, by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes of the Roman people. If so many distinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaisance of the senate was prepared to supply every deficiency by the most ample and extraordinary concessions. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws. They were authorized to convene the senate, make several motions in the same day, and recommend candidates for the honors of the state. They could enlarge city boundaries and employ government funds at their discretion. They declared peace and war, ratified treaties and, by a most comprehensive clause, could carry out anything they judged advantageous to the empire and agreeable to the majesty of things private or public, human or divine.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Magistrates*

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the Imperial magistrate, the ordinary magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigor, and almost without business. The names and forms of the ancient administration were preserved by Augustus with the most anxious care. The usual number of consuls, pretors and tribunes<sup>11</sup> were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, continuing to discharge some of their least important functions. Those honors still attracted the vain ambition of the Romans and the emperors themselves, though invested for life with the powers of the consulship, frequently aspired to the title of that annual dignity which they condescended to share with the most illustrious of their fellow-citizens.<sup>12</sup> In the election of these magistrates, the people, during the reign of Augustus, were permitted to expose all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, instead of discovering the least symptom of impatience, humbly solicited their voice for himself or his friends, and scrupulously practiced all the duties of an ordinary candidate.<sup>13</sup> But we may venture to ascribe to his councils the first measures of the succeeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the senate.<sup>14</sup> The assemblies of the people were forever abolished, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude. Without restoring liberty, the common people might have disturbed, and perhaps endangered, the established government.

<sup>10</sup> See a fragment of a Decree of the Senate, conferring on the emperor Vespasian all the powers granted to his predecessors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. This curious and important monument is published in Gruter's Inscriptions, No. ccxlii.

<sup>11</sup> Two consuls were created on the Calends of January ; but in the course of the year others were substituted in their places, till the annual number seems to have amounted to no less than twelve. The pretors were usually sixteen or eighteen (Lipsius in Excurs. D. ad Tacit. Annal. l. i.). I have not mentioned the Ediles or Questors. Officers of the police or revenue easily adapt themselves to any form of government. In the time of Nero the tribunes legally possessed the right of intercession, though it might be dangerous to exercise it (Tacit. Annal. xvi. 26). In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneship was an office or a name (Pun. Epist. i. 23).

<sup>12</sup> The tyrants themselves were ambitious of the consulship. The virtuous princes were moderate in the pursuit, and exact in the discharge of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and swore before the consul's tribunal that he would observe the laws (Pun. Panegyric. c. 64).

<sup>13</sup> Latin text deleted.

<sup>14</sup> There was apparently some faint and unsuccessful effort made toward restoring them to the people.

### *The Senate*

By declaring themselves protectors of the people, Marius and Caesar had subverted the constitution of their country. As soon as the senate had been humbled and disarmed, such an assembly, consisting of five or six hundred persons, was found a much more tractable and useful instrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the senate that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire, and they affected, on every occasion, to adopt the language and principles of Patricians. In the administration of their own powers they frequently consulted the great national council, and seemed to refer to its decision the most important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces, was subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the senate. With regard to civil objects, it was the Supreme Court of appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal handled trials for all offenses committed by men in any public station, or that affected the peace and majesty of the Roman people. The exercise of the judicial power became the most frequent and serious occupation of the senate. The important causes that were pleaded before them afforded a last refuge to the spirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of state, and as a court of justice, the senate possessed very considerable prerogatives. But in its legislative capacity—by which it was to represent the people—the rights of sovereignty were acknowledged to reside in that assembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their sanction. Their regular meetings were held 3 days a month. (Calends, Nones, and Ides) The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themselves, who gloried in the name of senators, sat, voted, and divided with their equals.

### *The Imperial System*

This system of the Imperial government—as instituted by Augustus, and maintained by those princes who understood their own interest and that of the people—can be defined as an absolute monarchy disguised in the form of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed.<sup>15</sup>

### *Court of the Emperors*

The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. The emperors, if we except those tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, disdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life they affected to confound themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourse of visits and entertainment. Their habit, palace, and table, was suited only to the rank of an opulent senator. Their family, however numerous or splendid, was composed entirely of their domestic slaves and freedmen.<sup>16</sup> Augustus or Trajan would have blushed at employing the meanest of the Romans in those menial offices, which, in the household and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are

<sup>15</sup> Dion Cassius (I. hi. pp. 703—714) has given a very loose and partial sketch of the Imperial system. To illustrate and often to correct him, I have meditated Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and consulted the following moderns: the Abbé de la Bleterie, in the *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xix. xxi. xxiv. xxv. xxvii. Beaufort, *Republique Romaine*, torn. i. pp. 255—275. The *Dissertations of Noodt and Gronovius, de legs Regia*; printed at Leyden, in the year 1731. Gravina do *Imperio Romano*, pp. 479—544 of his *Opuacula*. Maffei, *Verona Illustrata*, t. i. p. 245, etc.

