

Conclusion of Lecture 13th
and
Commencement of Lecture 14th

Continuation of Lecture 13th

The foreign wars during his reign are the most remarkable; the first successful attacks were now made by the barbarians on the Roman Empire. His ridiculous expedition against the Catti, in 82, afforded the first evidence of his unlimited vanity; and the recall of the victorious Agricola from Britain, 85, of his suspicion. His most important wars were those against the Dacii or Getae, who attacked the Roman frontiers under their spirited king Decebalus. By these wars others were caused at the same time, with their neighbors, the Marcomanni, Quadi and Sarmatians from 86 to 90, which resulted so unfortunately for Rome, that Domitian was compelled to purchase peace of the Dacii by a tribute. In his reign occurred the second great persecution of the Christians, (that under Nero being the first) in which 40,000 were destroyed. After a reign of 15 years he was assassinated at the

investigation of his wife Domitia. The twelve Caesars as they have been designated in history ended with Domitian; in this number however Julius Caesar, is included, although Augustus was the first emperor strictly so called, and he was the last emperor of the Augustan family.

M. Cocceius Nerva, aged 70, was raised to the throne, by the murderers of Domitian, and with him a more happy period for the empire began to dawn. The former reign of terror ceased; and he sought to give life to industry, not merely by diminishing the taxes, but also by the distribution of land to the needy. He was the first Roman emperor of foreign extraction, being a native of Crete; he adopted as his successor M. Vespasian, and thus rendered a service to mankind, which his administration otherwise could have accomplished.

Vespasian was a Spaniard by birth, a native of Seville; a prince who was equally great as a ruler, a general and a man. He adopted as his principal object the restoration of the Roman free constitution as far as it could exist with the monarchy, while he made himself subject to the laws. He exercised the art of self government, to a degree, & with a strictness, practised by few princes. Imperial in his private concerns, he was splendidly liberal for every useful institution in Rome, or in the provinces, as in constructing roads, public monuments, and establishing institutions for the education of poor children. By his wars he extended the Roman territory beyond its former limits; for in the two wars against the Dacians, their territory, & in the wars against the Armenians & Parthians, Mesopotamia, & a part

of Arabia, were conquered and reduced to provinces. Why was the love of conquest a feature of so noble a character. The first war against the Saei, in which he did away the scandalous tribute, and compelled Sercebalus to submission continued from 101 to 103. But after Sercebalus had again risen, the war was renewed 105, and terminated 106, Saeia was made a province, & several Roman colonies established there. The war with the Parthians arose respecting the filling the throne of Armenia, 114 to 116. in the reign of Cosmes, the 25th Arsaces. Trajan invaded Parthia, took Ctesiphon, and appointed Parthamaspates, king of the Parthians; victorious - ly as this war terminated, no permanent advantage accrued from it to the Roman Empire. In the

most of his conquests, he died at Seleucia, after a reign of 19 years 110. A.D. The third great persecution of the Christians took place during his reign. At the instigation of Plotina, the wife of Trajan, he was succeeded by his cousin & ward, N. P. P. Helius, Hadrianus, aged 42 whom he is said to have adopted before his death. Having been immediately recognized by the army in Asia, with which he had resided, the Senate soon followed. The system of his government differed from that of his predecessor, inasmuch as he made the preservation of peace the aim of his endeavours, for the sake of which he immediately with singular moderation, resigned the newly conquered Asiatic provinces, Armenia, Syria, & Mesopotamia, and settled the content with the Parthians. He relinquished all the conquests of Trajan, made Parthia -

maspates, king of Armenia, and Cos-
-wos again obtained the Parthian
throne. But in order not to expose
the Roman colonies, Sasia, was un-
-willingly retained by him. On the
other hand he sought to give the
empire a greater degree of solidity,
by a universal and strict reform
of the interior; and by increasing
the severity of military discipline.
For this end he visited successively
all the provinces of the Roman Em-
-pire; first those in the west, and
afterwards those in the East; and
every where he restored better order.
He was a great friend of the arts, &
possessed a fine taste; on the whole
his reign was truly salutary; and a
rich compensation for the few acts of
injustice with which he was charged,
was given by his choice of a successor.
When he went to Britain, he built
a wall of wood & earth, between the

modern towns of Carlisle & Newcastle,
eighty miles in length, to protect the
Britons from the incursions of the
Caledonians. He built a city on the
ruins of Jerusalem, which he called
Aelia Capitolina; during his reign
a great rebellion took place among
the Jews, on account of the heathen
rites introduced into the colony Aelia
Capitolina. He died in 62nd year of
his age 130. A. D.