<sup>16</sup> A weak prince will always be governed by his domestics. The power of slaves aggravated the shame of the Romans; and the senate paid court to a Pallas or a Narcissus. There is a chance that a modern favorite may be a gentleman.

so eagerly solicited by the proudest nobles of Britain.

### *Their Deification*

The deification of the emperors<sup>17</sup> is the only instance in which they departed from their accustomed prudence and modesty. The Asiatic Greeks were the first inventors, the successors of Alexander the first objects, of this servile and impious mode of adulation. It was easily transferred from the kings to the governors of Asia. The Roman magistrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars, temples, festivals and sacrifices.<sup>18</sup> It was natural that the emperors should not refuse what the proconsuls had accepted. The divine honors which both the one and the other received from the provinces attested rather the despotism than the servitude of Rome. But the conquerors soon imitated the vanquished nations in the arts of flattery. The imperious spirit of the first Caesar too easily consented to assume, during his lifetime, a place among the guardian deities of Rome. The milder temper of his successor declined so dangerous an ambition, which was never afterward revived, except by the madness of Caligula and Domitian. Augustus permitted indeed some of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honor, on condition that they should associate the worship of Rome with that of the sovereign. He tolerated private superstition, of which he might be the object.<sup>19</sup> However, he contented himself with being revered by the senate and people in his human character, and wisely left to his successor the care of his public deification. A regular custom was introduced, that on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods. The ceremonies of his Exaltation were blended with those of his funeral. This legal, and, as it should seem, injudicious profanation, so abhorrent to our stricter principles, was received with a faint murmur<sup>20</sup> by the easy nature of polytheism. But it was received as an institution of policy, not religion. We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines, by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the characters of Caesar or Augustus were far superior to those of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of such a mixture of fable and mystery as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As soon as their divinity was established by law, it sunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame or to the dignity of succeeding princes.

### *Titles of Augustus and Caesar*

In the consideration of the Imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Augustus, which was not however conferred upon him till the edifice was almost completed. The obscure name of Octavianus he derived from a common family in the little town of Aricia. It was stained with the blood of the prohibition, and he was desirous, had it been possible, to erase all memory of his former life. The illustrious surname of Caesar he had assumed as the adopted son of the dictator. But he had too much good sense either to hope to be confounded, or to wish to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was proposed in the senate to dignify their minister with a new appellation. After a very serious discussion, that of Augustus was chosen, among several others, as being the most expressive of the character of peace and sanctity which he uniformly affected.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Treatise of Vandals de Consecratione Principum. It would be easier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.

<sup>18</sup> Dissertation of the Abbé Mongault in the first volume of the Academy of Inscriptions.

<sup>19</sup> Latin text deleted.

<sup>20</sup> Latin text deleted.

<sup>21</sup> Dion Cassius, l. liii. p. 710, with the curious Annotations of Reymar. Vol. 1-5

Augustus was therefore a personal, Caesar a family distinction. The former should naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was bestowed. However the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance; Nero was the last prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honors of the Julian line. However, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inseparably connected those appellations with the Imperial dignity, and they have been preserved by a long succession of emperors, Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans, from the fall of the republic to the present time. A distinction was, however, soon introduced. The sacred title of Augustus was always reserved for the monarch, while the name Caesar was more freely communicated to his relations. From the reign of Hadrian at least, was appropriated to the second person in the state, who was considered as the presumptive heir of the empire.

### *Policy of Augustus*

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition, prompted him, at the age of nineteen, to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterward laid aside. With the same hand, and probably with the same temper, he signed Cicero's death sentence and pardoned Cinna. His virtues and vices were artificial. According to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and in the end, the father of the Roman world.<sup>22</sup> When he framed the artful system of the Imperial authority, his moderation was inspired by his fears. He wished to deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government.