He had adopted Titus Antoninus, sur-
-named, Pius, who succeeded him.
His reign was without doubt the
happiest period for the Roman Em-
-pire. He found it in excellent or-
-der, and left in their places, all
the civil officers appointed by Adrian.
His noiseless activity affords his-
-tory but little to speak of, & yet
he was perhaps the noblest man
that ever sat upon a throne. Even
when prince, he led the life of the

life of the most blameless private individual, while he administered the affairs of the State as his own. He honored the Senate, and the provinces flourished under him, because he not only exercised, a strict inspection over the governors, but also made it a principle to leave in office for years those whom he had once found to be good men. He preserved strict order in the finances, and was never avicious, when the establishments or improvements of useful institutions were in question. He waged no war himself; but, on the contrary, foreign nations voluntarily, chose him as their arbitrator; a few disturbances which arose in Britain and Egypt, and some frontier wars, excited by the Germans, Sarmatians, Maures, and Alans, were quelled by his lieutenants. His regard for the Christians was extraordinary for a heathen emperor; He declared

that, if any should proceed to disturb them on account of their religion, such should undergo, the same punishment which was intended against the accused." He died 161. A.D. He was succeeded by Aurelius Antoninus, who nominated Lucius Verus Augustus as his assistant, & gave him his daughter in marriage. (Hadrian had adopted Antoninus Pius, with the condition that he should adopt Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Verus.) notwithstanding the difference of their characters harmony was preserved between them during their mutual reign, although Lucius Verus, absent most of the time in wars, had but little to do with the affairs of government. The reign of Marcus Aurelius was remarkable for severe accidents, a terrible plague, famine and almost continual wars; and only such a prince could com-

late for them, who exhibited to the world the example of a philosopher on the throne. Immediately after his accession, the Catti rose on the Rhine, and the Parthians in Asia; Lucius Verus was despatched against them. But more important consequences, resulted from the wars along the Danube, with the Marcomanni, and their allies in Pannonia, and other northern tribes, who began to make powerful efforts to penetrate into Dacia. They employed Marus Aurelius with little interruption from 167 to the end of his reign. He maintained indeed the bounds of the empire, but he was the first who civilized the barbarians, within it, and adopted them into the Roman service. The war against the Parthians, was terminated, victoriously by Verus, & the Romans even gained possession of the first cities of Parthia; but while it was carried on by his lieutenants,

he was revelling at Antioch. The first war with the Marcomanni 167 to 174, carried on by both of the emperors till the death of Verus, was highly dangerous for Rome, because several other nations had united with the Marcomanni, especially the Quadi, Saxyfes, and Vandalis, and penetrated to Aquileia. In 174 Aurelius terminated it by an honorable peace; but in 178 the Marcomanni kindled a second war, before the end of which Aurelius died at Sirmium. Contemporaneous with these wars, the however, as it appears, without connection with them, were the attacks of other nations, such as the Bastarnae, the Alani &c, who fled before northern tribes, (probably the Goths now advancing south) to Dacia. These were the first symptoms of the great migration of the nations. In the reign of Aurelius, the christians at one time were violently persecuted. He died.

By adoption the Roman empire had obtained for 80 years such a series of rulers, as rarely falls to the lot of a state. But with the son of Marcus Aurelius, J. Commodus Antoninus, aged 19, a monster of cruelty, arrogance and sensuality ascended the throne. That he might return to Rome, he purchased peace of the Marcomanni; and as he took no part himself in the affairs of state, the helm was placed in the hands of Perennis, a strict man. But he having been murdered by the discontented soldiers, was succeeded by the freedman Eleander, with whom every thing was venal, till he fell in a riot of the people 189. The mad profligacy of Commodus for the amusements of the amphitheatre for the wild beasts, and shows of gladiators, in which he himself appeared as a Hercules, was one main cause of his wasteful prod-

gality, and thence of his cruelty, till he was murdered in the 13th year of his reign 193. A.D. The wars on the frontiers during his reign, in Dacia, and especially in Britain, were carried on victoriously by his lieutenants, who were still generals of his father's school.

The empire had suffered from the calamities under Jn. Aurelius, and the extravagance of Commodus; but it was not yet weakened; towards the end of the period of the Antonines it stood in its entire strength. If a wise government, internal peace, moderate taxes, a certain degree of political, and unlimited civil freedom, can constitute the happiness of a state, Rome must have been happy; and how many advantages over all other states, did she possess from her situation? We see every where proofs of it; a numerous popu-
-lation;

rich provinces; flourishing and splendid cities; an active internal and foreign commerce. But in the true happiness of a nation, moral greatness is an essential ingredient; and this we seek, in vain. Were it otherwise, would Commodus have seen the nation bow so easily to the yoke of his despotism? would it have suffered itself to be wrenched by the praetorians & legions? But the powers which the nation yet possessed are most clearly shown by the resistance, with which it repelled for two centuries more, all formidable attacks from abroad.

Foreign commerce, now in so flourishing a condition, was, in fact, but little more than commerce with the East, (since the Roman Empire embraced the whole east) especially with India. It extended also over Egypt, and over Palmyra and Syria.

Lecture 14th

From the death of Commodus to Diocletian 193-284

The extinction of the house of the Antonines with Commodus, produced commotions in the Roman world, similar to those which had been occasioned by the extinction of the house of Caesar after Nero. P. Helvettius Pertinax, aged 67, was raised to the throne by the murderers of Commodus, and acknowledged first by the guards, and shortly after by the senate. Originally he was the son of an enfranchised slave, but rose to esteem by his virtues and military talents. The financial reform with which he was obliged to open his reign, made him equally odious to the soldiers and the courtiers. In less than 3 months, a rebellion among the soldiery, cost him his life. This was the first ex-

- ample of that fearful military despotism, which constitutes the leading character of this entire period, and was more pernicious to none than to those, who attempted to build on it their supreme power. The arrogance of the guards had again grown formidable under the reign of Commodus, but it had never entirely ceased, during the period of the Antonines. They had been kept in good humor by large donations, & their consent purchased, especially at every adoration. The greatest objection against the period of the Antonines is, that these princes did not rid themselves of this dependence, when they appear to have pursued such ample means.

Didius Julianus a man of consular rank, and the richest citizen in Rome then obtained the empire by purchase. 193. The praetorian guards, by proclamation offered it to the highest bidder, & he, charmed with the prospect of unbounded

- ded dominion, hastened to the camp and offered the largest price. The natural consequence of this transaction, was the mutiny of the legions, who were better able to make an emperor than the guards. The army in Illyria proclaimed their general Septimius Severus, emperor; The army in Syria proclaimed Pescennius Niger, who was more worthy of the throne; the army in Britain proclaimed Albinus; a series of civil wars only could decide whose claims should be valid. Septimius Severus was the first that made himself master of Rome, and after Didius Julianus had been put to death, which he was in the fifth month of his reign, Severus, was acknowledged by the senate. 193. He dismissed indeed the former guards, but chose in return a fourfold more numerous body from his own army. In 194 he raised Albinus to the dig-

city of Caesar, whilst he first under-
took the war against Pescennius
Niger, who was beaten at Issus after
several battles, and fell. 196 he took
L destroyed Byzantium; this war
was followed by one with Albinus,
197, of whom the perfidious Severus,
had sought to rid himself by as-
sassination. After a bloody defeat
at Lyons, Albinus took his own life.
These civil wars were immediately
succeeded by a war with the Par-
thians, who had embraced the cause
of Pescennius. This war terminated
with the pillage of their capital.
(Volagases 4th or Ardavanus) 198. Seve-
rus possessed many of the virtues of
the soldier, but the insatiable gre-
diness of his minister Plautian, de-
prived the empire, of all the advan-
tages, that are peculiar to a military
government. Plautian was finally

murdered, at the instigation of Cara-
calla. 204. In order to employ the
legions, Severus undertook an expe-
dition against Britain, 209, where he
enlarged the boundaries, but died
at Eboracum (York) 211, bequeathing
to his sons the advice, "to enrich
the soldiers, but to consider all oth-
ers as nothing." Agricola had already
established a line of fortifications
in Britain, probably between the
Firth of Clyde, and the Firth of
Forth; these were changed by Hadrian,
for a wall along the boundaries of
what is now Scotland. Severus again
enlarged the boundaries, and renewed
the fortifications of Agricola, throwing
at the same time a rampart from
sea to sea, but his son made a res-
toration of the conquered territory
and Hadrian's wall again became the
boundary.