### *Image of Liberty for the People*

- I. The death of Caesar was ever before his eyes. He had lavished wealth and honors on his adherents. But the most favored friends of his uncle were in the number of the conspirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority against open rebellion, but their vigilance could not secure his person from the dagger of a determined republican. The Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus<sup>23</sup> would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Caesar had provoked his fate as much by the ostentation of his power as by his power itself. The consul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation, that the senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion, as long as it was supported by the virtue, or even by the prudence, of the successors of Augustus. It was a motive of self-preservation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conspirators against Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked the person of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

<sup>22</sup> As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Caesars, his color changed like that of the chameleon: pale at first, then red, afterward black. He at last assumed the mild livery of Venus and the Graces (Caesars, p. 309). This image, employed by Julian in his ingenious fiction, is just and elegant. But when he considers this change of character as real, and ascribes it to the power of philosophy, he does too many honors to philosophy, and to Octavianus.

<sup>23</sup> Two centuries after the establishment of monarchy, the emperor Marcus Antoninus recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue.

### *Attempts of the Senate After Caligula's Death*

There appears, indeed, one memorable occasion, in which the senate, after 70 years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reassume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne became vacant through Caligula's murder, the consuls convened an assembly in the Capitol, and condemned the memory of the Caesars. They gave the watchword liberty to the few cohorts who faintly adhered to their standard, and during 48 hours acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the Pretorian Guards had resolved. The stupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, invested with the Imperial purple, and prepared to support his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end and the senate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable servitude. Deserted by the people and threatened by a military force, that feeble assembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the Pretorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amnesty which Claudius had the prudence to offer and the generosity to observe.<sup>24</sup>

### *Image of the Government for the Armies*

- II. The insolence of the armies inspired Augustus with fears of a still more alarming nature. The despair of the citizens could only attempt what the power of the soldiers was, at any time, able to execute. How precarious was his own authority over men whom he had taught to violate every social duty ! He had heard their seditious clamors; he dreaded their calmer moments of reflection. One revolution had been purchased by immense rewards ; out a second revolution might double those rewards. The troops professed the fondest attachment to the house of Caesar; but the attachments of the multitude are capricious and inconstant. Augustus summoned to his aid whatever remained in those fierce minds of Roman prejudices. He enforced the rigor of discipline by the sanction of law and interposed the majesty of the senate between the emperor. The army boldly claimed their allegiance as the first magistrate of the republic.<sup>25</sup>

### *Their Obedience*

During a long period of 220 years, from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. The soldiers were seldom roused to that fatal sense of their own strength, and of the weakness of the civil authority, which was, before and afterward, productive of such dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were assassinated in their palace by their own domestics. The convulsions which agitated Rome on the death of the former were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the space of 18 months, four princes perished by the sword and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this short, though violent, eruption of military license, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained by civilian blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by the authority of the senate and the consent of the soldiers.<sup>26</sup> The legions respected their oath of fidelity. It requires a minute inspection of

<sup>24</sup> It is much to be regretted that we have lost the part of Tacitus which treated of that transaction. We are forced to content ourselves with the popular rumors of Josephus, and the imperfect hints of Dion and Suetonius.

<sup>25</sup> Augustus restored the ancient severity of discipline. After the civil wars he dropped the endearing name of Fellow-Soldiers, and called them only Soldiers (Sueton. in August. c. 25). See the use Tiberius made of the senate in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions (Tacit. Annal. i.).

<sup>26</sup> These words seem to have been the constitutional language. See Tacit. Annal. xiii. 4.

the Roman annals to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle.<sup>27</sup>

### *The Race of the Caesars and Flavian Family*

In elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and mischief. As a result, the transfer of power from one Roman emperor to the next was sometimes done without the public knowing it. This would spare the armies that time of suspense, and the temptation of an irregular choice. Thus Augustus rested his last hopes on Tiberius, after all his other prospects had been snatched away by untimely deaths. He obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunal powers, and passed a law by which the future prince was invested with an authority equal to his own over the provinces and the armies. (Velleius Paterculus, 1. ii. c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 20) Thus Vespasian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. Titus was adored by the eastern legions, which, under his command, had recently achieved the conquest of Judea. His power was dreaded. Since his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were also suspect. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the Imperial dignity. The grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father. (Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Pun. in Praefat. Hist. Natur.)