After a useless attempt at the division of the empire, the mortal hatred that existed between the two sons of Severus, Caracalla & Geta, both of whom had been raised to the imperial dignity, resulted, after their return to Rome, in the murder of Geta, in the arms of his mother, Julia Domna, and in the death of all others who were accounted his friends. 212. But Caracalla's restless spirit soon drove him from Rome, and while he marched through the provinces, first along the Danube, & then in the East, he ruined them all by extortions & emeths, that he might be enabled to pay his soldiers, and purchase peace of the border nations. His first foreign wars were against the Catti & Alemani, among whom he resided, a long time, sometimes their friend,

sometimes their enemy, 215. 216. He made war against Artabanus 4th king of Parthia; of whom he had asked his daughter in marriage, and in consequence of his refusal made a predatory incursion into Armenia. In this war he was murdered by Macrinus, the commander of the guards. Macrinus, aged 53, was then acknowledged by the soldiery, and soon by the Senate. 217. He immediately adopted as Caesar, his son aged 9 years. He made an unsuccessful termination of the war with the Parthians by a purchased peace; but while he was yet in Asia, Bassianus, the grandson of the sister of Julia Domna, and the high priest in the temple of the Sun at Emesa, who was given out by his mother as the son of Caracalla, was proclaimed emperor by the legions

Here, and after a battle with the
guards, Maximinus and his son were
killed, and he raised to the throne.
Maesa, the sister of Julia Domna,
had two daughters, both widows,
the elder of whom, Soaemias, was the
mother of Heliogabalus, the younger
Mammaea, the mother of Alexander
Severus.

Heliogabalus, aged 14 brought with
him Syrian superstition & luxury. 210.
While he introduced the service of
his god Heliogabalus, into Rome, even
in public he polluted himself with
such brutal & riotous sensibilities,
that history knows not his equal, in
shamelessness or luxury. How deep
must the morality of an age have
sunk, when even a boy could ripen
into such a monster? It was him
a plan to produce a degradation of
the senate, and all important offices,

by filling them with his own abandoned
wretches, and even the adoption of his
cousin, the excellent Alexander Seve-
rus, is nothing to his credit, for he
soon after attempted to murder him,
but instead of it was himself mur-
dered by the guards.

His cousin and successor, Alexander
Severus, aged 14. 212. carefully formed
under the guardianship of his mother
Mammaea, was one of the best of
princes, in a period and on a throne,
where virtues were more dangerous
for a ruler than vices. Protected by
his youth he endeavoured to effect a
reform, in which he was supported
by the co-operation of the guards,
by whom he had been elevated to the
empire. He increased the authority
of the senate, out of which he formed
his privy council, with much strict-
ness of choice, and removed from
their offices, the creatures of Helioga-
balus.

A revolution of very great importance for Rome, took place in the Parthian empire, from that time the modern Persian, 226, and compelled him to engage in a war with Artaxerxes, in which he was probably victorious. 231 - 233. But having been obliged to hasten immediately after, to protect the frontiers against the encroachments of the Germans, he was murdered by the soldiers, in his own tent, at the instigation of the Thracian Maximinus; the soldiers were exasperated at the severity of his discipline. He was at one time instructed by the famous Origen in the principles of Christianity, but it does not appear that he embraced that religion. The revolution in the Parthian empire, by which the modern Persian arose, occasioned many wars with Rome, for Artaxerxes 1st

and his successors, the Sassanides, as descendants of the ancient Persian kings, laid claim to the possession of all the Roman provinces in Asia. By the murder of Alexander Severus, military despotism attained its highest summit, when the unpolished Maximinus, by birth a peasant of Thrace, was raised to the throne. He continued with success the war against the Germans; he penetrated beyond the Rhine, and advanced to Pannonia, and from thence wished to make war upon the Sarmatians. But his terrible rapacity, which spared neither the provinces, nor the cities, produced a rebellion against him; and Gordian, the proconsul in Africa, now 80 years old, with his son of the same name, were proclaimed Augusti by the people, and acknowledged by the Senate. Maximinus, to revenge

himself on the Senate, attached Italy from Sirmium. In the meanwhile the two Gordians, had been defeated in Africa, by Capellianus, the governor of Mauritania, and his legions and lost their lives. But as the Senate had no favor to expect, they appointed Maximus Papienus, and Publius Balbinus, Augusti, with whom it was obliged to associate the young Gordian the third, as Caesar. In the meantime Maximinus besieged Aquileia, but the siege being unsuccessful, he was murdered by his own soldiers. Papienus and Balbinus now remained on the throne, but the guards, who besides had just had a bloody feud with the people, would have no emperor, that the Senate had appointed, and murdered them both, proclaiming at the same time, the dignity of Gordian, increased from Caesar, to that of Augustus.

The reign of the young Gordian aged 12 200, grandson of the pro consul who had fallen in Africa, gained some firmness from the support of his father in law, Misithens, the commander of the praetorian guards, and from the successful expedition, which he undertook against the Persians, who had invaded Syria. But after the death of Misithens, Philip, the Arabian, obtained the command of the guards; and was able to gain the soldiers; he determined Gordian and caused him to be put to death. 244. The reign of Philip the Arabian, was rendered very uneasy, by several rebellions in Pannonia; till Decius, whom he had despatched to quell the insurrection, was compelled by the soldiers, to accept the diadem. Soon after this, Philip, vanquished by him at Verona, perished with his son of the same name.

Trajanus Decius, aged 50 years, succeeded him, 249. In his reign, the Goths, having crossed the Danube, penetrated for the first time, into the Roman Empire. Decius, with his son, was slain by them in Thrace, after reigning two years & six months.

C. Trebonius Gallus, was now proclaimed Augustus by the army; he raised his son Volusianus to the dignity of Caesar, and accepted as his associate, Hostilianus the surviving son of Decius, of whom however he soon rid himself. He purchased peace of the Goths; he was despised by his generals, and was assailed by Geminius Geminius, in Moesia, and murdered together with his son, by his own army. May. 253. But three months after Geminius met with the same fate; when the friend and avenger of

Gallus, Valerian, advanced against him with the Gallic legions. The people and the army viewed Valerian as the restorer of the empire; but although his generals defended the frontiers against the Germans & Goths, he himself had the misfortune to be overthrown, and taken captive by the two powerful Persians. He was sent to death, by Sapor, the Persian king. Upon this, his son and colleague, Licinius Gallienus, who understood any thing but the art of governing, became sole ruler. 259. During his violent reign, of 9 years, the Roman Empire appears to have been partly dissolved into a number of states, partly to have been swallowed up by the barbarians. For the Persians were gaining victories in the East, & the Germans in the West, while his liege-tenants, in most of the provinces,

declared themselves independent of a prince, whom they despised, and as in the case of Postumius in Gaul, were obliged to declare themselves so for their own safety. Of such, nineteen may be enumerated, several of whom, however, elevated their sons to Caesars. For this reason, this is, very improperly, called the period of the 30 tyrants, although their boundless oppressions might justify the expression.

The German nations, which now became so terrible to the Roman Empire, were, 1st The nations united under the name of the Franks, along the Lower Rhine, who roved through Gaul. 2^d The popular league of the Alemanni, on the Upper Rhine. 3^d But more powerful than these were the Gothic nations, who now founded a monarchy along the whole of the lower part of the Danube and the Black Sea, which soon ex-

tended from the Theis, to the Don. These nations became formidable, not merely by their land force, but, having made themselves masters of the Pan-nic peninsula, yet more by their naval power, by which they disturbed both the Grecian, and Asiatic provinces.

In 268. Gallienus lost his life before Mediolanum, in the war against the usurper Aureolus. He recommended for his successor, M. Aurelius Claudius. Claudius restored some degree of solidity to the distracted empire, for he not only took Aureolus captive, and defeated the Alemanni but he also gained at Bissa, over the Goths, invading Thracia. He died soon after at Sirminum of the plague, and destined for his successor Aurelian, a hero like himself.

Aurelian reigned almost 5 years. During his reign the countries that had been separated or lost, were again annexed to the empire. After having repelled the Goths and the Alemanni, who had penetrated as far as Umbria, he undertook his expedition against the renowned Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, who at that time possessed Syria, Egypt, and a part of Asia Minor. Palmyra, situated in the Syrian desert, opulent from Indian commerce, was one of the most ancient cities, and had been a Roman colony, since the reign of Trajan. Under Gallienus, Volens the husband of Zenobia, distinguished himself so highly by his victories over the Persians, that Gallienus named him his colleague on the throne. He was murdered by his cousin Macrinus.