Vespasian's good sense engaged him indeed to embrace every measure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath and the troops' fidelity had been consecrated by the habits of a hundred years to the name and family of the Caesars. Although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans still revered, in the person of Nero, the grandson of Germanicus, and the lineal successor of Augustus. It was not without reluctance and remorse that the Pretorian Guards had been persuaded to abandon the cause of the tyrant.<sup>28</sup> The rapid downfall of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius taught the armies to consider the emperors as the creatures of their will and instruments of their license. Vespasian was born a commoner: his grandfather had been a private soldier, his father a petty officer of the revenue.<sup>29</sup> His own merit had raised him, in an advanced age, to the empire. But his merit was rather useful than shining, and his virtues were disgraced by a strict and even sordid selfishness. Such a prince consulted his true interest by the association of a son whose more splendid and amiable character might turn the public attention from the obscure origin to the future glories of the Flavian house. Under Titus' mild administration, the Roman world enjoyed a passing happiness, and his beloved memory served to protect the vices of his brother Domitian for over 15 years.

### *AD 96: Adoption and Character of Trajan*

Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple from the assassins of Domitian before he discovered that his feeble age was unable to stem the torrent of public disorders which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predecessor. His mild disposition was respected by the good. The degenerate Romans however, required a more vigorous character, whose justice should strike terror into the guilty. Though

<sup>27</sup> The first was Camillus Scribonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia against Claudius, and was deserted by his own troops in five days. The second, L. Antonius, in Germany, who rebelled against Domitian; and the third, Avidius Cassius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two last reigned but a few months, and were cut off by their own adherents. We may observe that both Camilius and Cassius colored their ambition with the design of restoring the republic; a task, said Cassius, peculiarly reserved for his name and family.

<sup>28</sup> This idea is frequently and strongly inculcated by Tacitus. Hist. i. 5 16, ii. 76.

<sup>29</sup> The emperor Vespasian, with his usual good sense, laughed at the Genealogists, who deduced his family from Flavius, the founder of Reate (his native country), and one of the companions of Hercules. Suet. in Vespasian, c. 12.

he had several relations, he fixed his choice on a stranger by adopting Trajan. The forty-year-old officer commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany. By senatorial decree, Trajan was immediately declared Nerva's colleague and successor in the empire. (Dion. 1. lxxviii. p. 1121. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric) It is to be sincerely lamented that while we are fatigued with the disgusting relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or the doubtful light of a complimentary flatterer. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. More than 250 years after Trajan's death, the senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the pleasure of Augustus and the virtue of Trajan. (Felicior Augusto, Melior Trajano, Eutrop. viii. 5.)

#### *AD 117: Adoption of Hadrian*

We may readily believe that the father of his country hesitated whether he ought to entrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments, the arts of the empress Plotina either fixed the irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption.<sup>30</sup> The truth could not be safely disputed, and Hadrian was peaceably acknowledged as his lawful successor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and vanity. As they prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, in turn, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet in the first days of his reign he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire. In the end, a long and painful illness rendered him peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant; the honors decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus. (Dion, lxx. p. 1171. Aurel. Victor.)

#### *Adoption of the Elder and Younger Verus*

Hadrian's capriciousness influenced his choice of a successor. After considering several men of distinguished merit, whom he both esteemed and hated, he adopted Aelius Verus, an outgoing and indulgent nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous.<sup>31</sup> But while Hadrian was delighting himself with his own applause, and the acclamations of the soldiers, whose consent had been secured by a large donation, the new Caesar (Hist. August. p. 13. Aurelius Victor in Epitom.) was ravished from his embraces by an untimely death. He left only one son. Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius, and upon Marcus' accession, was invested with an equal share of sovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus he possessed one virtue: a dutiful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philosophic emperor dissembled his follies, lamented his early death, and cast a decent veil

<sup>30</sup> Dion (1. lxix. p. 1249) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of sifting this mysterious transaction. Yet Dodwell (Praelect. Camden. xvii.) has maintained that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire during the lifetime of Trajan.

<sup>31</sup> Antinous' deification, medals, statues, temples, city, oracles, and constellations, are well known, and still dishonor Hadrian's memory. Yet we may remark that of the first 15 emperors, Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct. For the honors of Antinous, see Spanheim, Commentaire sur les Caesars de Julien, p. 80.

over his memory.

### *Adoption of the Two Antonines*

As soon as Hadrian's passion was either gratified or disappointed, he resolved to earn the thanks of posterity, by placing the most exalted merit on the Roman throne. His discerning eye easily discovered a senator about 50 years of age, blameless in all the offices of life, and a youth of about seventeen, whose riper years opened the fair prospect of every virtue. The elder of these was declared the son and successor of Hadrian, on the condition he immediately adopt the younger. The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now speaking) governed the Roman world 42 years with the same invariable spirit of wisdom and virtue. Although Pius had two sons,<sup>32</sup> he preferred the welfare of Rome to the interest of his family. He gave his daughter Faustina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the senate the tribunal and proconsular powers, and with a noble disdain, or rather ignorance of jealousy, associated him to all the labors of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor. He loved him as a parent and obeyed him as his sovereign.<sup>33</sup> After Hadrian's passing, Marcus regulated his own administration by the example and maxims of his predecessor. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.

### *AD 138—180: Reign of Pius and Marcus*

Titus Antoninus Pius has been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice, and peace was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of those virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighboring villages from plundering each other's harvests. Antoninus spread order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history, which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life he was an amiable as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniences of fortune and the innocent pleasures of society.<sup>34</sup> The benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper.

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a severer and more laborious kind.<sup>35</sup> It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight writing. At the age of 12 he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind and his passions to reason. He considered virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, and all things external as things indifferent.<sup>36</sup> His meditations, composed in the tumult of a camp, are still extant. He even condescended to give lessons of philosophy in a more public manner than was

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<sup>32</sup> Without the help of medals and inscriptions we should be ignorant of this fact, so honorable to the memory of Pius.

<sup>33</sup> During the twenty-three years of Pius' reign, Marcus was only two nights absent from the palace, and even those were at different times. Hist. August. p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> He was fond of the theater, and not insensible to the charms of the fair sex. Marcus Antoninus, i. 16. Hist. August. pp. 20, 21. Julian in Caesar.

<sup>35</sup> The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocrisy, and with a want of that simplicity which distinguished Pius and even Verus (Hist. August. 6, 34). This suspicion, unjust as it was, may serve to account for the superior applause bestowed upon personal qualifications, in preference to the social virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite; but the wildest skepticism never insinuated that Caesar might possibly be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valor are qualifications more easily ascertained than humanity or the love of justice.

<sup>36</sup> Latin text deleted.

perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor.<sup>37</sup> But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfection of others, and just and beneficent to all of mankind. Avidius Cassius, who began a rebellion in Syria, had disappointed Marcus by committing suicide, denying him the pleasure of converting an enemy into a friend. He justified the sincerity of that sentiment by moderating the zeal of the senate against the adherents of the traitor. (Dion, 1. lxxi. p. 1190. Hist. August. in Avid. Cassio). He detested war as the disgrace and calamity of human nature. Yet when the necessity of a just defense called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful posterity, and more than a century after his death many persons preserved the image of Marcus Antoninus among those of their household gods. (Hist. August. in Marc. Antonin. c. 18)

### *The Precarious Happiness of the Romans*

If we could fix a period in the world's history during which the human race's condition was most happy and prosperous, we would, without hesitation, name that time which elapsed from the Domitian's death to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as accountable ministers of law. Such princes deserved the honor of restoring the republic had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

The labors of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success, by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of see the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just, but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display a ruler's virtue but never correct his vices. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression. The corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud and ministers prepared to serve the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their masters.

These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history. In the conduct of those monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue; the most exalted perfection, and the meanest degeneracy of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theater on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark, unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius,<sup>38</sup> and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During 80 years (excepting

<sup>37</sup> Before he went on the second expedition against the Germans, he read philosophy lectures to the Roman people during three days. He had already done the same in the cities of Greece and Asia. Hist. August. in Cassio, c. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Vitellius consumed in mere eating at least six million of our money in about seven months. It is not easy to express his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog; but it is by substituting to a coarse word a very fine image. (Latin text deleted) Tacit. Hist. ill. 36, ii. 95. Sueton. in Vitell. c. 13. Dion Cassius, L lxxv. p. 1062.

only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign<sup>39</sup>) Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue and every talent that arose in that unhappy period.

### *Misery of the Romans Under Their Tyrants*

Under the reign of these monsters the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived: (1) the exquisite sensibility of the sufferers ; and, (2) the impossibility of escaping from the oppressor's hand.

### *Indifference of the Orientals*

When Persia was governed by the descendants of Sefi, a race of princes whose wanton cruelty often stained their couch, table, and bed with the blood of their favorites, there is a saying recorded by a young nobleman. It says, "one never left the sultan's presence without checking to see whether his head was still on his shoulders." The experience of every day might almost justify the skepticism of Rustan. (Voyage de Chardin en Perse, vol. iii. p. 293). Yet the fatal sword, suspended above him by a single thread, seems not to have disturbed the sleep, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Persian. The monarch's frown, he well knew, could level him with the dust. But a bolt of lightning or sudden stroke might be equally fatal. It was the part of a wise man to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with being named the king's slave. Perhaps he had been purchased from obscure parents in an unknown country. He was trained up from his infancy in the severe discipline of the seraglio.<sup>40</sup> His name, wealth, and honors were the gift of a master who might, without injustice, resume what he had bestowed. Rustan's knowledge, if he possessed any, could only serve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except absolute monarchy. The history of the East told him that this had always been mankind's condition.<sup>41</sup> The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, taught him that the sultan was the descendant of the prophet and the vicegerent of heaven; that patience was the first virtue of a Moslem, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a subject.

### *Knowledge and Free Spirit of the Romans*

The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for slavery. Oppressed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they preserved the sentiments or ideas, of their free-born ancestors for a long time. The education of Helvidius and Thrasea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the same as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philosophy they had imbibed the most just and liberal notions of human nature's dignity and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a free, virtuous and victorious commonwealth, to abhor the successful crimes of Caesar and Augustus, and inwardly despise those tyrants whom they adored with the most abject flattery. As magistrates and senators, they were admitted into the great council which had once dictated

<sup>39</sup> The execution of Helvidius Priscus, and of the virtuous Eponina, disgraced the reign of Vespasian.

<sup>40</sup> The practice of raising slaves to the great offices of state is still more common among the Turks than among the Persians. The miserable countries of Georgia and Circassia supply rulers to the greatest part of the East.

<sup>41</sup> Chardin says that European travelers have spread among the Persians some ideas of the freedom and mildness of our governments. They have done a very bad job of it.

laws to the earth, whose name still gave a sanction to the acts of the monarch, and whose authority was so often prostituted to the vilest purposes of tyranny. Tiberius, and those emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to disguise their murders by the formalities of justice, and perhaps enjoyed a secret pleasure in rendering the senate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this assembly the last of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accusers assumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country, where the public service was rewarded by riches and honor.<sup>42</sup> The servile judges professed to assert the majesty of the commonwealth, violated in the person of its first magistrate.<sup>43</sup> They passionately applauded his clemency yet fearfully trembled at his inexorable and impending cruelty.<sup>44</sup> The tyrant beheld their baseness with just contempt, and encountered their secret sentiments of detestation with sincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the senate.

### *Extent of Their Empire Left Them No Place of Refuge*

The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other, by the general resemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own heart or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of Imperial despotism, whether condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the senate, or to live out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair.<sup>45</sup> To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to cross without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers his anxious view could see nothing except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile barbarian tribes, fierce manners, unknown languages, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive.<sup>46</sup> "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror." (Cicero and Familiares, iv. 7)

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<sup>42</sup> The alleged the example of Scipio and Cato (Tacit. Annal. iii. 66). Marcellus Epirus and Crispus Vibius had acquired two millions and a half under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Vespasian. Tacit. Hist. iv. 43. Dialog. de Orator. c. 8. For one accusation, Regulus, the just object of Pliny's satire, received from the senate the consular ornaments, and a present of sixty thousand pounds.

<sup>43</sup> The crime of majesty was formerly a treasonable offense against the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Augustus and Tiberius applied it to their own persons, and extended it to an infinite latitude.

<sup>44</sup> After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the senate for his clemency. She had not been publicly strangled, nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Gemoniae, where those of common malefactors were exposed. Tacit. Annal. vi. 25. Sueton. in Tiberio, c. 53.

<sup>45</sup> Seriphus was a small rocky island in the Aegean Sea, the inhabitants of which were despised for their ignorance and obscurity. The place of Ovid's exile is well known, by his just, but unmanly lamentations. It should seem that he only received an order to leave Rome in so many days, and to transport himself to Tomi. Guards and jailers were unnecessary.

<sup>46</sup> Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was stopped in the Straits of Sicily, but so little danger did there appear in the example that the most jealous of tyrants disdained to punish it. Tacit. Annal. vi. 14